ALUMNI VOICES

Jacob Oet, BTL ‘12
I’m currently pursuing an honors major in English with creative writing and a minor in Russian at Swarthmore College.

Why did you attend BTL?
I attended BTL to improve as a writer and person, to experience Iowa City, and to connect with Russian writers.

What was your favorite class?
I loved the Hemingway class and Camille Dungy’s workshop.

What else have you been up to?
Since BTL I’ve published two chapbooks, most recently Nightshirt from Finishing Line Press. I’ve also had many poems accepted for publication.

Below: Hiking at Wildcat Den State Park

HOW TO APPLY

Join alumni from Algeria, Armenia, Bahrain, Canada, China, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, USA, and Yemen.

The application deadline is April 1, 2016. More information about the program, the application process, and tuition can be found at:

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2016 SESSIONS

Russian/Arabic
June 25-July 9
Ages 16-19

Silk Routes
July 16-July 30
Ages 16-19
“We came here writing on pages and computer screens, and we left writing on each other’s hearts. – Hajir Al Zadjali, Oman

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Between the Lines (BTL) invites students of differing nationalities, ages 16 to 19, to the University of Iowa campus for a unique summer program that develops participants’ creative writing skills while also promoting cultural exchange. Since 2008, BTL has hosted young writers from over 20 countries including the U.S., Russia, Armenia, Turkey, China, and over 15 Arabic-speaking countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa. In the summer of 2016, the BTL community will continue its growth, hosting once again a combined Russian/Arabic session (June 25-July 9) and a landmark second session featuring Silk Routes countries (July 16-July 30): Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic, among possible others. Focusing on the theme of Peace and the Writing Experience, each session will bring together young writers from diverse backgrounds to explore their distinct histories, languages, and cultures while also approaching world literatures and writing as a dialogue that leads to empathy and a shared understanding of the human condition.

For two exciting weeks, participants learn from one another through creative writing workshops, global literature seminars, and special events featuring international authors, guest speakers, and cultural exchange activities. BTL is a small, structured program run by experienced staff of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, located in Iowa City, a UNESCO City of Literature and home to the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. Participants live in university dorms with trained counselors—themselves writers—and are taught by a faculty of prize-winning poets and writers from the U.S. and abroad. By the end of each session, participants will have grown not only as writers but also as citizens of the world, becoming part of a tight-knit international network.

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

9:30 A.M. Morning meeting to detail the day’s events.

10 A.M. The Global Literature seminar is a dynamic discussion-oriented course designed to introduce students to different cultural and literary traditions.

12 P.M. Lunch; time to write or explore Iowa City.

2 P.M. Writing workshops allow students to focus on their own writing, learn processes of revision and translation, and think about culture-specific literary traditions. Workshops are conducted in the student’s native language.

5 P.M. After a day of classes, students may visit the many local bookshops and landmarks, attend author readings, and explore each others’ cultures through scheduled events, such as Arabic and Russian 101, or the BTL Cinematheque, a film series featuring student-selected movies from their native countries. Past sessions have included a Ramadan dinner at the Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids, a visit to the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, and a hike through the Maquoketa Caves State Park.