

O C R E E C A S

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OCREECAS Establishes Summer Internships for 2000

OCREECAS has finalized its first two internship programs for Oberlin students, both scheduled for the summer of 2000. AIDS Infoshare Russia, a Moscow non-government organization whose goal is to “reduce the harm caused by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Russia by providing information, services, and support to those affected by HIV/AIDS,” has offered to support an Oberlin intern. One of the first organizations of its kind in the Former Soviet Union, AIDS Infoshare was founded in October of 1993 by two Russians, in response to the dire need for education about HIV/AIDS and other STDs in



Russia. Even today, Russian awareness about HIV/AIDS remains surprisingly low, as does awareness about infected individuals’ rights within the healthcare system. The disease is spreading at an alarming rate throughout the country, especially among intravenous drug users.

Since its founding in 1993, AIDS Infoshare has expanded its full-time staff to twelve people, as well as local volunteers and a few foreign interns from Canada, the United Kingdom, and the US. Although the organization is still based in Moscow, AIDS Infoshare now has affiliates throughout Russia, the Far East, and Central Asia.

AIDS Infoshare boasts an extensive informational library of over 5,000 multimedia resources devoted to HIV/AIDS and other STDs; it is the only library of its kind in Russia. These resources are used to provide information to Russian agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, including the Russian Ministry of Health.

To maintain their library, the AIDS Infoshare staff creates original materials, and translates over 200 pages of documents per month. In addition, they conduct their own social research projects, investigating issues such as human rights violations in the healthcare system, medical professionals' attitudes toward those infected with HIV/AIDS, and commercial sex work in Moscow. They also provide professional Russian trainers and consultants to local NGOs, UN organizations, and the Russian Ministry of Health. Trainers offer insight and information on topics such as pre and post-HIV test counseling, fundraising strategies, and disease prevention. Finally, AIDS Infoshare produces a quarterly journal called "Round Table" and maintains a website, <http://www.openweb.ru/infoshare>.

The Oberlin intern will spend the summer of 2000 in Moscow assisting the staff of AIDS Infoshare with a variety of projects. These include the distribution of educational materials, the delivery of AIDS information to medical personnel, the gathering of information to be translated, and the collection of data from needs assessment surveys.

The second OCREECAS internship will extend the Council for International Educational Exchange's spring semester in Budapest, Hungary. In addition to offering language and area studies courses, CIEE Budapest assists their students in finding internships with a variety of Hungarian-based organizations. The OCREECAS program will allow one Oberlin student to return to Hungary for the summer following the program in order to continue both his/her internship and his/her study of the Hungarian language.

OCREECAS internships are available to both current and former Oberlin students. For more information, please contact Professor Tim Scholl at tim.scholl@oberlin.edu.

Elizabeth Blayney, OC '98

P o z d r a v l q e m !

The American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) has chosen Professor Arlene Forman as this year's recipient of the Award for Excellence in Teaching at the Post-Secondary Level. The award will be presented at the annual AATSEEL conference in Chicago this January. This past July, Professor Forman also won the Oberlin Distinguished Teaching Award, established in 1998 to annually honor three members of the Oberlin faculty. Congratulations to Professor Forman for her much-deserved recognition and her outstanding work!

Oberlin Student Spends Summer Assisting Russian Scholars in Washington, D.C.

Sarah Scannell, OC '2000, spent last summer fine-tuning both her research and her language skills in Washington DC, where she participated in a paid internship program at the Kennan Institute of Advanced Russian Studies. She worked as a research assistant for two of the Institute's resident scholars: Vladimir Batyuk, from the Moscow Institute of Canadian-American studies, and Viktor Pasisnichenko, from the University of Kharkov in Ukraine. Batyuk's research involved the Cold War, the arms race, and espionage in the 1950's. Pasisnichenko studies Ukrainian nationalism and the role of NGOs in evolving civil society.



Sarah spent approximately 30 hours per week at the Institute, where her responsibilities involved proofreading scholars' papers and presentations and assisting with their research, both on the Internet and at the nearby Library of Congress. She also translated documents and presentations, usually from Russian into English, but also occasionally from English into Russian. Although both scholars could communicate in English, according to Sarah they were much more comfortable speaking in their native language. She commented on what a great opportunity it was to speak Russian, and that she feels extremely well prepared for the upcoming academic year!

As a workplace, Sarah found the Kennan Institute to be very friendly and flexible, although she said that scheduling her work hours could be problematic at times. What particularly impressed her was that

the Institute went out of its way to learn about each of its intern's interests, and to match them up with a scholar with compatible research interests. Sarah is currently working on an Honors project involving Yugoslav influence on Soviet politics, and she found that both scholars, particularly Vladimir Batyuk, were extremely good matches in terms of her own research. She said she would highly recommend the Kennan Institute to anyone looking for an internship involving Russian studies, and that it was a great place to make contacts for future job opportunities.

The Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies is part of the larger Woodrow Wilson Center, which was established in 1968 as a center for international scholars. It administers an active program of public lectures and meetings and issues publications that include meeting reports, occasional papers, and books. In addition, the Kennan Institute offers residential research scholarships of three to six months to academic scholars ranging throughout the humanities and social sciences. Each resident scholar is assigned an assistant to support his/her research activities.

Sarah highly recommends the Kennan Institute, and said it was a great place to make contacts for future job opportunities.

To those who might be interested in the program, Sarah recommends getting an early start on both the application process and looking for housing, since finding a place to stay in the DC area can be difficult and costly. Sarah was fortunate enough to be able to stay with her sister in the area, but she mentioned that the Institute was very helpful regarding housing, and sent out a contact list of the other interns in the program. In addition to a small weekly stipend, Kennan pays for transportation to the Institute each day, which is very helpful since commuting can be quite expensive.

For more information on the Kennan Institute, including research assistantships and contact information, take a look at their website: <http://wwics.si.edu/programs/region/kennan/kenmain.htm>

Elizabeth Blayney, OC '98

Help Conserve the Soviet Poster Collection!

The Oberlin Department of German and Russian recently received a surprise gift: a number of Soviet civil-war era posters. Virginia Waratinsky, a current resident of Kendal at Oberlin, had purchased them at a library sale years ago, and thought they might be of interest to the department.

The eight posters are examples of mass-produced propaganda created during the period of 1917-1921, during the Bolshevik revolution. They were an extremely effective means of spreading news and policies throughout the Soviet Union at a time when a large portion of the population was illiterate. Propaganda posters helped the government raise money, recruit troops, provoke patriotism, and explain policies.

Among the eight posters is a very famous image created by Dimitri Moor, one of the two major artists of the Literary Publishing Department (Litizidat) created by the Bolsheviks. Distributed in 1921, the poster was designed as a plea for famine relief after the war.

The department is delighted to acquire the posters, and hopes that they will form the basis for a teaching collection of Russian and Soviet materials. They are currently being held at the Allen Memorial Art Museum.



Two of the eight posters from the collection. Displayed on top is Dimitri Moor's famous "pomogi" design.

Unfortunately, they are in terrible condition. Posters such as these were originally meant to be used for only a short time, and in order to be produced and distributed as quickly as possible, they were printed in mass quantities on very cheap paper. Storage conditions have to be extremely carefully controlled to prevent the deterioration of the paper and ink; even under optimal conditions, however, this is often not enough to prevent the paper from yellowing and becoming brittle. Waratinsky's posters were stored unprotected in a basement for several years, and as a result, are in extremely poor condition; all are torn, some very badly, and several are stained. As damaged as they are, it is unlikely that they could be accepted into a museum collection; however, if repaired, the department feels they would be invaluable teaching aids.

To be at all usable, the posters must undergo an active conservation process, involving removal of dirt and stains, de-acidification of the paper, repair of tears, and backing the posters with new paper. Since it is such a time-consuming and therefore expensive process, the cost of even the most minimal conservation will be approximately \$1000.

The department hopes to raise the money for the conservation of the Soviet posters through alumni donations. If you would be interested in contributing to the poster conservation fund, please send checks payable to Oberlin College to the following address:

Poster Conservation Fund
c/o Office of Development and Alumni Affairs
Bosworth Hall
50 W. Lorain St.
Oberlin, OH 44074

*In Memoriam***Marjorie L. Hoover
(1910-1999)**

Marjorie L. Hoover, emerita Professor of Russian and German at Oberlin College, died on April 25, 1999, in New York City where she was born and lived since retirement. Professor Hoover received her B.A. in French and German at Smith College in 1930. She then studied at the University of Bonn where in 1934 she was awarded a doctorate in German literature. In 1962 she completed a master's degree in Russian Literature at Yale

University. Professor Hoover taught briefly at St. Xavier College and Swarthmore and then moved to Oberlin where she taught for nearly 40 years.

Professor Hoover edited two readers for college students of German, Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (both 1957). Her major area of research was German and Russian theater. She wrote a number of articles on Brecht and other German writers. Much of her scholarship was devoted to Russian drama. She translated Nikolai Erdman's play, *The Mandate* (1975). Her book, *Meyerhold: The Art of Conscious Theater*, 1974, was nominated for a National Book Award. Her other books included a monograph, *Aleksandr Ostrovsky* (1978), and further work on Meyerhold, *Meyerhold and His Set Designers* (1988). At the time of her death she had nearly completed a book on the Moscow theater director, Nikolai Okhlopkov.

Students of Professor Hoover remember her as a very energetic, enthusiastic, and demanding teacher who, perhaps because she had undertaken the study of Russian relatively late in life, gave no quarter to the difficulties that usually bedevil American students. At a time when many Russian teachers taught only the passive skill of reading comprehension, Professor Hoover encouraged active speaking and writing. For example, for extra credit students in their first semester of study were invited to go to a play and then write a short review of it in Russian. In RUSS 101 she thought nothing of having students "master" the alphabet in one day. To her, grammar was something to "swallow whole" so that one could get on with the interesting work of talking with others, reading great literature, and then writing about it. In 1969, RUSS 101 in Mrs. Hoover's class was a marathon session, covering most of the grammar in the voluminous Stillman and

Harkins textbook! In addition to everything else, her students were reading "simpler" poems of Blok and Akhmatova by the end of first semester!

Professor Hoover always encouraged her students. She gave generously of her time and knowledge, gladly taking on independent reading, shepherding Oberlin students to the USSR for summer study in Leningrad, and nominating seniors (and not just Russian majors) for every imaginable post-B.A. fellowship. Professor Hoover was particularly important to her women students as a strong mentor at a time when relatively few women were prominent in Slavic studies.

Professor Hoover was instrumental in establishing exchange programs with the Soviet Union for Oberlin students when very few summer and semester programs existed. Thus, Oberlin became one of the CIEE core schools for the program in Leningrad. She set high standards for the Russian major at Oberlin. All teaching of language and literature was in Russian. The honors thesis, often 80 pages in length, had to be written in Russian, as did the rigorous honors exam, with an outside examiner conducting the oral part of the exam, based on a long reading list of Russian literature, in Russian.

Professor Hoover was famous for her physical toughness. A small, wiry woman, she adored her chosen sport of swimming. When she took students to Leningrad on the CIEE summer program, her fame grew as she took to swimming each morning in the Neva River. She learned to scuba dive at the age of 62. After retiring in 1976, she returned to her hometown of New York City, where every day, amid all the taxis, she would pedal her bicycle from her apartment in Greenwich Village uptown to swim at the YMCA.

Professor Hoover is survived by her husband, Andrew Hoover, emeritus professor in English Literature at Oberlin, and two sons, John and James.

Edith W. Clowes, OC '73
Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Kansas

Ellen Chances, OC '72
Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Princeton University

*From Alumni**Events*

After graduating, **Barry Mallis, '68**, taught Russian at the North Country School in Lake Placid, NY, and received an M.A. in Russian from Middlebury. From 1973 to 1983, he taught a senior class in translation on 19th-century Russian literature at the Putney School in Vermont.

In April, 1998, Mr. Mallis was selected as one of five Rotarians to travel for one month to Russia's northwest in order to assist newly formed Russian Rotary clubs with community service projects. He visited St. Petersburg, Petrozavodsk, Novgorod, Staraya Rus, Tver, Vladimir, Suzdal and Moscow. As the interpreter in the group, he said he "got his linguistic money's worth!" Mr. Mallis is currently the manager of Training and Development for the MARKEM Corporation.

Alice Jean Westmoore, '74, is working as editor of the weekly youth section of the Buffalo News, and as the children's book reviewer.. She also continues to correspond with her Russian roommate.

Melissa Merrill, '91, is returning home after two years working as the International Finance Corporation's Financial and Administrative Manager for the Technical Assistance Projects in Belarus. She says she will miss Belarus very much, and has a lot of hope for the country despite the current presidential administration.

Jenny Bautista, '95, received her MS in TESOL and Bilingual Education last year, She has been teaching English as a Second Language at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, CT, and at the Naugatuck Adult Education center. Her students speak a variety of different languages, including Russian, Spanish, Croatia, Vietnamese, and Polish. Jenny is also an educational volunteer at the Garner Correctional Institution in Newtown, Connecticut.

As part of the Russian/Baltic Millennial Series, the **University of Michigan** will offer a mini-course in January dedicated to the compositions and mystical philosophy of Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915). The course, entitled "**Apocalypse Now? Scriabin and Russian Culture at the End of the Century,**" will consist of a series of concerts, multi-media events, and a half-day symposium, in which the work of Scriabin will be interpreted in its historical and artistic context.



Scriabin's work was influenced by occult philosophy, eastern mysticism, and a fascination with modern technology. The course's objective is to recreate the milieu of the era using current technology in

a combination of music, visual arts, and sensory perception. In addition, it will follow the implications of Russia's historical experience to the end of the Old Regime and examine current millennial concerns. The concert series will include performances by pianist Arthur Greene and by the Russian National Orchestra; the music will be accompanied by light displays, projections, and incense.

The program is geared towards both undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in Russian culture; however, no experience in Russian or music is required. Students who meet the requirements can receive course credit for attending; Oberlin students will have the option of enrolling for Winter Term credit.

For more information and a schedule of events, please refer to the following website: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~7Eagreene/symposium.html>

For those unable to attend, don't worry-plans are under way to webcast the concerts and symposium and put them on CD-ROM!

What's New With You?

We would like to hear from you.

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

We look forward to your reply. You can return this form, or write us at:

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