



[Previous Issue](#)

March 4, Volume: Issue: Issue Editor: Joe
1999 1 3 Bollinger

[Next Issue](#)

Researching the Possibilities

By Samantha Rodgers



This is the question that we've all been asking ourselves when referring to just finishing our midterm in a class that just began 2 weeks ago. In two more weeks we will be taking the final and then starting the process all over again with a new Penn State professor.

The current class that I refer to is Research Methods in Social Science taught by Dr. Les Gallay who came here to Moscow about two weeks ago. When I think about it, he really is like the rest of us, students. He lives across the hall from me and participates in our group dinners and outings. Never in my time at Penn State have I spent this much quality time with a professor who is held in such high regard.

His class deals mainly with statistical analysis, matrix algebra, and computer applications that we will be able to use in analyzing demographic and economic patterns here in Russia.

Dr. Gallay expressed his interest in having us (Russian and American students alike) leave the class with an understanding of the social sciences, what the difficulties and strengths are, and for us to be effective consumers of social science research in agriculture and on the people of Russia.

However, the teaching process has been slower than he would have liked.

The Experiment Is Underway

By Dax Fleckenstein



The experiment has begun. One of the main purposes of our Russian trip was to put Americans and Russians in one classroom and teach them the same subjects. We began our regular classes with our Russian colleagues two and a half weeks ago. We have class with them two to three days per week. So, the question is: How is the experiment progressing?

As with any experiment, there are a few stumbling blocks that need to be overcome before this project can be labeled as a total success. First and foremost, communication presents a problem. The classes are taught in English, using many technical terms that the Russian students do not recognize. The pace of the classes has to be slowed down so that everyone is able to get a grasp on the information being presented.

Another bug in the system is the time slots allotted for our classes. As for the Russian students, they have their regular university classes on top of our classes. Their classes are on Tuesdays and Fridays, so we must cram a whole semester of information into two days a week for one class and one day a week for the other. That means six or more hours of lecturing per day.

I am certain that this experiment will have nothing but positive results. Though we encountered a few wrinkles

Our Russian colleagues have a harder time keeping up in class, understandably, since their English comprehension takes longer. He feels that it is hard to keep their attention in class and this might have to do with the fact that they are only minoring in agriculture while majoring in being translators. Overall however, the entire class is a learning experience and we all agree that we are fortunate to be in such surroundings.

We are also very fortunate to have such an interesting professor here with us in the month of February.

at the beginning, things are beginning to smooth out as the semester moves forward. The improvements have come mainly because everyone is willing to make the necessary adjustments. We all know that we are part of something very important here and that completion of this project means international success for both of our universities.

Our efforts now will help ensure that PSU students who will come to Russia in the following years will have an easier transition and as many cultural experiences and academic opportunities as we are having this year.



February 18, 1999 - Moscow

*Les at work. This is our Research Methods class, taught by Les Gallay an American instructor from Penn State. This is our classroom in the hostel.
cr. Erik Kelling*



February 18, 1999 - Moscow

*Russian and American Students learning together in our Research Methods Class. Here the Russian and American students are learning how a database.
cr. Erik Kelling*



*Rats and 'Roids -A Workout
at
the Flex Gym
By Jamie Rayman*



Since our INTAG classes are all taught in one of the conference rooms of our

*Canteen Food in Moscow
By Lincoln Rodgers*



I am going to attempt to describe the challenging parts of our unique culinary situation. Next week I will focus on the easier aspects of eating here. We can't really buy food

hostel, some of us noticed that days would go by and we would never have any physical activity. Not bad, if you live on the 20th floor and the elevators are broken, but since we only live on the 5th, we got kind of restless. Tanya, one of our Russian friends, suggested a gym near our hostel and we said, "sign us up!"

Thus began our relationship with Flex Gym. The Flex gym consists of two rooms (a free weight room and a "universal" weight room), a few small offices and two locker rooms located in the basement of a neighborhood apartment building. So let me describe the gym to you.

The free weight room has dumbbells and barbells, four benches and some cardiovascular equipment: one bike and some interesting TV-infomercial-type machines. In this room the equipment is pretty close together so that you either have to try to find an empty corner to move your device to or wait until someone else is done so you can move theirs out of the way. Also, the equipment is not very well organized--the free weights are all over the floor and it usually takes some effort to locate matching dumbbells. The "universal" machines in the other room are sticky, unsmooth and some of the cables are kinked.

I can't tell if this gym is a fly-by-night operation or if it's representative of the quality of gyms available to the public here in Russia. Either way it's lacking, but kind of charming in a funny way--if you know what I mean. They even have Flex Gym tee-shirts in English. I want to get one 'cause they're so cool. On the front they say "Flex Gym" with a gorilla, their mascot, lifting a huge barbell over his head. On the back they say "Body Builders of Russia XXL." They're awesome.

Unusual behavior exhibited by some of the clientele has led us to believe that maybe steroids are available as well. You could probably get some rockin

like we do in the US. Instead we have to hunt for it. When you don't know the language, trying to purchase items is a major cross-cultural experience. Try communicating the idea of a kilogram by grunting and pointing.

All this effort, and what do you get? A package of ready-mix ramen noodles, if you're lucky. If not, you get some raw ingredients so you can cook up a meal on the three burner Electra stove that services the entire floor.

If cooking is not your thing, you can just drop down to the canteen on the first floor. Now, the language barrier crops up again. The menu is totally illegible to me, so the longsuffering ladies behind the counter have to interpret my gestures and feeble attempts to speak Russian. Some foods are easily purchased. For instance boolkas, a pastry similar to pop-tarts, are readily available, because they are on the counter and you can point to them. Needless to say, they have become a group favorite.

However, if you want something more substantial, I will eventually end up with one of the two main dishes of the day. Let me give you a few of the common ones. Plov, an Uzbekistan dish that consists of sticky rice with meat. Goulash, an Azerbaijan dish, is meat with a choice of noodles or boiled buckwheat. If these don't sound appetizing, how about macaroni noodles with liver or a meatball. However, by what we get to eat at the canteen, you cannot judge the food that Russians generally eat. The fact is that they don't eat at the canteens because they know how bad they are, so they eat at home!



'roids there if you wanted to--there's a back office that guys go into after kind of looking around sheepishly.

While on the exercise bike Bethany (of course it was Bethany, she hates crawly things the most) spotted a rat rounding the corner from the "universal" weight room into the free weight room. The rat, which Bethany swears was 8 inches long not including the tail, made a B-line for the steroid room. Later, after the shock was wearing off, Bethany astutely noted "No wonder it was so big. It lives in the 'roid room!"



Day by Day Schedule

By Joe Bollinger



- Feb 15 Second week of combined Russian/American classes began. Some of us were recovering from colds and others from the long nights out over the weekend.
- Feb 16 Group Dinner. Les cooked us scrambled eggs MTO.
- Feb 17 Visited Russian kindergarten. Afterwards, visited an elementary/middle/high school complex for secondary education followed by a visit to a Russian technical school.
- Feb 18 Class with Les in the morning and then some of us ventured to one of the malls near the Kremlin.
- Feb 19 Visited a special secondary school that is focused on teaching English. A trip to Manhattan Express night club brought a refreshing close to the
- Feb 22 Research Methods miderm.
- Feb 23 Russian language class in the morning. Went to the American Bookstore in the afternoon.
- Feb 24 Robert Walker, the director of the Foreign Agricultural Trade Office for the USDA, gave a seminar on United States trade and investment relations with Russia. Samantha's birthday party! It began with a dinner and ended with all of us singing songs.
- Feb 25 Rick Bennett, the Program Leader for International Activities at the USDA, gave a seminar on international research in agricultural products. Went to a theater performance in the evening followed by dinner.
- Feb 26 Visited a French/English speaking secondary school.
- Feb 27 Visited the Tretyakov Art Gallery. Ate dinner at the Canadian Bagel Café.
- Feb 28 Visited the Armoury in the Kremlin which contained articles of clothing, dishes, armor, carriages, and jewelry used by previous rulers of the country.

week.

- Feb 20 Took a trip to the largest CD market in the world. Ate at Starlight Dinner in the evening.
- Feb 21 Went to a Russian banya (sauna) at a dacha in the woods, compliments of friends of Ksyusha's (one of our Russian colleagues) family.

Happy Birthday, Samantha!



The International Women's Day *By Olga Averianova*

Born at a time of great social turbulence and crisis, the International Women's Day (IWD) inherited a tradition of protest and political activism. In the years before 1910, from the turn of the 20th century, women in industrially developing countries were entering paid work in some numbers. Their jobs were sex segregated, mainly in textiles, manufacturing and domestic services where conditions were wretched and wages worse than depressed. In Europe, the flames of revolution were being kindled.



It was German socialist Clara Zetkin who was the real mother of IWD. In 1907 she had organized an International Conference of Socialist Women and called for all socialist parties to fight energetically for women's suffrage. Zetkin was bitterly opposed to bourgeois feminism and wanted to ensure that working class women were not lured away from their class movement by default. The conference participants, including Alexandra Kollontai, a Russian revolutionary,

discussed demonstrating to publicize their support for women's equality.


In 1908 Branch Number 3 of the New York City Socialist Democratic Women's Society took up the call by organizing a mass meeting on women's suffrage on March 8th. The following year the American Socialist Party declared the last Sunday in February to be National Woman's Day.

Russian socialist women followed suit from 1913, celebrating IWD like the American socialists on the last Sunday in February. In Petrograd (now St. Petersburg), on 23 February 1913 an IWD demonstration by women textile workers turned into bread riots and then into the February revolution. The fact that 23 February on the old Russian calendar corresponded to 8 March on the Western calendar adopted after the revolution set the date for the Soviet celebrations of IWD from 1918.

From 1922 Clara Zetkin headed the International Women's Secretariat of the Communist International in Moscow and IWD became an official Communist holiday. It became International Women's Day after the Second World War.

March 8 became the first spring holiday in Russia. Up to this day, it is an official day off and both men and women of Russia are looking forward to this holiday. It has long lost its political meaning and is looked upon as a day to celebrate the unconditional love, sacrifice,

patience, wisdom, and beauty of the Russian women.

 E-mail us your questions/suggestions:

[Dr. Thomas Bruening](#)
[\(Project coordinator\)](#)

Class Schedule

Mo/Thu	Research Methods with Les Gallay 9am to 4 pm
Tue	Russian Language 9am to 12:30pm
Wed	Russian Ed System with Evgeni Shmelev 10:50am to 3:00pm
Fri	Various field trips

