

# The Program



This program provides a unique opportunity to experience contemporary Russia both on and off the beaten track. The program is based in St. Petersburg, known as Russia's "window to Europe" and includes travel to Siberia, Moscow and Novgorod. Coursework explores the opportunities and challenges of contemporary political, economic and cultural life, exploring how Russians' sense of self and national identity is shaped by history, place and rapid change. Field trips, study projects, and interactions with host families help students gain a deeper sense of where this great "Eurasian" country has been, and where it is headed.

The program begins in late August with intensive language study. In mid-September we travel to Irkutsk, founded in the 16th century when Russian trappers made their way across Siberia. Classes on the shore of Lake Baikal combine natural history, an introduction to local indigenous cultures, and continued language study. In late September we return to St. Petersburg to begin regular semester classes and homestays. An early November trip to Moscow gives students a chance to experience a city fast-tracking its way to status as a major world capital of finance, culture and politics. Throughout the semester, students study Russian at the level appropriate for them — *there is no need for prior study of Russian.*

St. Petersburg has a rich and dramatic history: cradle of revolution, epicenter of industrialization, heroic survivor of the longest siege in modern history. It is a city that has given birth to countless artists, poets,

dancers and musicians. Students are encouraged to experience its diverse offerings –from jazz clubs and sporting events to world-class ballet and art. Coursework is complemented by extensive field trips and meetings with local business people, activists and artists. A Thanksgiving trip to Novgorod, the 9th century city to the south of Petersburg, gives students a chance to experience one of medieval Russia's most beautiful and well-preserved sites. The program ends in mid-December.

## The Courses

### *Identity and Place in Contemporary Russia*

Jane Costlow

This course explores Russian identity as it relates to place. We explore images of Petersburg and Siberia fashioned by writers and painters, along with more day-to-day associations with particular places and their cultural meanings, from Nevsky Prospekt (St. Petersburg's "place to be seen") to cemeteries, country houses and a building that once housed the KGB. We consider both classic and contemporary works of art, literature, music and film. The course includes extensive on-site/on-street explorations. Students produce their own "writing about place" for a final project.

### *Russian Political Economy*

Áslaug Ásgeirsdóttir.

Over the past two decades, the political economy of Russia has undergone a fundamental transformation from a centrally planned economy toward a more market orientation. This change has been accompanied



Franz Josef Land

Novaya Zemlya

Dikson

Noril'sk

Igarka

Nadym

Novyy Urengoy

RUSSIA

Lesosibirsk

Tomsk

Kemerovo

Bamaul

Abakan

Kyzy

Krasnoyarsk

Irkutsk

Ulan-Ude

Kyzy

Chita

Borzya

Lake Baikal

Tynda

Never



by a political transformation that is still playing out as Russia sheds its communist past. The course introduces students to the political and economic features of the centralized planned economy, and considers the challenges and successes of post-Soviet political and economic transition. The course considers the political implications of Russia's reliance on natural resources, the transformation of industry and the emerging financial sector, and Russia's increasing importance in international affairs.

## Language Courses

Students earn two course credits for study of the Russian language. Courses at all levels of language instruction are taught by native speakers in small classes. All courses aim to improve rapidly the skills of comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. Homestays further reinforce students' conversational Russian skills, and their understanding of daily life and culture in today's Russia.

## Travel

Excursions and field trips are central to the program, illustrating the economic, political and cultural traditions and transformations underway in Russia. Travel destinations include Lake Baikal, the deepest and oldest lake on earth; Moscow, the political and economic capital of Russia; Novgorod and Pskov, medieval cities in the northwest of Russia. In the St. Petersburg area, we will visit factories, schools, civic organizations, and some of the literally hundreds of museums in this historic city.

# Bates Semester in St. Petersburg, Russia Fall 2009

## Fees and Credits

This program is an integral part of the Bates curriculum. Completion of the FSA provides participants with four Bates credits, three in Russian language and culture and one in politics. Grades count toward the students' cumulative averages. The four courses also count as a General Education Concentration. Students must take all four courses as they are considered corequisites of one another. Students from other colleges are welcome to apply; they attend Bates as "visiting students" for the semester and transfer program credits to their home institution.

All expenses — including tuition, room and board, travel to and from Russia, and course-related travel and field trips — are covered by the regular Bates comprehensive fee. Students should bring funds to pay for personal expenses, entertainment and gifts.

## The Faculty

Jane Costlow is a professor of Russian literature and language. She has led numerous student trips to Russia, both in short term and during the fall semester. She is a member of the Bates College Environmental Studies committee, and combines interest in Russian literature and culture with work on Russian perceptions of nature and the environment.

Áslaug Ásgeirsdóttir is an associate professor of politics. She is a scholar of international cooperation and resource politics who has taught at Bates since 2001. There she teaches courses on the relationship between states and markets, the international political economy, the politics of trade and international cooperation.



## For More Information

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Applications are available from Georgette Dumais, 200 Hathorn Hall or the Off-Campus Study Office, 110 Lane Hall, Bates College. Early applications from enrolled students may be submitted to the Off-Campus Study Office by December 12, 2008, for notification in mid-January. Regular applications should be submitted by February 6, 2009. Late applications will be reviewed if space is available.

Information on safety, security and crime in Russia is available on the Web site of the U.S. Department of State [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Information on health issues and recommended immunizations is available on the Web site of the Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Students and families are urged to review the information on both sites.

Photographs by Jane Costlow.

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