

## The Melikian Center

Building global understanding  
across national borders

The Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies at Arizona State University advances research, teaching and outreach on the languages, societies and geopolitics of greater Eurasia. The center's core mission is to enhance global awareness and cross-cultural understanding in the communities it serves by harnessing innovations and partnerships across disciplinary, ideological and geographical borders.



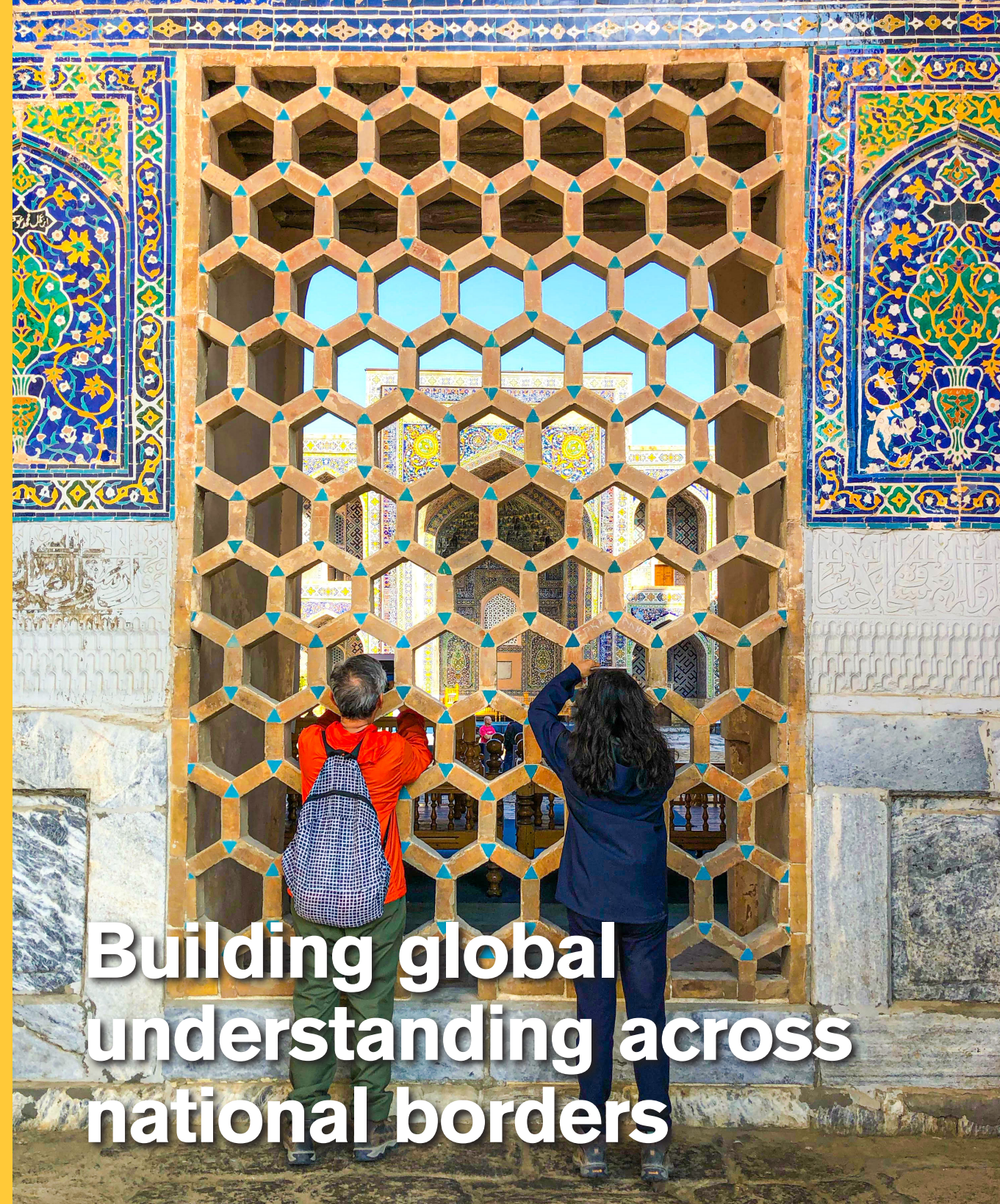
Critical Languages Institute students riding to  
Lake Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan (2017)

## Philanthropy fuels possibilities

Established as a consortium in 1984, the Melikian Center adopted its current name in late 2006, in recognition of the generous support of Gregory and Emma Melikian. Since 2014, members of the Melikan Center's Advisory Board have contributed expertise as well as financial support for the center's initiatives. As a result of the generosity of the Melikian family, the advisory board and other donors, the center provides over 30 scholarships to students in the Critical Languages Institute each summer. In addition, the center also provides five to 10 Melikian Center Undergraduate Fellowships to ASU students each spring and a wide range of high-quality programming to enhance public understanding of the diverse cultures, peoples and histories of the post-Soviet world.

“What better way to  
communicate than  
to speak each  
other's language?”  
-Emma Melikian

[melikian.asu.edu](http://melikian.asu.edu)



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 **The Melikian Center:**  
Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies  
Arizona State University



CLI Students and Instructor, Tempe, Arizona (2019)

## The Critical Languages Institute

Since 1991, ASU's Critical Languages Institute (CLI) has offered intensive summer courses in less commonly taught languages. Drawing on an international team of master teachers, many of whom hold university appointments in their home countries, CLI equips students with the tools to communicate effectively and confidently in a foreign language. CLI offers the equivalent of a full year of college-level language study in one summer.

This immersive experience accelerates student gains in proficiency and builds regional knowledge. With four classroom hours a day five days a week for seven to 12 weeks, plus a wide variety of co-curricular cultural programming, it's no wonder that CLI students report dreaming in their target language!

The programming and opportunities available from CLI reflect ASU's broader commitment to inclusion and student success. Tuition subsidies are available for all students, and in most recent years more than half of enrolled students received scholarship support from either federal or philanthropic funding.

CLI also provides career and fellowship advising and mentoring. In addition to using their language skills in a range of public and private sector careers, CLI students have gone on to win numerous prestigious national fellowships.




### Melikian Center faculty accomplishments

 **Expertise in 30 countries**


 **14 Fulbright alumni**


 **Six national book awards**  
between 2014-2020

### CLI fast facts

 **9 current overseas locations**—more coming soon!

 **Over 2,000 students** completed at least one year's equivalent of college language study in one of **16 less commonly taught languages**

 **Over 800 students** studied abroad

 In 2016-2020, 379 CLI students awarded scholarships totaling over **\$2.2 million.**

 From 2014-2021, **15 CLI alumni** won Fulbright awards.

## Advancing cultural competency

ASU's Melikian Center is a national leader in research and teaching on Russia, Eurasia and East Europe. This pivotal region of the world, including Turkey and the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Russian Federation, the Baltics and Eastern and Southeastern Europe, has a combined population of around 340 million people in 31 countries.

For students and residents in Arizona, the Melikian Center's

programs provide geopolitical awareness, area expertise and cultural and linguistic competency.

Alumni of the center's certificate program and the Critical Languages Institute have built on their regional knowledge and communication skills to pursue successful careers in government service, business, the nonprofit sector and education.



Photo: Rythum Vinoban

## Leading global engagement through regional and local cooperation

The Melikian Center serves as a hub for transdisciplinary exchange and knowledge creation. The center's faculty affiliates teach on all four Phoenix-area campuses, in professional fields including engineering, law, journalism and music, as well as a range of humanities and social sciences disciplines. They have received individual fellowships from multiple sources including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, the National Humanities Center and the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center at Hokkaido University in Japan. Books published by Melikian Center faculty affiliates have won national awards including the 2020 Paul E. Lovejoy Prize by the Journal of Global Slavery and the Davis Center prize in Political and Social Studies from the Association for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies.

Faculty and graduate student affiliates, board members and the Critical Languages Institute instructional team have extended on-the-ground experience in over 30 countries across the Russia, Eurasian and East European region. As of 2021, the center offers language instruction in 13 languages and continues to expand its partnerships with higher education institutions and civil society organizations for language teaching, curricular innovation and public engagement.

The center seeks to contribute to ASU's eight design aspirations, with a particular focus on student success, global awareness and community connection. Collaborations with local organizations include Tempe Sister Cities, the Arizona National Guard and the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations. Engagement with Maricopa Community Colleges and area high schools also promotes informed public dialogue on pressing global issues.



Since 2017, alongside philanthropic gifts and individual faculty recognition, the center has received grants from the Department of Defense, the State Department's Title VIII program, the US Embassy in Yerevan, the Fulbright program for South and Central Asia and the U.S. Russia Foundation.