

Proposal summary

The Department of History at the University of Houston seeks to recruit

a scholar in Eastern European history with an emphasis on Eastern European Jewry to teach classes in their area of expertise during the 2020-21 academic year. The Department of History seeks to develop new strengths in Jewish, Russian, and Eastern European studies, the fields that are important to the department not only academically, but also in terms of outreach to the communities of the Greater Houston Area with historical ties to Eastern Europe. The scholar will also contribute to curriculum development and allow us to establish long-term contacts with a university in Eastern Europe.

Institutional Profile: University of Houston

a. Brief Information

The University of Houston (UH) is a public research university located in the vibrant city of Houston, the energy capital of the world and a vibrant cultural center of the U.S. South. It is a Hispanic-serving institution and the home of the renowned Center for Mexican American Studies and Arte Público Press, the nation's largest and most established publisher of contemporary and recovered literature by U.S. Hispanic authors. Currently, 2,700 faculty members direct the academic development of over 46,000 students who work with faculty through 29 research centers and 43 departments both gaining and discovering new knowledge. The student body is the second most ethnically diverse in the U.S. Students are actively engaged in approximately 500 student organizations.

The mission of the University of Houston is to offer nationally competitive and internationally recognized opportunities for learning, discovery and engagement to a diverse population of students in a real-world setting. UH awards more than 9,000 degrees annually from 46 doctoral, 104 masters, and 108 undergraduate degree programs and pursues a broad agenda of research and creative activities. UH also maintains close ties with Greater Houston and has been recognized by the Corporation for National and Community Service for its outstanding service to the community. Research programs are linked with local industries, students and alumni are movers and shakers in the Houston business and economy, outreach programs conduct multiple projects on campus and throughout the neighborhoods.

b. Experience with international and world area studies programs

UH has strategically developed a focused approach to engage the University colleges, centers, departments, programs, and units with global partners through the UH Office of Global Strategies and Studies, which also coordinates the Global Citizens Credential, a certificate program that encourages students to increase their level of global engagement and responsibility. UH undergraduate and graduate students benefit from educational overseas experiences through faculty-led, reciprocal exchange and affiliated third party provider learning abroad programs, as well as research trips, internships, experiential and service learning, and volunteer activities. Overall, close to 900 UH students participated in learning abroad programs in 2018.

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages offers the M.A. degree in World Cultures and Literatures, B.A. degrees in Chinese, French, Italian Studies, and World Cultures and Literature (including a minor concentration in Russian studies); minors in Jewish, Arab, and India Studies; and minors and/or language instruction in thirteen languages. The Department of Hispanic Studies offers the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies, including the only doctorate program in creative writing in Spanish in the U.S. It also offers certificates in Spanish as a heritage language. The Department of

Comparative Cultural Studies offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Anthropology and Religious Studies, which include an extensive world area studies component.

Regrettably, the connections with Eurasia and Eastern Europe remain underdeveloped despite historic and present-day ties between Greater Houston and the region. The Greater Houston area (as well as Southwest, Central, and West Texas) has large Czech, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Jewish communities, which emerged historically as a result of immigration from Eastern Europe, and which continue to grow due to economic opportunities in Houston and adjacent areas.

The enrollment of students from these backgrounds at UH is high, and we seek to create learning opportunities to connect them with the histories and cultures of Eastern Europe. The Jewish Studies Program was established at UH in 2011, followed by the Russian and Eastern European Initiative in 2018. Both programs will greatly benefit from the introduction of new courses and scholarly networks through a visit of Fulbright scholar from the region.

Both the Jewish Studies Program and the Russian and Eastern European Initiative as well as the UH student body will additionally benefit from the Scholar-In-Residence's community engagement. The University of Houston prides itself on connecting to communities across the city. This allows academic programs, such as these two, to develop locally oriented programming and education, enriching student learning in a tangible way beyond the classroom. The programs' connections with community organizations, such as Holocaust Museum Houston and the Russian Cultural Center of Houston (to name a few), offer the Scholar-In-Residence the ability to participate in and build experiential learning opportunities for students through site visits, cultural events and lectures, and classroom visits by relevant community members. Since Houston is an international city, the Scholar-In-Residence will have local resources to draw from, which we discuss in further detail below.

As a large public university, UH enrolls about 4,000 international students. Arriving from more than 130 countries, they are drawn to UH's academic programs, research opportunities, and extraordinary diversity in the heart of the international city of Houston. UH hosts international scholars through several different programs, but it has not previously participated in the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program.

c. Short- and Long-Term Goals

The University of Houston does not have a specialist in the history of Eastern Europe and Holocaust history. This presents a gap in educational opportunities within the History and Modern and Classical Languages Departments, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Russian and Eastern European Initiative. The University of Houston will benefit from its participation in the S-I-R program by building a stronger expertise in Eastern European and Jewish Studies, which will include introduction of new courses in the UH curriculum; training of new cohorts of students with knowledge of the Eastern European region and its history, cultures, and societies, including the Jewish diaspora; reinforcing existing connections in the city of Houston and building new ones; and establishing new links with scholars and universities in Eastern Europe. This will help the university build its international profile and assist in program building across the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, expanding student and off-campus community learning opportunities. It will involve the implementation of the following goals:

Short-term goals (one to five years):

To introduce new courses in the UH curriculum on Jewish and Eastern European history, cultures, and societies, including 3000-level courses on History of Eastern European Jewry and History of

Eastern Europe since 1815, and 4000-level courses on Borderlands in a Comparative and Historical Perspective and History of the Holocaust. After the end of the Scholar-in-Residence program, these courses will be taught by UH faculty and as distant-learning courses by the visiting scholar on a regular basis and will acquire permanent course designations in the UH curriculum;

To increase the enrollment in and awareness of our Minor in Jewish Studies, as well as overall enrollment in courses in Eastern European and Jewish histories and cultures;

To lay the foundation for a Minor in Russian and Eastern European Studies (Department of Modern and Classical Languages);

To reinforce existing and establish new connections with the Eastern European community organization in Houston, such as the Czech Center Museum and Holocaust Museum Houston, which we will use to establish internships for undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in our courses and degree programs.

Long-term goals (six to ten years):

To establish the foundation for a Major in Russian and Eastern European Studies (Department of Modern and Classical Languages);

To institute an educational track in an essential field of Jewish Studies;

To start offering study abroad programs in one of the Eastern European countries;

To develop institutional connections with a partner organization in Eastern Europe for a new student exchange program.

Proposed Program and Financial Support: University of Houston

a. Oversight.

The Office of Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs will be the primary structure within the University of Houston for planning, overseeing and assessing the S-I-R grant. The Office of Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs includes the International branch responsible for arranging the visits of international scholars. The head of the office, Dr. Mark Clarke, Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs, will be responsible for overseeing the S-I-R program and holding regular meetings with the scholar and related faculty members and administrators. He will serve as the principle contact for academic arrangements.

Since the invited scholar will be hosted in the History Department, other key personnel will include Philip Howard, Department Chair; Mark Goldberg, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Jewish Studies Program; and Alexey Golubev, Assistant Professor of History and Coordinator of the Russian and Eastern European Initiative. Dr. Howard's responsibilities will include the organization of the scholar's teaching schedule, and Drs. Goldberg and Golubev will be responsible for the scholar's professional and community activities.

b. Academic Program of Scholar

Despite its strategic location, unique cultures, and historical and economic ties with the Greater Houston area, Eastern Europe remains a region that has almost no presence in the academic curriculum and research activities at the University of Houston. By inviting a scholar from the region, UH will address this critical gap in its global outreach and expertise, and will establish valuable connections with new partners in Eastern Europe and the communities in Greater Houston and

Southeast Texas with historical ties to the region. We seek to recruit a scholar from the Czech Republic or Poland, who would be able to teach courses on Eastern European history and Jewish history according to the following academic schedule: two courses in the Fall 2020 term, including a 3000-level course on History of Eastern European Jewry, and a 4000-level course on Borderlands in a Comparative and Historical Perspective, a comparative course that will address histories of Eastern European and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands co-taught with Dr. Mark Goldberg; and two courses in the Spring 2021 term, including a 4000-level course on History of the Holocaust, and a 3000-level course on History of Eastern Europe since 1815, co-taught with Dr. Alexey Golubev. To help the scholar-in-residence develop their syllabi, the Department of History's Undergraduate Advisor Ms. Aarti Sharma will assist them in course scheduling, while Drs. Goldberg and Golubev will familiarize the scholar with the teaching resources and infrastructure available through the department and the UH Libraries. To this end, we request that the scholar arrives two weeks prior to the official beginning of the 2020 Fall semester. This will also entail participation in the new faculty orientation programs at UH.

In addition to teaching these courses, which will be introduced in the UH curriculum on a permanent basis, the invited scholar will contribute to the curriculum development in the Jewish Studies Program and the Russian and Eastern European Initiative at UH. Both programs currently offer minors (a minor in Jewish studies and a minor in World Cultures and Languages with a Russian concentration). The development of new courses contributing to both programs, their increased visibility, and new connections with Eastern European partners created through the visiting scholar will help to expand the course offerings, establish connections with various ethnic communities in Greater Houston to serve as a basis for curriculum-based internships, eventually develop a Major in Russian and Eastern European Studies, and grow the Jewish Studies Program.

The scholar will be also involved in honors thesis advising in their field of expertise, as well as in academic supervision for the Mellon Research Scholars program, an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded program at UH that supports underrepresented students (Hispanic, African American, Pacific Islander) and other undergraduates with a demonstrated commitment to the goal of building a diverse academy in the humanities.

c. Plans for Other Campus Activities

The invited scholar will be involved in the activities of the following departments and centers at the University of Houston: Department of History, Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, Jewish Studies Program, Russian and Eastern European Initiative, Honors College, Center for Public History, and the Office of Global Strategies and Studies. In addition to academic conferences, workshops, and guest talks, these activities include public film screenings organized by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, community outreach events organized by the Jewish Studies Program, Russian and Eastern European Initiative, and Center for Public History, and multiple events aimed to facilitate faculty-student interaction at the Honors College. In particular, we expect the invited scholar to organize and lead at least one film screening as part of the Honors College's regular Movie and Potluck Nights, which would also attract students from the World Cultures and Literatures concentration in global cinema. As a visiting scholar of the Department of History, they will be encouraged to participate in its professional and social life, including department meetings, department colloquia, the annual open house, and graduate and faculty trivia nights.

Two student organizations have expressed interest in inviting the visiting scholar to their events: Houston Hillel, a Jewish student organization, and the UH Russian Club, whose members include

students of the various Eastern European origins. The possible formats of the visiting scholar's participation in the activities of these organizations are a guest talk, a film screening, and debates on a historical topic.

d. **Community Outreach**

Community outreach is a central component of the UH Jewish Studies Program's academic mission, and the program therefore has built ties with several community institutions around Houston. Thus, the infrastructure to collaborate on events and activities that would enrich the scholar's visit is already in place. For example, Jewish Studies has a relationship with Holocaust Museum Houston (HMH). Based on the program's faculty expertise, which does not include Eastern European Jewish history, the programming this collaboration has developed together primarily center on ties between Jews and other minority groups in the United States. Jewish Studies and Holocaust Museum Houston would welcome a specialist in Eastern European Jewish history, allowing them to develop events more directly related to the Holocaust, including a lecture and film screening and discussion. In addition, Dr. Mark Goldberg sits on the HMH Education Committee, and he will connect the S-I-R to the individuals in charge of the museum's extensive educational programming. The UH Center for Public History historically has placed UH students and graduates in a variety of public-history sites, including museums, for internships and formal employment. The relationship with HMH around the S-I-R's expertise would help continue that tradition, giving students and graduates the opportunity to apply the historical knowledge in the community that they gained on campus. The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center and local synagogues also regularly host visiting scholars, and the Jewish Studies Program has worked with these institutions on a variety of events. They provide other venues for the S-I-R to teach the public about their research expertise. The Consulate General of Israel in Houston hosts events on Jewish history, offering another potential platform for the scholar to present.

The UH Department of History has established connections with Eastern European cultural organizations (Czech Center Museum, Russian Cultural Center of Houston, Forum Houston Polonia, Slavic Alliance of Houston) and Consulates General of Russia and Poland as part of our new Russian and Eastern European Initiative. Hosting a scholar with an expertise in the history of Central Eastern Europe will give a major boost in our relations with these organizations in two major ways. First, these organizations have an active cultural agenda and will give the S-I-R an opportunity to engage local audiences about their research through guest talks and networking events. Second, we will be able to offer internships at these cultural organizations to students enrolled in the courses that the invited scholar will teach. Integrated into the UH curriculum, internships will serve as opportunities to practice and expand cultural literacy learned in the classroom, and will persist after the end of the S-I-R program. As with the Holocaust Museum, this will be valuable in terms of producing new student internships on a recurring basis and creating more opportunities for collaboration between units at UH (History, Modern & Classical Languages, The Honors College, UH Global) and cultural and professional organizations in Houston.

e. **Professional Enrichment**

The scholar-in-residence would have access to History Department travel funds for regional, national, and international academic conferences and annual meetings, as well as to the university-wide travel funding (UH Provost travel grants and UH Global travel grants). The S-I-R would participate in the Texas Jewish Studies Triangle (TJST) meetings. The UH Jewish Studies Program is a member of the TJST, an interdisciplinary cohort of faculty from around the state that meets biannually to share research, provide opportunities to collaborate, discuss pedagogy, and encourage outreach, program

exchange, and community engagement. These fully funded meetings would allow the S-I-R to participate and connect with colleagues in Jewish Studies as well as Eastern European history. The UH Jewish Studies Program annually features its own faculty in an event for students, faculty, and the public. The S-I-R would be a welcome addition to this series.

The Scholar-in-Residence program at the University of Houston will also provide the invited scholar with excellent opportunities to engage the American community of scholars of Eastern European and Jewish history. We expect them to participate in the lecture series at the UH Russian and Eastern European Initiative, as well as in the professional meetings of the Southern Conference for Slavic Studies and Association for Slavic, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies.

f. **Sustainability**

The scholar's activities would make a long-term impact at the University of Houston in multiple ways. First, the S-I-R would create new courses for the UH curriculum. While both the History Department and the Jewish Studies Program have strong international dimensions, they currently do not include an Eastern European history course. The programs in History and Jewish Studies would be able to develop a more well-rounded Jewish Studies education by including a concentration on Eastern Europe. Moreover, the scholar would help History and Jewish Studies nurture and build relationships to local organizations through on- and off-campus programming, benefiting students, faculty, and the broader Houston community. As mentioned above, these community relationships are crucial to the Jewish Studies Program's mission and to the degrees in Russian and Eastern European Studies that are currently in development.

g. **Duration of Grant Period**

We request a scholar for the full academic year, which begins on August 24, 2020, and ends on May 13, 2021. We also request to include a two-week period prior to the beginning of classes to help the scholar with course development and to allow them to attend new faculty orientation meetings at UH.

h. **Financial Support**

In addition to the funding provided by the Fulbright Commission, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Dr. Antonio Tillis, has committed a stipend of \$5,000 to the candidate. The Department of History will additionally provide up to \$1,200 of travel funds to the scholar to attend relevant conferences and meetings of professional associations. The Texas Jewish Studies Research Triangle additionally provides resources for participation in the consortium's biannual meetings that the scholar will be entitled to.

j. **Requesting Scholar Recruitment**

For recruitment purposes, please outline the following:

1. *Detailed description of courses*

HIST 3395 History of Eastern European Jewry will discuss the origins of Jewish communities in the region; the impact of border changes (such as the Partitions of Poland in the late 18th century); their legal status in different parts of Eastern Europe, as well as its changes over time; traditional culture and economy; radical Jewish organizations; emigration from the region; experience of the World War I and imperial collapse; interwar years and the rise of Nazism; the Holocaust; postwar histories of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

History of Eastern Europe since 1815 (3000-level), co-taught with Dr. Alexey Golubev as a survey course that will start with the Congress of Vienna, will examine the historical developments in the Russian and Habsburg, later Austro-Hungarian Empires until their collapse in the end of World War I, histories of their successor states, rise and fall of Communism, and the post-socialist era. History of the Holocaust (3000-level), will approach the Holocaust from a historical standpoint, examining Nazi Germany in its European and global contexts. The course will examine the causes and historical antecedents of the annihilation of six million Jews and millions of other individuals targeted as homosexuals, the disabled, Nazi political opponents, and Roma. Students will consider this history from multiple vantage points: elite and ordinary soldiers' perspectives; victims, resisters, and survivors; collaborators and onlookers.

HIST 4395 Borderlands in a Comparative and Historical Perspective, a high-level course which will be co-taught by the prospective scholar who will bring an Eastern European perspective on borderlands, and Dr. Mark Goldberg, who will bring a U.S.-Mexican perspective. The course will include an overview of theoretical scholarship on borders and borderlands, and comparative topics dealing with both regions, such as border security, exchange of knowledge across the borders, and the formation of trans-border communities.

2. *Disciplines or fields of expertise.*

We seek to recruit a **scholar with an expertise in modern Eastern European history (19th and especially 20th centuries) and a particular emphasis on anti-Semitism/Holocaust and border studies.** Ideally, a prospective scholar has several peer-reviewed publications on one or both of these topics.

3. *Scholar's qualifications* including academic degree level and years of teaching experience

We seek a scholar with a PhD or equivalent degree and at least two years of teaching experience, preferably with some experience of teaching in English.