



## Space, Mobility and Transformation: Theories, Methods and Empirics

**Call for Applications:**

**PhD Summer School**

**Organisers:** Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL), Leipzig, Germany  
American University of Central Asian (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

**Location:** Bishkek and Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan

**Dates:** 14.08.2016 – 18.08.2016



## Summer School Goals

The PhD Summer School is embedded in the research and network project *Fluid mobilities for cities in transformation: spatial dynamics of marshrutkas in Central Asia and the Caucasus (Marshrutka Project)*. Within the scope of the project, we want to gain insights into transformation processes through the lens of changing mobility practices.

We are inviting doctoral students from diverse disciplines, such as geography, urban studies, anthropology, social and political sciences, and others, interested in the questions of **space, mobility and transformation**. The summer school is designed to encourage transnational interdisciplinary discussions, and provide high-impact feedback and networking opportunities for its participants. We offer [1] thematic key-note speeches, [2] training sessions on research methods, [3] an opportunity to share, discuss, and receive feedback for ongoing research projects, [4] mobility-themed field trips.

Besides offering a unique and understudied thematic focus, we offer a cozy and thorough working environment and networking opportunities. The summer school invites five project-funded PhD students, ten external PhD students (please see information on funding opportunities below), ten project partners from Kyrgyz, Kazak, Tajik, Russian, Georgian and German academic institutions, international and local key-note speakers, trainers and stakeholders. Such a high student/professor ratio and a diverse regional and thematic expertise of the participants will ensure an opportunity for constructive in-depth discussions.

## About the Marshrutka Project

Minibuses locally known as *marshrutkas* are a common sight in urban and rural landscapes of Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Marshrutka project deals with the role of the marshrutka mobility phenomenon in the production of post-Soviet urban spaces, in and beyond Central Asia and the Caucasus. It provides an empirically founded contribution to the larger discussion on post-Soviet transformation, and fosters a still under-represented view on post-Soviet transformation, highlighting – through the lens of the marshrutka phenomenon – the bottom-up and everyday emergence of new orders in the fields of economy, morale, urban development and migration. The project is carried out by means of five complementary PhD projects under supervision of academic project partners; in addition, a post-doc based at the IfL in Leipzig is charged with a cross-cutting research project and ensures the conceptual coherence of the project. The project sees its outcomes in terms of a solid and sustainable transfer of knowledge and methods, from German partners towards the academic institutions in the target regions, and vice versa, strengthened local research capacities and infrastructures, and long-lasting research cooperation.

## Thematic Focus

We understand mobility as a mode of space production. Space has become a prevailing concept for speaking about ordering of social relations and urban life. Bourdieu, de Certeau, Lefebvre and many others used spatial approaches to analyse the relations between social and material, the structure of societies, the organisation of the urban every day. The end of last century witnessed a “mobility turn”, implying that mobility is crucial to a social production of space (cf. Urry 2002,

2004, 2007; Edensor 2004; Jensen O 2009; Jensen A 2011). At the same time, social sciences lack appropriate vocabulary for a description of mobile objects constituting space.

While the project-related PhD research is focusing primarily on marhsrutka mobility, external participants are welcome to present papers on the following (and related) themes:

- Shared taxis and paratransit in the global North and South;
- Mobility and informal practices;
- Bottom-up social orders, entrepreneurship and transition;
- Space and mobility in post-Soviet cities and beyond;

## Flexible Openings

The summer school is primarily designed for doctoral students. However, in exceptional cases, the applications from post-doctoral and early career researchers, as well as MA students will also be considered. The knowledge of the post-Soviet region is welcome but not necessary. The working language of the summer school will be English. For selected lectures, translation from Russian will be provided.

## Submission guidelines

The application should include a motivation letter, a short CV and an abstract (not more than 500 words) of the paper you are planning to present at the summer school.

Please submit the application to Lela Rekhviashvili ([l\\_rekhviashvili@ifl-leipzig.de](mailto:l_rekhviashvili@ifl-leipzig.de)) by **April 30, 2016**.

## Travel grants

The participation of the Summer School is for free. We offer travel grants up to 400 EUR to ten selected applicants.

The sessions of the Summer School will be held daily from August 14 – August 18, 9am until 6pm, and full attendance is required. The participants of the Summer School will receive a certificate of attendance.

## Hosts and Organisers

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL), Leipzig, Germany (<http://www.ifl-leipzig.de/>)

American University of Central Asian (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (<https://www.auca.kg/>)