Russian House

Professor Kevin McKenna, Faculty Director
Tatiana Rumsey, Student Director

OVERVIEW

The primary goal of the “Russian House: An Introduction to Russian People, Culture and their Society” course will be to present our first-and second-year students with a broad overview of Russian cultural, social, political, and historical topics covering Russian, Soviet, and, now, Post-Soviet Russia at the beginning of the 21st century. Admission into the Russian House is limited to students currently studying the Russian language or to those who have enrolled in a Beginning Russian course for the fall semester.

Members of the German and Russian Department, as well as faculty from the Russian and East European Studies Program, will give bi-weekly lectures and slide presentations covering a variety of historical and cultural topics pertaining to Kievan, Muscovite, Romanov, Soviet, and contemporary Russia. While the Faculty Director, Professor Kevin McKenna (German and Russian Department) will address a number of topics related to Russian literature, history, and politics, other REES faculty will speak on Russian history, film and society (Professor Denise Youngblood, History Dept.); Russian music, cuisine, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy (Professor Kenneth Nalibow, German/Russian Dept.); Russian/Slavic social and cultural anthropology as well as contemporary Russian popular music, tattoo culture, student political movements (Professor Jennifer Dickinson, Anthropology Dept.); post-Soviet Russian and Central Asian politics, economics, and business culture (Professor Michele Commercio, Political Science Dept.). On occasion, Russian visitors to UVM will hold personal meetings with “Russian House” students. In 2006, for example, Russia’s greatest living poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko gave a special poetry reading of his poetry.

The goal at all times will be to present students in the Russian House with a general introduction to a broad range of cultural, historical, social, and political topics related to a 1000-year history of Russia. Students will prepare oral presentations as well as a research paper on related topics of their choosing. As opportunities arise (e.g. the Flynn Theatre, the Fleming Museum), Program students will attend local music and cultural events in the Burlington area as well as a number of Russian films on campus,
In order to build upon Russian language skills acquired in the classroom, Professor McKenna will hold a "Russian conversation hour" each week of the semester to assist students with "everyday" aspects of the language (linguistic etiquette at the dinner-table; Russian pen-pal correspondence; Russian scrabble and monopoly; Russian jokes/anecdotes, etc). To assist Professor McKenna and to help Russian House students with their study of the language, a number of Russian exchange students from Irkutsk, Etaterinburg, Yaroslavl, Moscow, St. Petersburg, etc. will participate in Russian House activities, including Russian cooking, Russian chess playing.

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**About the Global Village**

This program is part of the Global Village Residential Learning Community (RLC). For UVM students interested in exploring other cultures, studying abroad, or pursuing lives and careers in an increasingly interconnected world, the Global Village may be just the place for you! Drawing on the resources of the Living/Learning Center and its dynamic network of student- and faculty-led programs, the community of learners that make up the Global Village will be engaged in coursework, lectures, concerts, exhibits, faculty and peer mentoring, social connections with international students, group meals, and trips that:

- Explore the many connections among language, art and culture at regional, national, and international scales.
- Share disciplinary expertise within an environment that values a holistic approach to "living and learning."
- Encourage formal and informal contacts among students, faculty, and staff within the Global Village, the Living/Learning Center, the other Residential Learning Communities, and the university as a whole.
- Aim to be a complement to existing international and cross-cultural programs at UVM.
- "Think globally and act locally" by outreach to the international community at UVM and within the greater Burlington area.

More information about the Global Village RLC can be found at: [http://www.uvm.edu/globalvillage](http://www.uvm.edu/globalvillage)

**GRS 025: The Global Village Seminar**

GRS 025: The Global Village Seminar is a largely self-paced, one-credit course designed to help you get the most out of your experience as a citizen of the Global Village Residential Learning Community. All new Global Village residents **must** enroll in GRS 025 for one credit during the fall semester or spring semester. (Returning Global Village students who have not yet satisfactorily completed the class must enroll in GRS 025 during the fall semester.) This course will be graded on a “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” basis. The course will be partly comprised of a series of “Common Hour” community gatherings held on Thursday afternoons. The primary purpose of the Common Hour meetings is to build a stronger sense of community among the members of the many Global Village houses and programs. As well, the Common Hour gatherings will help Global Village citizens build a common knowledge and skill set, including such topics as intercultural communication, globalization, etc. A variety of program offerings will take place during Common Hour meetings, such as special guest lectures, interactive dialogue and social gatherings. During weeks when the Common Hours are not held, you are expected to participate in one educational event or activity with a global cultural theme. We’ll provide you with a list of
suggested events and activities, or you can identify other events/activities with a global cultural theme; you choose which ones you wish to attend.

We’ll provide you with a Global Village Passport; use it to keep track of your activities and explorations. In addition to documenting participation in Common Hours and the educational events/activities, you will need to do reflective writing in the form of five short journal entries on the cultural/educational events that you participated in, along with a lengthier essay looking back on your most meaningful experience of the semester within the Global Village.

Returning Global Village students are also invited (but not required) to enroll in GRS 025 during the fall semester or spring semester.

If you anticipate a problem with fulfilling this course expectation (such as if you will already be enrolled in 18 credits), please contact Prof. Joseph Acquisto, Faculty Director of the Global Village, at Joseph.Acquisto@uvm.edu

For more details about this course, visit: http://www.uvm.edu/~gvrlc/?Page=passport/passport.html&SM=passport/sub-menu.html