"Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them."

— Albert Einstein

We are glad and proud to show our readers some of the ways in which University goes beyond its borders, be it in teaching or in research. In this spring issue we present the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, whose very name underscores its globally-oriented approach, and HSE’s experience of launching massive open online courses. Being a leader among Russian universities in introducing MOOCs, HSE’s professors share their experience in designing and leading English-taught courses on Coursera. In addition to announcing the upcoming short-term visits of scholars invited from universities abroad, we are also starting a new tradition of interviewing guest scholars at HSE. Dr. Virginia Moreira has kindly agreed to open the series of such interviews.

We hope that the spring mood will invigorate you to pursue new research and teaching projects, and we cordially invite you to participate in the upcoming April Conference!

Yulia Grinkevich
Director of Internationalization

**Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs**

Interdisciplinary research and education in economics and international politics are the trademark of the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs at HSE. The Faculty offers three tracks for undergraduate students and five Master’s programmes, as well as many opportunities for collaboration on research projects for faculty members and students. **Sergey Karaganov**, Dean of the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, spoke with The HSE Look about research plans, international cooperation and new degree programmes.

**Sergey Karaganov** is a Doctor of Sciences in World History and a Dean of the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs. Prof. Karaganov graduated in 1974 from the Department of Economics of the Moscow State University, and did his research for the Doctorate at the Institute of USA and Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is active in many professional and public organizations, including being an Honorary Chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, Chairman of the Valdai Discussion Club, and a member of the Supervisory Board of the Publishing House "International Affairs".

**How did things change for the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs after becoming one of the ten “mega-faculties”?**

Personally, my work became more difficult because we need to develop more complex projects under economic constraints, but there is a lot of potential. With the addition of the School of Asian Studies the faculty as a whole gained many opportunities, especially by integrating the professors and students who focus on the culture, history and languages of East Asia into our programmes on world economy and international affairs, and the other way around.
It takes time and effort; it requires some sacrifices and changes and new ways of doing things – but overall it is a positive process. We find the faculty merger most productive because of the new people it brought. We were starting to get stale in the established research areas, etc., and now we have many new colleagues to collaborate with. I am glad that we have faculty members from the School of Asian Studies; many of the younger colleagues are very proactive, and already make up almost half of our new faculty administration.

Of course, synergy takes time but we already start to see the benefits. We’ve done a review of the study programs which we offer, including the programs in Asian Studies, and made adjustments to the curriculum. This led to the increase in tuition-based applicants and students, and a certain redistribution of them among the various undergraduate and graduate programs that we offer.

How did the merger influence the research landscape of the Faculty?

One of my tasks as a dean and a leader is to foster collaborations. We are using both external contracts as a means to do research and the Faculty’s budget to support research projects which are not yet sought out by clients. We are starting to form mixed groups which focus on intercultural cooperation in business and politics, especially concerning Asian countries. The results will take some time to emerge, but it is undoubtedly a productive endeavor.

From the very start, our Faculty practiced seamlessness: we do not draw a divisive line between economics and international relations. Economists who have little understanding of international relations, culture and religion are not going to be good experts, the same way that it’s impossible to be a good expert or policy-maker in international relations without having a deep knowledge of world economy.

Ideally, if we had more resources, we would be a Faculty of Political Economy and offer programmes and does research in economics, international relations, cultural anthropology, history and religion. It’s a goal we are patiently working towards within the existing constraints and resources.

You are launching an undergraduate programme fully in English, can you tell more about it?

It’s a program that we’ve been developing for the past two years with the London School of Economics and Political Science (University of London). It’s going to be a tuition-only programme taught fully in English, with a mostly humanities-oriented curriculum in international relations, together with mathematics and economics. We want to provide students with a high quality international education and the opportunity to receive the degree from two universities.

Are you planning to target primarily Russian prospective students?

Russian students will make up a large part of the student body, certainly, but we expect to have a substantial number of international students as well, based on our experience with other programmes.

What is the profile of your international students and how many are there?

The majority of international students are enrolled in Master’s degree programmes, though some of them join us already for the Bachelor’s degree. Ideally, we would have around 20% of international students in undergraduate programmes and around 30-40% in Master’s. It will bring directly to our students the chance to develop and practice intercultural skills. It’s very important because knowledge and professional skills are only a part of what good education gives to students; experience, socializing, friendships, a chance to interact with people from different backgrounds – all of this is valuable and can help make a good professional.

I had the privilege of meeting Lee Kuan Yew several times, and he was bewildered by the fact that somebody who did not have an experience living abroad could be appointed a cabinet minister. “They cannot assess the situation in their own country if they are too immersed in it,” he noted, and I agree with that.

Who are your main partners among foreign universities? Are there any plans to find new ones?

We have several partners in Europe (mostly in economics), a lot of partner universities in China and Japan, and several very prominent partners in USA (mostly in international business). We have long-running cooperation with Harvard University: we hold conferences twice a year and our PhD students can spend one research year at Harvard tuition-free. We also plan to develop a partnership with Leiden University (the Netherlands) and will try to involve other faculties which teach humanities, as currently the agreement is focused mostly on academic exchange for students.

In general, we’ve been pioneers in developing systematic relations with Chinese universities, we have joint programmes with universities in UK, and we are not actively looking for new partners.

HSE is hiring faculty members and researchers through international recruitment procedures. Is it an important opportunity for the Faculty to attract new colleagues?

I think it’s a very valuable opportunity for us, especially now that we can get a more flexible opportunity to hire senior scholars for part-time positions. It is more convenient for both sides: we can get renowned professors to give lectures,
supervise students’ graduation theses, and they do not have
to relocate to another country for 3-5 years. We already have
two full-time faculty members hired for tenure-track positions: Andrej Krickovic [see the interview in The HSE Look 1(08) 2014] and Yuval Weber who are active members of our team.

Could you tell more about research carried out at the Faculty?

First of all, the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs and our partner organizations developed the policy proposal for Russia’s economic turn to the East. One year ago we prepared the proposal for joining the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt and The Eurasian Economic Union, which became a part of Russia’s policy. We are quite good at making accurate policy forecasts: the analysis of world politics development which we made in 2007-08 is, sadly, turning out to come true.

Secondly, we have a strong tradition of European Studies. Our experts have been showing for a long time that the European Project is going to experience a crisis because of the initial mistakes in inner policies as well as inevitable complications which arise in such large-scale endeavors. Currently I am encouraging the faculty members to venture into political economy in their research, but it’s not an easy goal to achieve. Our focus of interest here is two-fold: economy as the tool of the countries’ international policies, and international affairs as a tool for achieving economic goals. This connection is growing stronger, even though 3-4 years ago economy seemed to be the primary driver. However, we are again entering the time of politicized economy, and it offers many interesting opportunities for a researcher.

Are you doing anything special to get more students involved into research? Are there any regular workshops?

We do, and such involvement brings very good results. I would like to illustrate this with how we shaped the idea of the “economic turn to the East”. When I started to develop this idea and assembled a team of several people, we reviewed all the existing publications on this issue – and they proved to be unsatisfying. We chose several Master’s degree students to join the group, and they wrote brilliant papers on Russia’s competitive advantages which can be used in the current economic and political situation, especially for the development of Siberia and the Far East. These former students are now our colleagues; each supervises 3-4 Master’s students and a research group or even one of the programmes our Faculty offers.

Massive Open Online HSE

Massive online open courses (MOOCs) are a very popular trend in education, and HSE is not shying away from it. Having joined Coursera in 2014, the university developed and launched 21 courses (5 in English) between 2013 and 2015, focusing on economics, mathematics and humanities.

In 2015, HSE converted two courses into the “on demand” format: ‘Introduction to Neuroeconomics: How the Brain Makes Decisions’ delivered by Professor Vasily Klucharev, and ‘Financial Markets and Institutions’ delivered by Tenured Professor Nikolay Berzon, and currently prepares several more.

The most popular English-taught courses were ‘Introduction to Neuroeconomics: How the Brain Makes Decisions’ and ‘Core Concepts in Data Analysis’, which attracted 76,061 and 57,911 learners, respectively.

This year, HSE plans to launch at least 10 new courses on the National Open Education Platform (Russia) and at least 20 new courses on Coursera. In 2016 HSE has already launched courses in “specializations,” a new format offered by Coursera that unites several practical courses into a series to provide highly-demanded skills. Two courses on private and corporate finance were launched by HSE on itself, and the university also developed a specialization jointly with the University of California, San Diego on Data Structures and Algorithms.

In addition to developing courses on Coursera, in collaboration with seven leading Russian universities HSE launched the National Open Education Platform.

HSE provides a possibility for undergraduate and graduate programmes to accept relevant MOOC certificates as a part of digital mobility towards the completion of programmes. The university is also considering the use of blended learning formats in its new models of undergraduate programs, with the idea that lectures could be held predominantly online and seminars could be led through face-to-face teaching.

The HSE Look interviewed two HSE professors who led English-taught MOOCs on Coursera, and they shared their experience of preparing and running the courses and how it differs from classroom teaching.
Teaching an Online Course on Understanding Russian Culture

Mira Bergelson, born in Moscow, is a Professor at the School of Philology of the Faculty of Humanities at HSE. She holds a PhD in Linguistics from the Russian Academy of Sciences as well as a second doctoral degree in sociocultural pragmatics of communication. Prof. Bergelson has taught a variety of courses on intercultural communication and cross-cultural management in Russian and American universities, and has worked as a consultant for the US White House advance teams and for the Presidential Executive Office of the Russian Federation.

As a teacher, was it more challenging for you to lead a MOOC than a regular course?
Both types of teaching have their challenges, but they differ. For me it was demanding to record the lectures, because as a lecturer I am used to relying on the feedback from the audience and adjusting the content accordingly. Recording the lectures took me almost a semester, and generally the response to this content was positive. After the first run of the course I wanted to change several things in the lectures, but it would mean re-shooting all the videos, so I decided that it is best to leave them as they are for the second run. My course assistant transcribed all the lectures, and I am very grateful for the effort she put into this, because automatically generated subtitles are not reliable.

Such a one-way ‘fixed’ exposure, when I cannot change the material and adjust it to the needs of the audience, and take into account their feedback, was not easy for me, psychologically speaking, but the course was very successful. Currently I am reviewing the course for the “on demand” format, so maybe we’ll record some new content as well.

Did the second run of the course differ a lot from the first?
In a way the second time was more “boring” but in a good way. Fewer people signed up, around 4,000, while the first time there were over 17,000 students, though the second time more people actually participated in the course. The first run was in May – July 2014, and the discussions, especially about politics, were very heated; some people signed up just because the course was about something related to Russia. The second time students who signed up were more focused on learning more about Russian culture or reaffirming and deepening their knowledge of it.

Around 20% of active participants were with Russian-speaking background, and they were of great help on the forum, answering the questions and sharing their experiences. There were no restrictions for the topics of discussion – culture, politics, etc., but we had certain rules concerning the academic format of discussion and maintaining a respectful attitude so as to help create a space for fruitful talks. A lot of people were interested in something specific, such as Russian rock music, ballet, or Tolstoy, and my lectures gave them the first push, while the main “action” happened in the forum discussions. Students made a lot of discussion groups based on their region or language – Italian students, French-speaking students, etc., but all of them were driven by their interest in Russia.

Were you following the discussions closely?
My course assistant checked the forum every day and replied to all the questions which were technical or where the answer was clear. If they felt that something required my attention, they e-mailed me the link, and I went to the forum and replied. We had a lot of positive feedback from students for this engagement with the course discussions. I tried to refrain from getting into the middle of discussions, so as not to intrude from the position of authority.

For any course in the humanities forum discussions are vital, and give the necessary spark. Each week we suggested a discussion topic related to the lecture, so that each participant could comment on that if they did not find another discussion which interested them. We had many responses in the discussion of cultural metaphors, conventions of politeness and rudeness and their origins.

What were the obligatory course assignments?
It’s always a challenging part for MOOCs in the humanities, since it’s difficult to make standardized test for them. Each week students had a quiz about the lecture’s topic, and they also needed to hand in and assess two peer-reviewed tasks (mid-term and final). For mid-term they had a business e-mail to analyze the mistakes in communication style and to improve it based on their knowledge about Russian and Western office communication conventions. After submitting their own task, each student needed to review three assignments. Of course, there is always a risk that either the reviewer will not be competent or diligent, or there will not be much to analyze, and I am looking for ways to improve the tasks and guidelines for peer assessment. For the final task the students needed to express their ideas on how to make communication between Russia and the West more effective, based on what they learned during the course.
What would you recommend to a colleague who wants to develop a MOOC?

I would think a lot about the potential audience for the course and what they could get out of it. If it’s a practical course that teaches practical skills needed in the 21st century, the situation is quite clear. If it is a course in the humanities or something with a broad overview of the subject, you might need to pay more attention to the context. Think about the special focus the audience will be looking for in a course taught by a professor from a university in Moscow, etc. You might want to divide the course into introductory and advanced parts.

I would advise to rely on your usual style of giving lectures (e.g. sitting, standing) so that the recording process goes more naturally. If your MOOC is in Russian, you should rely on your experience with Russian-speaking students and their perception of lectures. If you are giving a MOOC in English, the audience is expecting a more concise presentation of the material, no longer than 9-10 minutes. Some of my recordings were 12-15 minutes, but in such cases they need to be very engaging.

Teaching Economics of Transition and Emerging Markets Online to over 15,000 Students

Prof. Marek Dabrowski was born in 1951 in Poland and is a Professor at HSE, Non-Resident Scholar at Bruegel in Brussels, and Fellow at CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research in Warsaw. He is a researcher and policy advisor on issues of monetary and fiscal policies, growth and poverty, currency crises, international financial architecture, perspectives of European integration, European Neighborhood Policy and political economy of transition.

Does your experience as a policy-maker and advisor influence your experience of leading a MOOC on “Economics of Transition and Emerging Markets”?

I am not an expert on massive open online courses per se, and I started to learn about their role in the education process only after I had recorded my course in spring 2014. However, I can share my practical experience in designing the course on “Economics of Transition and Emerging Markets” for Coursera and the insights I obtained when this course was run in late 2014-early 2015.

In my professional life I was mostly involved in research, policy advising and consultancy. I gave occasional lectures at universities, research institutes, training courses of technical assistance projects, Joint Vienna Institute, etc. but did not follow innovations in university education. However, it was not my first experience with online education; my public lectures and presentations have frequently been video-recorded and published on YouTube.

Could you tell us in more details about your experience of teaching this MOOC course?

I started working at HSE in February 2014, in the middle of the academic year, and all teaching schedules were already fixed for the 2013-2014 academic year. It was the Rector’s decision that I should be engaged in designing a MOOC, and I was very happy that I had that opportunity. Over fifteen thousand students signed up. Now the course is redesigned for the “on-demand” format and will be available online on a non-stop basis, and practically every two months a new cohort of students can join us.

In the course that was run at the end of 2014 and early 2015, most of the students were from the United States, India, China, Latin America, the EU and remaining some 15 percent - from Russia and other post-Soviet countries. Lectures were pre-recorded so I could not react to the audience as in face-to-face teaching. However, I received some feedback from students, not only via forum on Coursera website, but also via the LinkedIn and e-mail. I could also observe that some of my publications started to be frequently viewed online, and I guess that was due to the Coursera students' interest.

You said that the majority of your students came from the United States of America. Were they the target audience you aimed at? Or did it turn out to be different from what you originally thought?

It is difficult now for me to reconstruct exactly what I thought at the start. I think in spring 2014 I did not have a clear idea who would sign up for my course apart from that its content was targeted to graduate students who already have some background in economics. Nevertheless I was aware that teaching in English would make the course available to a global audience and this really happened.

Only after The Economist’s article on the role of MOOCs in June 2014 I started to learn more systematically about this form of education, its organization and future prospects.
Because my course contained information on the situation in the world economy, individual regions and countries at the beginning of 2014, I had to record additional video clips with updates when redesigning the course for “on demand” mode in early 2016.

**Did you engage in the conversations on the forum a lot?**

It was impossible to be engaged in every stream of discussion on the forum, because there were too many students and topics to debate. I was greatly helped by my assistant Inna Zaitseva who took responsibility for monitoring the forum debates on a regular basis. As far as I remember, only a few hundred students completed the entire course, i.e., they passed the quizzes, wrote the essay and purchased the certificate. Such statistics are similar to other MOOCs.

The essay was the most difficult task and the online peer-review evaluation system (each student should evaluate essays written by others) raised some controversies. Some people believed they wrote good essays but were less favorably assessed by someone who was not competent. Such mismatches are bound to happen with such a diverse audience. On the other hand, neither lecturer, nor his/her assistant are able to read and evaluate even several hundreds of essays, not to mention a few thousands.

Some people passionately discussed the material for the whole lifetime of the course, judging by their questions and comments, they were really competent. Others, I guess, were less prepared and treated the class as an adventure to explore.

I think online courses are a great thing, because they give a unique educational chance for many people, especially those from developing countries. There are a number of courses by distinguished scholars whom normally students would not have access to, and they are actually open to everybody. It gives chances to people who are in less favorable geographical locations or life situations to gain good knowledge.

**You mentioned that your research page was more frequently visited. Was there any impact, any new connections for collaborations? Were the visitors looking for your research or just checking who their professor is?**

I think both. I’ve had a profile on LinkedIn since 2008, and now I have more than one thousand contacts. It is a part of my professional life and history: I worked in many institutions on various projects, and it is one of the ways to list them and keep in touch with colleagues. Maybe it is a coincidence, but at the end of 2014 and at the beginning of 2015 I had a big inflow of visits to my profile and proposals to establish contacts. This might be connected with Coursera, and it might be connected with my employment at HSE, but also might be a result of my part-time employment at Bruegel (a Brussels-based global and European think tank) which started in September 2014. But from looking at the background of those people, I guess this was predominantly the impact of Coursera. It definitely helped me in professional promotion, and I hope that my course also helps HSE to achieve its institutional goals.

**If a student had a choice to join your online course or your face-to-face course, which would you recommend?**

I think that it depends on the status of the potential student and their geographic location. According to the current rules, HSE Master students (at the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, and exchange students) who choose the topic of my course must attend my classes. They do not possess a formal option to substitute those classes by the online course. On the other hand, to others who are not formally HSE students the online course is the only available option. Especially to those who live outside Moscow and Russia.

Of course, these two forms of teaching differ. Live teaching offers more opportunity for interaction, because the lecturer has more time, students can ask questions, clarify and discuss issues of her/his interest, ask for specific advice (for example, related to choice of literature). Online teaching requires the lecturer to be very concise. There is no room for additional comments and interaction with students (only to a limited extent via forum).

It seems to me that there are several categories of MOOCs students. There are people who graduated several years ago and not necessarily in a given discipline, and who are looking now to update their education. There are current students who are looking for extra knowledge. There are university professors and lecturers who want to confront their knowledge and teaching methods with what is offered in MOOCs. Finally, there are enthusiasts of continuous education who try to learn new disciplines and new topics, just to broaden their own intellectual horizons.

I think that as long as universities will not accept credits from online courses as a part of total degree credits for students on a large scale, MOOCs and face-to-face courses will remain two separate tracks. Online courses will largely exist as an opportunity for public education.

**What would you advise to someone who wants to create their own massive open online course but, like you in 2014, does not have a full understanding of how to do that?**

I would advocate being as simple as possible. Even if you teach a complex topic that requires a lot of knowledge, try to present it in the most simple and clear way. Do not digress from the main thread of your lecture, make the structure
clear to follow. I used a PowerPoint presentation which, apart from statistics, graphs, and maps, included the logical structure of my presentation and my arguments. I hope they helped people to catch up if they missed something while listening to me. And of course you should present things in a more concise way than when you usually speak to the classroom. For me it was not difficult because I have an extensive experience in conference presentations where I have usually only 10 or 15 minutes to present a complicated problem. It may be more difficult for people who are used to having 60-90 minutes to explain the topic in detail.

Visiting Scholars

The HSE Look is happy to promote upcoming short-term visits to HSE by international scholars, which were supported by institutional funding based on the hosting departments’ applications. The following visits are scheduled for March and April. For details, please, contact the hosting department or visitingscholar@hse.ru

**Gulnaz Sharafutdinova**, Senior lecturer at the Russia Institute of Kings College (London)
Hosting department at HSE: Department of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (Perm)
**Dates**: March 13 – 16, 2016

**Elmar Schenkel**, Professor at the Institute of English Studies at the Leipzig University
Hosting department at HSE: Faculty of Humanities (Nizhny Novgorod)
**Dates**: April 3 – 17, 2016

**Tatiana Rakhmanova**, Director and producer at the Wilton Films
Hosting department at HSE: Faculty of Communications, Media and Design
**Dates**: March 27 – April 17, 2016

**Jurgen Basedow**, Managing Director at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law, Hamburg
Hosting department at HSE: Faculty of Law
**Dates**: April 25 – 30, 2016

In addition to announcing the stay of visiting scholars at HSE we would also like to introduce them to you through interviews, starting with an interview with a visiting scholar Virginia Moreira.

International Exchange of Ideas and Practice in Psychology

Dr. Virginia Moreira visited HSE in late January-early February 2016 at the invitation of the Department of Psychology of Personality (School of Psychology of the Faculty of Social Sciences), and taught several classes at the Master’s Programme “Consulting Psychology. Personology”.

**What is your research focus in psychology?**
**How did you learn about HSE and why did you decide to collaborate on teaching?**

I have been a psychotherapist for many years now and also a Professor at Universidade de Fortaleza in Brazil where I do phenomenological research in psychotherapy and psychopathology, in person-centered approach in the laboratory APHETO – Laboratório de Psicopatologia e Clinica Humanista Fenomenológica. It is one of the main approaches taught in the Master Programme “Consulting Psychology. Personology” at HSE. Professor Veniamin Kolpachnikov and Professor Alexander Orlov have known me for some years now from conferences, and they invited me to teach a short series of lectures and seminars based on my research in Brazil. It's my second time in Russia, I first came to a conference in 2010 organized by the Department.

**How do you find the students?**
**Is teaching here different from your home university?**

It’s my third class here already, and it’s a very good experience so far. The first day was somewhat difficult; a Brazilian professor giving classes to Russian students in English – it's a challenging situation, but it turned out well.
April Conference Announcement

The XVII April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development will be held on April 19-22 at HSE’s Moscow campus. It is a major forum in Russia on social sciences, especially economics. This year’s special topics are:

- Diagnostics of economic growth: comparative perspective;
- Top-down modernization: opportunities and limits in modern world;
- Values, trust and cooperation.

The conference program is available online: [https://conf.hse.ru/en/2016/program](https://conf.hse.ru/en/2016/program)