

AUDEAMUS

THE MISSION

The project is aimed at creation and audio recording of individually developed lecture courses in the Russian language, literature, history of Russia, art studies, semiotics and culture. It also targets development of innovative teaching packages based upon them. The project's hallmark is the combination of new educational resources and preservation of the unique heritage of the well-established Russian scientific tradition. Audeamus also seeks to make this heritage easily accessible.

The project objectives are as follows:

- regular recording, digitising and transcribing of lectures read by the most distinguished Russian scholars and teachers; this includes collaboration with other universities and research institutes in Russia; guest lecturers from other institutions are invited to St. Petersburg University; visiting sessions of audio recording are organised;
- creation of electronic libraries and innovative teaching packages based on the existing collection of audio lectures that is regularly replenished;
- organisation of a permanently functioning system of web-based and distance learning which employs pre-developed teaching packages; the users of the system will include: school students and university entrants, students of Russian as a second language, native speakers of Russian, compatriots residing abroad, and all those interested in the Russian history and culture;
- preparation, commenting and publication of lecture courses developed by the prominent Russian scholars of the past.

PROJECT APPLICABILITY

The integration of the Russian higher education system into the global environment requires modernisation of the former, including its affiliation with the up-to-date European pedagogical practice. This practice rests on the 'open education' principle and emphasises an extensive use of electronic teaching aids, switching to the distance learning platform being the priority here. The benefits of such pedagogical and organisational model are indisputable: the world of knowledge is perceived as an open, unlimited and dynamic information space. Therefore, the main role in the educational process is played by the knowledge consumer. It is a person openly searching for information and having a wide choice of the subjects, strategies and modes of study.

However, the recent international educational guidelines should be adopted with care. Detailed consideration is to be given to both the negative sides of the concept and the apparent achievements of the Russian pedagogy. We should highlight the following major priorities of the new educational system that accord with the national pedagogical traditions: necessity to maintain the classical tripartite structure of communication in the university environment: students – teachers – administrators. The system must not be reduced to a bipartite one, i.e. students and administrators/tutors. The role of a teacher (not of a tutor) helps preserve the authority, the value system, the traditions of the school of thought, cultural and intellectual dialogue between generations, etc., which are important factors of the teaching and learning process.

These two key lines can be effectively combined in a distance learning model based on audio lecture courses built into a system of full-fledged teaching packages consisting of relevant programme specification and teaching materials. In this sense, the creation of *The Golden Collection of Russkiy Mir Foundation Lectures* is an important step towards the above-mentioned objectives.

THE GROUNDWORK

Lectures have been audio recorded and transcribed at St. Petersburg University since 2002 in order to create audio libraries accessible via the Internet.

In 2008-2013, the educational Web portal AUDEAMUS (*The Golden Collection of Russkiy Mir Foundation Lectures*) was developed by St. Petersburg University with funding from the Russkiy Mir Foundation. The web-page of the project is russianlectures.ru.

At present, there is a total of 250 recorded, digitised and transcribed lectures there, in the following fields: *Biblical Studies, Journalism, Art Studies, History, Linguistics, Literary Studies, Folklore*.

The website also provides information on 35 scholars and professors of St. Petersburg University. Each author participating in the project has personal information sections. Some of them can be operated by the authors themselves with the help of online tools.

The information in personal sections is given in two languages, Russian and English. It can be edited/added in these two languages as well. For this purpose, there are language-switching elements in the upper part of the Edit/Add form.

To be granted access to their personal sections, the authors must go through the authorisation process first. For that, they should press Login in the upper left-hand corner and type their personal data (login and password) in the drop-down form field. Upon authorisation, the author is granted access to his or her personal sections.

The Biography section contains an author's biographical data, which is editable. Upon pressing the proper element, a form opens enabling the authors to edit their biographies.

In the Publications section the authors can publish their scholarly works. A publication is added through pressing the proper element and filling in the opened form which contains three sections: the title, the synopsis, and the text of the publication. Each added publication appears on the site as a separate entry in the list. The authors can manage their previous publications by editing or removing them from the section page.

The Interviews section contains interviews with the authors. The interviews are presented as a list with the available Edit and Delete elements for each previously published interview. A new interview can be added using the Add option displayed at the top of the list.

The Photos section contains the authors' photographs. Photos can be added with the help of a special form by choosing the file on the hard drive, typing the photo's title (optional), and pressing the Add button. Each previously published photograph can be removed by the author, and its title edited. For that, menu elements that pop-up when mousing over the photo must be used.

The FAQ section is a venue for establishing online communication with the visitors of the site. Any concerned visitor is provided with an opportunity to ask any author a question. The author who has been asked a question is informed about that by an e-mail notification. Questions and answers are to be published in the section as a list arranged in reversed chronological order according to the date of adding a new question. The authors can hide any question from other visitors of the website.

In 2010-2012, a triple DVD containing 30 teaching packages in linguistics, literary studies, folklore studies, history and art studies was created at St. Petersburg University by charitable donation from the Russkiy Mir Foundation. The teaching packages were based on the audio lectures of the leading professors working at the SPbU Faculty of Philology and Faculty of History.

The teaching packages are aimed at the three main groups of listeners: 1) university entrants; 2) students of Russian as a foreign language; 3) students of Russian philology — linguists,

philologists, folklorists, historians and students of art — those who are professionally involved into an advanced study of the Russian language and literature, fine art, history and culture.

Using *The Golden Collection of Russkiy Mir Foundation Lectures* DVD does not require any teacher's supervision. At the same time, all the teaching packages are uploaded to the *SPbU Russian Studies* system of web-based and distance learning (rusist.spbu.ru) based on the Sakai platform, which is a virtual environment aimed at the organisation of the teaching and learning process and collaborative work.

Each teaching package includes the following:

- audio lectures;
- text transcripts of the lectures;
- synopses for the entire package and each of the lectures;
- supporting data for lectures;
- assignments to the lectures;
- learning outcomes assessment tests;
- reference aids;
- course syllabus and learning guidelines;
- the author's concise biography.

The audio recording of the lectures has been done at the SPbU Faculty of Philology. The average duration of a lecture is 30-40 minutes. In addition to the MP3 sound file, each lecture exists in the form of a text transcript on the disk.

All the lectures are complemented with *visual aids* (jpg, gif, png, tif and cdr images) to facilitate understanding. The number of images depends on the aims and objectives of the course, yet the average number is three or more for each of the lectures.

All the lectures are complemented with various types of assignments aimed at the consolidation of the theoretical material.

There are the following types of assignments: the pre-text ones (done before listening to the lecture), the on-text ones (done while listening to the lecture) and the post-text ones (done after listening to the lecture). Besides, there are self-study assignments.

The pre-text assignments enable students to perceive the lecture. They may include a detailed plan of the lecture; glossaries containing specific terms, archaisms or obsolescences that one will come across while listening to the lecture; concise biographies of the scholars or historical figures mentioned in the lecture; background knowledge assignments, etc. The teaching package may include from five to ten pre-text assignments to each of the lectures.

The on-text assignments are aimed at an active involvement into the understanding of the lecture. They may include assignments aimed at taking notes, finding the key words, filling in the gaps in a text fragment, writing out terms, names of persons and dates, studying of the illustrations. The teaching package may include from five to ten on-text assignments to each of the lectures.

The post-text assignments are aimed at the consolidation of the knowledge obtained in while listening to the lecture. They may include retelling of particular points of the lecture in your own words, illustrating of the points of the lecture by your own examples, etc. The teaching package may include from five to ten post-text assignments to each of the lectures.

The self-study assignments are aimed at creative perception of the lecture and at its inclusion into general cultural context of the student. The student may be offered either to analyse certain literary works (excerpts thereof) that are thematically related to the subject of the lecture or to investigate a certain private issue touched upon in the lecture. The teaching package may include one or two self-study assignments to each of the lectures.

All the lectures are complemented by *tests* aimed at students' self-assessment of their knowledge. Each lecture results in such a test. In addition, there are final assessment tests (upon completion of the course).

The self-assessment test consists of ten to fifteen questions. The answers thereto can be found in the text of the lecture. The student answers the questions one after another, each time choosing the right answer from the list. Upon completion of the test, the student is shown his or her statistics and is given certain recommendations concerning further studying of the course.

The final assessment test is formed at random out of the question pool. Each time, the student is offered ten to fifteen questions selected from this pool at random.

The reference aids for the teaching package may consist of the following components: 1) an anthology of scientific and literary texts for an advanced study of the course; 2) a terminological dictionary (glossary) of the concepts used in the lectures; 3) commentaries, explanations and references.

The course syllabus and learning guidelines have the following structure: 1) the course title; 2) the aim of the course; 3) the objectives of the course; 4) the role of the course in the graduate's professional training; 5) the sections of the course; 6) summaries of the sections; 7) the system of learning outcomes assessment; 8) course hours distribution depending on the section and type of work; 9) course specification and teaching materials (main and supplementary books).

The author's *concise biography* includes the following: 1) place of employment, position, academic degree, academic title; 2) curriculum vitae; 3) a brief description of the research interests; 4) a bibliography of major research works; 5) brief information on the family status and fundamental interests.

VIDEO LECTURING SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

The video lecturing system on the website of AUDEAMUS is a particularly important component of the project (*The Golden Collection of Russkiy Mir Foundation Lectures*).

A video lecture is a dialogue between the lecturer and the remote audience taking place online and enabling 'live' interaction in the process of learning.

The idea of video lecturing is quite a new one. Yet, with the universal development of the broadband Internet access in Russia, it is growing in popularity from the educational perspective. Video lecturing has every advantage and all the benefits of video conferencing. Moreover, it enables us to make the communication between the lecturer and the audience ultimately interactive. Online video broadcasting leads to the effect of the lecture perception by a person similar to the one achieved when he or she is sitting opposite the lecturer in the classroom.

The video lecturing system on the website of AUDEAMUS (*The Golden Collection of Russkiy Mir Foundation Lectures*) enables anyone, being in whatever spot on the globe with an Internet access, to become a student of these courses and a participant of educational seminars organised by the leading Russian professors and scholars. The authors participating in the project will be able to organise their video lectures at their convenience, with an opportunity of publishing the schedule and informing the audience on the classes.

The main advantages of the video lecturing system are as follows:

- organising lectures with up to 100 invited participants simultaneously;
- an opportunity of 'live' communication between the audience and the lecturers;
- the lecturers can demonstrate their pre-developed materials;
- an opportunity of online polling among the audience;
- video lecture recording with a delayed viewing and archive creating opportunity;

- multi-video conferencing (up to 14 participants) – an opportunity to organise the participants' presentations;
- joint viewing of the presentations;
- joint viewing of the videos;
- an interactive whiteboard enabling each of the listeners to paint on it;
- organisation of public and private chat rooms among the audience;
- an opportunity of tuning the video quality according to the network bandwidth of the audience.