“Persianate Cultures in Central Asia: Coexistence and Integration”
Fulbright-Hays Curriculum Development Project for Community College Instructors and K-12 Educators

Application Instructions

The University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) is pleased to announce a travel abroad program to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for K-12 educators and community college faculty. The program is funded by a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad (GPA) grant. Most of the costs – including air travel – will be covered (see below). The program is based on similar successful GPA programs organized in Arizona: most recently a summer 2019 program to Morocco and an in-process Jordan program postponed until summer 2021.

Central Asia Travel Seminar

This curriculum-building project will take twelve K-14 educators on a 28-day program to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, lovely countries located in Central Asia. The travel abroad portion of the program will take place from May 31 (arriving in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on June 2) through June 29, 2020 (arriving home June 30). The program will focus on the history, culture, and language of Persian-speaking areas of Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan – with the travel-seminar restricted to the latter two countries, which the program will emphasize. The goals of the program are threefold: the expansion of participants’ knowledge about Central Asia, the greater Persianate world, and the Persian language to improve their teaching, the creation of curricular materials that can be directly implemented in school and community college classrooms, and the widespread national dissemination of these materials.

Two personnel will lead the group. The program’s Scholar Escort is Dr. Austin O’Malley, a scholar of Persian literature and medieval history in the University of Arizona School of Middle East and North African Studies. The educational coordinator is Dr. Lisa Adeli, the CMES Director of Educational Outreach, a history PhD and experienced high school teacher. Assisting with the program is Nazafarin Lotfi, a native Persian-speaker, artist, and experienced art-educator.

Unlike many programs on the Persian-speaking world which focus mainly on Iran’s relations with the West, the Central Asia program will focus on the history, culture, and language(s) of Persianate peoples through two entirely different lenses. One view extends from Central Asia
westward, looking at Persianate cultures from Central Asia to the “heartland” of Iran; the other (primary) focus is an internal, Central Asian one, centering on the interaction of Persian-speakers (Tajiks) with Turkic cultures (particularly the Uzbeks). Themes of cultural diffusion, multi-ethnic/multi-lingual societies, and population groups separated by national borders will be important focal points.

The program is designed to be academic, experiential, and practical. Participants will learn about the history, geography, cultures, languages, music, art/architecture, and politics of Central Asia – as well as receiving 40 hours of instruction in the Persian language (using the most common, Iranian dialect and alphabet). Travel, visits to museums and cultural sites, talks by regional scholars, and interaction with local people will give participants experiences and insights that they can bring back to the classroom – along with photos and cultural artifacts purchased as part of the project. All participants will receive 90 hours of professional development/recertification credit. (Interested educators may receive graduate credit – but only if they want to pay UA tuition for the credits.)

**Important Notes on Travel during this Program:**

Although Central Asia is considered a safe destination, problems could always arise, and you would be asked to exercise basic safety/security precautions. Additionally, although you will be staying in comfortable hotels and eating in well-regarded restaurants, you will still have to be careful with drinking water (only from bottled sources) and food safety. Also note that YOU WILL BE SHARING A HOTEL ROOM with one other participant. Because this program aims to provide a full academic/cultural experience, there will be a lot of intensive travel: sometimes hours spent in buses on winding mountain roads, one night in a yurt in the desert, and A LOT of walking. Be prepared for that. It will sometimes be HOT outside – not as bad as in July, but it will still be summer….

**What Is Expected of Participants:**

**Financial:** The Fulbright-Hays grant/CMES funds will cover overseas airline costs (round-trip flights from a near-by hub airport, housing in comfortable hotels, transportation within Jordan, two meals per day, tour guides, speakers, etc.) Participants are expected to provide a cost-share of $1,250.00, payable in February 2021. The payment is non-refundable except for the extremely unlikely event in which the trip itself has to be cancelled (as happened for our Teach Syria program planned for summer 2011).

**Participation:** Participants are expected to:

- participate in the online pre-travel programs
- attend the full program and participate enthusiastically in the abroad portion of the program
- create an extended lesson plan for a class that you teach (completed upon your return from the abroad program)
- contribute to the Persian language-exposure modules, created by the group, that can be integrated in classrooms OR integrate language materials into your curricular material
- give a presentation at a teachers’ workshop, districtwide PD program, or meeting of a community group

**How to Apply**

1. Determine your eligibility.
   
   You are eligible to apply for the Central Asia program if you are:

   - a full-time K-12 teacher in either a public or private school who teaches social studies, foreign languages, English, or fine arts or a full-time K-12 administrator, teacher-educator, or district administrator responsible for planning, conducting, or supervising a program in modern languages or area studies or a full-time community college educator who teaches social studies, foreign languages, English, or fine arts
   - **AND** you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
   - **AND** you expect to continue teaching until at least May 2023
   - **AND** you are available to travel starting May 31, 2021 (We realize that in some parts of the country, the school year ends later than this, but there is no way to accommodate everyone.)

   **Note:** People who have participated in a Fulbright-related program after summer 2019 OR have previously participated in any previous CMES-sponsored Fulbright-Hays program are not eligible to apply. **If you have any questions as to eligibility, contact us before applying.**

2. Complete the very short Application Form. Please TYPE your information. We ask that you provide the contact information (not letters of recommendation) for two people who we can contact in support of your application. Recommender #1 must be a superior (principal, department head, etc.). Recommender #2 should be a colleague or instructor familiar with your work, interests, and goals. **You do NOT need to provide actual letters of recommendation.**

3. Prepare a personal statement: approximately 2-4 pages in length. An important part of your application will be the personal statement. Please address the following:
   - Why are you interested in Central Asia?
   - How would you integrate material from the program into your teaching? Applicants should propose a curriculum project and explain how they would share it with their students and other teachers.
   - What are your professional goals, and how might they be enhanced though this project? Please include any professional affiliations or experiences that demonstrate your commitment to sharing your knowledge with colleagues.
   - What unique experiences or background do you think make you particularly qualified to join this group project?
   - What aspects of this trip do you think might be challenging for you, and how do you anticipate overcoming such obstacles?
4. Submit a resume or CV that includes information on the courses you teach and/or plan to teach in the future.

5. Submit all materials (cover page, personal statement, CV) as email attachments to sbs-cmesoutreach@email.arizona.edu and adeli@arizona.edu

ONLY COMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED

The selection committee will meet to choose applicants after the deadline. Chosen applicants must be approved by Fulbright-Hays and will be notified as early as possible. If you have questions about the curriculum-building trip, please contact: Lisa Adeli, CMES Director of Educational Outreach at adeli@arizona.edu.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 1, 2020