



**Princeton-HU Strategic Partnership
Grant Application 2015-17
Two-year open grant
(maximum support = \$300,000. (\$150,000 equivalent support
from each partner).
Funding term: September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2017**

Lead Applicants:

Prof. Dr. Susanne Frank, Institut für Slawistik, Humboldt University Berlin
Prof. Dr. Michael Wachtel, Slavic Department, Princeton University

Project Title: „Places of Slavic cultures – Slavic cultures out of place“

Events and activities:

The project includes a series of 3 Graduate conferences as well as less formal teaching and research exchanges between the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and its affiliated Chairs at Princeton and the Institut für Slawistik at the Humboldt University.

Preliminary cooperation:

The point of departure of this project is the cooperation that has already taken place: An “Initiativförderung” from the Humboldt University allowed a first visit of Prof. Susanne Frank to Princeton in February 2014. Prof. Frank gave a lecture and held meeting with colleagues from several departments, including Slavic, History, and German.

In fall 2014 a second cooperation event took place at Princeton when 4 Humboldt Graduates were invited to take part in the Princeton Graduate Conference *Dumpster Diving and Sustainability: Managing the Limited Resources of Culture* (October, 17-18).

Finally, in spring 2015 Professor Frank returned to Princeton to teach a 6-week seminar on the subject of the project. As a result of this seminar, a number of the graduate students will have worked on papers that can be improved and presented at our first conference, planned for fall of 2015 in Berlin.

Expected added value of the cooperation for both sides:

One of the greatest motivations for our cooperation is that the project will benefit from the widely differing departmental structures and research fields of the two universities. Whereas the Princeton department of Slavic languages and literatures is mostly focused on Russian studies, Humboldt Institut für Slawistik (with its chairs of East, West and South Slavic literatures, languages and cultures) is much more diversified in different areas of Slavic studies. And whereas Humboldt Institut für Slawistik has a mainly philological focus, Princeton specialists have divergent disciplinary focuses: besides philology and literary studies also cultural anthropology and the history of culture and history of

sciences. There are specialists in the field of spatial and urban studies on both sides, but they work with somewhat different disciplinary approaches and on different material. These structures are complementary: the Russian focus being complemented by a broader East European focus, and the philological approach being complemented by cultural studies of sorts. The hope of the project leaders is to initiate a sustainable scholarly dialogue between the two sides.

Another motivation is the chance to upgrade the graduate program. Princeton graduates follow the schedule of a structured graduate program that foresees not only seminars and colloquia, but also the participation in and organization of conferences and workshops. Most Humboldt graduates do not participate in such events. Only some of them get the chance to become members of the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies (which is the only one in the whole of Germany). As an active board member Prof. S. Frank cooperates with Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School, located at Freie Universität Berlin. To give Humboldt graduates the chance to present their contributions at conferences organized in cooperation with Princeton University would be a great advantage for them, giving them a broader view of the field and of their own contributions to it. But Princeton graduate students can also profit from this cooperation. Already the conference at Princeton last fall initiated ongoing contacts between students at both institutions working on related topics.

Inclusion of different status groups into the project

Most participants in the conferences will be graduate students. But besides the graduate students faculty will guide the conferences, participating as discussants and speakers. The central faculty members will be Prof. Wachtel, chair of the department at Princeton, and Prof. Frank, holder of the chair of East Slavic literatures and cultures at Humboldt University, but they will make every effort to include colleagues in related departments (history, anthropology, German). This will allow interdisciplinary breadth but also focus the long-term cooperation between the departments.

Types of activity

In addition to the three Graduate conferences the project cooperation plan foresees short-term visits on the level of graduate students and faculty. We would like to fund (not exclusively through partnership funding) 1-2-month research stays in Berlin for graduate students to give them the chance to profit from more intensive discussions with colleagues and a mentor from the partner department, and to get access to archival material. A one-week visit by faculty members would give them the chance to present a workshop for students as well as a lecture on their current research. It would also help prepare the theoretical frame for the upcoming graduate conference by a programmatic lecture that addresses graduates, faculty and a wider circle of scholars.

Timetable:

Graduate Conference 1: „Charlottengrad: The Berlin (Meta)Text of Slavic cultures and literatures“, November, 2-4, 2015

Graduate Conference 2: “Russians in America”, Princeton, October 2016

Graduate Conference 3: “Slavic cultures out of place”, Berlin, August (October) 2017

Detailed Description of Conference 1:

The Graduate Workshop „Charlottengrad: The Berlin (Meta)Text of Slavic cultures and literatures“ is located in a research field of threefold actuality:

1. It focuses on a place that hitherto has been mostly discussed as a place of Russian exile and Russian literature in exile: During the 1920s Berlin had become one of the most popular sites of Russian culture abroad. Among approximately 300 000 Russian Berlin residents were some of the most famous writers of the time (Majakovskij, Shklovskij, Belyj, Gor'kij, Erenburg, Chodasevich, Nabokov etc.) But in the course of the 20th century Berlin has been of symbolic significance for other Slavic and East European literatures too: During the 1920s through 30s Berlin became a center for Ukrainian studies. Ukrainian, but also Polish and Czech writers alike made Berlin at least temporarily a center of their mental map and work.

2. Due to quite different political circumstances Berlin has regained similar significance for Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech and other Slavic and East European writers and artists in general during the last decade. In terms of aesthetic creativity the Slavic and East European Berlin of today can easily compete with its historical predecessors. For scholarly analysis the comparison between aesthetic reactions to situations of exile in the (early) 20th century and situations of migration in the beginning of the 21st century are rich and largely untapped.

3. Theoretically and methodologically the topic of the Graduate Workshop is located in the context of the so-called spatial turn in literary and cultural studies. This 'turn' has brought forward a range of tools to analyze literary texts as a means of symbolically constructing and deconstructing cultural space, a means of subverting (or affirming) the symbolic order of space by charging it with new/different meanings. In the context of this turn literary studies have become part of an approach that has branches in cultural studies, cultural sociology, cultural anthropology, human geography and urban studies.

All contributions to this workshop will address one of these key aspects.

The Graduate Workshop shall be complemented by talks and roundtables with specialists in the field of Russian and Slavic Berlin (Karl Schlögel, Fritz Mierau et al.) and framed by readings of Berlin resident writers who in their works develop and transform the Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Czech etc. Berlin (meta)text. (Vladimir Sorokin, Katja Petrovskaja, Vladimir Kaminer e.a.) as well as by a concert of Berlin resident Russian composers (Boris Filanovsky, Dmitrii Dragilev a.o.)

Contributions of HU-graduates will include:

1. Yaraslava Ananka: Vladislav Chodasevič's Berlin as „mother in law“ of Russian cities
2. Philipp Kohl: Sorokin's Berlin-topography
3. Svetlana Sirotinina: Berlin as ‚regiotext‘
4. Ksenja Stoychuk: Exophony in Russian-German literature (Katia Petrovskaya, Olga Martynova)
5. Miriam Finkelstein: Figures of concealment in transnational contemporary literature
6. Roman Widder: Political dimensions of the new world literature
7. Kamil Moll: Remarks on Nabokov's Berlin

Faculty:

1. Susanne Frank: The new “Charlottengrad”
2. Heinrich Kirschbaum: Mandel'stam's 1920s' perspective on Germany
3. Alfrun Kliems: Czech Berlin

Contributions by Princeton Graduates:

1. Phil Gleissner: Moscow-Berlin-Jerusalem. Jewsej Schor's long journey of translation theory and identity concepts
2. Natasha Klimova: Rereading Victor Shklovsky's *Zoo*
3. David Hock: A New Kind of Losing? Displacement and мерцание as Poetic Strategy in contemporary Russian and transnational poetry
4. Alisa Ballard: Hamlet between Berlin on Moscow in the early 20th century
5. Massimo Balloni: The Russian Berlin journal "Veshch'" as a promotor of European Avantgarde
6. Elizabeth Stern: Moscow-Berlin ballet-dialogue. The genre of "drambalet" and its reception in GDR dance pedagogy
7. Elizaveta Mankovskaya: Berlin on Boris Pasternak's poetic map
8. Emily Wang: Ukraine – Berlin dialogue
9. Gabriella Ferrari: Moscow – Berlin exhibitions

Faculty:

1. Michael Wachtel: "Russisches Denken, deutsche Sprache: E.D. Schor als Vermittler zwischen Russland und Deutschland"
2. Katherine M.H. Reischl: Berlin as an alternative Russian Publishing space in the 1920ies (Вещь, Жар-птица, etc.)
3. Serguei Oushakine: Urban texts and textures
4. Mark Petrus: Berlin Alexanderplatz: Alfred Döblin's dialogue with Dostoevskii

The second conference will focus on the "American" text of Slavic literatures, including writers from the first emigration (Nabokov, Roman Jakobson), the third emigration (Brodsky, Limonov), as well as recent writers such as Gary Steyngardt, Eugene Osheshevsky and Olga Grushin (who now write in English but from a Russian perspective), or poets like Valzhyna Mort (partially writing in English, partially in her native Belarusian), or writers like Aleksandar Hemon who immigrating from Bosnia also changed his writing language and followed in Nabokov's footsteps.

The third graduate conference will be concerned with the Russian diaspora in its broadest sense, including writers living in Central Asia, Western Europe, Canada, and America. More detailed planned for the second and the third conference will be elaborated subsequent to the first conference.

Sustainability and additional external funding

In order to make the program and the results of the project exchange transparent and visible, a website "Princeton Junction" will be initiated. It will be designed for online publication and documentation of key contributions to the conferences or key lectures. In the long run a Princeton-HU co-edited online journal will be planned.

Additional funding especially for the purpose of graduate exchange and graduate activities can be provided by an already existing exchange program between Princeton and Humboldt for graduate students.

Further funding shall be ensured by means of an official and intensive cooperation between Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School Berlin and Princeton.
Incidental funding will be contributed from the Princeton chair's discretionary account.