

Title: Project “Picturing Russia” at the University of Central Florida
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The presentation will be based on the project “Picturing Russia” conducting by University of Central Florida, Russian Language program. The “Picturing Russia” project is the result of our long-standing hope to position the study of culture through art in the Russian language classroom. The obvious connections between culture and language – from a pragmatic, everyday level to the more abstract ways values and ideas are woven into language – make artwork an important tool for exploring Russia as well as better understanding one’s own multi-faceted culture.

This project is designed to enhance cultural understanding between American and Russian students. Linguistic experiments have provided data that has shown the lack of cultural awareness amongst Russian and American students. Data collected suggests images of Russia held by American students do not include the influence of art in Russian Culture. The “Picturing Russia” can be used for different age groups and will present different media from different time periods: paintings, architecture, filming, sculpture, and photography. This educational tool reflects the results of the linguistic experiment through lesson plans. Visual images are prepared by student assistants to inspire understanding of another culture while engaging in meaningful use of Russian language. The involvement of student assistants provides a fresh perspective on the visual images and insight into how they will be perceived. The lesson design focus on encouraging students to actively engage in the classroom.

This project is a “labor of love.” The contributors all worked tirelessly, after their normal day of classes. The fact that Americans and Russians collaborated to create this material is in itself a reflection of what our ultimate goal is: to bring the people of the U.S. and Russia closer through a mutual passion for art and all that it represents.