STARTALK Institute at the Davis School of Russian, Middlebury College, Summer 2019: Proficiency-Based Pedagogy for Russian

Online Session: June 24 – July 3
Residential Session on Campus: July 7 – 21

Frequently Asked Questions

Application
When is the application due?
The application (submitted via Google forms) is due on 5:00 PM EST on April 1, 2019.

When will I hear back?
You will receive a confirmation upon submission. Acceptance results will be announced via email by May 1, 2019.

Can I apply if I am not a US citizen or permanent resident?
Yes. The program is open to anyone currently teaching or planning to teach Russian in the United States. Please, note that we will not be able to sponsor a visa for you to participate in the STARTALK program. Given the time constraints, students who are not citizens or permanent residents must already be in the US in a visa status that permits study at Middlebury. If you have questions about whether your visa status permits study at Middlebury, please contact our office of International Student and Scholar Services at isss@middlebury.edu.

Cost and Financial Support
Funded by the National Security Agency, the program is free for all participants. Tuition, course materials, campus housing, and three daily meals are covered by the grant. All participants will be offered reimbursement for transportation for up to $300. Participants may be asked to submit information and/or documentation for tax reporting purposes, since certain expenses covered by the grant count as scholarship funding for IRS purposes. Participants who are not citizens or permanent residents will be required to
register in the Foreign National Information System (FNIS) to receive reimbursement of travel expenses. No exceptions can be made.

Room and Board
Will housing be provided?
Yes. All participants will stay in dorm rooms on the Middlebury College campus among Russian School students and instructors. While we will try to accommodate as many as possible into single rooms, we cannot promise this prior to arrival at Middlebury. If you have any special needs, please contact us ahead of time.

Can we find our own housing if we want?
It is strongly recommended that everyone stay in the dormitories, as 24/7 Russian communication is an essential part of the full language immersion experience.

Will meals be provided?
Yes. Three meals a day will be provided to all participants in a Middlebury College dining hall. Special diet meals are readily available, including vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free, low sodium meals, etc. There are also several restaurants and cafés in town, however these expenses are not included in funding.

Academics
What is the online session of the program?
All participants are required to take part in a 10-day online session on SLA, which will run from June 24 to July 3, 2019. The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to the theory of language acquisition and principles of proficiency-based pedagogy; the on-campus session will be dedicated to applying this theoretical knowledge to classroom teaching and material development. The daily schedule of the webinars will be announced by email. These webinars are not lecture-based; rather, they are interactive sessions in which participants ask questions, react to instructor’s prompts, and work in small groups in real time. Participants will be assigned daily readings (1-2 chapters or articles on the day’s material, should not take more than two hours) and will be required to post reflections online by 7:00 pm that day. The heaviest reading of the Institute will be done during the online session; however, the reading list will be made available in early June and participants are highly encouraged to complete the reading assignments in advance.

Am I expected to participate in both the online and the on-campus sessions?
Yes. Please note that no exceptions can be made. All participants are required to participate in the SLA online module and in the onsite part of the program.
What are the key dates of the on-site program?
Participants must be on Middlebury campus by 5:00 PM on Sunday, July 7. Required teaching exercises and other class activities will be scheduled on the weekend of July 13-14 and Saturday, July 20. You will deliver a short lesson to a group of volunteer Middlebury students who are not available for this during the work week, as they have their own classes to attend. The Institute will end after lunch on Sunday, July 21. Participants have the option of staying over Sunday night and departing on Monday.

Will I receive credit for participating in the STARTALK Institute?
Yes. Participants will be registered in the course RUSS 6001, a non-degree Russian graduate course valued at one course unit of credit. One Middlebury course unit is typically treated as the equivalent of 3 credits (semester hours) when transferred.

Logistics
How do we get to Middlebury?
All participants will be offered reimbursement for transportation for up to $300. Documentation and original receipts must be saved and provided for reimbursement to occur. Burlington International (BTV) is the closest airport. Visit Middlebury’s transportation options page. Shuttle services such as Middlebury Transit (not affiliated with the College) and taxi companies such as Route 2 Cab and New England Taxi provide transportation from the airport and train and bus stations. You may also be able to use an online service such as Uber or Lyft. Rental cars are available at the airport. Amtrak provides train service to Essex Jct., Rutland, and Castleton, Vermont, as well as
Port Henry, New York (note that these are on two separate lines, the Vermonter and the Adirondack). If you are driving to Middlebury, you can find directions [here](#).

**When should I arrive and leave?**
We ask that you arrive on Sunday, July 7; you should plan to leave after lunch on Sunday, July 21, or on Monday morning, July 22.

**Can I bring my car to Middlebury?**
Yes, but you will need to register it with Public Safety, upon arrival or online prior to arrival. You will need your vehicle registration and driver’s license.

**What should I bring?**
Linen, towels, and pillows are provided in the dorm rooms. Most rooms will include a fan (lower floors) or air conditioning unit (upper floors). Because summer weather in Vermont is rather unpredictable, you may want to bring an umbrella, light jacket, and bathing suit (there are lakes nearby and a pool open to Russian School participants).

Dress is casual. Since you will be taking part in demo teaching, you may feel more comfortable in business casual (although this is not required).

**Language Pledge**

**What is the Language Pledge?**
All Language Schools students agree to abide by the Language Pledge, a formal commitment to speak, listen, read, and write the language of study as the only means of communication for the entire summer session. It is the foundation of all of our intensive immersion programs.

Therefore, we ask that all participants speak Russian at all times, on and off campus. This is crucial not only to the success of the STARTALK Institute, but also to the students attending the Davis School of Russian over the summer.

**Life in Middlebury**

**What is Middlebury like?**
Middlebury is a beautiful, small, historic town in northwestern Vermont. It has cafés, shops, restaurants, bars, parks, libraries, and a post office, all within walking distance from campus. Just a short drive from campus, there are hiking trails, lakes, waterfalls, as well as larger grocery stores. Weather during the summer is typically warm, though rain is to be expected. It would be wise to bring an umbrella, close-toed shoes, and at least one waterproof jacket.
Is there a gym?
Yes, Middlebury College has a gym that is available to all participants of the STARTALK Institute. There are also running tracks, soccer fields, tennis courts, and a pool on campus, as well as numerous trails through nearby woods. With the exception of the golf course, there is no charge to use the athletic facilities.

Will we have free time?
Yes, evenings will be free, although you will have homework, and one Saturday will be dedicated to teaching a group of volunteer Middlebury students. During your free time, you are strongly encouraged to socialize with other participants and Russian school students and instructors. You are required to follow the Language Pledge during these times as well.

What types of cultural activities are available?
The Davis School of Russian has a rich cultural program available to all who wish to participate. On a weekly basis, students can watch Russian movies, participate in clubs (crafts, cooking, yoga, literature salons, poetry nights, etc.), play on the volleyball or soccer team, attend guest lectures, go to Russian parties, and much more. As a teacher in training, it is strongly recommended that you interact with the Russian School students as much as possible (but only in Russian, of course).