Picture a co-ed from Athens sitting in a walled Italian town painting a street scene. Or visualize a young man from Martin, Georgia, teaching a group of Russian teenagers about America's 4th of July observances. At the University of Georgia and many other colleges and universities, there are opportunities such as these to expand the educational experience by studying abroad to earn course credits.

The University of Georgia Art Department operates one of the oldest study abroad programs at the university and one of three residential programs. For 40 years, students have had the opportunity to enrich their education in Cortona, Italy, a medieval town in Tuscany, recently made famous by the book and movie, *Under the Tuscan Sun*. This program affords participants the opportunity to spend a few weeks or a semester developing their artistic gifts and talents in the town's art-drenched atmosphere. Directed by Rick Johnson and his associate, Chris Robinson, who both spend much of most of their time in Italy, the Cortona program continues the tradition started by Jack Kehoe who believed that a small town would lend itself to getting the feel of days gone by.

With a broad offering of classes, the primary focus is on the tradition and history of the special medium and Renaissance process. For instance, if marble is needed, it is available in nearby Carrara; if alabaster, then go to Volterra, and San Sepolcro has a quarry for clay. Another important aspect is the collaboration across UGA's colleges and schools. Landscape architect students, journalism students, as well as all of the art disciplines, can find their education enhanced. In addition, there are programs emphasizing Renaissance science for pre-med students, the culture of wine-making for agriculture school students and Shakespeare's Italy for drama students.

Sarah Watkins spent the past summer in Cortona and found the experience invaluable. In addition to the educational experience, living in the small town for ten weeks allowed her to get to know some of the residents. She had an opportunity to take weekend group trips to places like Assisi, Florence and Venice. This was Sarah Park's first time out of the country, but her experience makes her want to go back.
In Cortona, Italy, students draw outside the Keboe Dormitory overlooking this beautiful Tuscan hill town. Camp Counselors USA Russia participants pose in front of St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square in Moscow. The Russian Camp study abroad program offers students like Jacob Miller (left, at bottom) an immersion in the lives of young Russians and a chance to serve as volunteer counselors in another country and culture.
For a painter, Cortona is rich in opportunities. A resident of Athens, Georgia, Sarah spent the fall painting Italian settings. One of her paintings, displayed in the extensive show at the Lamar Dodd School of Art, depicts such a scene. It is of a medieval-looking street, but Sarah can point out the location of a small café where students spent time relaxing.

Most of the other programs are short-term, such as the Russian Camp program sponsored by the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department in collaboration with Camp Counselors USA. Students in this program have an opportunity to live and learn at a summer camp in the Mari El Republic of Russia. Residential camps have long been an integral part of the Russian culture, going back to Soviet days. The Russian Camp study abroad program, headed by Dr. Gwynn Powell, offers students an immersion in the lives of young Russians, eager to practice their English language proficiency and to serve as volunteer counselors in another country and culture. The program gives the student an opportunity to bridge political and social differences by developing relationships with individuals.

Jacob Miller, a senior from Martin, Georgia, was enthusiastic about his summer of 2008 experience. Jacob's first trip out of the country started with orientations in New York and Moscow and came to an end after a 16-hour train ride to the camp site. He was most impressed with the people and how nice they were. “They made me feel at home in Russia.” He explained that the small things made a big difference. The camp personnel had learned that Americans like cold drinks, an anomaly to the Russians, so they always had a pitcher of cooled water at lunch.

Jacob was assigned to a group of 13- and 14-year-olds and cooperated with two Russian counselors, aided by a translator. He and Denny Teason, a graduate student from Cape Cod, who was at a different camp a few miles away, both appreciated the opportunity to actively participate in learning as opposed to talking about it theoretically. Denny noticed how invested he became in the lives of people as he expended energy trying so hard to communicate. Both...

At Electric City Printing, we manufacture quality printed products at competitive prices and provide you with what you want, when you want it. Magazines, brochures, catalogs, and newsletters; imaging digital work and impeccable quality variable data; fulfillment, online solutions and much more. With Electric City Printing, you have experienced professionals who can manage your needs ... just ask our many satisfied customers like Northeast Georgia Living Magazine!

Proven Customer Satisfaction Since 1928
acob and Denny learned some basic Russian and also learned things about themselves that they would not have earned otherwise. More importantly, they learned about commonalities in living and in global understanding.

According to Dr. Kasee Clifton Laster, Director of Studies Abroad for the university, there are presently 100 study abroad programs, 50 exchange programs and 20 non-traditional programs. Presently there are programs in 55 countries on every continent, including Antarctica. The 2000 Strategic Plan called for 25 percent of the university’s students to study abroad during their university education by the year 2010. Dr. Laster said that now 28 percent of the students at UGA are participating in a study abroad program during their undergraduate years. Five to six percent of the student population is studying abroad any given year.

Dr. Laster went on to say that the financial aid structure is very flexible for students who wish to be involved in one of the many programs offered by the university. Funding sources include HOPE, Pell Grant, student loans and additional scholarships stipulated for study abroad. She says, “If there is a desire on the part of a student to study abroad, we try to help them find the means.”

Times have changed; people have changed, and so has a university education. Today’s world calls for people educated not only in their academic discipline, but also in multi-cultural experiences. The education of the leaders of tomorrow includes both. As Dr. Powell says to prospective study abroad students, “You will be able to increase cultural understanding and be an ambassador for your country ... and you will have an experience of a lifetime!”

For further information on these and other study abroad programs, please visit www.uga.edu/oie/studyabroad, www.art.uga.edu/cortona and www.uga.edu/russia camps.