Bowling Green State University

MOSCOW – ST. PETERSBURG SUMMER PROGRAM

Russian language & culture
May–July 2014 (six weeks)
at Moscow State & St. Petersburg State Universities

Institute of Russian Language and Culture, Moscow State University, 24/35 Krzhizhanovskogo St.
117218 Moscow, Russian Federation

Russian Language & Culture Institute, St. Petersburg SU, 11/2 nab. Leitenanta Shmidta, Room 307, 199034 St. Petersburg, Russia
Program background

The BGSU program was instituted in 1992 with sites in Kiev and St. Petersburg. Since 1992, the BGSU program has cooperated with the Russian Language & Culture Institute at St. Petersburg State University (SPSU). In 2012, Moscow State University’s (MSU) Institute of Russian Language & Culture began hosting part of the BGSU summer program. BGSU and the Center have collaborated on Russian language learning projects since 2007. BGSU has formal bilateral agreements with both St. Petersburg State University and Moscow State University.

Participants

Bowling Green State University students of all ages, and undergraduate and graduate students from other universities have taken part in the program. It is easy to register as a summer guest student at BGSU in order to join the program.

Faculty members

BGSU faculty members have taken part in language learning materials development and tester training at both St. Petersburg State University and Moscow State University. Instructors at St. Petersburg and Moscow are experienced in teaching Russian to speakers of other languages, and are familiar with Russian state standardized testing and European equivalents.

Program content

The program includes learning opportunities in language and its cultural context, Russian and general European cultural history, cross-cultural communication (with people from countries other than Russia), and areas of special interest (e.g., art history, military history, and literature). These opportunities are structured into the program, which includes regularly scheduled language and culture classes, scheduled group excursions, and individualized excursions. A detailed daily schedule is available two months before the program start date.
Academic courses: There are four hours of Russian language and culture classes per day. At MSU, students attend as a group, regardless of level; at SPSU, students are placed into a group with people from other countries based on a reading and grammar test. Students have the option of changing their placement. Testing is according to the state Russian language test. Sample test materials are provided in advance. A semester of Russian language is strongly recommended before the program, but individuals have been successful with no prior formal course.

Cultural program: The program of daily afternoon and evening excursions in St. Petersburg is organized around the (weekly) topics of 1) the history of St. Petersburg, 2) the visual arts, 3) the performing arts, and 4) St. Petersburg and Russia in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Throughout the program participants learn about contemporary life, including forms of popular entertainment and leisure.

Learning activities include

- on-line orientation workshop
- small-group language and culture courses
- average five excursions per week in and around Moscow and St. Petersburg
- background readings on the cultural history of St. Petersburg and Russia,
- completion of an exit questionnaire and post-program written reflection on
  - language learning
  - cultural adaption and learning
  - learning related to an individual field of interest other than Russian
- other activities related to individual goals and any relevant BGSU course equivalents

Learning outcomes: It is expected that program participants will advance in their language and culture abilities, as measured by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines, by at least two steps. In other words, a person with Novice High speaking abilities will likely have Intermediate Mid abilities by the end of the program. Progress at more advanced levels is slower, a fact recognized by the ACTFL. Participants will move from what is commonly called a tourist or outsider’s view of the culture closer to an insider’s view, as they come to accept behavioral conventions and better understand people’s views in the society. This learning is gauged by pre- and post-program questionnaires for personal use.

* * * * * * *

Facilities

The SPSU and MSU academic buildings have central city but not downtown locations. The SPSU building is located on Vasilievskii Island, on the north bank of the Neva River in walking distance (across the Blagoveshchenskii Bridge) from the Alexander Garden and St. Isaac’s Cathedral.
In St. Petersburg, home stay arrangements are on Vasilievskii Island or in the central, Nevsky district. The location ensures easy access—two to three subway stops or a direct bus ride—to central city cultural sites, including the Russian Museum, the Hermitage Museum, and many theaters and concert halls.

The MSU academic building (marked “A”) is located about a one-half hour trolley ride from the main campus of MSU, located to the northwest, and in proximity to a subway station (Profsoiuznaia) on a direct line to the center of Moscow. Program participants reside on the main campus, in walking distance to the Moscow River and the Universitet subway station. They can reach Red Square on foot and by subway in under an hour.

**In St. Petersburg, students reside with host families. There are partial and full (two meals) board options. The university office makes arrangements with host families and communicates their names, addresses, and phone numbers to program participants in advance. There may be a less expensive, residence hall

**from Google Maps**

**Instructional facilities:** At both SPSU and MSU, Bowling Green program participants meet with instructors in small classrooms that accommodate approximately fifteen people. Classrooms are located on the second and third floors of the SPSU and MSU buildings.

**Living arrangements:** Program participants reside in the main building of MSU with students from the Russian Federation and abroad. Accommodations are two to a “block” of two rooms, with shared bathroom and entryway. A university cafeteria is open 7:30 A.M.–7 P.M. weekdays for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There is a café on the same floor with a full menu. It is open until midnight. In addition, there is a small grocery store with fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, breads, milk products, and other staples at reasonable prices, and a number of bakery and sandwich stands throughout the building. The 2014 room rate was $13 per night.
option in 2014. The range of prices for living with a host family, without board to full board, is $950–$1100 per month. Additional details are found in the program cost sheet, which lists Bowling Green State University Board of Trustees' approved fees and costs.

**Excursions:** Cultural excursions are a part of the program. Select examples of excursions in recent years have been to

- Moscow Kremlin
- Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Savior
- Moscow State Botanical Garden
- Darwin Museum
- Kolomenskoe park and palace
- Tsarytsyno palace in Moscow
- Catherine's Summer Palace
- ancient city of Novgorod
- Hermitage Museum
- Moscow Nikulin Circus
- Russian Museum in St. Petersburg
- Peterhof on the Gulf of Finland

*at the St. Petersburg Mining Institute*

**Transportation:** Group members fly from the U.S. (or other point of origin) to Moscow and back to the U.S. from St. Petersburg. The group travels from Moscow to St. Petersburg by train. MSU and SPSU provide airport pickup and drop off. Program participants use public transportation—trolley, bus, tram, and subway—in both Moscow and St. Petersburg. In St. Petersburg, a one-month pass for all forms of transportation is most economical. The use of taxis and private autos is reviewed at orientation meetings.

**Safety:** The program has a university-approved set of emergency guidelines and contacts. Faculty directors are experienced in dealing with travel, medical, and other emergencies. Security in the MSU residence hall is tight. There are security checkpoints staffed by guards at the entrance to the residence hall grounds and to the residence hall floors. Entrance is by student i.d. and passport.

Security in residence halls and academic buildings is generally superior to that at U.S. universities, but the use of security cameras may be less common. Entrance to the academic buildings at MSU and SPSU is by university-issued student identification card.

Host families provide keys and building security codes to program members upon arrival.

Forms of identification and safety and security—e.g., financial, on the street, in public transportation—are important topics in the orientation workshop and upon arrival in Russia.

The Bowling Green State University Student Code is observed throughout the program.

**Medical care:** Program participants can use university clinics for minor health care needs. If a physician is required, doctors from Russian clinics make house calls. Care for more serious medical needs is coordinated by the program director and host institution administration.

**Orientation:** On-line orientation devoted to travel to and living in Russia. BGSU students must attend an orientation at the Education Abroad Office as well.

**Application and payment:** The 2015 application deadline is 16 February. Applications may be accepted after this date, but on 16 February there will be a call for passport information, which is the basis for receiving a Russian university invitation and student visa. About eight weeks are required to receive a visa. Application materials are at [www.bgsu.edu/educationabroad](http://www.bgsu.edu/educationabroad).

**Contact information:** Dr. Timothy Pogacar, director, Dept. of GREAL, Shatzel Hall 103, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403; 419-372-2268 (o), 372-2571 (f), pogacar@bgsu.edu