STARTALK Institute at the Davis School of Russian 2017:
Proficiency-Based Pedagogy for Russian

Online Session: June 19 – 23, 2017
Residential Session on Campus: July 12 – 23, 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

Application
When is the application due?
The application (submitted via Google forms) is due no later than 5:00 pm on March 13, 2017.

When will we hear back?
You will receive a confirmation upon submission. Acceptance results will be announced via email by March 30, 2017.

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.

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 at Middlebury College cafeterias. For those who request it, special diet meals are readily available, including vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free, low sodium meals, etc. The chefs at Middlebury are very friendly and more than willing to accommodate everyone on campus. There are also several restaurants and cafes in town, however these expenses are not included in funding.
**Academics**

**Am I expected to participate in both the online and the on-campus sessions?**
Yes. Please note that no exceptions can be made.

**What is the online session of the program?**
All participants are required to take part in a one-week online session which will run from **June 19 to 23, 2017**. The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to the theory of language acquisition and principles of proficiency-based pedagogy before the program, so that the on-campus session can be dedicated to applying this theoretical knowledge to classroom teaching and material development. The online session will consist of 5 webinars which will run Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 10:30 am EST; they will be recorded and available for review later. 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.

**What work will be expected of me?**
Participants must be on Middlebury campus by the end of the day on July 12; the on-campus session will begin on the morning of July 13. If all participants are able to arrive on campus by 5:00 pm on July 12, we will consider holding an orientation session on the evening of the 12th to maximize time spent on content.

Participants should expect a fairly substantial workload. Because of the intensive nature of the program, we will assign roughly three hours of homework on a daily basis. You should plan on being in class part of Saturday, July 15, for practice teaching. 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 last working day of the program will also fall on a Saturday, July 22.

**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.

**What is the Intensive Language Course?**
This year the STARTALK Institute received an award to offer up to five scholarships to cover tuition for the Davis School of Russian’s 1-Week Refresher Course. The scholarships are competitive and will be awarded to those admitted STARTALK participants who need to “update” their language skills before starting the on-campus program on July 12. **The Refresher Course will run July 2-9, 2017 (arrival on Sunday, July 2).** More information about the course is available here: [http://www.middlebury.edu/ls/russian/refreshercourse](http://www.middlebury.edu/ls/russian/refreshercourse).

**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 [here](http://www.middlebury.edu/ls/russian/refreshercourse).
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. It is also possible to rent a car at the airport. Amtrak provides train service to Essex Jct., Rutland, and Castleton, Vermont, as well as Port Henry, New York (note that there are on two separate lines, the Vermonter and the A. If you are driving to Middlebury, you can find directions here.

**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 we bring?**
Basic 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, although participants will be taking part in demo teaching, in which case some feel more comfortable in business casual (although this is not required).

**When should I arrive and leave?**
We ask that you arrive on Wednesday, July 12; you should plan to leave anytime on Sunday, July 23.

**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 at least one of the weekends will be dedicated to practice teaching a group of volunteer Middlebury students. During this time, you are strongly encouraged to socialize with other participants and Russian school students and instructors. But please, follow the Language Pledge during these times as well.

What types of 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, sing karaoke, 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).