



TEACHERS OF RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015



## RECENT EVENTS

### “BRIDGING CULTURES AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES” PROJECT



*Joel Brady and Ljiljana Duraskovic leading workshops on Eastern Europe at CCBC.*

The University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Russian and East European Studies (REES) and the Community College of Beaver County (CCBC) have completed the first stage of a National Endowment for the Humanities-sponsored “Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges” partnership project. In Fall 2014, a group of 15 CCBC faculty members were recruited for the project, representing a diverse range of academic disciplines such as English, History, Political Science, Communications, Business, Information Technology, Nursing, and Microbiology. In Winter – Spring 2015, these faculty members attended a biweekly evening workshop series that presented East European history, cultures, and literature through carefully selected readings and discussions led by two REES-affiliated Pitt faculty coordinators, Joel Brady (Religious Studies/Slavic Languages and Literatures) and Ljiljana

Duraskovic (Slavic Languages and Literatures). Each CCBC participant then developed a plan for an original course module featuring content on Eastern Europe, which they will incorporate into one or more of their upcoming classes. The workshop series concluded in April with a session held at the historic St. Nicholas Croatian Church in Pittsburgh.

Plans are under way for the next stage of the project, which will feature a monthly Saturday morning lecture series in the 2015-16 academic year that will link CCBC faculty, students, and community members via videoconferencing with expert speakers at East European universities and with community members in Eastern Europe through U.S. State Department-sponsored “American Corners” in the region. In addition, a new section of CCBC’s existing World Literature course focusing on East European literature will be introduced in Fall 2015.

Cooperation between REES and CCBC on the “Bridging Cultures” project has also led to broader collaboration between CCBC and the various area studies centers housed within Pitt’s University Center for International Studies (UCIS), including the centers for African, Asian, European Union, Global, and Latin American Studies in addition to REES. Using funds from the U.S. Department of Education’s Title VI National Resource Center program and other grants to the UCIS centers, Pitt and CCBC jointly organized a faculty development workshop held at CCBC in April 2015 on “Mobilizing People, Students, and Ideas: Social Movements across the Globe and in the Undergraduate Curriculum.”

Faculty from CCBC and two other Western Pennsylvania community colleges (from Allegheny

and Westmoreland Counties) attended the UCIS event, which will be the first in an annual workshop series aimed at internationalizing community college campuses across the region. The UCIS centers are also working on development of study abroad opportunities for community college faculty and students. Thus, the NEH-sponsored “Bridging Cultures” project is already contributing to progress toward the longer-term goal of internationalizing the curricula at CCBC and other community colleges in the Pittsburgh area.

## REES SCHOOL VISIT PROGRAM UPDATE

In November 2014, REES organized a visit by Werner Selle, an advanced undergraduate student from Pitt’s Russian and East European Studies certificate program, to West Hempfield, Harrold, and Wendover Middle Schools in Irwin and Greensburg, PA. Werner spoke to social studies classes at the three schools about the contemporary political scene in Russia and Ukraine. Also, in May 2015, he and Alyssa Cypher—an alumna of REES’s graduate certificate program—spoke about the current Ukrainian-Russian conflict to middle school students at the Falk Laboratory School in Oakland.

In addition, in October 2014, REES arranged for undergraduate certificate program students Erica Hom and Sasha Plotnikova to give presentations on Russian and East European cultures at the Diversity Day program held by University Park Elementary School in Monroeville. To arrange a presentation at your school focusing on a country or topic of your choice from the Russian and East European world area, please contact Gina Peirce at [gbpeirce@pitt.edu](mailto:gbpeirce@pitt.edu).

*The REES School Visit Program is supported by the Title VI National Resource Center program of the U.S. Department of Education.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PITT MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2015

The 19th annual Pitt Model United Nations conference on **Monday, November 2, 2015** will provide a stimulating and competitive environment to challenge teams of

high school students on an array of internationally provocative issues. The Model UN is a simulation of the sessions of the real United Nations, and is organized by the University of Pittsburgh’s international studies centers, Global Solutions Education Fund Pittsburgh, and Pitt’s student Model UN Club. Participating students are able to apply their prior research and studies in a “real-world” context and practice diplomacy, negotiation and resolution writing as they assume the roles of UN delegates. If your school would like to send a team to our Model UN, be sure to register as soon as possible, since this popular event fills up fast! For more information, please visit the Pitt Model United Nations website at [www.pitt.edu/~modelun/generalinfor.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~modelun/generalinfor.html), or contact Diana Shemensi at (412) 648-7394 or [modelun@pitt.edu](mailto:modelun@pitt.edu).

As in past years, we will offer on-site workshops at individual schools to assist you with preparing your students to participate in Model UN. For more information, please contact Laura Amster at [laura@globalsolutionspgh.org](mailto:laura@globalsolutionspgh.org).

### EUROPE: EAST AND WEST UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

In **Spring 2016**, REES will present the 15th annual “Europe: East and West” Undergraduate Research Symposium along with Pitt’s European Studies Center/ European Union Center of Excellence and International Business Center. This event provides an opportunity for undergraduate students to present their own research papers in an environment similar to that of a graduate-level conference, and to receive constructive feedback from panels of faculty and graduate student discussants.

Participants in the 14th annual Symposium on March 27, 2015 included a total of 29 students from 15 educational institutions, including University of Pittsburgh, University of Southern Maine, Bowling Green State University, Mercyhurst University, Northwestern University, Princeton University, Georgetown University, Seton Hall University, Georgia Tech, University of Michigan, Old Dominion University, Pomona College (CA), Dickinson College, Brigham Young University, and Roanoke College. This was one of the most geographically diverse participant groups in the history of the Symposium, with students from 13 states, the District of Columbia, and five countries

represented. Student presentations focused on a wide variety of topics, such as: “False Starts: The Legacy of Soviet Development in Central Asia,” “Russia’s Information War: Media Coverage of the Ukrainian-Russian Conflict,” and “Cult Lists and Government Restrictions on Religious Practice in Europe.”

Applications to participate in the 2016 Undergraduate Research Symposium will be posted this fall on the event website with a deadline in January. The event will again be open to students from higher educational institutions throughout the Western Pennsylvania/West Virginia/Eastern Ohio area and beyond. We would like to encourage all faculty members whose undergraduate courses on Western or Eastern Europe, the European Union, Russia, or the former Soviet Union include research paper assignments to inform their students of the opportunity to participate in the Symposium at Pitt. For more information, please contact Gina Peirce at [gbpeirce@pitt.edu](mailto:gbpeirce@pitt.edu) or visit the Symposium website at [www.ucis.pitt.edu/ursymposium](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/ursymposium).



*Student presenters at the 2015 Europe: East and West Undergraduate Research Symposium at Pitt.*

## **INTENSIVE SUMMER LANGUAGE CLASSES AT PITT**

The University of Pittsburgh’s Slavic, East European and Near Eastern Summer Language Institute (SLI) offers intensive courses in a variety of languages each summer. These courses, which attract students from colleges and universities all over the country, are also open to qualified high school students and to adult learners. Classes meet on Monday through Friday for five hours per day and include an extensive cultural program, giving students hands-on exposure to the music, dances, and cooking of the country whose language they are learning, as well as films and lectures on cultural topics. Most classes are taught by native speakers of the language. Each course covers

the equivalent of a full academic year of college-level language study. Students who complete an SLI course receive six to ten University of Pittsburgh credits.

In Summer 2015, four levels of Russian language and one level of Arabic will be offered at Pitt from **June 8 – July 31**. Courses will also be offered in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Turkish, and Ukrainian from **June 8 – July 17**. Some courses include optional study abroad components. For more information, please contact Dawn Seckler at (412) 648-9881 or [sliadmin@pitt.edu](mailto:sliadmin@pitt.edu), or visit [www.sli.pitt.edu](http://www.sli.pitt.edu). Information on Summer 2016 courses will be available on this site in the fall of 2015.

## **LANGUAGE TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR ROTC STUDENTS**



REES has received federal grants for the past three years from the Project GO (Global Officers) program to provide Russian language training to locally and nationally recruited students from the Army, Navy, and Air Force ROTC. Project GO is sponsored by the Defense Language and National Security Education Office and administered by the Institute of International Education.

This year, REES awarded Project GO fellowships consisting of full summer tuition plus a living stipend to six students for beginning-level and one student for intermediate-level intensive Russian language study in Pitt’s domestic Slavic, East European and Near Eastern Summer Language Institute. REES also awarded Project GO scholarships to six intermediate-level and nine advanced-level students to participate in Pitt’s intensive Russian language study abroad program at Narva College of the University of Tartu in Narva, Estonia in Summer 2015. In addition, three ROTC students with Project GO scholarships from San Diego State University and one with a scholarship from the University of Kansas will join Pitt’s program in Narva this year.

ROTC students who take Pitt's intensive Russian courses this summer, but do not have Russian language instruction available at their home institutions, will have the opportunity to complete an online beginning or intermediate Russian sustainment course sequence in the 2015-16 academic year (pending renewed federal funding of Pitt Project GO). This will prepare them to participate in a study abroad program at the next higher language level in Summer 2016. In addition to these summer and academic year courses, Pitt Project GO provides ROTC students with extracurricular Russian language practice through free individual tutoring, a weekly conversation table, and cultural events.

Pitt plans to offer Project GO scholarships next year for both the Russian and Turkish languages. In addition to current undergraduate students, high school seniors who will enroll in a college or university ROTC program in Fall 2016 are eligible to apply. For information about how ROTC students at your school can apply for Project GO fellowships to begin intensive language study in Summer 2016, please visit [www.ucis.pitt.edu/crees/projectgo](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/crees/projectgo) or contact Dawn Seckler at [das200@pitt.edu](mailto:das200@pitt.edu). The anticipated application deadline is **February 1**.

## STARTALK GRANT FOR HIGH SCHOOL RUSSIAN SUMMER PROGRAM

REES was recently awarded a federal grant through the National Security Language Initiative to run an intensive four-week residential program, the "University of Pittsburgh STARTALK Summer Russian Language School" or SRLS, for 20 high school students at no cost to the students or their families. Students were recruited from three high schools that offer academic year Russian language programs: Pittsburgh Brashear of the Pittsburgh Public Schools system, plus two public charter high schools in Chicago, Pritzker College Prep and Noble Street College Prep. The program rationale is to provide an opportunity for high school students, particularly from underrepresented minority and lower-income populations, to acquire knowledge of Russian language and culture, experience an intensive academic program, and increase their readiness to succeed in college and continue their foreign language studies.

The SRLS will be held on Pitt's Greensburg campus from **June 22 – July 17, 2015**. The curriculum is based

on the theme "Cultural Diversity in Russia," focusing on both ethnic diversity and the diversity of youth and popular culture in contemporary Russia, including music, film, sports and internet culture. Classroom instruction will target the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in Russian; cultural and grammatical knowledge; and college readiness. Pending renewed federal funding, REES plans to offer a similar program for high school students in Summer 2016.

## TEACHER SERVICES

REES's outreach program offers expert speakers free of charge to Pittsburgh area schools, as well as other community organizations. School visitors may speak on a wide variety of topics related to Eastern Europe, Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union, including language, culture, current issues and the arts. Lessons on the Russian alphabet and basic phrases, folk dancing, Ukrainian egg decorating, etc. are available. A school visit may be requested by contacting REES outreach coordinator Gina Peirce at (412) 648-2290 or [gpeirce@pitt.edu](mailto:gpeirce@pitt.edu).

REES also maintains a lending library of educational resources for K-12 and college-level teachers. Available materials include books, maps, videos, audio CDs, and teachers' curriculum guides covering all countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. To view the current list of materials, please visit [www.ucis.pitt.edu/outreach/resources](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/outreach/resources), or contact Gina Peirce to have a hard copy of the resource directory mailed to you. Materials are lent to educators free of charge for two-week periods and may be renewed. Most materials are available for lending by mail.

Our resource collection includes 12 curriculum guides to those Central and East European nations that either already became members of the European Union, or are on a path to possible EU membership in upcoming years. Guides are available on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. All of the guides may be viewed, printed or downloaded free of charge on the REES website at [www.ucis.pitt.edu/crees/outreach/resources/](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/crees/outreach/resources/)

[curriculumguides](#). (If you prefer to receive hard copies of one or more of the guides by mail, please contact Gina Peirce.)

The REES curriculum guides provide an overview of the history and current political situation of each country, as well as various cultural topics such as national customs, holidays, cuisine, music, and educational systems. They include lists of additional resources to consult for more in-depth information on particular subjects. The guides are organized into sections of approximately one to five pages, each of which can be used independently of the rest, so that educators may select specific sections to print for use as handouts in class. While primarily designed for use in high school social studies and world culture classes, the guides are also appropriate for use in introductory college-level courses, and may be particularly useful for preparing students to study abroad.

In addition, REES works together with the African, Asian, European Union, Global, International Business, and Latin American Studies programs at the University of Pittsburgh to organize annual professional development workshops on teaching international studies, as well as events for secondary school students such as Model

United Nations and international career days (please see “Upcoming Events” for more information).

If you would like to be added to the main REES mailing list and receive the monthly calendar of REES activities, including weekly lectures on the Pitt campus, film screenings and other special community events, please contact the Center for Russian and East European Studies at (412) 648-7407 or [crees@pitt.edu](mailto:crees@pitt.edu). If you are not currently on the K-12 teachers’ mailing list, and would like to be added to this list to receive the TREES newsletter and event announcements for K-12 teachers and students, please contact Gina Peirce at (412) 648-2290 or [gbpeirce@pitt.edu](mailto:gbpeirce@pitt.edu).

Another way of staying up to date on Pitt’s internationally themed events and resources for teachers is to like our Facebook page, “Pitt K-12 International Studies Resource,” at <https://www.facebook.com/K12IntlOutreach>.

The REES School Visits Program, resource lending library, professional development workshops and other outreach events are supported by the Title VI National Resource Center program of the U.S. Department of Education.



*St. Vitus Cathedral in the Castle District, Prague, Czech Republic (2014)*



# Course Development Stipends

for internationalizing **K-12** education

The University Center for International Studies (UCIS) at the University of Pittsburgh announces **a new faculty course development grant program to support the creation of courses on internationalizing the K-12 classroom**, to be offered to education students beginning in AY 2016-2017. The purpose of this grant program is to increase the number of courses in Schools of Education and other teacher training programs in the Western Pennsylvania region that provide pre-service teachers with **tools to strengthen integration of international and cross-cultural content into K-12 classrooms**, thus exposing students to different cultures, languages, and meaningful international experiences.

These grants will be administered by the international and area studies centers within UCIS with support from the Title VI program of the US Department of Education, as part of an initiative to create a regional Forum on International Education and Leadership Development (FIELD). Successful applicants will receive either a course release (for Pitt faculty) or **up to \$4,000 for purchasing course release time from their college or university or other expenses related to course development**. Recipients are expected to be active participants in a committee of UCIS members and other education faculty who will hold a series of meetings on K-12 internationalization.

**APPLY ONLINE BY JUNE 15, 2015**

<http://tinyurl.com/UCIS-InternationalizeK-12>

**QUESTIONS?** Please contact Veronica Dristas ([dristas@pitt.edu](mailto:dristas@pitt.edu)) at the Global Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

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