As an eventful year in U.S. politics comes to a close, we offer this new-look annual report from the Melikian Center. We do so in anticipation that come January, think tanks will pass depressing verdicts on the state of world politics. Freedom House, after all, began 2018 by titling its annual flagship report “Democracy in Crisis.” And as we approach the end of 2018, the bad news from the Melikian Center’s region of focus seems deafening. Electoral campaigning in Ukraine has been disrupted by Russia’s decision to attack and seize three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews. Following President Erdogan’s extension of presidential powers, members of Turkey’s political opposition face ever-increasing sanctions. And Hungary—a member of the European Union—has forced the internationally-ranked Central European University to leave Budapest, and relocate to Vienna.

The Melikian Center is committed to building the capacity of different U.S. publics to understand the stakes and the implications of these stories. We also seek to ensure that good news from the region gets heard too—especially from countries where the Center is actively engaged. In 2018, Armenians launched their own “velvet revolution;” Kazakhstan sent peacekeepers to Lebanon as part of the United Nations mission; and in Macedonia, citizens resolved to move beyond destructive nationalism.

Besides research, teaching and outreach to illuminate these stories, this has been a year of reorganization at the Center, to make optimal use of resources as we enhance our national academic standing and support colleagues in the region who see universities as key agents for positive societal transformation. It has been a year of affirmation and success, as our summer language programs continue to win grant support and strengthen our reputation for high-quality instruction in critical and less-commonly-taught languages. And above all it has been a year of interaction and network-building, as we’ve striven to create mutually beneficial partnerships on campus and beyond.

These partnerships are already yielding dividends. With support from the Center on the Future of War and from the Kopf conference fund at the School of Politics and Global Studies, we are convening scholars to analyze the enduring consequences of NATO’s 1999 war in Kosovo. This event will include a keynote address by New America Foundation Director Anne-Marie Slaughter on smart foreign policy. In collaboration with the McCain Institute and the Phoenix Council on Foreign Relations, we are planning to provide a range of briefings on the Ukraine’s presidential election scheduled for March 31. And support from multiple ASU sources, including President Crow’s office, will for the first time bring a Global Teaching Fellow to ASU from Central European University. Through a new class titled “Democratic Erosion,” ASU students will gain unique perspective on this real-life, contemporary Hungarian case-study—and, perhaps, participate in formulating effective responses to the broader problem.

As ever, we are so grateful for all your support, inspiration and encouragement for the Center. The end of 2018 will mark one more transition, as we will be relocating from Coor Hall to the Computing Commons on East Orange St, at the very heart of ASU’s Tempe campus. We will be there while renovation continues in our anticipated permanent home, the Languages and Literatures building.
## Headline Events

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16**
“Hungary today: A Conversation”
Peter Galbacs, Budapest Business School, Fulbright Scholar at ASU’s Center for the Study of Economic Liberty, Balint Szalai, Business Journalist at index.hu, Hubert Humphrey Fellow at ASU’s Walter Cronkite School

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30**
“Webcraft in the Balkans: Building Resilience and Stabilization Networks.”
Anne-Marie Slaughter, President and CEO New America

**MONDAY, MARCH 18**
“Refuseniks and Rights Defenders: Jews and the Soviet Dissident Movement”
Benjamin Nathans, University of Pennsylvania
Co-hosted with the Center for Jewish Studies, through The Lowe Family Lecture Series: Totalitarianism, Dissent and Democratic Institutions

**FRIDAY, APRIL 5**
Global Forum: The Silk Road: Past and Present Iterations (II). Co-convened with ASU’s Center for Asian Research, and Maricopa Community College Center for Learning and Innovation.

**MONDAY, APRIL 15**
“Nadia Murad, The Yazidis of Iraq and ISIS: A ghostwriter’s story”
Jenna Krajeski, author and freelance journalist

**DATES AWAITING FINALIZATION**
“Violence and Its Alternatives: Notes from the Fight for the Rule of Law in the Republic of Macedonia.”
Radmila Šekerinska, Minister of Defense Republic of Macedonia
2019 Mary Choncoff Lecture on Southeastern Europe.

“The U.S. is the primary enemy of Russia - how the Kremlin uses the propaganda to increase Putin’s support”
Dmitry Goncharov, National Research University Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg.
Alexey Gorbachev, Chief Deputy Political Editor, Nezavisimaya Gazeta and Hubert Humphrey Fellow at ASU’s Walter Cronkite School

## Works in Progress

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23**
“Capitalism and the (In)Stability of Empires: Austria-Hungary in a Global Perspective”
Mladen Medved, Melikian Center

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13**
“The Constitutional Court in Kazakhstan”
Margaret Hanson, School of Politics and Global Studies

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27**
“An Interloper in Asia: Yugoslavs Join the Developing World”, Robert Niebuhr, Barrett, The Honors College

## Film Series

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 24**
*Wag the Dog*
Introduced by Keith Brown, Melikian Center

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21**
*Miracle*
Introduced by Steven Beschloss
ASU Media Relations

**THURSDAY, MARCH 28**
*Fuse*
Introduced by Mladen Medved
Melikian Center

**THURSDAY, APRIL 18**
*The Cruise (Rejs)*
Introduced by Michael Ostling
Barrett, The Honors College

For updated information on date, time and location, and details of additional events, please visit [https://melikian.asu.edu](https://melikian.asu.edu)
Year in Review Spring 2018

17 JANUARY 2018
Works-in-Progress Lunch Series:
Discussion of doctoral dissertation chapter. Erin Hutchinson, ASU alumna and doctoral student of history at Harvard University.

26 JANUARY 2018
“Traveling Affinities: Politics of Belongings Beyond East and West”
Works-in-Progress Lunch Series:
Discussion of the manuscript that studies eighteenth and nineteenth century French and Ottoman writings and archival documents that defy easy geopolitical narratives. Neveser Köker, Honors Faculty Fellow, Barrett, The Honors College.

13 FEBRUARY 2018
“Oh Living with Russian Ambition: Perspectives from Central Europe and the Baltics”
Panel Discussion. Panelists: Vaira Vike-Freiberga, former President, Republic of Latvia; Michael Kraus, Professor, Middlebury College; Holger Roonema, Hubert Humphrey Fellow at ASU from Estonia; and Szabolcs Panyi, Hubert Humphrey Fellow at ASU from Hungary.

21 FEBRUARY 2018
“Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Politics of Memory in the post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe”
Lecture. Presenter: Michael Kraus, Department of Political Science, Middlebury College.

14 MARCH 2018
The Search for a Cold War Legitimacy: Foreign Policy and Tito’s Yugoslavia
Book Discussion, Author: Robert Niebuhr, Barrett, The Honors College. Discussants: Danko Šipka, School of International Letters and Cultures; and Andrej Milivojevic, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley

28 MARCH 2018
The Balkan Route
Film screening & discussion with filmmakers. The Balkan Route tells the untold story of refugees in their quest for safety and a better life. Filmmakers: Bailey Netsch and Tea Price, both Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication graduates.

4 APRIL 2018
“Religious Freedom and the Spiritual Marketplace in Post-Soviet Russia”
Works-in-Progress Lunch Series;
Author: Eugene Clay, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies

25 APRIL 2018
“The Kosovan Gorani Ethnolect: A Border Enclave in Search of (Linguistic) Identity”
Lecture. Presenter: Motoki Nomachi, Faculty of Letters, Hokkaido University.

2 MAY 2018
“The Role of Parliament in the Rule of Law in Kazakhstan”
Discussion. Issues of the role of the Parliament, the rule of law, policy for security and stability in the region, relations between Kazakhstan and the U.S., and the impact on Kazakhstan of U.S. relations with other countries in the region, such as Russia. Discussants from the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Snezhanna Imasheva, Mazhilis (lower house) Deputy, Serik Sapiyev, Mazhilis Deputy, Serik Aidarbekov, Chief of the Office of the Mazhilis, Dinara Kuanyshskaliyeva, Department Sector Chief in the Mazhilis, Yerkhanat Kakabay Legal Consultant to the Mazhilis.

3 APRIL 2018
The Soviet Century
Book Discussion, Karl Schlägel, European University Viadrina (Germany).

18 APRIL 2018
Childhood Schooling in (Post)Socialist Societies: Memories of Everyday Life
Book Discussion. Author: Iveta Silova, Center for the Advanced Studies in Global Education, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College. Discussants: Martin Matušík, School of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies; Claudia Sadowski-Smith, Department of English; and Anna Cichopec-Gajraj, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies.

26 APRIL 2018
“Language Emancipation of Slavic Microlanguages: A Comparative Case Study”
Lecture. Presenter: Motoki Nomachi, Faculty of Letters, Hokkaido University.
13 SEPTEMBER 2018
*The Edge of Heaven*
Film screening. Introduction by Neveser Köker, Barrett, the Honors College.

4 OCTOBER 2018
*My Happy Family*
Film screening. Introduction by Irina Levin, The Melikian Center.

19 OCTOBER 2018
*Global Forum: The Silk Road- Past and Present Iterations*
Presentations [Center for Asian Research (CAR) and The Melikian Center (MCREEES)]
Presenters: Alexander Plum, CAR; Margaret Hanson, School of Politics and Global Studies and MCREEES, Huaïyu Chen, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies and CAR, Laura Popova, Barrett, the Honors College and MCREEES. Hosted by International and Intercultural Education at Maricopa Community Colleges.

8 NOVEMBER 2018
*Citizen-Diplomacy: An Arizonan Guide*
Global Dialogue series at Maricopa Community Colleges
Keith Brown, Melikian Center.

8 NOVEMBER 2018
*Luna Papa*
Film Screening. Introduction by Ana Hedberg-Olenina, School of International Letters and Cultures.

28 NOVEMBER 2018
*Theorizing Nationalist Movement*
Works-in-Progress Lunch Series; Presenter: Irina Levin, Melikian Center.

26 SEPTEMBER 2018
*The New Immigrant Whiteness: Race, Neoliberalism, and Post-Soviet Migration in the United States*
Book Discussion. Author, Claudia Sadowski-Smith, Department of English. Discussants: Iveta Silova, Center for the Advanced Studies in Global Education, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College; Laurie Manchester and Anna Cichopek-Gajraj, both of the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies.

18 OCTOBER 2018
*Global Dialogue - Seeking Citizenship: Exile and Belonging in the Former Soviet Union*
Presentation by Irina Levin, The Melikian Center.

1 NOVEMBER 2018
*The Life and Death of the Russian Revolution*
Lecture by Yuri Slezkine, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley
Co-hosted with the Center for Jewish Studies, through The Lowe Family Lecture Series: Totalitarianism, Dissent and Democratic Institutions.

3 NOVEMBER 2018
*The House of Government*
Reading and Discussion, Changing Hands Book Store
Author: Yuri Slezkine, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley.

5 NOVEMBER 2018
*Jews and Ukrainians: A Millennium of Co-Existence*
Lecture, Arizona Jewish Historical Society
Author: Paul Robert Magocsi, Departments of History and Political Science & Ukrainian Studies, University of Toronto.

14 NOVEMBER 2018
*Sustainable Development and Education for Sustainability in Kosovo-Where Does it Stand?*
Works-in-Progress Lunch Series
Presenter: Zeqir Veselaj, Fulbright Scholar to the U.S., University of Prishtina (Kosovo).
2018 was a year of expansion, innovation and renewal for the Melikian Center’s Critical Languages Institute. In many respects, things were much as they have been over the past decade. In May, just as many ASU undergraduates were packing up and heading out of Tempe for the summer, almost one hundred committed beginning language learners took up residence on campus. Their goal; in 7-8 weeks of intensive, immersive study, with CLI’s exceptional faculty, to gain the grounding that usually takes a full academic year. And then in July around a third of those students traveled to CLI’s overseas programs, for four weeks in-country study alongside another fifty intermediate and advanced students in six countries.

These hybrid and overseas programs are built to serve student needs in a world where intercultural competence, perspective-taking and team-building are vital.

At CLI, students do not simply attend traditional language classes, and earn college credit. In the 7- or 8-week domestic programs at ASU’s Tempe campus, first-year students couple their language study with daily lectures and events focused on the region’s geopolitics and history, as well as career building, and different genres of writing, including scholarship applications and convergent journalism. The result is a lively exchange among students and faculty of different backgrounds and generations, across a dozen languages and cultures.

CLI’s 8-week overseas immersion programs for intermediate and advanced learners, as well as the 4-week in-country extension that many first-year students choose, take the cultural encounter to another level. Most students live with host families, and often begin life-long friendships which help to shape and influence the way they see the world. Returning CLI students emphasize the value of using their language for everyday interactions, and the respect they learn for other countries and cultures.
CLI has sustained its offerings in less-commonly-taught languages (LCTL) over many years. 2018 saw a major new addition, prompted by geopolitics, and made possible by start-up funding. Thanks to the Mykytyn Trust, James and Patience Huntwork, Stephen and Sandra Batalden, and Branch 3 of the Ukrainian National Women’s League of America, 2018 saw the successful introduction of first-year Ukrainian. The first cohort included six students—a mix of undergraduates, graduates, and non-students. On the basis of this positive response, CLI plans to add a second-year (8-week) program in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2019, as well as a first-year (4-week) extension.

With support from the Melikian Advisory Board, we hope to also relaunch first-year Macedonian in 2019. Macedonian was the first language ever offered by CLI in 1991. Ties between the country’s capital, Skopje and Tempe date back to 1971, when the two cities’ leaders made the first sister-city relationship between the United States and Eastern Europe. We hope to spark renewed interest in the geopolitically important country and region.

Many CLI students were beneficiaries of two federal grants that supported CLI in 2018. The State Department’s Title VIII fellowships provide funding for U.S. graduate students for the study of Eastern Europe and the independent states of the former Soviet Union. This prestigious grant is managed by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and over the past twenty years has produced a network of scholars and professionals who can draw on their expert knowledge to guide policy decisions and shape public debate on this important region of the world. In 2018, Title VIII funding provided full scholarship support for 24 graduate students at CLI.

The Department of Defense and the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) support Project Global Officer, which provided direct support for 37 ROTC cadets and midshipmen to study Indonesian, Russian, and Turkish with CLI in 2018. Each cadet or midshipmen participated in one of CLI’s hybrid or overseas programs. For many, this was the first time they had left the country, or even their home state. As one four-star general and keynote speaker from a recent conference remarked, “We need every future officer to experience another country and culture now. Otherwise, the first time they do will be with a rifle in their hand.”

Since CLI 2018, the Melikian Center has successfully applied for renewed support from these two important programs. In CLI 2019, Title VIII will provide full-ride fellowships to 22 U.S. graduate students wishing to study Albanian, Armenian, BCS, Macedonian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian or Uzbek; while Project Global Officer will support 24 cadets and midshipmen studying Russian and Indonesian.

These successful grant applications are a direct result of the Melikian Center’s continuing commitment to provide quality, proficiency-based and culturally-oriented instruction through CLI programs. Together with generous support from the Melikian Center Advisory Board, other community donations, and the student tuition waivers approved by the University Provost, Title VIII and Project GO sustain CLI’s commitment to broadening access.

In 2018, CLI awarded $624,333 in direct scholarships, while the value of student tuition waivers totaled $999,767.

Building on the momentum from 2018, CLI is poised for success in 2019 and beyond. For more information about CLI, please visit our website: cli.asu.edu.
In 2018, the Melikian Center hosted its most successful Russian STARTALK program to date. STARTALK is a federally-funded program to introduce junior high and high school students to critical languages and 2018 marked the third year of ASU’s participation.

The Melikian Center’s program, led by Andrew Gunn, is free for all participants—the program currently offers 28 places—and runs over three weeks. Because it runs concurrently with CLI, students share their language-learning experience with undergraduates, graduates and lifelong learners, and participate in the many co-curricular events and talks that happen during CLI.

Furthermore, STARTALK students interact with host families from CLI’s overseas program in Kyrgyzstan during weekly Skype sessions. These sessions, mediated by instructors, offer students a unique window into a different way of life, and a chance to practice their newly-acquired Russian skills with sympathetic native speakers. The 2018 program attracted a diverse and competitive group of junior high and high school applicants from the greater Phoenix area.

Yuliana Gunn (Faculty Associate at ASU), returned as lead instructor on the program, working with doctoral graduate students Philip Skorokhodov from ASU and Aleksey Novikov from the University of Arizona. Their hard work and energy, coupled with the application of CLI experience in curriculum design,
paid dividends: student test scores exceeded all expectations. 96% of STARTALK students met the program’s aspirational goal, advancing from true beginners to Novice-Mid in oral proficiency on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages scale (ACTFL). More than a third of the students showed still greater progress, reaching Novice-High or Intermediate level. On the strength of these outcomes, we anticipate continued support from the Defense Language Agency, and have begun planning for STARTALK 2019. Besides offering a new cohort of high school students a taste of Russian language and culture, the program is an integral component of our commitment to lifelong learning. Though STARTALK, and our wider outreach to area high school and community college partners, we seek to fire the imagination and feed the curiosity of young, culturally-minded students, and make them aware of a pathway to cross-cultural expertise through continued language study at CLI, ASU, and institutions of higher education around the country.

"I was a Fulbright FLTA at the University of Utah in 2011-2012. When I heard that there was an open position in CLI, I didn’t hesitate even once because teaching in the US with the Fulbright scholarship had been by far the best teaching experience of my professional career at that time. I also heard lots of good things from the former Turkish instructor, which turned out to be all true. After 4 years, I can say that teaching in CLI has been an excellent professional development opportunity for me. I am able to work with a group of talented colleagues who teach different languages and dedicated CLI staff. It gives me the opportunity to work in diverse multicultural environments which open up new horizons in my life filled with excitement and fulfillment.

One thing that I like about my language classes in CLI is the great motivation and enthusiasm that my American students hold during the program. My main goal is to make language learning authentic and fun by presenting different communicative activities in the classes and encourage students to practice the language in real life settings.

Culture is also a very important part of the Turkish program. Not only do the students learn Turkish language in the classroom but they are also engaged with Turkish culture in different contexts. For example, they sing Turkish songs, cook Turkish food, prepare Turkish coffee and perform Hacivat Karagoz shadow play.

Language is a communication tool and the diverse nature of the USA makes foreign language learning necessary to understand different mindsets of people from different cultures. Since language and culture are intertwined, learning a foreign language makes it easy for the American students to build cultural understanding and provide deep insights into how other people see the world."
Core to the success and reputation of the Critical Languages Institute is the quality of our overseas programs. For that reason, we regularly visit providers and partners, to ensure that classes are being conducted in a modern and professional way, that the students are living in reasonable accommodations, and that the conditions of our contracts are being met. In 2018, after a year as Interim Director, I took on the challenge: 26,000 miles and five countries in three weeks.

I traveled first to Denpasar, Bali in the company of our ROTC students on Project GO, who make up the majority of our students of Indonesian. The language (a standardized form of Malay) is currently identified as critical to U.S. national security, with over 200 million speakers in the world’s fourth most populous country. Indonesia is majority Muslim, but culturally diverse: Bali, for example, is 83% Hindu, and feels very different from the other islands. Temples to the major deities are everywhere, and family offerings of flowers and food fill the sidewalk. The sights, sounds and smells offer all kinds of opportunities for co-curricular programming, and a truly immersive experience for students. Combined with the teaching expertise of resident director Peter Suwarno and instructor Nyoman Riasa, this makes for impressive learning outcomes. Some Denpasar students have achieved ACTFL level 1+ or 2 in spoken proficiency after only one summer of study, which puts CLI on the leader board in Project GO evaluations.
My next stop was Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, where we have nearly 40 CLI students studying Russian. It’s a familiar city to me; I served as resident director for 3 years, enjoying the cultural and ethnic diversity of this former Soviet Republic. Bishkek, the capital, is in the north of the country. The region is nominally Muslim; I’ve never met anyone there who prays five times a day, but I do emphasize to our students Kyrgyz values of hospitality, fierce loyalty to family, and a tendency to avoid alcohol. Our students also have the opportunity to get a taste of ancient Kyrgyz nomadic culture, in trips outside the city in which they ride horses and get hands-on experience assembling a yurt.

CLI is proud to have offered Armenian, with its deep Christian heritage and unique alphabet, for almost two decades. Though the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh remains “frozen,” and tensions with Turkey persist, day-to-day life is peaceful in Yerevan.

Albania, my next stop, has a far different religious past. Our two 2018 students

On my weekend in Armenia I accompanied our students to Geghard Monastery, which contains an ancient sanctuary dug into a mountainside. The inner sanctum has a seven-second echo that impelled me to sing “Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulcia ferens pondera, quae sola fuisti digna sustinere regem caelor um et dominum” (Sweet is the wood, sweet are the nails, sweeter still are the wounds he bore, for you only were worthy to bear the King of Heaven). As I sang a capella, my Protestant heart singing the Catholic liturgy in an Armenian Apostolic church, it felt as if the angels themselves stood still to listen.

in Tirana were particularly sensitive to the legal and political ramifications of the legacies of communism—a period where religious practice was outlawed, and mosques, churches and synagogues shut down. Daniel Klingenberg (left) came to us in CLI Tirana after a year’s work as a Fulbrighter, educating Albanians in the norms of international law, while (right) Sam Eisenberg’s interest in Albanian was sparked in the course of studies in political science. In the picture, instructor Eljon Doce (center) and our students are striking the double-headed eagle pose outside Krujë Castle, where national hero Skanderbeg withstood three sieges by the Ottoman Empire.

My last stop (before the 14-hour haul back to Phoenix) was with our Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian (BCS) program in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. In the 1990s, Bosnians fled war to find refuge abroad; today, while many countries have closed their borders, Bosnia is providing shelter to Syrians fleeing violence. I was struck by this quirk of history, and also by a common global concern. When I spoke with young Bosnians, they echoed a theme I had heard everywhere I traveled: frustration at the lack of opportunities for employment in their homeland. In Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Albania and Bosnia a generation is coming of age who simply want to have a normal life and family, but see no way to realize that dream. This is, of course, a transnational problem—affecting also the Middle East, and much of the United States. My hope is that CLI students with their multilingual education, study abroad and expanded horizons, can in the long run contribute to good policy decisions that will help resolve this widespread frustration.
I have been working on a novel about the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine for the past two years in the Creative Writing MFA Program at Arizona State University. For the summer of 2018, I was awarded a travel fellowship grant from the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing to finish research on the project, and I was fortunate that the Melikian Center, through their Critical Languages Institute, was also offering Ukrainian for the first time that summer before I went abroad. I was selected as a Title VIII Fellow and awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research in order to fund my Ukrainian language studies through CLI.

It was important to me to learn the language of the people I’m writing about – even if I hadn’t had the opportunity to travel to Kyiv, I knew I needed to access the language in order to connect to the culture and the spirit of the Ukrainian people. Slavic languages are difficult to learn for native English speakers, and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from a native Ukrainian speaker. And, as a first-time solo-traveler on an international trip, after completing the program, I felt infinitely more empowered navigating Kyiv – a European city that still has limited English-speakers. It was a life-changing experience for which I am deeply grateful.

Through the Critical Languages Institute, perhaps one of the most valuable experiences I had was being able to connect to individuals who have a common interest in Ukrainian culture. Through the course of the summer, we listened to a number of contemporary and folk songs, and discussed and debated Ukrainian history and current events. This is simply a community I would have never connected with if it hadn’t been for the Critical Languages Institute, and I am thankful for it.

Being a writer is a lonely path in itself and so writing about a region of the world that not many Americans understand can also be a further isolating experience. I often get the question from my peers, “Why Ukraine?” The honest answer is that this project chose me – I wasn’t looking for the Revolution of Dignity, and when it found me, it moved me. The strength and resiliency of the Ukrainian people is incredible, inspiring. I can’t imagine a single person who could look at those images and not be moved by them. I remember seeing the footage of the demonstrations at Maidan, and I started researching Ukrainian history, and I started to see the tapestry of interwoven narratives that led to the protests, that have led to the War in Donbas. From there, the story just opened on the page, and I’ve been at work.

I’ve been fortunate that while working on this project, opportunities have unfolded through the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing, the Melikian Center, and the U.S. State Department in order to make the writing of this book possible. I am currently in my last year in my program, and I hope to have this novel completed by February 2019, though I know it will live with me long after.
I’m Nikki Hinshaw, a junior studying Human Communication and Political Science at Barrett, the Honors College at ASU. I am the 2018-2019 Barrett Fellow at the Melikian Center. I was excited to learn about the Center’s collaboration with the Institute for Humanities Research through the project titled “Citizen-Diplomacy, Past and Future: A Case-Study of the Tempe Sister Cities Program, 1971-2021.” My current plan for my Honors thesis is to trace the influence of the Sister Cities program on past participants, by looking at how they’ve engaged in globally-minded careers or activities. The opportunity to analyze almost fifty years of cross-cultural encounters, in which almost a thousand Tempe high school students have traveled abroad, and welcomed visitors into their homes, is very exciting.

I first became interested in the field of citizen diplomacy after studying abroad in Ghana, West Africa. I realized how powerful people-to-people interactions were in eliminating preconceived notions or stereotypes we may have about a culture or a people. Through working and living abroad, I was able to gain a new understanding of Africa; a continent that is often portrayed negatively in U.S. media and popular culture. Simultaneously, I was able to serve as an ambassador for the United States, providing insight into American culture for my Ghanaian classmates and coworkers. My study abroad experience, combined with my involvement in mentoring international students on campus, inspired me to learn more about citizen diplomacy as a career path and research field. I strongly believe that citizen diplomacy efforts are essential in reducing discrimination, eliminating stereotypes, and building a more peaceful, tolerant world.

My name is Hailey Avery and I am a Junior at ASU studying Finance and Russian. I began my fellowship with the Melikian Center in the fall of 2017, during my sophomore year. My pathway to the Center started when I began studying Russian—a language I’ve come to love—because of my interest in working internationally in finance. After two semesters of Russian, I became curious about Eastern Europe, especially those countries with economic systems organized along socialist lines, and how such countries have evolved after the end of communism. Through reading and interviews this past year, I had the chance to learn about the experiences of Western professionals who contributed to upgrading East European laws on asset valuation, accounting and bankruptcy, and facilitating marketization. My honors thesis will build on this experience, and focus on financial regulation in post-communist states.

In Spring 2019, I will be interning with the Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C. Through this amazing opportunity, I have been assigned to collaborate with foreign regulators from Eastern Europe. I look forward to gaining insight into the present state of these countries’ financial markets and how they have evolved over the past 25 years. I am fascinated by the topic because many US agencies (such as the SEC and USAID) have given large amounts of aid and training to these countries. It will also be interesting to see the regulations that are in effect and compare them to U.S. regulations.
WHERE WE WORK

The Melikian Center maintains a strong roster of faculty and graduate student affiliates with research and teaching interests in Russia, Eurasia and East Europe. 71 faculty and 17 graduate students from diverse disciplines work in 29 countries across the region, with the largest number in the Russian Federation. As well as offering intensive and immersive summer programs in twelve languages on the Tempe campus, The Melikian Center’s Critical Languages Institute operates 7 study abroad programs.
CLI Overseas Programs

- Tirana - Yerevan - Sarajevo
- Bishkek - St. Petersburg - Kyiv
- Bali, Indonesia (not shown on map)
This fall I have had the pleasure of curating the Melikian Center’s film series. As an anthropologist and scholar of migration, I wanted to feature engrossing stories of Eurasians on the move. The Eurasian Journeys series invites viewers to travel, if ever so briefly, with the people they see on the screen. The films in the series, *The Edge of Heaven*, *My Happy Family*, *Luna Papa*, and “Mankurt” (an animated short shown along with *Luna Papa*), grapple with contemporary issues that are as provocative as they are familiar—the impacts of international migration on individuals and nation-states, the shifting of power dynamics within “traditional” families, and the consequences of violent conflict and economic collapse on ordinary lives. It was my hope that coming along on these “journeys” would inspire viewers to consider the roles that various forms of movement play in both sustaining and disrupting social worlds.

The many ASU students who have attended these screenings have done just that! In our post-screening discussions, they have asked questions that reflect their newly minted curiosity about previously unknown worlds and their ability to make connections between these worlds and their own experiences. Some of these students have told us that the films of Eurasian Journeys have been the first foreign films they have ever seen. Having overcome their apprehensions, they have read beyond the text of the subtitles and into the inner lives of the characters. This was most aptly demonstrated by one student’s response to *The Edge of Heaven*, which I will paraphrase here: the film demonstrated that people from many different walks of life can come together and care for each other in their most vulnerable states. 

Irina Levin
Melikian Center

**The Eurasian Journeys series invites viewers to travel, if ever so briefly, with the people they see on the screen.**

Graduate student Garine Palandjian is on a journey to understand her own heritage and heal the wounds of past violence.

As a child in Rhode Island, Garine Palandjian learned her family’s stories of escape from the 1915 genocide, and attended Armenian school. It was only after college, and teaching in Armenian school in California, that she began to re-examine some the certainties she had accepted without question. In search of broader perspectives, she earned a Master’s in Comparative Education at Lehigh University, traveled to Turkey (where both her mother’s and father’s family homes are located), and worked for four years at the American University of Armenia as a student advisor. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies in Educational Policy and Evaluation at ASU’s Mary Lou Fulton Teachers’ College.

Garine’s research examines how national education systems—especially history curricula and teacher training—can advance or hinder initiatives in conflict transformation and peace building. Taking inspiration from authors who have paid the price for speaking out against narrow nationalism—including Azerbaijani novelist Akram Aylisli, and Turkish journalist Hrant Dink—she seeks to identify strategies through which Armenian communities, at home and in diaspora, can escape what she terms the “nostalgia trap” which fosters animosity toward neighboring countries. As well as analyzing the way language is taught, she proposes to highlight the experiences and stories of teachers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey who have participated in exchanges and collaborations with their peers across borders, and sought to incorporate broader perspectives into their classroom practice. Her ultimate goal—in keeping with ASU’s commitment to community engagement—is to inspire new dialogues that come to terms with fractured, contentious pasts, and acknowledge our shared humanity.
Professor Zeqir Veselaj, a member of the Graduate Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina in Kosovo, spent Fall 2018 as a Fulbright Scholar at the Melikian Center.

Professor Veselaj earned his PhD in Biology in the University of Tirana in Albania. As a Senate elected member of the Steering Board of the University of Prishtina, he has advanced an agenda of reform to raise the University’s rankings, advocating for professional standards, transparency and greater internal integration and external cooperation.

His research specialization is environmental education and sustainable development, and his work focuses on developing curricula, teaching resources, and pedagogical expertise in the teacher education sector in Kosovo, for pre- and in-service teachers. He is one of the authors of “Green Pack- Kosovo edition,” a multimedia educational kit about sustainable development for the students of secondary education level in Kosovo.

His Fulbright project is entitled “Education for Practical Sustainability Solutions in Kosovo.” Education for sustainable development (ESD) is one of the core concepts of the new Kosovo pre-university curriculum. However, this concept has not yet been fully introduced or integrated into teacher training. The primary goal of the project is to develop capacity to teach and conduct applied research in the field of education for sustainable development, by analyzing contemporary sustainability solutions in practice, and their introduction into pre-service and in-service teacher training.

Among the project goals is the design of a comprehensive training package for ESD for in-service teachers and other interested stakeholders, including a standardized methodology for ecological and carbon footprint measurement. This training will be delivered through two new interdisciplinary units at the University of Prishtina that were established during USAID’s Transformational Leadership Program: the Institute for Research and Development of Education and to the Center for Energy and Sustainability of the University of Prishtina. “We established those two units based on ASU innovations in University design, thanks to the input of our Melikian Center colleagues Steve Batalden and Shahin Berisha” reports Professor Veselaj. “By learning from international experience and best practices, including ASU’s commitment to university design, the University of Prishtina has already made swift and measurable improvements.”

Professor Veselaj’s deep commitment to improving Kosovo’s education system is shaped by his personal experiences. While he was an undergraduate in Prishtina in the early 1990s, Serbian authorities closed the University and forced faculty and students to set up a parallel system of higher education in Albanian language. In 1999, when his son was just a year old and recovering from an operation, Veselaj and his immediate family spent four months as war refugees in neighboring Macedonia, and returned to find that Serbian paramilitaries had destroyed their home and killed many of their relatives. His generation has faced, and overcome, enormous challenges in their professional and personal lives. Through his Fulbright project and his administrative leadership at the University of Prishtina, Professor Veselaj hopes to lay firm foundations for the next generation of smart, ambitious students to succeed, and take Kosovo forward.

Period of the Project: August 15 - December 15, 2018
Two new faculty members joined ASU whose work focuses on the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia—where Russia and China are making political alliances and economic deals, and where democratically-minded leaders and citizens nevertheless still look to Europe and the United States for support and inspiration.

**Dave Fossum** is an ethnomusicologist, who joins ASU after a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh. Combining extensive ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, he examines how ideas about musical creativity and intellectual property interact, especially in the relationship between indigenous music producers and the broadcasting industry. In addition to working on traditional music in Turkmenistan, his current project focuses on how Turkey’s cultural policies and copyright law impact long-practiced patterns of cooperation and borrowing in composition and performance.

**Margaret Hanson** is a political scientist, who spent 2017-18 as a postdoctoral fellow at the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies at the University of Michigan. Specializing in Comparative Politics, Professor Hanson conducts research on political systems in the former Soviet Union, with a focus on the roles of formal and informal institutions in different structures of governance. She is currently working on a book manuscript which compares how authoritarian leaders in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan use law and courts to solve information problems, manage their subordinates, and curtail the threat of mass protests.

Professors Fossum and Hanson will bring their own extensive in-country experience to their teaching in the classroom. Several other new affiliates, meanwhile, are creating opportunities for ASU students to study abroad in the key borderlands of the Balkans, Turkey and Eastern Europe, and gain new perspectives on contemporary international tensions, as well as patterns of intercultural encounter and cooperation.

In the School of Politics and Global Studies, **Henry Sivak** and **Daniel Pout** are developing a two-week summer program in which students will visit cities in Macedonia and Greece and examine how nationalism has affected relations both across their border, and within these historically polylingual and multiethnic countries.

**Neveser Koker**, a Barrett Faculty Fellow since 2017, plans to lead a May 2019 program in Turkey for honors students. Students who take “Mediterranean Crossroads: Past and Present” will discover the country’s rich history as a meeting point between Europe and the Middle East.

In spring semester 2018, **Andi Hess** led a group of 17 undergraduate students through Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Hungary to study identity and conflict. The students visited a variety of religious sites, museums, institutes, and other sites that showcased each location’s distinctive contribution to the history of the region.
Reflecting on the impact of the study abroad experience, one student reported “When we traveled through different cities and countries, we heard people talk about the same event but they each had their own strong, very different opinions about how they believe it happened. It was challenging at first to remove my own preconceived opinions but once I applied the same principles that I had learned from my interdisciplinary courses, I was able to gain a much greater appreciation and understanding of the topic.”

The in-depth field experience of Melikian affiliate faculty in different countries represents a tremendous resource for ASU students who are looking to expand their horizons, and build their cross-cultural competence.

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**Notable Affiliates Activities**

**Hilde Hoogenboom** spent Spring 2018 at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina continuing her academic-year placement as a resident associate. She was working on her project, “Noble Rot: Corruption, Civil Society, and Literary Elites in Russia.”

On August 30, 2018, in a ceremony held at the Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest, **Ileana Orlich** was awarded a medal by the president of Romania, Klaus Werner Iohannis. The award recognizes Romanians who “promote Romanian language and national identity abroad.”

**Victor Peskin** gave an invited research presentation and policy briefing for Philip S. Kosnett, the incoming U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo at the State Department in Washington, D.C. Peskin’s September 2018 briefing focused on the relationship between international criminal justice and post-war political reconciliation within Kosovo and between Kosovo and Serbia. The State Department’s Executive Analytic Exchange on the Republic of Kosovo also featured experts who presented on the ongoing normalization talks between Kosovo and Serbia.

In June 2018, **Martin Matuštík** took part in a two-week interfaith seminar at the Elijah Interfaith Institute in Jerusalem, where he is spending the 2018-19 academic year as a Lady Davis Fellow.
In 2018, Arizona State University’s Design Aspirations shaped much of the work of the Melikian Center. Pursuing our core commitments to student success, community partnerships and global engagement, the Center invested in relationship-building with a broad range of collaborators, on campus and far beyond.

Within ASU, students have had the opportunity to interact directly with outstanding civil society activists and advocates participating in the McCain Institute’s Next Generation Leaders program, and the Humphrey Fellows program at the Cronkite School for Journalism and Mass Communication. Going forward, we anticipate closer collaboration, especially in research and programming on the vital issues around media literacy, civic education and the corrosive effects of disinformation, that confront democracies around the world.

In Phoenix and Arizona, we have begun conversations with community organizations including Tempe Sister Cities, Global Ties Arizona, and People to People International, as well as the Phoenix Council on Foreign Relations, to leverage our respective resources and expertise, especially in the important field of citizen diplomacy. All these organizations know that their programs have an impact on those who participate, whether they are parliamentarians from Kazakhstan, fascinated by the workings of city government, or students meeting their peers in Macedonia, Poland or the Czech Republic. But they share a common desire to communicate that impact to broader audiences, and to document and share lessons learned and best practices for Arizona’s future global civil entrepreneurs.

We are also looking to build or rebuild partnerships with other in-state educational institutions. We plan to extend our collaboration with Maricopa Community Colleges, following our successful Global Forum co-hosted with ASU’s Center for Asian Research, and focused on the Silk Roads. In Spring 2019, under the leadership of Don Livingston, Arizona’s branch of AATSEEL (American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages) will hold a graduate student conference at the University of Arizona in Tucson, with the goal of fostering dialogue and exchange.

On the national stage, the Center has been part of professional networks for many years—especially thanks to the national
reputation of the Critical Languages Institute, which draws graduate students from leading programs and highly-motivated ROTC students from across the USA. ASU faculty are also well-represented in the leadership of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Eugene Clay, Robert Niebuhr, David Siroky and Laurie Stoff all serve on committees of affiliate groups, and as of 2019 Keith Brown, our Center Director, will begin a three-year term on the ASEEES Board of Directors, as Chair of the Council of Institutional Members. At the most recent Annual Convention, ten faculty affiliates, and three graduate student affiliates were on the program—evidence of ASU’s strength in the field across multiple disciplines.

Internationally, the Center is maintaining long-standing ties, and actively contributing to ASU’s growing profile in the region. In the Western Balkans, the University of Prishtina inaugurated its Center for Energy and Sustainability, drawing from ASU’s blueprint for how to develop practical solutions and policies for pressing environmental issues. At the initiative of ASU Engineering Professor Kiril Hristovski, the University of Kiril and Methodi in Skopje, Macedonia reactivated the Memorandum of Understanding with Arizona State University first signed in 1974, and faculty will contribute to ASU’s relaunch of Macedonian in CLI 2019.

In Spring 2019, the Melikian Center hosts historian Mladen Medved as the first North American Global Teaching Fellow from Central European University. Recently forced out of Hungary, CEU was founded to advance the principles of open society, and continues to attract high-quality graduate students from across the world. The Global Teaching Fellowship program offers outstanding CEU pre-doctoral students professional development opportunities to work with researchers and master-teachers in their speciality, and offers ASU students new comparative perspectives on the region.

As well as teaching on East Europe in Transition, Mladen will spearhead ASU’s participation in nationwide initiative including students from over two dozen universities. In “Democratic Erosion,” an open source class launched by Professor Rob Blair at Brown University, students on different campuses engage current claims that democracy is under threat; evaluate if and where those claims are valid; and explore strategies for stopping democratic decay both here and abroad.

ASU’s participation in the Global Teaching Fellowship program is made possible by President Crow’s strategic initiative fund, and by support from the office of CLAS Social Sciences Dean Elizabeth Wentz.

Dr. Yuri Slezkine, the Jane K. Sather Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, came to Tempe at the beginning of November.

His evening lecture, “The Life and Death of the Russian Revolution,” was the first in the Totalitarianism, Dissent, and Democratic Institutions lecture series, which is made possible in part by a Lowe Family donation to the ASU Jewish Studies Center. Slezkine drew heavily on his latest book, The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution (Princeton University Press, 2017), to illustrate the rise and fall of the Russian Revolution. Over lunch, he met with ASU faculty and graduate students to discuss the recent trends in Soviet historiography and where the study of and writings on Soviet history are taking scholars. Finally, at the Changing Hands Bookstore in Tempe, Professor Slezkine answered questions about what prompted him to write The House of Government and how he went about choosing and tying together the stories of the various residents of the enormous apartment complex to tell this story of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union.
We hope that this annual report has given you a sense of what is going on at the Melikian Center. If you’re interested to know more, and haven’t yet joined the Center’s mailing list, please let us know. During 2018, we used our email list to send out invitations and reminders for our public programming, and also provided bi-monthly updates of activities. We plan to continue that practice in 2019.

We also hope you have had or will take the opportunity to learn more about the Center’s affiliated faculty and their research through our broader investment in outreach. We have been working on upgrades to our website, and expect to launch the new version during 2019. Some of the new material we have been working on is already available: you can watch, for example, a series of short video profiles of faculty affiliates. As they discuss their own pathways to their academic career, the transformative power of language learning, and their current research projects, their passion and commitment shine brightly—testament to the storytelling skill of videographer Ari Gajraj. We posted five faculty profiles in 2018, and are working on five more for release in 2019.

The Center has also benefited enormously from ASU’s broader commitment to making scholarly knowledge public. ASUNow has published eight stories featuring the Melikian Center since September 2017, including most recently a description of Greg Melikian’s participation in the U.S. veterans’ delegation that attended the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day in France. Other stories highlighted the launch of Ukrainian as part of the Critical Languages Institute, thanks especially to the commitment of Professor Mark Von Hagen, Advisory Board member Patience T. Huntwork and James Huntwork; and the particular appeal of conspiracy theories in Eastern Europe and beyond. In addition, ASU’s Media Relations office have facilitated Melikian affiliated faculty in contributions to the online media outlet The Conversation, and ASU’s “Got a Minute” video series.

Besides their financial contributions, Advisory Board members have also been generous with their time and creativity in raising the Center’s profile. Thanks especially to the work of Board President-elect Ramona Melikian, the Center has a presence at ASU’s new Washington D.C. platform, where we look forward to opportunities to work closely with the McCain Institute and other partners to inform policy debate and decisions. In a time of shifting geopolitical alignments, the regional expertise, global orientation and analytical skills of ASU’s faculty and students are of enormous public value. Our goal is to set new standards in making scholarly insight accessible and relevant.
Your support for deserving students, world-class language instruction in the Melikian Center’s Critical Languages Institute, timely public programs and research conferences, and distinguished international scholars-in-residence has helped to make ASU a premier national research and training center for East European and Eurasian studies.

Thank you to all the Melikian Center friends for your generous contributions of funds and time to support the Melikian Center and CLI in 2018.

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We encourage you to visit the Melikian Center support page at https://melikian.asu.edu/support and learn about our giving opportunities. Your secure online gift to Arizona State University’s Melikian Center and Critical Languages Institute represents an investment in the international leaders of tomorrow. Funds will be deposited with the ASU Foundation, a separate non-profit organization that exists to advance Arizona State University.