

STUDENT ALMANAC

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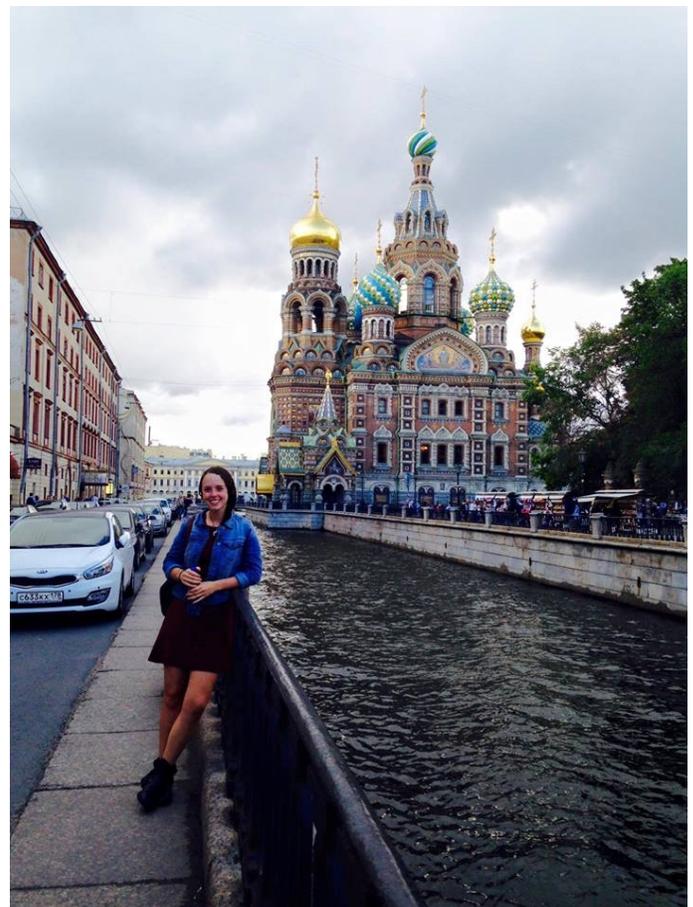
By Sarah Weiser '17

History and the everyday in St. Petersburg

Russia is every bit as strange as you might expect it to be. What was strangest for me, though, was discovering how similar such an alien place was to my own country. Underneath the superficial differences are crucial similarities in the power of collective memory, frustration with polarized politics, the challenges of globalization, and the complexities of living in a diverse society. I'm surprised and impressed to see every day how Russians hold their identities and histories – tragedies included – so close their hearts, even as they navigate St. Petersburg's modern landscape. Young Russians I've met seem to care deeply about the kind of country they live in, about its soul and its role in the world, and it's been fascinating to watch them piece together a national identity in such a tumultuous and complicated place.

The richness of Russia's history is unavoidable even in daily life. I used to laugh at Russia's bizarre quirks, but now I appreciate the deep roots of even the smallest cultural details. My host mom's insistence on keeping that last tomato slice in the fridge is part of a common psychology about the preciousness of food dating back to the Leningrad blockade and beyond. The grannies who yell at young people on the bus do so because they see themselves as inheritors of the country after the virtual destruction of their male cohorts in World War II. My hosts only talk about politics over tea because during the years of surveillance and betrayal, the kitchen was the only safe place to breach dangerous topics. And the couple making out in the metro inherited that practice from generations who lived in crowded communal apartments and needed to get creative if they wanted alone time away from their grandmothers.

There's really no place like Russia. It's always distinguishing itself from the world and underlining how



it's different. Its history is tragic, miraculous, and absolutely everywhere in St. Petersburg. The city is built on generations of itself; the original construction was imperial and decadent, the second wave was Soviet and austere, and the third wave is post-Soviet and global. You can see marble statues, hammers and sickles, and ads from internet providers on the same corner. It sounds contradictory, but that's Russia!

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(“History and the everyday in St. Petersburg” continued from the front page)

History follows you here, and it’s more dramatic than this American can truly comprehend (even in the lifetimes of the people just walking down the street.) American history feels to me like a stable progression from one decade to the next. Russia, though, somehow remains despite unimaginable upheaval and social divides. People talk about 1991 as though it were yesterday’s lunch, and such nonchalance seems crazy to an American who has never lived through a regime change. Russians have experienced periods of destruction, war, deprivation, rebuilding, and dramatic development that can’t be erased from the collective memory. When you come to Russia, no matter how many iPhones you see or how many H&Ms you walk past, you become a part of that memory. 

By Metin Turgut ‘16

Berlin’s urban culture

I decided to leave my school and friends for a whole year to go abroad, some time in my sophomore year. Back then my only motivation was to see a different place and learn German. But looking back as a senior, it’s crystal clear to me how much I’ve gained from my year abroad.

Without a clear idea of what to expect, I went off to Berlin to study at the Free University, through the Berlin Consortium for German Studies (BCGS). The BCGS is a program administered by Columbia University, and its main mission is to enable the students’ integration to the German culture. Therefore they only arranged my stay for host family for a month in September 14, and I was expected to find a place on my own for the rest of my time in Berlin. Although finding a place to live is extremely difficult in a language I hadn’t mastered, it definitely paid off at the end as where I lived was an immense part of my experience. I rented a room in a Wohngemeinschaft in Schöneberg (West Berlin) and lived with three other Germans from October 14 to July 15. My ability to express myself colloquially in German has improved greatly thanks to my housemates, but more importantly I’ve had a great look into casual, every-day life of a German.

Berlin, with its dynamic city-culture, has been a great thing to experience as of itself. I’ve had the impression that the whole city was a campus for me with its amazing 24-hour transportation, festive youth culture and great street food. Coming from Williams, where

academics and classes would constitute most of our daily conversations with our peers, being able to take my friends to a lake or to a club without worrying too much about classes next day was a blessing.

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(“Berlin’s urban culture” continued from previous page)

After a full year in Berlin, I realized that my identity as a young individual could be irrelevant of my academic life.

BCGS, administered by Columbia, prides itself on its academic rigor. This was great, and I was really lucky to experience the fun, exciting parts of Berlin, while not missing out on the academic environment at a

German university. I was expected to take classes with other German students, and I had to write Hausarbeiten (final papers) like them at the end of the semester. Writing papers in German was quite difficult, but the tutors our program has arranged for us have been quite helpful in assisting us with the language and the nuanced academic standards of the German education system. I couldn’t have asked for a more well-rounded experience. 

By Greg Steinhelper ‘17

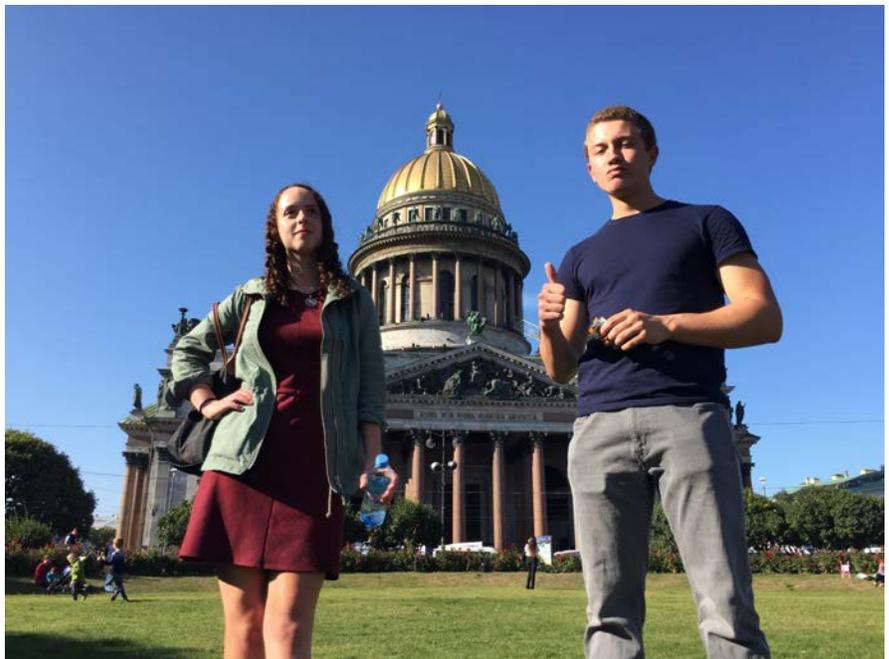
Fun with a bit of challenge in Russia

Valuable is the adjective I would use to describe my time in Russia, which is good, because I did not want to trade out a semester at Williams for a semester consisting only of festivities and escapades. But I certainly have had my share of fun here, and more importantly, I’ve acquired valuable skills and enjoyed great personal growth, which is probably what the study abroad office and my parents would prefer I get out of this semester in the first place. By the time I return from Russia in about a month, I will be able to keep on learning Russian by just checking the news or trudging through an academic article. Here’s a more concrete example that also timestamps when I wrote this: Turkey shot down a Russian plane yesterday around the Turkish-Syrian border, and trust me, you wish you could read both English language and Russian language news on that event. Experiencing the same world events while in Russia is quite eye-opening.

On the idea of personal growth, making that move from child to adult, I think a substantial part of the transition is becoming adaptable. A while ago, I stepped off the bus on my way to the gym and realized that everything in that moment felt normal. I was on autopilot at that point, which isn’t anything noteworthy when I’m in Williamstown, but in St. Petersburg the ability to zone out and just go about my business meant I had reached a milestone in adapting. Don’t misunderstand me: there have been plenty of times since then when I have felt foreign, unprepared, or uncomfortable. And of course, I still make trips alongside other students to touristy locations on a regular basis, because I have never seen so many magnificent palaces and churches nor have I seen so many behemoth missiles

and gnarly war machines. But the ability to blend into the crowd during rush hour and converse with everyday Russians gives the satisfaction that I’ve accomplished something here outside of academics, sightseeing, and revelry.

To be sure, though, most of the moments from this semester that I will remember three decades from now happened during what I would call adventures. Walking to the gym is boring, except that one time I saw a man alongside what I can only assume was his pet pig/boar, which was the size of a very large dog and just as noisy. One of the other outstanding memories for me was a spur of the moment decision to hang out with a fellow American student and some Russian dudes. This decision ultimately resulted in a rather unexpected trip to a small village outside the city, where one guy’s family had their own *banya* that also served as a nifty spot to hold (very) small parties. Like I said, Russia is fun, it’s just fun with a bit of challenge mixed in. And life would be pretty boring without challenges, right? 



By Carlos Malache '18

My Summer in Frankfurt

Thanks to the Robert G. Wilmers Jr. 1990 Memorial Summer Language Study Fellowship I obtained through Williams' Fellowships Office, I went to Frankfurt, Germany in order to continue my study of German. I was able to study the language in the culture and in the context in which that language is used. This was extremely useful since language is embedded in the society from which it came. Language usage in daily experiences is a very important aspect to be discovered outside of a classroom experience.

That being the first premise, my program was also academically intense, with about 8 hours of German in the Goethe-Institut a day, every weekday for a month. It is a very challenging experience but also very rewarding because at the end of it one gets to study the grammar intensely and practice it in a real life situation right after one has learnt it.

It is of course a maturing experience, to travel and live alone for an extended period of time. Indeed, being alone, doing daily chores, filling out migratory paperwork, getting to make friends with whom you don't share many experiences, and managing a budget that you have to prepare 4 months in advance, can be quite daunting at first. However, I think this is an important component of a personal formation, which may be harder to get in a college campus. It's a sneak peek into "the real world" with the safety net that it is actually just for a month or two.

Another intellectually exciting component of my language learning experience was the academic side. I went to the Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt which holds the Adorno Lectures, an important historical tradition in Cultural Theory and Contemporary Continental Philosophy.

Finally, this full immersion program was also a lot of fun and very enriching culturally. I could travel even after the end of my program given that



museums, concerts, coffee shops, restaurants, youth hostels, streets, fields, seas and lakes are a bus ride away, for Europe has public transportation. One also has to learn to plan for some rest time in between, because a fuzzy head can lead you to lose your passport with three visas in it, and from experience, being in Europe at the dawn of a refugee crisis with nothing but a Williams

ID and no money left is not a good place to be in life. Luckily, if you know languages, airport counters will let you pass, police officers will look upon you with mercy and not distrust and, after a jolly conversation in your broken German with a Migrations Officer at the Frankfurt airport, who finds lovely the fact that you learnt his language all the way in the U.S., you will be able to board a transcontinental flight with no money, no paperwork and an endearing pat on the back. However, this last part might be pushing your language skills to the extent that imprisonment and deportation is at stake. I do not recommend that, but the point is that languages are really life saving, if one values freedom and being able to cross borders of all kinds. 

Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen
17. bis 19. Juni 2015

Diedrich Diederichsen
Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien

**Übergriffe und Traumhäuser.
Zur Ästhetik der nachpopulären Künste**

Mittwoch, 17. Juni, 17.30 - 19.30 Uhr
Traumyndikate, Rhetorikadisten und Duldungsstarren

Donnerstag, 18. Juni, 17.30 - 19.30 Uhr
Sex und Gewalt versus Lust und Unlust

Freitag, 19. Juni, 17.30 - 19.30 Uhr
The Healing Festival: »Criticality«, »Participation«, »Widerständigkeit«

Goethe-Universität
Frankfurt am Main
Campus Bockenheimer
Hörsaal IV
Mertonstraße 17-21

SoloLamp Verlag
Institut für
Sozialforschung IFS

By Brian Astrachan '16

Americans in Russia

In January 2015, Alex Schidlovsky and I traveled to Russia to research the conflict between the United States, Russia, and Ukraine. We spent three weeks traveling to four cities, using Moscow as our home base. Although one may not initially think of Moscow as a highly sought-after destination for Americans to relocate and work, we met several Americans (including Williams students) living in Moscow.

While reasons for relocation varied, several (outside of simple fascination or interest in Russian history) stand out as either more common or worth noting. For one, some had followed job opportunities to Moscow. Work in oil and gas or Russian business provide a strong incentive to move to or remain in Russia.

Second, many shared an affinity for Russian culture or a desire to experience something different. People seemed to have amassed a sense of boredom with American culture and wanted to experiment with a society that many would describe as questioning and discarding some of the fundamental American cultural assumptions.

Related to a questioning of American culture, the most surprising and intriguing reason for moving to

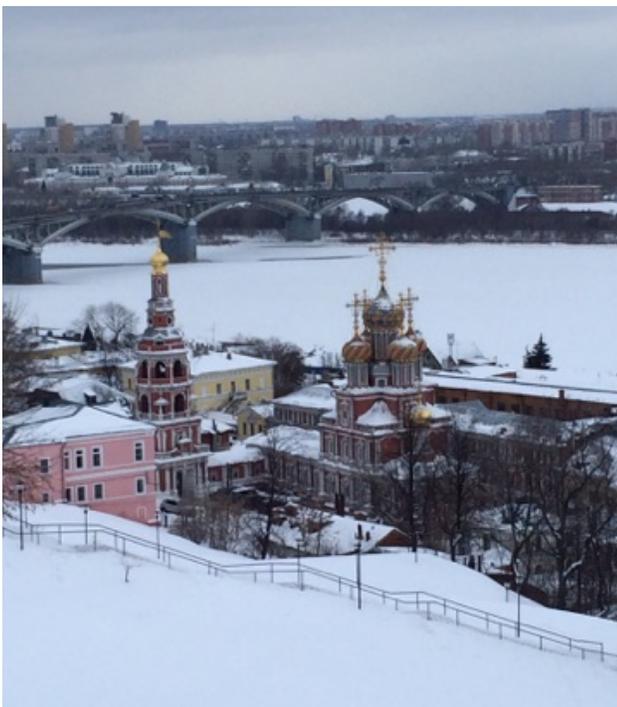


Russia came from American expats with Russian heritage. Recent political tensions seem to have created an identity crisis in those Americans with Russian historical and family identities. Faced with local news about the evils of Putin and Russia as a whole, culturally Russian Americans were forced to seriously question one of their identities, and expats in Russia had decided to question American society and return to Russia. Maintaining both identities proved too difficult amidst the current conflict.

Even those culturally Russian expats who continued to see themselves as American viewed Russia more favorably or the United States with more distrust than those living in the United States. Whereas Americans view Russia as aggressive, expansionist, a bully, this cohort viewed Russia as acting defensively. This cohort perceived the United States as the aggressor, while they acknowledged that hedging Russia in may not be a flawed American strategy in Eurasia.

The past century's antagonistic relationship has painted Russia, at least in the minds of Americans, as a place to question American ideals and views that we take for granted. For those either looking for an alternative out of interest or out of disenchantment with the American way of life, Russia provides a testing ground for new views. Whether spending a few weeks, a few months, or a few years in Russia, one cannot help but develop a healthy, by my accounts, skepticism. By recognizing that other viewpoints exist and then deeply engaging with those other viewpoints, those who have lived in Russia have gained a better perspective on the United States and its recent relationship with Russia.

It is important to note, however, that almost all of the expats planned to move out of Russia in the next few years. 



By Alex Schidlovsky '16

Visiting Russia

In January, 2015, Brian Astrachan and I visited Moscow and three other cities: Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, and St Petersburg. Although most of our time was spent in Moscow in order to conduct our research, we spent a few days in each of the other three cities.

Located at the confluence of two major rivers, Nizhny Novgorod was founded in 1221. The dominating feature of the city is the Kremlin, with its red-brick towers.



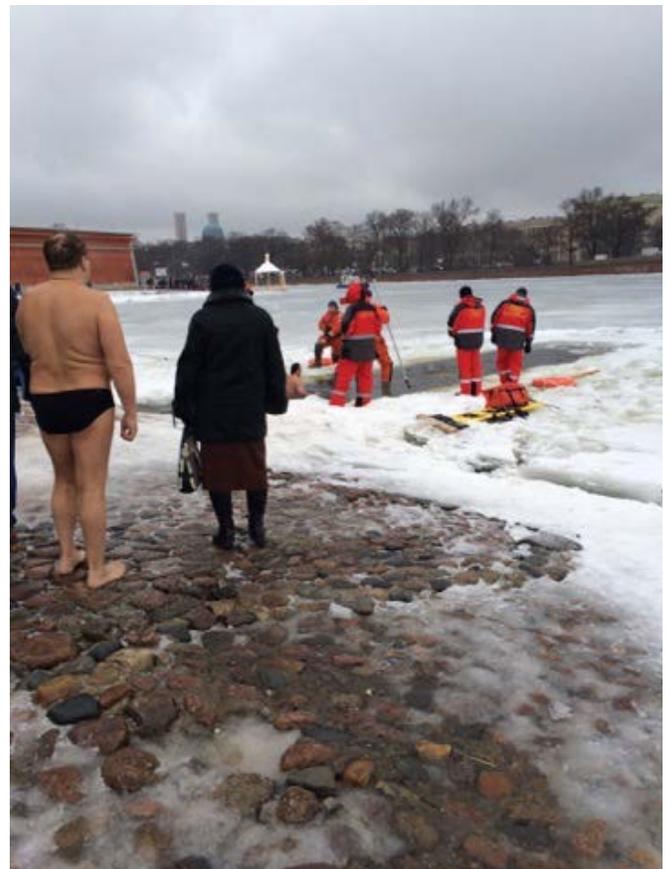
Although the city is the fifth largest by population in Russia, from the moment we stepped out of the train, it seemed rundown and under-financed with old buildings and dirty roads.

Kazan, on the other hand, was very clean and had been in the process of major renovations. Despite having a smaller population than Nizhny Novgorod, the

city is the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, and thus boasts a significantly higher percentage of Muslims than in the most of Russia. Due to this distinguishing demographic characteristic, its white-stoned Kremlin includes a large mosque, considered to be, at the time of its construction, one of the biggest in Europe outside Istanbul.

We left Kazan feeling that it would be worth revisiting in the summer, and we felt the same way about our last destination, Saint Petersburg. Built in the beginning of the eighteenth century, St Petersburg is the second largest city in Russia and home to many historical and tourist attractions. Despite the freezing temperatures, walking through the city allowed us to enjoy the scenery while walking through canals, parks and even witnessing an old Russian holiday, involving a festival with locals jumping into the ice cold river. Due to its location in the port of the Baltic Sea and history of being the capital of the country until the beginning of the twentieth century, the city was in great condition, with sound infrastructure as well as clean and modern buildings.

As a whole, the people in all of the cities were very helpful and were intrigued by us as foreigners. 



By Peter Hale '17

Exploring Dresden

With the much appreciated support of Robert G. Wilmers Jr. and the Wilmers family, I traveled to Dresden to take a month-long language course at Dresden's Goethe Institute and to learn more about the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, including what residual effects Reunification has left on its former citizens. I stayed with a host family in Loschwitz, a sleepy riverside town on the northeastern side of Dresden where boats float listfully along the Elbe and biergartens line the shore.

Families would pass through on their way to the massive Dresdner Heide, a forest on the edge of town. It was from here that I made my daily commute westward into the heart of Dresden, passing along the river as my tram made stops in Albertplatz and Neustadt. Weekdays were spent travelling to and from the Goethe Institute, picking up groceries on Mondays and Fridays, and running through the massive forests after class. I would listen to the nightly political radio show as I attempted to cook German cuisine. In many ways, my main experience in Dresden was that of a local, and as the weeks passed I gained a strong sense of what life was like for the average Loschwitz resident.



My Guatemalan classmate Fernando and I at the Buntes Republik Neustadt festival. In the 90's, Neustadt declared itself a micronation for a week, celebrating its independence from the East German state but also reacting against the encroachment of West Germany. Now however, the political side has died down and the BRN festival has become another excuse to party.

This meant that my weekends were spent taking in as much of the city as possible. I made visits to the Militärhistorisches Museum, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Dresden State Art



View of the Elbe with Loschwitz on the left bank

Collection), Dresden's redeveloped Altstadt, and the trendy Neustadt just across the river. I even had the chance to visit Leipzig and see the Stasi Museum and Nikolai Kirche. I met a variety of people from across Saxony and developed a much greater sense of the impact Reunification has had on German culture and the people of East Germany. My stay in Dresden certainly helped improve my German language skills while exposing me to East German history. Families would pass through on their way to the massive Dresdner Heide, a forest on the edge of town. It was from here that I made my daily commute westward into the heart of Dresden, passing along the river as my tram made stops in Albertplatz and Neustadt. Weekdays were spent travelling to and from the Goethe Institute, picking up groceries on Mondays and Fridays, and running through the massive forests after class. I would listen to the nightly political radio show as I attempted to cook German cuisine. In many ways, my main experience in Dresden was that of a local, and as the weeks passed I gained a strong sense of what life was like for the average Loschwitz resident.

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By Agnes Chang '16

Glimpses of Moscow

I have, by now, told many people how much I disliked my time in Moscow. But perhaps I have not given it the credit it deserves.

At first, the initial excitement of being in a brand new city in a foreign country sustained my imagination and my satisfaction. To the amusement of even the Russians who resided in and loved the city, I would profess my love for my new home. “Москва -- чудесная, чистая, зелёная,” I would gush at them. “Чистая? Зелёная? Правда?!” they would ask, incredulous. “Да,” I would insist.

I was earnest about my sentiments. I loved the towering Stalinist architecture of the university that I attended, МГУ, with its grand concrete walls that shot up and beyond our heads, pockmarked with tiny pockets that served as windows. I would gaze at the spire with awe, many mornings finding it shrouded in deep fog, decked out in a glitter of lights as the night approached. I loved the many wooded pathways that were--yes--green with the life it clung onto vestiges of summer. And beneath the streets existed another city--interconnected tubes that housed the famous Moscow metro, known for its beauty and efficiency.

I'm not too sure how it started, but as the initial excitement faded away and the strains that came with culture shock bore more and more heavily upon me, I stopped seeing my new home with the rose- or green-tinted lens of the first month. The incoming winter certainly did not help. I started eyeing the lengthening shadows stretching across buildings with wariness, the falling and dying leaves with sadness. I was tired of people not being able to tell *ходит* apart from *ходить*, and cashiers who made every shopping experience hellish. Even the charm of the metro could not stave off the crushing disillusionment that soon followed.

There are certainly precious memories Moscow holds in its streets. Long walks with friends from the choir I joined at my church. A lady who placed her hat on my head when she thought I looked too cold. Adventures, rambles, explorations across the city with program mates. Doner kebabs and cheap ice cream stands that seemed to dot all streets. The two women who walked me to my destination, 30 minutes away from where I asked for their help. The violin teacher who invited me to her house and made different soups. These little gems are innumerable, individual moments that sparkle within the wintry deposit of my memories. However, it was the very last day before I was to leave that saved Moscow from forever being remembered as that depressing city with the gray buildings and cold people.

After spending my spring semester in Yaroslavl, I returned to Moscow for the last time before I was to take a plane out of the country for good. My flight was at 6am. Determined to arrive at the airport by 2am, I left my hostel at 11pm. The metro station would close soon, so I hurried. Many people looked at me curiously, a girl traveling alone at night with two big suitcases and a violin slung over her back. The bus that was taking me to the аэроэкспресс that connected to the airport suddenly stopped and the driver told the passengers that the bus would no longer be running. A boy who didn't pay his fare runs past me and casts a sheepish glance at the driver. She lets him off. I approach the front to where she sits and start complaining, begging her if she couldn't take me the rest of the way. No, she says firmly, taking a cigarette between her lips and lighting it. Take the metro. At this point I am shaken, but I pay my fare, which I forgot to do at the beginning of the ride, and step off. I think the bus driver appreciated or is surprised by this gesture, for she comes out and starts giving me directions to the metro I should take. Then she grabs one of the men loitering nearby and orders him to take one of my suitcases. His face is red and I can smell the liquor in his breath, but the driver assures me that he will help me. And though he complains, he carries my bag down the stairs to the metro and once again repeats which lines I should take. I thank him, and he goes back.

I start my way down the long hallways of the metro alone, but only temporarily. A man comes to my side and takes one of my suitcases. I'll help you, he says. I relent, for my arms have become sore from my two heavy suitcases, but I am also terrified. What if he wants to take my suitcase? It's heavy, yeah, and he'll have a hard time running away with it, but what if he has friends? He sees my worry in the not-too-subtle glances I give, so he starts telling me about himself—though he immigrated to Russia, he is now a Russian citizen; that he's married and has kids. I am reassured, but don't relax until he has carried my suitcase all the way down the stairs—to the wrong station. Trust me, trust me, he says. This is the correct way. You're going to the airport, correct?

He leaves me at the platform after our farewells to wait for the next train. I see a woman and ask if I can indeed get to the airport through this line, and she gives the affirmative. My knees shake from the relief and tension that has been slowly building up throughout this trip. I think she notices how anxious I am. Seeing two men going along the same route as mine, she calls and orders them to carry my suitcases as far as they can. The woman and I grin at each other as they pick up my bags and start walking to the nearest exit. We exchange kisses, and I thank her before following them.

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(“Glimpses of Moscow” continued from previous page)

"Aren't you scared to be traveling alone at night," one of them asks. His name is Ruslan: swarthy, tall, wearing black sweatpants with white lines running down the sides. The other is Leonard, who wears a blue button-down shirt and jeans, is of smaller height and figure, with golden stubble for hair. "Not really," I say. "I realized that Moscow is not such a scary city as many

people think it is." They lead me to a taxi, and we part ways.

"Truly, a year is needed to get to know a country and its people. No, even a year is not enough. But within this period of time, I have fallen in love with it." Dated June 25, 2015. I write this down in my journal on my flight back home. Indeed, a single night was to provide for me another glimpse at a side of Moscow that had eluded me for an entire semester. 

By Brooks Rao '17

Segeln im Wind Sailing in the Wind

My most memorable experience this summer in Germany is an evening with my colleagues from the Federal Office of Statistics. Daniel, Bettina, Frau Fischer, and Frau Mischke had planned a bike tour through Berlin just for me. That was almost six months ago, but that evening left such an impression on me that even today, I still remember every detail.

We start at Checkpoint Charlie in *Stadtmitte*, the center of Berlin where we work. We swim through the streets like a school of fish as we race through traffic and mesh with masses of bicycle commuters, all forming a column on the side of the street. The midafternoon sun is high in the sky, and we chase it as it sets. We head first to the *Jüdisches Museum Berlin*. It is a stark, horizontally expansive grey building that captures your attention the moment you lay eyes on it. Policemen continue their patrols around the museum as we take some time to pay our respects and to reflect on the country's history and how far it has come.

Now once again we are swimming. After an entire day at the office, we somehow find ourselves once again yearning for coffee. We stop at a garden café, and encounter undeniable evidence of Germany's

technological ingenuity: the Solar Bike.

After an hour and a half, off we are again. This time we find ourselves at Berlin's old decommissioned airport. What used to be a hub



for international air travel is now a gigantic park. It is unbelievably beautiful. Imagine what I saw. Massive kites look like peregrine falcons as they float ephemerally in one moment and careen downward in the next. Underneath them you discover small figures and realize in that moment that they are sailing the winds on skateboards, racing down a runway where jets once roared. They are black shadows dancing in front of an aureoline hue as the sun spends its final moments on our side of the world. Only in Berlin, you think to yourself. Further we go. Always further. *Immer weiter*. Now we stop to eat at an Italian restaurant and chat past midnight, like old friends from years ago.

The point of describing this image to you is to imagine together how studying abroad in Germany can influence you on the most fundamental level. What I mean is if you want to be inspired and you want to enrich your perspective of the world, your study abroad in Germany will undoubtedly rise to the occasion. Germany is a land of fast progress and eager discovery. It has the most ambitious renewable energy initiative, known as the *Energiewende*, and it is a clear leader within the EU. With an aging population and shifting demographics, Germany is in the midst of great change. There has never been a better time to study in Germany. 



Алина Будникова

"Что мне снег, что мне зной, что мне дождик проливной, когда мои друзья со мной..." (особенно, если это русские друзья) или 5 причин дружить с русским

1. Ты только улыбайся...

"Ты слишком улыбчивая", - слышала я много раз от своих новых американских друзей. Почему же русские ассоциируются со злым и угрюмым выражением лица? Ответ прост. Потому что мы всегда настроже.

Для русского человека, выросшего в условиях холодной и суровой сибирской зимы, длящейся круглый год (осторожно стереотип), улыбка это не просто атрибут вежливости. Это отражение нашего душевного состояния и эмоций. Мы улыбаемся только тогда, когда нам действительно хорошо, и жизнь прекрасна. Постоянная улыбка на лице без причины - "признак дурачины", как сказали бы наши бабушки и дедушки. Таким образом, ранним утром или поздним вечером в заполненном московском метро улыбающийся человек определенно вызовет подозрения. 1. Кто может быть счастлив или доволен в таком месте в такое время, когда а) утро, все не выспались, а впереди долгий рабочий день; б) вечер, все устали, хотят домой, а поезд еле тащится? 2. Раз причины для счастья нет, этот человек определенно что-то замышляет (и вряд ли что-то хорошее). 3. Нужно его остерегаться.

Звучит довольно угрожающе, однако в этом есть свои плюсы. Знайте, если ваш русский друг вам улыбнулся, это значит он действительно рад вас видеть и будет счастлив провести вместе время.



2. Как дела?

Для любого русского, изучающего иностранный язык, одним из самых сложных моментов в коммуникации с носителем английского языка является вопрос "How are you?". "Что же в этом сложного?" - подумаете вы. И опять же ответ очень прост. В России приветствие включает в себя только одно слово - привет, или более вежливую форму - здравствуйте. Задавая вопрос "Как дела?", человек хочет услышать не просто банальное "Хорошо", но подробный и детальный отчет о том, как прошли ваши выходные, как поживает ваша собака, и что интересного произошло с вами

сегодня утром. Он действительно хочет знать, как у вас дела.

3. "Не в бровь, а в глаз" (русская поговорка)

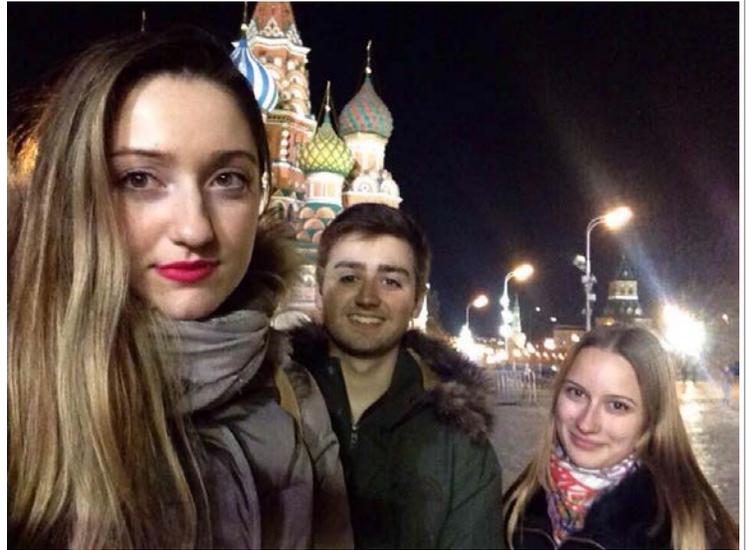
Когда я приехала в Америку, и мы всей нашей дружной командой учителей только начинали узнавать друг друга, все сказали, что я очень прямая. И они не ошиблись. Русские говорят, что думают, часто не пытаюсь подобрать слова или быть корректными. Это может звучать обидно или слишком резко, зато вы можете быть уверены, что всегда услышите только правду и настоящие мысли.

4. Все лучшее - гостю

Древняя русская традиция обязывает встречать всех дорогих гостей хлебом и солью. И каждый, кто был в России, знает о силе нашего хлебосольного гостеприимства. Если вас пригласили домой (или если вы просто решили заскочить на пару минут, чтобы сказать привет), будьте готовы. О вас будут заботиться, предложат всё самое лучшее, достанут все виды солений, всё, что есть в баре, минимум три смены блюд, чай и напоследок на столе волшебным образом появится свежеспеченный пирог.

5. Пройти огонь, воду и медные трубы

Русские друзья - самые верные. И если вы попали в круг нашего доверия, то можете быть уверены, что вы в нем навсегда. Мы будем бороться за своих друзей, переживать о вас, и прикладывать все свои усилия, чтобы вы были счастливы. А если вам когда-нибудь понадобится помощь, мы бросим все дела и приедем из любой точки планеты, чтобы быть рядом. Все за одного, и один за всех! 



We recently asked graduates of the Russian program to tell us where their Russian studies took them after Williams. We received many responses which we are going to post on our departmental website soon. In the meantime, here are two sample responses.

Scott Monroe '90:

What is your current occupation?

"I am a Supervisory Management Analyst with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. I am the HR director for the Office of Air and Radiation, an organization of 1,100 people who implement the Clean Air Act and run voluntary programs such as Energy Star. I am an HR generalist, which means that I work in pretty much every aspect of HR as well as in Equal Employment Opportunity and diversity. I have occupied this position since 2008. I have been an employee of USEPA since 1992. (This is typical; EPA employees tend to stay with the agency.)"

How were Russian Studies useful to you?

"Unquestionably useful. I had intended to seek employment with the U.S. State Department. My Russian degree led to a master's degree in international policy and Russian language, then to a Presidential Management Fellowship. Circumstances prevented me from landing a job with DOS, but I exercised a

connection with USEPA acquired during graduation school. Specifically, in 1991 when the USSR broke up I was working on an environmental research program. Information started coming out about the environmentally disastrous actions taken under the Soviet regime. Because I was able to read Russian, I was able to research the nuclear catastrophe that occurred mid-century near Chelyabinsk and publish one of the first English language articles on the subject. It was this work that helped me get a position with EPA's radiation division. A short assignment at DOS convinced me I did not want to work there, so I stayed with EPA and eventually abandoned the thought of an international career in favor of simply staying in public service. My move into HR was related to a mid-career interest in organization development.

On a personal level, studying Russian and traveling to Russia forced me to come to terms with my American-ness in a way that other foreign experiences did not. I'm struggling to articulate this point; suffice to say that I found Russia unique in being simultaneously proximate in terms of culture and absolutely foreign, whereas other countries I've been to have seemed to be one or the other. The paradox still sits with me, even though I haven't visited the country since 1993."

(continued on next page)

("Russian alumni" continued from previous page)

Please share your advice or recommendation about the Russian department at Williams.

"I highly recommend the Russian major. I viewed it as a my educational hub and built spokes around it in the political science and history departments. The Russian department is linguistic and literary in focus, which I think offers the student a point of access to the culture that complements what is offered by other departments. The literature is fascinating, the language is hugely rich, the poetry is magnificent -- Mayakovsky, Pushkin, Akhmatova. If I can offer any kind of object lesson, it's that one's options after graduation are not limited to a Ph.D. or the Foreign Service."

Elizabeth Andersen '87

What is your current occupation?

"I live in Washington DC, where I serve as the Director of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, the ABA's global development program, working in about 60 countries world-wide to support justice sector actors in their efforts to strengthen laws and legal institutions to promote access to justice, economic opportunity and human rights. My responsibilities include all aspects of oversight of this \$40 million program, including strategic planning, fundraising, and management of our 700 staff and volunteers working throughout the world."

How were Russian Studies useful to you?

"Absolutely useful! I have worked in international human rights advocacy and rule of law development for over 20 years, and my Russian language and Russian studies experience was critical to establishing me in the field. I started my career in this field working at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and while I did not directly use my Russian studies knowledge there, it helped demonstrate my interest in Eastern Europe and international affairs to get me in the door. Thereafter, I spent eight years at Human Rights Watch, in its Europe and Central Asia division, and then three years as Director of the ABA Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative, and in both roles, my Russian studies major was directly relevant and instrumental to my success in important ways."

Please share your advice or recommendation about the Russian department at Williams.

"My knowledge of the department is quite dated, but I would generally encourage students to take what interests them, and to try to spend time in the region, living, working and studying there, learning the culture and language in a hands-on way."

You can contact the above and more alumni with questions related to their fields of work and career paths. Their responses and contact information will be posted soon on the departmental website!

Photos from our delicious and fun 2015 Russian Potluck Dinner:

