Bulgaria to promote domestic tourism

In the past Russians and Ukrainians have flocked to the Bulgarian Black Sea tourism meccas of Varna, Burgas, Sozopol, and Sunny Beach. The quaint beauty of Nesebar and Golden Sands were perennial attractions. But now that Russia and Ukraine are effectively at war, tourist numbers from those countries to Bulgaria have plummeted. Tourism is an important component of the Bulgarian economy. And therefore the new push by the tourism ministry to interest Bulgarians in seeing what there is to see in their native land. And there is a cornucopia of attractions for the tourist and traveler. From the lived in beauty of Sofia to the artistic panache of Plovdiv; from fortresses to castles to remnants of the Thracian and Roman empires, Bulgaria is a travelers dream.

http://www.novinite.com/articles/166176/Bulgaria+Launches+EU-funded+Advertising+Campaign+to+Boost+Domestic+Tourism

Endangered baby eels rescued

Eels in a Styrofoam box. Eels being transported from who knows where into Bulgaria to feed a ravenous Bulgarian appetite for the snake-like fish? Apparently. Who woulda thought?! Shushi maybe or maybe some Bulgarian oligarch needs a flashy pair of eel-skin cowboy...
boots. It happens.  
http://www.novinite.com/articles/166112/Bulgarian+Customs+Prevent+Smuggling+of+Two+Million+European+Eels

**Junior Eurovision contestants**

The Eurovision competition is a very big deal throughout Europe. Kind of like American Idol, the Super Bowl, and Antiques Road Show to the 4th power. Why you ask? Why is a song contest, and herein described a junior one at that, so spectacularly popular? Why, if this was the 19th century, nation states would go to war rather than admit that their representative at the Eurovision competition wasn’t up to snuff. Given free reign some right wing political parties in most of Europe would do that now. But cool heads generally prevail and nationalistic violence is usually left to the soccer hooligans. Hooray for music!!  
http://www.novinite.com/articles/166185/Bulgaria+to+Host+Junior+Eurovision+Song+Contest+in+2015

**Stoyanka Mutafova is a Guiness world record holder**

For longevity in acting. Professional acting that is. Being paid for being a thesbian. But each of us is an actor on our own stage and have been acting our entire lives. Ms. Mutafova has advanced into eighty years in theater; just the average lifespan of a western woman. We’ll all get there given enough sunrises and sunsets. What’s the big deal? Oh right. She’s paid to act and has writers and directors. And we are on our own. And so who deserves a Guiness listing more? Ms. Mutafova or us?  
http://www.novinite.com/articles/166077/Bulgarian+Actress+Stoyanka+Mutafova+Storms+Guiness+Book+of+World+Records
Bulgarian railway system is a money loser

Please tell us something we don’t already know. State owned enterprises are usually money sinks especially in the transport industry. Redundant employees, gross inefficiencies, and outright dishonest behavior as you’ll read here. It should not take 12 hours to go from Blagoevgrad, where the American University in Bulgaria is located, to Belgrade, Serbia, a distance of about 300 miles, my experience during my year in Bulgaria. As a side note, while taking a train trip I helped smuggle cigarettes from Bulgaria to Serbia for a grandmotherly woman who asked me very nicely for assistance, but that’s another story. [http://www.novinite.com/articles/166209/Bulgarian+State+Railways+Struggling+To+Stay+Afloat](http://www.novinite.com/articles/166209/Bulgarian+State+Railways+Struggling+To+Stay+Afloat)

Bulgarians are wine drinkers

Vineyards are everywhere in Bulgaria. Many residences have bowers growing grapes to make one’s own vintage. Bulgarians are anxious to have you taste their own wine from their personal mini-enterprise. Quality varies but all will alter your state of consciousness. And there are modern, sophisticated wineries producing for the world market. We partake of both during our study abroad program. At the very least, come to taste the Bulgarian grape. [http://www.novinite.com/articles/165692/Bulgarians+Have+Drunk+100+M+Litres+of+Wine+in+2014](http://www.novinite.com/articles/165692/Bulgarians+Have+Drunk+100+M+Litres+of+Wine+in+2014)
Ancient tomb discovered in Varna

Bulgaria is rotten with antiquities. The region has been a crossroads of civilizations for millennia. The Thracians, the Romans, the Greeks, and the Ottoman Turks all vied for a piece of present day Bulgaria. Remnants of these civilizations lie in every region of the country including the city of Plovdiv where we visit the Roman amphitheater which is still used as a theater by current Plovdivians. Varna is a city on the Black Sea coast which has been the site of touristic bacchanals since ancient times. Those age-encrusted wine decanters were entombed to assure a wild ride to Kingdom Come.

http://www.novinite.com/articles/165868/Ancient+Tomb+Discovered+in+Downtown+Varna

We are almost into February. If you are considering the Bulgaria study abroad program to the American University in Bulgaria in June then now is the time to complete the application process. Please don’t wait until the last minute to talk with significant others about your participation. In any case, we hope you decide to do summer study abroad with us in Bulgaria in June 2015. Compare our $2950 program fee which includes airfare with any other four week program to Europe and you’ll be astonished. How do we do it you wonder? Bulgaria hasn’t adopted the Euro as yet and we have strong connections in Bulgaria. The program application form is now included at the bottom of this newsletter. For more information please contact me at: philip.szmedra@gsw.edu; 229-931-2122 or any of the other faculty participants at the email addresses listed in the application below.

Until next time.
Dovizhdane,
Philip Szmedra
Summer Study Abroad in Bulgaria
Georgia Southwestern State University
The American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
June 2-28, 2015

Cost: $2950
Directions: Complete all lines, sign the form, and return it with a check for $100.00 payable to Georgia Southwestern State University to:

Dr. Philip Szmedra
Director of Study Abroad
School of Business Administration
214 BHP
Georgia Southwestern State University
800 GSW SU Drive.
Americus, GA 31709

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: ____________________________________________

Last Name       First Name       Middle Name

Local Address: ______________________________________

Street name/number       Apt. number       City       State       Zip

Permanent Address: ________________________________

Street name/number       Apt. number       City       State       Zip

Phone (Land/Cell): ________________________________

Area code + current number

Email: ________________________________

Date of Birth (month-day-year): ________________________________

Social Security Number: ________________________________

GSW Identification number: ________________________________

Academic Major/Minor: ________________________________

Circle one:  Male  Female

Medical Information: List any chronic conditions, allergies, or other special health concerns including psychological and emotional problems and include information on prescription medications that you currently take for those problems:

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
4. ________________________________

Emergency Contact:
Name/ Relationship: ________________________________
Have you ever traveled outside of the U.S.? ________________________________

If Yes, where_______________________________________________________________

B. PASSPORT INFORMATION

Country of Citizenship:________________________________________________________

I have a current passport:_________________________

I am applying for a passport: Yes No (circle one)

C. ACADEMIC INFORMATION

College/University Attending:____________________________________________

Classification (circle one): Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Grad Student

Major/Minor__________________________________________________________

Current GPA:_________________________________________________________

Are you enrolled in a program leading to a degree or diploma? Yes No

Will you be applying for financial aid? Yes No

Do you have a HOPE grant to attend college in Georgia? Yes No

D. COURSE SELECTION AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

You may take a maximum of two courses for a total of up to six (6) semester hours. Please select a first and second choice of courses with the understanding that only those courses that enroll the most students will go. Circle your first and second choices:

**ARST 3102 (3cr) – Ethics in International Photography.** Ms. Tonia Hughes. tonia.hughes@gsw.edu.

**ARST 3170 (3cr) – Beginning Digital Media.** Ms. Tonia Hughes. tonia.hughes@gsw.edu.

**ECON 2106 (3cr) – Principles of Microeconomics.** Dr. Philip Szmedra. philip.szmedra@gsw.edu

**ENVS 1100 (3cr) – Introduction to Environmental Science.** Dr. Tzvetelin Iordanov. tzvetelin.iordanov@gsw.edu

**PHYS 1222 (3cr) – Stellar Astronomy.** Dr. Svilen Kostov. svilen.kostov@gsw.edu.

Note: Transient students must apply to GSWSU and pay a $25 application fee. Out-of-state applicants will pay a $250.00 study abroad fee and in-state GA tuition.
AUTHORIZATION AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

Read and Sign the Following Statement
I acknowledge that participation in a study abroad program involves some risk of injury, illness, or loss of personal property. I agree to release and forever discharge Georgia Southwestern State University and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, its members individually, and its officers, agents, and employees, from any and all claims, demands, rights, and causes of action of whatever kind of nature, arising from and by reason of any and all known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen bodily and personal injuries, including death, damages to property and the consequences thereof, resulting from my participation in the Maymester 2010 Study Abroad Bulgaria program and related activities.

I hereby agree to maintain accident and health insurance in force and effect for the duration of my participation in the Study Abroad Bulgaria program. I further acknowledge that the supervising faculty or program director has sole authority to make decisions regarding the continued participation of any individual in the program whose conduct may necessitate disciplinary action. I further authorize the supervising faculty or program director to obtain and provide medical treatment and/or services that I may require during the study abroad program.

Finally, I am aware that the deadline for submission of this application is February 24, 2012 and I agree to abide by the deadlines for fee payment as follows:

March 31, 2015: $100.00 non-refundable application fee due
April 14, 2015: First payment of $1425.00 due
April 28, 2015: Final payment of $1425.00 due

I further acknowledge and accept the schedule for refunds, should I withdraw from the program, and accept the penalties associated with late withdrawals, as follows:

Withdrawal before April 15, 2015: All but $500.00 will be refunded.
Withdrawal between before May 1, 2015: All but $750.00 will be refunded.
Withdrawal after May 15, 2015: No money will be refunded.

Note: All withdrawals must be made in writing to the Office of International Programs at Georgia Southwestern State University in order for refunds to be processed.

I understand that submitting an application for this study abroad program does not guarantee acceptance into the program; that candidates must meet program requirements and be approved by the program director; and that participation is subject to availability and is on a first come, first served basis.

Signature of Applicant__________________________________________________
Date________________________________________________________________

NOTE: APPLICATION FORM MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY $100.00 APPLICATION FEE