

The “Learn Russian in the European Union” project

Daugavpils University

**EUROPEAN STUDIES
IN THE TRANS-BORDER PERSPECTIVE:
EAST EUROPEAN AND BALTIC REGION**



**Daugavpils, Latvia
2016**



EUROPEAN STUDIES IN THE TRANS-BORDER PERSPECTIVE: EAST EUROPEAN AND BALTIC REGION

The research on border areas has traditionally been the sphere of comparative studies; they include the introduction to the history, the cultural history and the peculiarities of everyday life in the region, as well as the introduction to the modern political and economic history. At the same time, special attention is paid to the search for similarities and differences in the fate of the inhabitants of border areas and to the perception of the border not only as a divisive, but also as a unifying factor.

Study course duration: 64 hours (6ECTS) or 128 hours (8 ECTS)

Scope: the present study course is envisaged for the students interested in the investigation of the problems of the post-Soviet space and the issues related to the formation of a *new* European identity.

Scientific discussions on the problems of border areas have been taking place for more than two centuries, but they became particularly relevant after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of independent states.

The study course is focused on the following problem categories:

- the problem of constructing the national identity of the region's population;
- the issues related to the integration into various international organizations;
- the problems of the respect for the ethnic minorities' rights;
- the reasons for choosing differently directed models of economic and political development of the states in the region, etc.

The study course is delivered in **Russian** (basically).

Methods of instruction: The methods of instruction include lectures, discussions of assigned readings, as well as practical training during the visits to the countries in the region (Baltic States, Russian Federation, Poland and Belarus). The lectures will be conducted by lecturers from the History Department of Daugavpils University.

Fields trips:

1. Multicultural Daugavpils (Dinaburg Fortress, Mark Rothko Art Centre, Jewish community museum). Military history (WWI and WWII military memorials, Holocaust memorial) (on weekdays).
2. East Latvia (Latgale region) – Vishki and Aglona. Basilica of Aglona – the religious and cultural centre of Eastern Latvia (a weekend excursion).
3. Baltic Trip (I) – Rundāle Palace and Bauska Castle (a weekend trip).
4. Baltic Trip (II) – Vilnius and Trakai (a weekend trip).
5. Baltic Trip (III) – Tartu – Tallinn – Pärnu (a three days weekend trip).
6. Individual guided trips to Poland, Belarus and the Russian Federation.

The awareness of the realia of modern everyday life gained on the basis of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and individual experience of communication will improve students' understanding of the socio-political processes in the area.

The basic module:

64 hours (6 ECTS)

- brief history of Latvia (4 hours), Lithuania (4 hours), Estonia (4 hours), Poland (4 hours) and Belarus (4 hours);
- particularities of the intercultural communication in the region (10 hours);
- everyday culture and spiritual heritage – traditions, rituals, customs, business etiquette (6 hours);
- the structure of the region's economy (4 hours);
- the introduction to Sovietology and the history of the USSR (10 hours);
- the process of the disintegration of the USSR – the theoretical aspect (4 hours);
- the vectors of mutual relations between Poland, the Baltic states and Russia (4 hours);
- the common and the different in the historical memory of the inhabitants of the region – the heroes and the traitors (4 hours);
- the alternatives of the development of cross-border relations in the region (2 hours).

Advanced module:

64 hours (6 ECTS)

Themes:

- the causes of regional conflicts in the process of the disintegration of the USSR (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdniestria (Transnistria), Chechnya, ...) (4 hours);
- the role of national elites in shaping the national identity (4 hours);
- national minorities in the countries of the region – similarities and differences in the legal and the political spheres (6 hours);
- problems in the definition of the concept *Russian* and *Russian-speaking population* (4 hours);
- the process of recognition of national minorities in the Baltic States and Poland (4 hours)
- the role of Russia and the ***Russian world*** being constructed in the formation of the national identity of the Russians living in Baltic countries (4 hours);
- problems of the formation of the national identity of Belarusians in Belarus, Poland and Latvia (4 hours);
- places of memories of indigenous population and national minorities – the confrontation and the possibility of dialogue (12 hours);
- the Crimean precedent – Is its repetition possible in Eastern Europe? (4 hours);
- The factor of the Ukrainian Revolution 2.0 in diffusion of socio-political processes in the region (8 hours);
- Who are Latgalians, Seto, Kashubians and Karaites, etc. – small ethno-cultural groups in the region? (4 hours);
- The self-identification of the states in the region – Central Europe? Eastern Europe? Baltic region or the post-Soviet countries? (6 hours)

If necessary, the themes considered in the framework of the study course may be adjusted according to the students' professional interests.