

GEOG 410/GLST 410 Russia's Three Capitals: Moscow. St. Petersburg, and Kazan

May 28-June 14, 2018

3 CREDITS

This education abroad course of 16 days will take students to Russia, which is one of the most exciting parts of the world to see. This class is most suited to geography and history students, but will also appeal to anyone interested in the country's rich 1000+ years long history, economics, culture, and political developments. Also, because my background is in environmental geography a lot of topics we cover will appeal to students interested in nature, protected areas, endangered species, conservation, and clean energy topics. We will see first-hand how globalization is shaping the world, including its biggest country by area, Russia.

Course Goals:

- The first is to focus critical attention on the ways in which Russia is represented in the American public discourse and how reality on the ground is different from what you see from North America
- The second goal is for students to analyze and critique natural and cultural landscapes of Russia today ranging across an environmental and cultural gradient from north to south and west to east.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will learn basic facts about Russian geography focusing on three major cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kazan
- Students will have first-hand experience of diverse geography topics, including urban, environmental and economic geography, as well as travel and tourism issues
- Students will demonstrate increased cultural awareness of Russia
- Students will develop new relationships with Russian colleagues
- Students will share their new knowledge with others

Note: In 2018 **FIFA World Cup** comes to Russia in summer. If you are a soccer fan, you might just get lucky and obtain tickets to a match. In this case, you can extend your stay in Russia after our class is over and I will assist you in making travel accommodations

Course evaluation:

Pre-trip readings and a mapping exercise	20%
Daily journal while on the trip	20%
Two quizzes	20%
Research project and final paper	30%
Class participation	10%

Choice of locations:

Moscow is the political and economic capital of Russia. It is home to over 12 million residents and has some of the main attractions of Russia to see: the Kremlin, the Red Square, St. Basil's and Christ the Savior Cathedrals, Tretyakov Gallery of Russian Art, Moscow State University, and many famous parks, theaters, museums and monuments. There are many environmental issues that one can observe in Moscow.

St. Petersburg is the former imperial capital of Russia established by Peter the Great in 1703 and home to the Romanov dynasty for 200+ years. It is also the birthplace of the Communist Revolution and the site of the longest siege in World War II. Home to about 5 million people, it is the second biggest city in Russia and is world famous for its architecture, white nights in summer, spectacular canals, bridges, palaces and parks. The Gulf of Finland development and the sea port are the highlights.

Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan republic on the Volga River. It is sometimes referred to as the third capital of Russia. Home to approximately 1 million people, it has a distinct multicultural feel. Tatars are the largest ethnic minority in Russia and are mainly Sunni Muslim. The conquest of Kazan by Moscow in 1500s marked the beginning of many centuries of coexistence between the two ethnic groups. There are many historical sites to see in Kazan. In addition, we will visit a nature preserve, take boat rides on the Volga, visit island town of Sviyazhsk and the ancient capital of Tatar khanate in Greater Bolgar, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Research:

Each student will sign up for a research topic before the trip starts. After some preliminary background readings, you will be expected to make observations on the trip, take photos, interview locals, and in general spend time on the trip engaging with your topic more deeply. After completion of the trip, you will write a short illustrated paper based on your research data collected.

Examples of such topics include:

- Megastructures of Russia: churches, monuments, and tombs
- Gendered stereotypes in Russian advertising
- Global influences on what Russians drink
- Russian writers reflected in the monumental art
- Is there recycling in Russia?
- Jogging in Russian cities
- Russian perspectives on America as seen in the landscape
- Rare plants of Central Russia: conservation strategies
- Orthodox Christians and wider world: religious (in)tolerance or inclusion
- Transportation systems of Russia: how different from America?

Breakdown by contact hours

Daily activities	3 cr.
Pre-trip reading homework, mapping homework, and two class meetings in the spring of 2018 on campus	4 hr.
Day 0: Leave St. Cloud. Fly MSP-St. Petersburg.	
Day 1: Arrive in St. Petersburg. Introduction to the city (evening walk enjoying famous northern "white nights)." Hotel overnight (Moskva, Azimut or similar 3-star with breakfast)	4 hr
Day 2: Central city. Petropavlovsk fortress, czars graves at the cathedral, prison museum. Boat tour of St. Petersburg canals. Alexander Nevsky cemetery. Stay at hotel overnight.	4 hr
Day 3: Peterhof (Russian "Versailles"). Suburban palaces along the Gulf of Finland and the sea port. Environmental issues related to water pollution of the harbor. Visit suburban developments. Back to central city in the evening to attend a ballet performance. Hotel overnight.	6 hr
Day 4: Hermitage Museum and Winter Palace and evolving geographies of the city center. Museum of Dostoyevsky, famous Russian writer. Take overnight train to Moscow.	4 hr
Day 5: Moscow. Take Moscow subway! Tour of downtown pedestrian areas: the Red Square and the Kremlin, Arbat street and other downtown attractions. Hotel overnight.	4 hr
Day 6: Suburban sprawl. Pollution. Local issues. Guided tours of Moscow parks with Russian biology and geography students. River tram cruise on the Moscow river.	3 hr
Day 7: Rural Central Russia: cultural geography. Visit St. Sergius Trinity Monastery in Sergiev Posad by suburban train. Geography of pilgrimages. Typical tourist gateway community to a historical site.	4 hr
Day 8: Urban and economic geography Geographies of retail and leisure. Moscow business center, Museum of WWII. Train to Kazan overnight.	3 hr
Day 9: Kazan. Central city, Kremlin with the Central Mosque, old Tatar district, arts and crafts.	3 hr
Day 10: Discussion of the regional economy and culture, comparisons with Minnesota. Students meet with local Russian students to discuss US-Russia relations.	3 hr
Days 11-14: Four days around Tatarstan: visit Sviyazhsk, and Greater Bolgar, Zhugulesvsky nature preserve, boating on the Volga river.	10 hr in 4 days – include data gathering on tourism and environment
Day 15: Transfer to airport and departure for the United States via Moscow	
	TOTAL CONTACT HOURS
	52

Assessment of GEOG 410 Russia 2018 class

<u>Student learning outcomes</u>	<u>Assessed by</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will learn basic facts about Russian geography	Two quizzes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will have first-hand experience of diverse geography topics, including urban, environmental and economic geography, as well as travel and tourism issues	Daily journal & final project
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will demonstrate increased cultural awareness of Russia	Exit survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will develop new relationships with Russian colleagues	Exit survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will share their new knowledge with others	Presentations