

OCREECAS Newsletter

2022-2023 Academic Year

About OCREECAS

The Oberlin Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies ([OCREECAS](#)) is designed to strengthen the study and teaching of Russian, East European, and Central Asian studies at Oberlin. Created in 1998 with support from the Clowes Fund, Inc. and other private contributions, its mission is twofold: to foster the development of new courses and cultural activities focusing on the region on campus and to support summer and postgraduate service internships abroad through OCREECAS grants.

Director [Kristina Paabus](#) and Internship Director [Maia Solovieva](#) provide the administrative support and resources essential to develop innovative programming for Oberlin students and graduates. They also assure participant safety and program quality within the rapidly changing conditions of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

OCREECAS is committed to providing Oberlin students with opportunities for Russophone studies, with particular emphasis on the formerly occupied nations of the former Soviet Union. The OCREECAS region is currently defined as the following: Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Statement on the War in Ukraine

OCREECAS, the Russian Department, and the REES Curricular Committee at Oberlin College condemn Russia's unprovoked attack on the sovereign nation of Ukraine. We grieve for the victims of this war, and we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and with all those in Russia, Belarus, and elsewhere who have protested the Russian government's actions.

OCREECAS Supported Events

OCREECAS supported a wide array of programming, events, and experiences through Russian, REES, as well as the larger campus community during the 2022-2023 academic year. This included the following:

Fall 2022

- “*The Russian Revolution and the Global South Reading Group*” from fall 2021, continued their studies under the tutelage of Visiting Assistant Professor Nicholas Bujalski during fall 2022 by examining two texts; “*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*” (1917) by V.I. Lenin, and “*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*” (1972) by W. Rodney.
- *CMPL 252/RUSS 252: Art as Witness in Eastern Europe and Russia*. Visiting Assistant Professor Anna Lordan brought the following speakers to her course through Zoom discussions:
 - Maria Shuvalova, Literary Critic, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
 - Olha Poliukovych, Associate Professor at the Department of Literature of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
 - Thomas Roberts, Assistant Professor of Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies and scholar of Ukrainian film, Smith College
 - Victoria Donovan, scholar of the visual heritage of industrialization in the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. St. Andrew’s University, Scotland
 - Olha Birzul, Ukrainian documentary film expert and film curator, Lviv, Ukraine
- Dr. Maia Solovieva, Faculty in Residence and Lecturer in Russian, invited Curtis Ford, a linguist and a creator of Russian language learning materials, to *RUSS305: Advanced Russian*.
- Visiting Assistant Professor Vladimir Ivantsov brought [Joanna Stingray](#) to his class *FYSP085, Rebellion, Revolution, Rock-n-Roll: Art and Dissent in Russia* through a co-sponsorship by OCREECAS and the First Year Seminar Program.
- OCREECAS provided funding for Student Russian Language Teaching Assistants who were able to facilitate conversations and discussion opportunities at the Russian language table.

Spring 2023

- In February, the three 2022 OCREECAS Internship Award recipients returned to campus for an informational session with current students. Sarah Chatta ’17 (Bukhara, Uzbekistan), Isak Saaf ’18 (Tashkent, Uzbekistan) and Annika Krafcik (Tromsø, Norway) presented on their experiences abroad, participated in a panel discussion, and generously answered questions from the audience.
- *CMPL/GERM/RUSS 246: Sex under Socialism*, Visiting Assistant Professor of German, Olesya Ivantsova brought guest speaker Julie Cassiday to the classroom. Cassiday is a Professor of Russian at Williams College who specializes in queer culture and performance.
- *RUSS306: Advanced Russian*, Faculty in Residence and Lecturer in Russian, Maia Solovieva, brought in guest speakers Katerina Zhukova and Nikita Makarenko.

- In spring 2023, OCREECAS joined numerous departments and programs across the college in co-sponsoring the [Reproductive Justice Symposium](#) and the [Jed Deppman Translation Symposium](#).
- OCREECAS provided funding for Student Russian Language Teaching Assistants who were able to facilitate conversations and discussion opportunities at the Russian language table, as well as supported Student Workers to assist with Russia House programming.
- Added to the library at Russia House was “*I. V Savitsky Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art: Collection Highlights*” (2022) by Tigran Konstantinovich Mkrtychev.

Summer 2023

- OCREECAS significantly subsidized student expenses for the June 2023 immersive study trip *Georgia: The Crossroads of Civilizations* that was led by Professor Vladimir Ivantsov in Tbilisi, Georgia. Students participated in a rich academic program of lectures, discussions, and field trips while simultaneously interning according to their interests at a range of organizations and institutions (NGOs, a publishing house, a theater etc.).



June 2023 study trip, *Georgia: The Crossroads of Civilizations*



OCREECAS Internship Informational Session, February 2023, Oberlin College Language Lab. Pictured left to right: Former OCREECAS interns Annika Krafcik (Tromsø, Norway) and Sarah Chatta (Bukhara, Uzbekistan), Maia Solovieva (OCREECAS Internship Director, Faculty-in-Residence at Russian House, and Lecturer in Russian), and Vladimir Ivantsov (Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian).

OCREECAS Student Grants

OCREECAS expanded grant programming in 2022-2023 due to a surplus that had built up during the years of the Covid pandemic and was able to offer three distinct award opportunities to students; the OCREECAS Russian Language Study Award, OCREECAS Winter Term Grant, and the long-standing OCREECAS Internship Award.

OCREECAS Russian Language Study Award

In AY 2022-2023 OCREECAS was able to use reserve funding to support an OCREECAS Russian Language Study Award. This grant offered up to \$2,500 for projects involving Russian language, and was designed to promote language learning with eligibility requirements including a student taking two semesters of Russian language during their first year at Oberlin.

The 2022-2023 OCREECAS Russian Language Study Award(s):

- In June 2023, OCREECAS awarded Noah Moylan ('26) a Russian Language Study Award to continue his Russian language studies with a tutor during the summer months.

OCREECAS Winter Term Grant

In January 2023, OCREECAS awarded four grants (up to \$1,000 each) to assist students with winter term projects that were thematically related to the OCREECAS region. Projects could be individual or collaborative

in nature, and focus on creative, scholarly, or other pursuits. The OCREECAS Winter Term Grant was open to all currently enrolled students, with priority given to Russian Studies/REES students and majors, and additional consideration towards demonstrated financial need. The project location could be anywhere, but proposals required a thematic relationship to Russia, Eastern Europe, or Central Asia.

The 2023 OCREECAS Winter Term Grant recipients were:

- Abe Gold ('24) for "Study in Eastern European Jewish Music" with Zisl Slepovitch, a renowned musician and ethnomusicologist.
- Dalia Tomilchik ('23) continued exploring ceramics to create artwork inspired by Soviet animation for their Senior Studio Major Capstone.
- Cassandra Frieauf ('24) examined archives in Oberlin for the project "Exploring Russia's International Relations Through Language from 1960's Newspapers".
- Martina Taylor ('24) traveled to Budapest for their project "Reimagining the Párta as a Form of an Evolving Queer Hungarian Identity".

OCREECAS Internship Awards

In continuing grant programming, OCREECAS awarded three grants (up to \$5,000 each) to send students to internships in the OCREECAS region during 2023. OCREECAS has developed affiliate internships to choose from, but students are also welcome to find their own internship opportunities with recognized institutions. Students are required to have at least one affiliate institution in the host country, and most internships are 2-3 months in length. OCREECAS Internships are open to currently enrolled students and graduates within the past two years, with priority given to Russian Studies/REES students and majors who have not previously received OCREECAS Internship Awards.

The 2023 OCREECAS Internship Awardees are:

- Raavi Asdar ('21) will be conducting a 9-week internship at Pheasant's Tears to learn about traditional ceramics and wine making processes in Georgia.
- Sam Merrick ('21) will be going to Estonia for a 3-month internship at TYP A Printing and Paper Art Centre to volunteer at a community based arts non-profit, examine the role of the arts in resistance movements, and conduct creative research.
- Xiwei Guo ('23) is traveling to Uzbekistan for a month-long internship at the Ilkhom Theatre where she will be expanding her research into theater, assisting with lighting for live performances, and working on Russian to English subtitle translation.



Dalia Tomilchik, OCREECAS Winter Term Grant 2023



Martina Taylor, OCREECAS Winter Term Grant 2023

OCREECAS is thankful to the **Clowes Fund, Inc.**; **Alyssa Perkins**, Administrative Assistant for Russian, East Asian Studies, and German; as well as the following **committee members** for their service during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- Nicholas Bujalski, Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian and East European Studies
- Vladimir Ivantsov, Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian
- Sheila Miyoshi Jager, Professor of East Asian Studies
- Tom Newlin, Professor of Russian and Chair of Russian
- Kristina Paabus, OCREECAS Director and Associate Professor of Studio Art
- Annemarie Sammartino, Professor of History and Chair of History
- Maia Solovieva, OCREECAS Internship Director, Faculty-in-Residence at Russian House, and Lecturer in Russian
- Pam Snyder, Executive Director, Foundation, Government & Corporate Grants
- Veljko Vujacic, Professor of Sociology