

General Education Curriculum (GEC)

Request for Course Approval Summary Sheet

Attachment

Relevance of Uzbek 101, 102, 103, and 104 to Category 7: Foreign Language in the GEC

Knowledge of the Uzbek language is key to properly understanding the entire Central Asian region. Uzbek is the dominant native language of the region (over 25 million speakers), the official language of the most populous and powerful Central Asian country (Uzbekistan), and the language of compact diasporas in the Russian Federation, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

This course will familiarize students with the sounds system, alphabet and the basic structure and practical use of the Uzbek language. Throughout the course, practice of all four language skills – listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing will be stressed extensively. At the end of the quarter, students should be able to listen to simple conversations, read and understand short texts, engage in brief conversations on simple everyday topics, and write short simple essays on familiar topics using the structures and vocabulary introduced in class.

With respect to the GEC Foreign Language category, instruction in the Uzbek language will not only give students vital language skills available only to a handful of universities in the world, it will also help them to understand and communicate across ethnic, cultural, ideological, and national boundaries. Cultural mores and differences will be closely intertwined in the instruction of Uzbek 101-104, which will give students a better understanding of Uzbek geography, history, literature, and customs.

Key to a Region

Being a Turkic language, Uzbek is related to most of the other Central Asian languages (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Qaraqalpaq, Turkmen, Uyghur, etc.) and would serve as a suitable foundation for scholars planning to work in all of these areas. Uzbek is particularly close to Uyghur, the native language of 8-10 million people in China (some suggest that the two are merely dialects of each other).

From an academic point of view, the field of Central Asian studies is in dire need of research based on vernacular language skills. Due to the inaccessibility of language instruction, scholars from all over the world have not been able to develop the tools necessary to learn more about the Central Asian region.

Global Significance, Interdisciplinary Interest

Why is Central Asian studies important to the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences? Central Asia is a region whose importance has grown immensely in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 world.

- It holds hydrocarbons that are potentially the world's largest underdeveloped reserve, of interest to energy specialists.
- It has undergone rapid post-socialist democratic reforms and economic liberalization, of interest to political scientists and economists.
- It is one site of struggle in the Bush Administration's global "war on terror", of interest to security specialists.
- It has witnessed a surge of Islamic activity, of interest to scholars of religion and social movements.
- It harbors rich but understudied literary and artistic traditions, of interest to a wide range of scholars in the humanities.
- It is located at the nexus between Russia, China, the Middle East, and South Asia, and is of

concern to specialists of all those regions.

Undergraduate and graduate students in all of the departments named above, and especially in International Studies, would form the core audience for the proposed Uzbek language courses. Uzbek would draw from a wide audience, attracting the attention of former Soviet specialists.

The Potential of Central Asian Studies at The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University is at this very moment poised to evolve into a serious player in Central Asian Studies on the *global* academic stage. We already have faculty in History, Political Science, Art History, and NELC with a Central Asian interest or actual focus. History has hired a Central Asian specialist who will begin teaching courses in Fall 2007. In addition, Central Asia continues to grow in importance for the Professional schools, especially the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

The following represent the core faculty in Central Asian Studies:

Morgan Liu, Central Asian History and Anthropology, NELC

Nicholas Breyfogle, Ph.D., Pennsylvania. Imperial Russian history on the Periphery. HISTORY

Stephen Dale, Ph.D., UC Berkeley. Middle East history, Central Asia. HISTORY

Jennifer Siegel, Ph.D., Yale. Modern European diplomatic history, the Great Game in Central Asia. DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

John Huntington, HISTORY OF ART

Kamoludin Abdullaev, Visiting Lecturer. Central Asian Politics, Chechen War. UISP

Alam Payind, Lecturer Ph.D., Indiana. Middle East, Central Asia, and Soviet Central Asia. UISP

In addition, area studies centers are actively promoting Central Asia: the Center for Slavic and East European Studies, the Center for East Asian Studies, and the Middle East Studies Center. Strengths in departments relevant to quality research on Central Asia throughout the College of Arts and Sciences (not only the language and humanities departments, but the social sciences) are also crucial to the mix.

Once OSU gets "on the map" of Central Asian studies, it can attract quality graduate students, who will need to study Uzbek. These students will have the opportunity to study in the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and the Center for Slavic and East European Studies. Uzbek will be a vital part of their academic life at OSU.

Conclusion

OSU is now positioned to add Central Asian studies into its portfolio of academic strengths. If OSU were to become known for its Central Asian studies, it could contribute valuable knowledge about this increasingly important region of the world. Language instruction in Uzbek is crucial to the realization of this goal.