Three IU Campuses Team Up to Offer Unique Study Abroad Program Focusing on Germany

Three Indiana University professors at the East, Indianapolis and South Bend campuses have developed an innovative study abroad course, the first of its kind, focusing on United States/German relations in Europe. The course will be taught simultaneously on all three campuses during Summer Session 1 of 1995, to be followed by a two-week study abroad component in Germany. Two years in the planning, the course came about through the efforts of Eleanor Turk, professor of history and a specialist in Germanic studies at IU East; Giles Hoyt, professor of German and Associate Dean for International Programs at IUPUI; and Gabrielle Robinson, professor of comparative literature in the department of English and Director of International Programs at IUSB. They had been concerned that, in spite of Indiana University's rich study abroad offerings, few programs were suitable to the needs of the commuter students on their campuses, who were unable to spend a great deal of time or money away from work and family, yet wanted to have an opportunity to participate in overseas study. Professor Turk saw this lack as an opportunity to do something new and contacted her two colleagues to see whether they could design a more appropriate course.

The interdisciplinary summer course has two components, each somewhat independent of the other. The first is a three-credit four-week course from May 15-June 12, called U.S., Germany, and the Future of Europe, which explores the central role of US-German relations from post-war 1945, through the Gorbachev Era and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and up to the current movement toward European unity. Students will take this course at their respective three campuses, which will be taught by Turk (History) at IU East, Richard Fredland (Political Science) at IUPUI, and John Lewis (Political Science) at South Bend. Those who wish to sign up for the three-credit continuation of the course in Germany from June 14-26 must take the first component as a prerequisite, and will also receive a short introduction to conversational German.

Students from all three campuses will then meet and travel together to Germany to the University of Oldenburg, where the continuation of their coursework, taught by Oldenburg faculty, will be conducted in English. The program director there is Dr. Wolfgang Grams, Associate Director of the Research Center for Emigration Studies in the Faculty of Sociology. At Oldenburg, they will be joined by English-speaking German students and all study the political and economic implications of German reunification and NATO. Weekend excursions include trips to Berlin via Potsdam, Bremerhaven, and Cloppenburg. Like the first component, this portion of the course will earn three IU credits in either history, political science, or Germanic studies.

As Turk points out, one of the most attractive features of this study abroad program is its relatively low cost. Students pay the standard tuition and fees to their respective campuses, plus additional airfare and tuition for the Germany portion of the course. The total cost of the six-week, six-credit courses will be under $1,800, says Turk, and financial aid is available.

The designers of this collaborative course hope that if it is successful, it may be repeated or submitted for regular overseas study program approval. “We believe that other campuses may also be able to use these course materials and to design similar programs of instruction on their campuses.” Partial funding for development of the course was received from the Office of International Programs through its Intercampus Research and Projects Grant program.

For additional information and applications, contact E. Turk at IU East (317-973-8304), G. Hoyt at IUPUI (317-274-2330), and G. Robinson at IU South Bend (219-237-4429).

New Humanities Texts Designed for Kyrgyzstan

At the request of the Soros Foundation, IUB professor of Central Eurasian Studies William Fierman traveled to Kyrgyzstan in early January to chair the international juries of scholars assembled to review textbook proposals for the organization’s “Transformation of the Humanities” program. The January meeting was the first in a three-stage selection process by scholars from the U.S., Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to assist the Soros Foundation’s program to develop and publish new humanities texts for the pre-school through university level that will reflect the distinctive heritage of Kyrgyzstan. Written in Russian and/or Kyrgyz, the textbooks will be introduced into the school system through a pilot program that seeks to encourage the Ministry of Education to adopt and republish the new humanities texts in larger editions. The Kyrgyz program is part of a larger Soros project initiated two years ago in Russia that has been expanded to include the Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Professor Fierman is serving as a member of the Soros Foundation’s strategic planning committees for the project in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.