

USC School of Pharmacy

Pharmacy Undergraduate Programs

Spring 2023: RXRS-499: Pharmacy Undergraduate Maymester

Balkan History, Geography, and Folk Medicines

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Course Weight: 2 units

Locations: Belgrade, Serbia
Stara Planina, Serbia
Sofia, Bulgaria
Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria
Varna, Bulgaria
Bucharest, Romania
Mangalia, Romania

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Catalogue description: Global perspectives Maymester – Folk Medicines, Geography, and History of the Balkans through immersive travel.

Introduction

This course will offer an immersive review of Folk Medicine and Practices in the Balkans – from Prehistoric to the Ottoman Empire. This course considers the benefits and consequences of folk medicine, including sustainability of these medical practices from both a historical and geographical perspective. Additionally, the course will consider the role of folk medicine as a cultural and political tool. Topics will be presented that highlight how folk medicine was used throughout the Balkans to shape, modify, or change history. Students will participate in immersive cultural and historic learning throughout the 15 Day Maymester.

Objectives

The study of medicine from the human past intersects across pharmacy, the humanities, natural sciences, physical sciences, and social studies. This intersection offers an ideal platform for fostering a lifelong appreciation for interdisciplinary perspectives and collaboration. Pharmacy Studies are fundamentally interdisciplinary, and an array of biological, chemical, and physical applications permeate pharmacologic research. Faculty from the University of Southern California's School of Pharmacy share common interest in history, medicine, and culture as do undergraduate students majoring in anthropology, art, biological sciences, classics, ecology, geography, and several other educational programs. The goal of this Maymester is to encourage students to explore the interdisciplinary scope of pharmaceutical sciences by immersion in the cultural history of Bulgaria and surrounding Balkan sites. This Maymester is designed to allow students with a common interest in pharmacy but with diverse backgrounds, skills, and interests to broaden their experience by taking part in a unique course offering designed to combine theory, application, and fieldwork.

Objectives for this course include:

In addition to developing a deeper understanding of the history of the Balkans, students participating in the Maymester will:

- Have demonstrated proficiency in pharmacologic methods related to folk medicine, archaeology, and history through classroom, field experiences, and exploration of local sites;
- Categorize the cultural contexts for the applications of traditional and folk medicines;
- Identify basic principles of pharmacology and historical theory;
- Appraise relevant data derived from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities in the context of folk medicine; and,
- Investigate the overarching economic patterns of medicine throughout human history.

Evaluation and Grading:

Evaluation will be based on six self-reflection assignments and fieldnotes.

60% Self-Reflection Projects: (each worth 10% of the class grade) The Projects will be free-form projects due at the end of the course, students will prepare a 10-minute presentation to describe the projects. Students may self-select projects in any form (literature review or scientific manuscript, creative writing piece, podcast, fine art composition, poetry, song, or any other creative presentation) that explicitly addresses the locations visited and topics discussed during this Maymester. A grading rubric will be distributed during the second week of the course. Creativity and passion in creating this project is highly encouraged.

40% Fieldnotes: Students will need to bring a blank notebook (lined or unlined, student's choice). This notebook will be used to keep daily notes either in journal or ethnographic format. This will be shared periodically with the instructor throughout the trip. Students will be encouraged to personalize this fieldnote book and after class it will serve as a memento of the travels and their experiences abroad.

Please note, below is the "Approximate" grading scale breakdown. However, this scale is not set in stone and may slightly shift up or down based on overall scores. There are no pluses (+) or minuses (-) assigned to grades in this course.

Percent	Letter Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	F

Students will be asked to complete an anonymous critical evaluation of the course at its completion.

Course Readings

Supplemental Readings (selected essays, videos, and other media).

Topical materials including but not limited to the syllabus, supplemental reading assignments and additional handouts will be made available to assist in the cultural immersion of this Maymester. Students will also be encouraged to use Blackboard as an additional learning tool.

Course Outline

This course will be in the format of a Maymester foreign travel immersion course, under the guidance of the instructor for the specific session. During the daily sessions the instructors will engage the students with questions and draw comments or interpretations primarily based on the materials, immersion, and cultural experience. Students are expected to ask questions and participate in an interactive fashion.

Pre-Trip Orientation and Preparation

This Maymester will feature mandatory pre-travel meetings wherein the following will be discussed / reviewed:

- Travel details, living arrangements, and trip itinerary
- Emergency procedures, health insurance, International SOS
- Health and safety precautions
- Expectations for appropriate behavior and participation
- Country-specific information

In addition, there will be a few planned outings during the Spring 2023 semester. These will allow students to get to know one another before travelling as a group. The schedule for these outings will be posted to Blackboard.

Pre-Trip Registration

Students will need to register for the course and will be asked to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire will ask for the following:

1. Full name (as it appears on passport)
2. Passport number and expiration date
3. Declaration of known allergies / medical concerns
 - a. This will not exclude participation, but will require an EpiPen to be obtained and carried by the student during the trip

Travel Abroad Guidelines and Policies

Students will need to familiarize themselves with the USC's travel abroad policies before departure.

<https://global.usc.edu/student-travel-abroad/policies-guidelines/>

<https://global.usc.edu/student-travel-abroad/policies-guidelines/for-students/>

<https://global.usc.edu/student-travel-abroad/international-sos/>

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/studying-abroad/>

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-travel-abroad-destination-restrictions-and-crisis-management/>

<https://global.usc.edu/files/2020/07/USC-Study-Abroad-Emergency-Response-Guideline.pdf>

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Date	Topic	Location(s)	Notes and Deliverables
Day 1 May 13	Leave LAX overnight flight to Belgrade, Serbia	LAX	
Day 2 May 14	Arrival Arrive in Belgrade Check into hotel Tour Palace of Parliament/Walking tour of Belgrade	Belgrade, Serbia	
Day 3 May 15	Day trip to Serbia Stara Planina	Stara Planina, Serbia	
Day 4 May 16	Local farm day; visit local hazelnut and honey farm Learn about herbs grown there and traditional medicinal practices	Belgrade, Serbia	
Day 5 May 17	Travel to Sofia Walking tour of Sofia	Sofia, Bulgaria	
Day 6 May 18	Travel to Stolat Stone and Compass Center Nature Walk; Bulgarian 101	Stolat, Bulgaria	

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Date	Topic	Location(s)	Notes and Deliverables
Day 7 May 19	Stone and Compass Center Honey: Medicine and Commerce	Stolat, Bulgaria	
Day 8 May 20	Veliko Turnovo Tsarevets – Bulgarian State and the City of the Tsars	Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria	
Day 9 May 21	Stone and Compass Center Herbal medicine, Herbarium, and Nature Hike	Stolat, Bulgaria	
Day 10 May 22	Varna Varna Cathedral Museum of the History of Medicine Varna Roman Baths	Varna, Bulgaria	
Day 11 May 23	Bucharest Bucharest Old Town walking tour	Bucharest, Romania	
Day 12 May 24	Bucharest Meet with an apitherapist and learn the history of apitherapy in Romania Visit a plafar Visit Romanian Peasant Museum	Bucharest, Romania	

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Date	Topic	Location(s)	Notes and Deliverables
Day 13 May 25	Mangalia or Eforie Nord Day trip to Romanian spa in Mangalia or Eforie Nord <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than one third of Europe's mineral and thermal springs are found in Romania.• The spas use natural factors to provide relief for medical disorders and illnesses including rheumatism, endocrine, kidney, liver, respiratory, heart, stomach and nervous diseases, metabolism, and gynecological disorders	Mangalia or Eforie Nord, Romania	
Day 14 May 26	Fields and Herbs Local farming fields to learn about / forage for medicinal herbs	Bucharest, Romania	
Day 15 May 27	Depart from Bucharest to return to LAX		

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

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[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.