



BALKAN IMMERSION SHORT TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM: CROSSROADS OF CULTURES

**JUNE 19 – JULY 4, 2022
SOFIA, BULGARIA**

Brief outline

The Balkan Immersion Program offered by Sofia University aims to give O.P. Jindal Global University students a unique experience of Balkan culture. On the one hand, it addresses in a cross-disciplinary perspective the fields of Balkan history, cultural heritage and regional development, and international politics through lectures and class discussions led by leading scholars in those fields. On the other, it brings an experiential dimension to the learning process through field trips and interactions with students from Sofia University. It aims to broaden the students' horizon by offering JGU students' critical perspectives on national myths and stereotypes that have shaped the Balkans as one of the most idiosyncratic regions of Europe, at the crossroads of civilizations from Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Sofia, where the program is based is a vibrant city, with lots of history and culture and a picturesque location at the foot of the Vitosha Mountain (2292 m.). The architecture, cuisine and lifestyle of the Sofians reflect the Roman, Greek and Ottoman impact on this Balkan foothold. Green spaces stand alongside dazzling museums and galleries, century-old cuisine is given a modern twist.

Why the Balkans?

Geopolitically as well as culturally, the Balkan peninsula, the South-East tip of Europe, is located at the cross-road of East and West, of Europe and Asia. Very broadly, it is home to some of the oldest cities in the world, it has been for many centuries part of the Ottoman Empire, and today is in the process of being integrated in the EU (though significant differences exist across countries). So:

- **If you are interested in international affairs, global politics and European integration** the BIP can give you a fresh insight into the problematics of border regions, intercultural communication and nationalist narratives. You will understand better why the region has been known as the “powder keg of the Balkans” and how the Great Powers have drawn the problematic political map we have today.

- **If you are interested in arts and architecture**, Bulgaria will charm you with off the beaten track multicultural towns, impressive monasteries and citadels perched on hillsides in fascinating and often eclectic styles. You will also get a taste of socialist realism – the grandiose style sanctioned by political power during the communist regime. Finally, you will be introduced to the vibrant Bulgarian modern art scene.

- **If ancient history is your thing**, you are in for a treat. You will see artefacts from as far back as the Neolithic Age. Much like Varanasi in India, Sofia and Plovdiv are among the oldest cities in the world. History is everywhere, in churches, forts, and museums and across city landscapes.

- **As a bonus**, you will get a taste of stunning landscapes, gorgeous mountains and forests, hearty food and striking folk music, often reinterpreted in modern fusion jazz compositions. Finally, a true immersion is nothing without human interaction: you will get to learn some basic Bulgarian words and expressions and interact with students from Sofia University (don't worry, they all speak English!).



WHAT TO EXPECT

Teaching



The academic schedule includes lecture sessions (30 hours of classroom teaching) in three broad areas: Balkan history, cultural heritage preservation and management, European integration/geopolitics of the Balkans, and an introductory seminar on Bulgarian language (“survival Bulgarian”), all of them in combination with hands-on experience of Balkan culture and the arts. Students conclude each of the three main courses with an individual or joint project. The instructors are leading academics from Sofia University, the New Bulgarian University and the Bulgarian Academy of Science.

Upon successful completion of the program JGU students will be awarded 4 credits.

Field Trips

As part of the academic program, the field trips will add a precious experiential dimension to your understanding of the Balkans.

- **10 hours cultural immersion in Sofia:** Cultural activities to supplement the lecture sessions
- **Field trip to Veliko Tarnovo** (2 days)
- **Field trip to Plovdiv** (1 day)
- **Field trip to Rila Monastery** (1 day)

Fees: ₹ 2,02,500 per student (16 students min.)

The fees include: 15 nights hotel accommodation in shared double room (twin beds) in Sofia + one night in Veliko Tarnovo, daily breakfast + lunch, transportation to field trips, course fees, entrance fees in museums and national monuments.

The fees do not include: air fare, visa expenses, travel insurance, personal expenses.

Interested?

You can apply by writing to **prof. Galina Rousseva-Sokolova**, faculty coordinator of the program at gysokolova@jgu.edu.in by **March 18th 2022**. Your application should include a 300 words motivation essay. Once offered a seat, a signed letter of intent from a parent is required to reserve a spot. The full payment is due by March 31st.

