

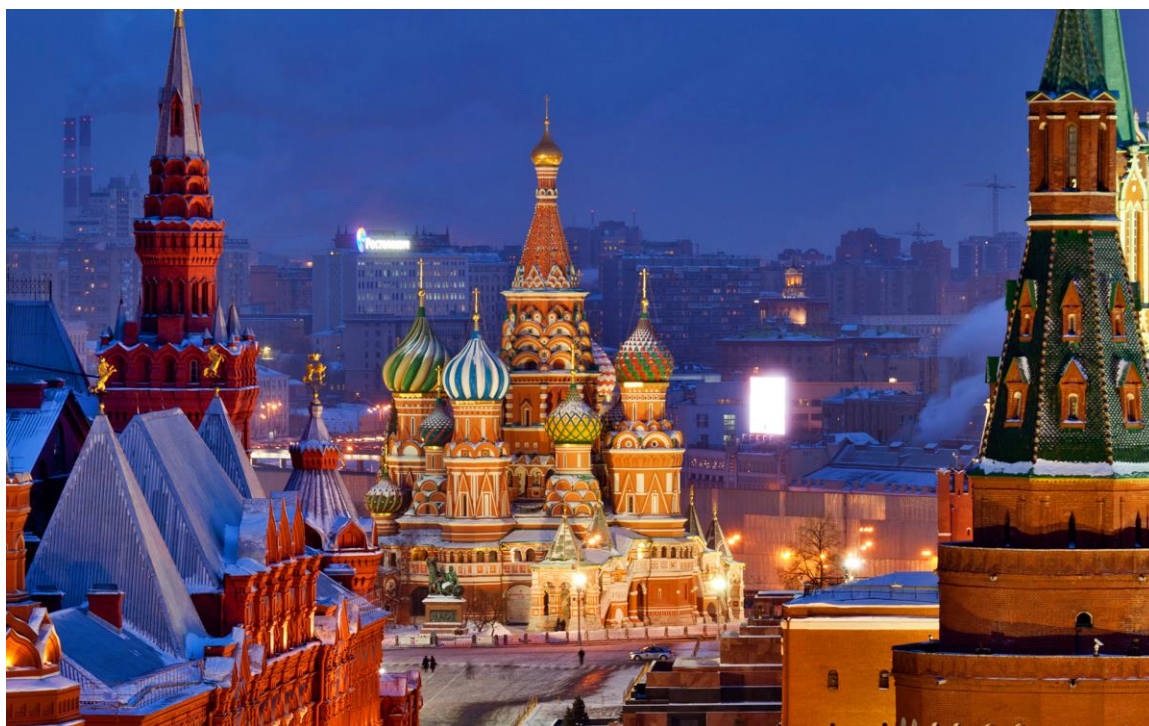
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# ***Russian Culture: Past and Present***

## ***Summer 2019***

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**Moscow & St. Petersburg, Russia**



## **Study Abroad Program Guide**

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## **DESTINATION: RUSSIA**

### **MOSCOW**

**Moscow** (Russian: Москва́, tr. *Moskva*) is the capital and the largest city of Russia, with 12.2 million residents within the city limits and 16.8 million within the urban area. Moscow has the status of a federal city in Russia.

Moscow is a major political, economic, cultural, and scientific center of Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as the largest city entirely on the European continent. By broader definitions Moscow is among the world's largest cities. Moscow has been ranked as the ninth most expensive city in the world by Mercer and has one of the world's largest urban economies. Moscow is the northernmost and coldest megacity and metropolis on Earth. It is home to the Ostankino Tower, the tallest free standing structure in Europe; the Federation Tower, the tallest skyscraper in Europe; and the Moscow International Business Center. Moscow is situated on the Moskva River in the Central Federal District of European Russia, making it the world's most populated inland city. The city is well known for its architecture, particularly its historic buildings such as Saint Basil's Cathedral with its brightly colored domes. With over 40 percent of its territory covered by greenery, it is one of the greenest capitals and major cities in Europe and the world, having the largest forest in an urban area within its borders - more than any other major city - even before its expansion in 2012.

The city has served as the capital of a progression of states, from the medieval Grand Duchy of Moscow and the subsequent Tsardom of Russia to the Soviet Union and the contemporary Russian Federation. Moscow is considered the center of Russian culture, having served as the home of Russian artists, scientists and sports figures and because of the presence of museums, academic and political institutions and theaters.

Moscow is the seat of power of the Government of Russia, being the site of the Moscow Kremlin, a medieval city-fortress that is today the residence of the Russian president. The Moscow Kremlin and Red Square are also one of several World Heritage Sites in the city. Both chambers of the Russian parliament (the State Duma and the Federation Council) also sit in the city.

Moscow has acquired a number of epithets, most referring to its size and preeminent status within the nation: The Third Rome (Третий Рим), The Whitestone One (Белокаменная), The First Throne (Первопрестольная), The Forty Forties (Сорок Сороков), and The Hero City (город-герой). In old Russian the word "Сорок" (*forty*) also meant a church administrative district, which consisted of about forty churches. The demonym for a Moscow resident is "москвич" (*moskvich*), rendered in English as *Muscovite*.

### ***Climate***

The average maximum temperature in May is 20 °C (60.8 °F). Average rainy days in May is 10.

### ***Local transportation***

Moscow has an extensive city-funded network of public transport (buses, trams, trolleybuses), but the most impressive is a subway or metro. The Moscow Metro, a metro system famous for its art, murals, mosaics, and ornate chandeliers, first opened in 1935, and the system had two lines. Today, the Moscow Metro comprises twelve lines, mostly underground with a total of 199 stations. The Metro is one of the deepest

subway systems in the world; for instance the Park Pobedy station, completed in 2003, at 84 metres (276 ft) underground, has the longest escalators in Europe. The Moscow Metro is one of the world's busiest metro systems, serving about ten million passengers daily. (300,000,000 people every month). Facing serious transportation problems, Moscow has plans for expanding its Metro.

## ST. PETERSBURG

**Saint Petersburg** (Russian: Санкт-Петербу́рг, tr. *Sankt-Peterburg*) is the second largest city in Russia. It is politically incorporated as a federal subject (a federal city). It is located on the Neva River at the head of the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic Sea. In 1914 the name of the city was changed from Saint Petersburg to **Petrograd** (Russian: Петрогра́д), in 1924 to **Leningrad** (Russian: Ленингра́д), and in 1991, back to Saint Petersburg. In Russian literature, informal documents, and discourse, the word "Saint" is usually omitted, leaving "Petersburg". In casual conversation Russians may drop the "burg" as well, referring to it as "Peter": Russian: Питер (*Piter*).

Tsar Peter the Great founded Saint Petersburg on May 27 1703. Between 1713-1728 and 1732-1918 Saint Petersburg functioned as the imperial capital of Russia. In 1918 the central government bodies moved from Saint Petersburg (then named Petrograd) to Moscow. It is Russia's second-largest city after Moscow, with 5 million inhabitants (2012), and the fourth most populated federal subject. Saint Petersburg is a major European cultural center, and also an important Russian port on the Baltic Sea.

Saint Petersburg is often described as the most Westernized city of Russia, as well as its cultural capital. The Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments constitute a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Saint Petersburg is home to The Hermitage, one of the largest art museums in the world. A large number of foreign consulates, international corporations, banks, and businesses have offices in Saint Petersburg.

Peter the Great was interested in seafaring and maritime affairs, and he intended to have Russia gain a seaport in order to be able to trade with other maritime nations. He needed a better seaport than Arkhangelsk, which was on the White Sea to the north and closed to shipping for months during the winter.

The city was built by conscripted peasants from all over Russia; a number of Swedish prisoners of war were also involved in some years under the supervision of Alexander Menshikov. Tens of thousands of serfs died building the city. Later, the city became the centre of the Saint Petersburg Governorate. Peter moved the capital from Moscow to Saint Petersburg in 1712, 9 years before the Treaty of Nystad of 1721 ended the war; he referred to Saint Petersburg as the capital (or seat of government) as early as 1704.

The style of Petrine Baroque, developed by Trezzini and other architects and exemplified by such buildings as the Menshikov Palace, Kunstkamera, Peter and Paul Cathedral, Twelve Collegia, became prominent in the city architecture of the early 18th century. In 1724 the Academy of Sciences, University and Academic Gymnasium were established in Saint Petersburg by Peter the Great.

In 1725, Peter died at the age of fifty-two. His endeavours to modernize Russia had met with opposition from the Russian nobility-resulting in several attempts on his life and a treason case involving his son.<sup>[21]</sup> In 1728, Peter II of Russia moved his seat back to Moscow. But four years later, in 1732, under Empress Anna of Russia, Saint Petersburg was again designated as the capital of the Russian Empire. It remained the seat of the Romanov dynasty and the Imperial Court of the Russian Tsars, as well as the seat of the Russian government, for another 186 years until the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

### ***Climate***

Distinct moderating influence of the Baltic Sea cyclones result in warm, humid and short summers and long, moderately cold wet winters. Climate of Saint Petersburg is close to the climate of Helsinki, although colder in winter and warmer in summer because of more eastern location.

The average maximum temperature in May is 16 °C (60.8 °F). Average rainy days in May is 16.

### **Local transportation**

Saint Petersburg has an extensive city-funded network of public transport (buses, trams, trolleybuses) and several hundred routes served by *marshrutkas*. Trams in Saint Petersburg used to be the main mean of transport; in the 1980s this was the largest tram network in the world, but many tracks were dismantled in the 2000s.

Buses carry up to three million passengers daily, serving over 250 urban and a number of suburban bus routes. Saint Petersburg Metro underground rapid transit system was opened in 1955; it now has 5 lines with 67 stations, connecting all five railway terminals, and carrying 2.3 million passengers daily. Metro stations are often elaborately decorated with materials such as marble and bronze.

## **FOOD**

You may have already heard of **pirozhki**. These little pastries can be packed full of potatoes, meat, cabbage, or cheese.

Caviar, or **ikra** is really something to get worked up about in Russia. Briny and sharp, it is often served on dark, crusty bread or with **blini**, which are like pancakes or crepes. Caviar on buttered bread is a popular zakuska.

**Blini** are also served rolled with a variety of fillings: jam, cheese, onions, or even chocolate syrup. At any restaurant where you aren't sure of any of the other dishes, **blini** are always a safe bet. **Blini** are such an important part of Russian cuisine, a festival called Maslenitsa celebrates the beginning of spring with them.

Russian kebabs are called **shashlyk**. Like any kebab, they can be a combination of meat and vegetables.



**Pelmeni** are pastry dumplings filled typically with meatballs. They can be served alone, slathered in butter and topped with sour cream, or in a soup broth. Definitely a favorite in Russia and abroad!

You can expect to find sour cream, or **smetana**, accompanying almost any Russian traditional food-with crepes, in soups, and even sometimes in dessert. Often, this sour cream is fresh and often melts into any warm dish, adding to its distinctive flavor.

Moscow and St. Petersburg are rich with restaurants, cafes and dining establishments which present cuisine of the World: Central Asian, Caucasian, West European, Chinese, Japanese to please any palate.

## **ALCOHOL**

**All participants in the program will be of legal age to drink while in Russia. It is absolutely mandatory that every participant behave responsibly in choices involving alcohol due to its cheapness, as an abuse of alcohol is dangerous not only to the individual but to the other participants as well. Alcohol abuse is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, at the discretion of the program director.**

## USEFUL WEBSITES (IN ENGLISH)

- <http://www.moscow.info/>
- <http://www.saint-petersburg.com/>

## THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Professor Valentina Sanders will lead the program. She graduated from Moscow University and teaches Russian Language and Culture at UB.

Professor Sanders may be reached at [ysanders@buffalo.edu](mailto:ysanders@buffalo.edu).

## PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

Mr. Anton Buynovskiy is currently a third-year undergrad at the University at Buffalo studying Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. He was born in Kiev, Ukraine and moved to the United States when he was 3 years old. He speaks Russian at home and has been taking Russian courses with Professor Sanders for three years. He participated in the summer program to Russia in 2017.

Anton can be contacted at [antonbuy@buffalo.edu](mailto:antonbuy@buffalo.edu).

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

This is a three-credit program. Each day, Professor Sanders and Anton Buynovskiy will conduct 3 hour lectures and guide tours around the cities. Students will learn about Russian culture and history by visiting the very places where the historical events happened. There will be opportunities for students to practice Russian language.

### Pre-Travel Assignments:

Before the start of the program, students will be required to read the following textbook and watch the following films in order to establish a general knowledge about Russian Culture.

### Reading

The textbook for the course will be

- Land of the Firebird, Susan Massey – Background on Russian culture and history.

### Films:

- “Russian Ark” by Alexander Sokurov –Brings the paintings of the Hermitage to life. Available on Netflix and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sE2jRxToAjQ>)
- “Burnt by the Sun” – Russian film that depicts the period of Stalin’s Rule (available on YouTube as well)
- “The Cranes are Flying” – a classic Russian film that portrays life in Russia during the Second World War
- “Andrey Rublev” – Russian film that tells the story of Rublev, one of the greatest icon painters. Students will see Rublev’s paintings in Moscow. (Used copies available on Amazon for \$3.00)

## TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

On a typical day participants will meet in the morning for breakfast to discuss the plan for the day. Lectures are conducted during daytime while visiting different sites.

## TENTATIVE CALENDAR

(Dates subject to change)

- May 21: Students board flights and leave for Moscow
- May 22: Students arrive in Moscow. Instructors meet students at airport and take students to hostel
- May 23: Walking tour of downtown Moscow. Tour of Kremlin, Red Square, Lubyanka, Lenin's Mausoleum (History, Culture, Politics)
- May 24: Subway tour, lunch, walking tour (Arbat and other locations not visited the previous day) On May 24, many people in Orthodox countries mark the Day of the Slavonic Alphabet and Culture. The holiday was established in commemoration of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the enlighteners of the Eastern Christian world who in the 9th century created the Slavic (Cyrillic) alphabet.
- May 25: AM: Tretyakov Gallery (Russian culture and paintings), PM: Gulag Museum (Russian History). Evening: Russian dancing and music at Izmailovo Park
- May 26: Buy Souvenirs at Izmailovo. Gorky Park (go to modern art museums: Garage and Dom Khudozhnikov) meal at a Georgian Restaurant, tour of Moscow State University and city overlook
- May 27: Kolomenskoye (Russian churches and houses), Donskoy Monastery (History of Russian Orthodox Church), Tsaritsino (palace and museum)
- May 28: Trip to the major Mosque (Muslim influence in Russia), Russian largest book market, afternoon:
- May 29: Novodevichy cemetery (graves of important Russian politicians, leaders, cultural figures), VDNKh (exhibits of the former republics), Russian Space Museum
- May 30 : TBA (will determine based on interests of students)
- May 31: AM Sapsan Train to St. Petersburg, check into hostel, tour of main street
- June 1: Downtown tour (Peter and Paul Fortress, famous churches, etc.). Visit the University.
- June 2: Trip to Hermitage (students to rent English audio guide, Piskarevskoye Cemetery, lecture on WW2 and the siege of LENINGRAD)
- June 3: Saint Isaac's Cathedral
- June 4: Petergoff Palace, boat tour
- June 5: Catherine's Palace
- June 6 : Free Day
- June 7: Fly home

**Students who want to go to the Bolshoi (Moscow) or Mariinsky (St. Petersburg) theaters should buy tickets online as soon as possible.**

## VISA

Students will be required to obtain a Tourist Visa to enter Russia and participate on this program. UB Study Abroad Programs will provide students with visa instructions to assist them with this process. Students are ultimately responsible for obtaining the required visa for their participation on this program.



## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE INFORMATION

**Arrivals:** All students are required to arrive in Moscow on Tuesday, May 22.

Students will fly back to the US from St. Petersburg. Students are responsible for purchasing their own airline tickets. When booking your flight, please note that many overseas flights are overnight, i.e. leaving the US late in the evening and arriving early morning the next day. Please make sure to check the departure date, i.e. leaving the US, and compare it to the date of arrival in Moscow. You must arrive in Moscow on Tuesday, May 22. So you will need to depart the US on Monday, May 21. The students will be met at the Sheremetyevo (SVO) airport by the Program Director and Program Assistant.

<b>Recommended flights:</b>
<b>Flight 1: JFK to Moscow SVO (Sheremetyevo) Aeroflot Flight 103</b> Depart JFK Airport at 7:20pm May 21 <sup>st</sup> → Arrive Moscow 11:45am May 22 <sup>nd</sup> SVO (nonstop)
<b>Flight 2: St. Petersburg (LED) to Moscow (SVO) Aeroflot Flight 11</b> June 7 <sup>th</sup> Depart St. Petersburg (LED) Airport at 10:40am → Connecting flight to Moscow (SVO) 12:00pm Moscow (SVO) to JFK 2:15pm SVO → 5:30pm JFK Aeroflot Flight 102

Once you have booked your flight, please complete the Flight Information section of the UB Study Abroad online application and upload an electronic copy of your detailed itinerary. This information will be shared with the Program Director and Program Assistant to notify them of your arrival. If you do not plan on taking these flights as suggested, please notify the Office of Study Abroad Programs and the Program Director.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Students and the Program Assistant, will stay at the [Vagabond Hostel](#) in Moscow. It is a very clean and safe hostel in downtown Moscow in the center of the city. Breakfast is included and there is a full kitchen. The common area will be used for socializing.

Students and the Program Assistant, will stay at the [Baby Lemonade Hostel](#). Rooms will be assigned upon arrival. Breakfast is included and common areas will be used for socializing.

## ADVICE ON MONEY, COMPUTERS, AND PHONES

### *Money*

Students are recommended to either bring US cash to exchange or use ATMS. Professor Sanders and the Program Assistant know where to exchange US dollars in Moscow. The exchange rate is usually quite fair. In order to exchange foreign currency, the currency **MUST BE NEW AND IN PRISTINE CONDITION**. Also, many exchange stations do not accept US bills less than \$100.

The easiest way to access funds is through ATM machines. We strongly advise that you only use ATMs located in safe areas, such as banks or hotels. ATMS located in the metro are not advised as they could be tampered with. The flat-rate charges are small, and exchange rates are normally reasonable. Debit cards with a Visa or MasterCard symbol will come in the most handy. Your bank will automatically convert the local charges into dollars on your statement, and you normally get the best exchange rate compared to exchanging cash. However, many banks and credit card companies have begun charging international service fees for purchases made in a foreign currency. Check with your bank or credit card company to see what they charge and, if necessary, check with other companies for better rates. Prior to travel, you **must** alert your bank of your travel days and locations to avoid ATM, debit or credit card refusal. Also, before leaving the US, determine if your bank has a European partner, as you'll get the best rates using that partner bank.

You will need some cash for small, daily expenses. The easiest way to obtain this is using an ATM. You will get the bank's exchange rate however it is likely that your bank will charge you a withdrawal fee for using a different bank's ATM. Be sure to check this withdrawal fee and daily withdrawal limits with your bank before departure! These fees add up quickly so it is advisable to withdraw larger amounts less frequently (and store excess cash in a safe place to avoid walking around with a large amount of money).

## **Computers**

You may decide to bring your own computer, though you are advised not to travel with expensive and valuable items in case they are lost or stolen. There will be free WIFI at all accommodations.

## **Phones**

Due to different technical standards, many US cell phones will not work outside of the US (in fact, they don't even work on other US networks). The mobile communications market has developed rapidly in Russia in the last few years, with 4G technology, better coverage, and increasingly low call costs among the improvements.

If students would like to purchase a Russian SIM card to communicate within Russia, Professor Sanders will offer the opportunity upon arrival. To buy a SIM-card, you will need to go to a mobile phone shop with your passport. Nearly all plans in Russia are pre-paid, and there's a large but easily comprehensible range of choices depending on what you plan to do. SIM-cards are affordable. Be aware that Russian networks operate by region, so the rates advertised will only apply if you are using your phone in St. Petersburg. As soon as you leave the city, you will have to pay higher roaming rates to use your phone.

To top up the credit on your phone, you can either visit a mobile phone store (the advantage being that there will be no commission), or use one of the automatic pay-points located in nearly all grocery stores, metro stations, etc. These machines are very simple to use, and commission is usually around 8%.

There are other options:

- Contact your US provider and find out what they offer for international service; if you're happy with it, no problem! Note that this is probably the most expensive option, and, you won't have a local number in Russia.
- Use an internet-based service such as Skype, Whatsapp or TextPlus, which enables you to call and/or text whenever you are online (but not at other times). You won't be reachable unless you are online, but can pay extra to set up a voicemail box if you wish.
- Use phone cards and local phone booths. You can often call the US for a very cheap rate. The drawback is that you must use a phone booth (but these are easy to find throughout any city), and of course, you generally can't receive calls.

## **SUGGESTED PACKING LIST**

### **Guiding Principles:**

- 1) **PACK LIGHT.** You will be carrying your luggage through train stations, metros and cities. Be prepared for a lack of escalators, moving walkways, etc. while traveling in Russia.
- 2) Pack what you can carry – traveling light is better than struggling with a lot of luggage.
- 3) You do not need your entire wardrobe – pack clothes you will wear multiple times.
- 4) Shopping is good and plentiful if you decide that you need something else.

### **Additional Observations:**

- 5) The weather in Russia could be cool and rainy, so bring a small umbrella.
- 6) Be prepared for a lot of walking and bring clothes and shoes appropriate for this.
- 7) For international flights, you are typically limited to a maximum of two suitcases (with



possible luggage charges) plus a carry-on bag. Try to fit everything you need into a single suitcase and bring a small bag as a carry-on to use for excursions (a regular backpack is ideal).

**Suggested Clothing List:**

- a) 3-4 pairs of long pants (khaki slacks and jeans) or casual skirts
- b) 4-5 shirts - mostly short-sleeved casual shirts and 1 long-sleeved shirt for dressier/cooler use
- c) 1-2 sweaters, nice but functional for everyday use if cool
- d) Functional rain/wind jacket - should be light and fold very small
- e) 2-3 pairs of shoes - running shoes and 1-2 pairs of casual shoes that are good for walking.

**Other Gear:**

- a) Toiletries (may be purchased in Russia)
- b) Small, secure organizer to hold passport, etc.
- c) Small folding umbrella
- d) Sunglasses
- e) Contact info for friends and family
- f) Tourist guidebook – good guides include Lonely Planet and Eyewitness Guides (DK Press)
- g) School supplies: pens, notebook(s), textbook, etc.
- h) Laptop – optional
- i) An adapter for Russian electrical outlets.

Towels and Bed sheets are provided by the hostels.

**Electrical Equipment**

The European standard is 220V compared to 110V in the US, and the electrical plug shape in Russia is different from that in the US. Therefore, there are two distinct possible problems: (1) US cords cannot be plugged into the wall outlet without a plug adaptor, and (2) even with a plug adaptor, some appliances cannot be used without a voltage converter.

Plug adaptors are cheap, light, and small; voltage converters are expensive, heavy, and large.

Most *electronic* devices like laptops, phones, MP3 players, camera battery chargers, etc, have a built-in voltage converter. Look for information printed directly on the plug itself, or, check your owner's manual. Typically, such devices will accept 100-240 volts and 50-60 cycles; this will usually be printed somewhere on the cord. These will work fine in Russia, but you will need a plug adaptor to make the plug fit into the wall. Plug adaptors are usually cheap, weigh almost nothing, and are about the size of a plug itself.

Most *electric* devices like hairdryers, irons, etc., do NOT have built-in voltage converters. These will require a separate voltage converter, which is generally heavy and expensive enough to seriously consider alternatives such as living without the device while in Russia, or buying a cheap one after arrival. If you do decide to bring a voltage converter and your electric device itself, be sure to match the maximum power output (Watts) of the converter to your device. A hairdryer may take 1500 or more Watts, so you must use a voltage converter with that much capacity, or it won't work.

For convenience, you could simply purchase small appliances as needed once you arrive (alarm clock, hairdryer, etc.) or adopt a simple lifestyle and do without these items while in Russia.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

**1. Program Director:**

Professor Valentina Sanders  
[vsanders@buffalo.edu](mailto:vsanders@buffalo.edu)

**2. Program Assistant:**

Anton Buynovskiy  
[antonbuy@buffalo.edu](mailto:antonbuy@buffalo.edu)

**3. U.S. Embassy in Moscow (hours 9am-6pm):**

Bolshoy Devyatinskiy Pereulok 8  
Moscow 121099, Russian Federation  
Google map: <http://goo.gl/maps/UT8qj>  
Tel: +7 (495) 728-5000, fax: 728-5090  
Moscow is 8 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST) and 7 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

**4. U.S. Consulate General in St. Petersburg:**

Ulitsa Furshtadskaya, 15, St. Petersburg 191028  
Russia — PSC 78, Box L, APO AE 09723  
Tel: +7 (812) 326-2560, fax: 326-2561  
Tel (secondary): +7 (921) 907-1677  
Saint Petersburg is 8 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST) and 7 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). )  
After hours emergencies: 331-2888  
Site: <http://stpetersburg.usconsulate.gov/>

**5. Police / Emergency (in Russia): Dial 112**

**6. Office of Study Abroad Programs:**

Mary Odrzywolski  
Director, Office of Study Abroad Programs  
University at Buffalo  
201 Talbert Hall  
Buffalo, New York 14260

Office Phone: +1 716 645-3912 (business hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm)  
Emergency Phone: +1 716 645-2222 (UB Police – 24 hours)  
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E-mail: [maryodrz@buffalo.edu](mailto:maryodrz@buffalo.edu); [studyabroad@buffalo.edu](mailto:studyabroad@buffalo.edu)