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.

HOW TO APPLY

This program is open to students interested in creative writing, including poetry, fiction, and playwriting. Students from Russia and Arabic-speaking countries must write in their native language, and be ages 16-19 by June 25, 2016. Students from participating Silk Routes countries, which can be found on our website, must be willing to write primarily in English for the program, and be ages 16-19 by July 16, 2016. Because BTL is a multilingual program, all applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English (writing, reading, and speaking); at the same time they must be committed to promoting their native language and literature, and to sharing it with their peers. BTL Russian/Arabic applicants need to submit a writing sample in their native language and in English. To streamline the application process for the multilingual BTL Silk Routes program, all writing samples need to be in English. More information about the program and about the application process is at:

International Writing Program, The University of Iowa
319.384.3296 | iwp@uiowa.edu
iwp.uiowa.edu/programs/between-the-lines
www.facebook.com/btlwriters

BTL is sponsored through grant funds provided by the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. The grant covers travel, tuition, and living expenses for the international students accepted to the program.
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Between the Lines (BTL), launched in 2008, is a multilingual program that brings together students from different countries for creative writing and cultural exchange. It is run by the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa and made possible by the Bureaus of Educational and Cultural Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

In 2016, BTL will host two sessions, each focusing on Peace and the Writing Experience: the first session will unite young writers ages 16-19 from Russia and Arabic-speaking countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa. A second session, BTL Silk Routes, will for the first time bring together students from Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States. Each session intends to bring together a wide array of young writers to jointly explore their distinct histories, languages and cultures, and teach literature and writing as a dialogue that can lead to empathy and a shared understanding of the human condition.

For two exciting weeks, participants learn from one another through daily classes and special events featuring prominent guest speakers and cultural exchange activities. BTL offers young writers the opportunity to experience other cultures and campus life at a major university within an intimate, structured program run by experienced staff. The University of Iowa is 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. The campus residence halls are well-appointed and secure. Floors are separated by gender; each participant will be matched with a roommate from another country. 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.

Above: West (Indiana) and Olga (Russia) discuss translation at a special workshop during BTL 2015.

Right: Junnan (China) and Anastasia (Russia) reading the BTL Anthology, a publication compiled each summer.

“We came here writing on pages and computer screens, and we left writing on each other’s hearts. – Hajir Al Zadjali, Oman

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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 for the Russian/Arabic session are conducted in the student’s native language. Given the many languages represented in BTL Silk Routes, the classes will be conducted in English, but each language will be featured in a collaborative translation project.

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 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 and a visit to the Figge Art Museum in Davenport.

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.

Jamie (Maryland), Nesma (Egypt), Reem (Egypt), and Rana (Gaza) relaxing at Shambaugh House.