

CONNECTIONS

UNC CENTER FOR SLAVIC, EURASIAN, AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Title VI competition is on! Every indication suggests that the Department of Education will issue the announcement in mid-April, which will include a submission date sometime in May. Although it's possible that the process can get derailed, we don't expect this to happen and are operating under the assumption that we need to submit our proposal to the Office of Sponsored Research on campus circa May 1.

CSEEEES now seeks to establish itself as a comprehensive National Resource Center, but no longer as part of a consortium. Our program stands tall among the tallest for a university our size, drawing upon 71 faculty members with international reputations in over 20 departments and professional schools, 32 of whom devote the majority of their time teaching and engaging in research focused on REEES. The breadth and depth of major and minor undergraduate degrees with significant REEES content, CSEEEES's interdisciplinary REEES MA degree, and curricula in UNC's outstanding professional schools and acclaimed PhD programs underscore the investments the university has made on our world area. These include development of the largest REEES library holdings in the Southeast, with over 800,000 print volumes in the languages of the region.

Since 2015 we have established core objectives to improve upon what we do. We reaffirmed our strengths. We recognized emerging new concentrations in Central Asia, the

Visegrad region, Global Studies, and Jewish History and Culture in their Eurasian context. We launched a Spotlight on Ukraine Initiative, a Central Asia Working Group, a Forum on Southeastern Europe, and a Russia on the World Stage Today Lecture Series. We established committees to facilitate strategic planning. As a result, we are now poised to play an even more critical role on campus and far beyond.

If our efforts prove successful, we will hire a Community Engagement Coordinator. We will support fifth-year Russian, the first Language Across the Curriculum course in Russian, hire a teaching assistant professor of Southeastern European studies, and introduce two years of instruction in Ukrainian and Kazakh. We will target outreach to Minority Serving Institutions and to K-14 teachers; forge new programs with the School of Education at UNC-W; improve language instruction and evaluation; and deepen our connections to UNC's professional schools. DOE monies will also support our initiatives listed above, fund additional speakers, develop library holdings in the new languages we will offer, and make it possible for CSEEEES to offer travel awards to faculty and students. Importantly, we are requesting 8 academic year FLAS awards and 8 summer awards.

Fingers crossed!
Donald J. Raleigh

LIAM ANDERSON (MA Student, REEES) was accepted to the Bard-Smolny Summer Language Intensive program in St. Petersburg.

CHAD BRYANT (Associate Professor, History) published “Habsburg History, Eastern European History... Central European History?” in *Central European History*. He will be spending the summer in the Czech Republic completing research for his current book project, entitled *Prague: Belonging and the Modern City*. He was also awarded an American Council of Learned Societies Collaboration Research Fellowship and a Faculty Fellowship from UNC’s Institute for the Arts and Humanities. In November, Professor Bryant presented “The Lonely Bolshevik: Vojtěch Berger and the Great War” at the ASEES convention. He also participated in a roundtable entitled “Nationalism versus Urbanism” at Fordham University in February.

ALBERT CAVALLARO (MA Student, REEES) was awarded a 2018 Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) for summer Russian-language study. Albert was also accepted to Middlebury College’s Monterey Summer Symposium on Russia.

ANNA PECK (CSEES Fellow) published “Transbaikalian Buddhism in Christian Perspective: Cognitive Patterns of Catholic and Protestant Observers” in *Przegląd Religioznawczy-The Religious Studies Review*, “Political Aspects of the Development of Tibetan Buddhism in the Transbaikal” in *Universitas Gedanensis*, and the first volume of *Polityczne i religijne aspekty percepcji buddyzmu tybetańskiego*, entitled *Przegląd Perspektyw i Interpretacji. Perspektywa Protestancka* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW 2017).

LOUIS PORTER (PhD Candidate, History) won the 2017 ASEES Graduate Student Essay Prize for his dissertation chapter “No ‘Neutral Men’: A Day in the Life of a Soviet International Civil Servant, 1956-1967.”

DONALD J. RALEIGH (Distinguished Professor, History) gave talks on the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution at the University of Tulsa, Miami University of Ohio, and California State University, Chico. He published “«Изъясняться по-большевистски», или как саратовские большевики изображали своих врагов,” in *Русская литература и журналистика в движении времени. Ежегодник 2017. Международный научный журнал. Факультет журналистики Московского государственного университета имени М. В. Ломоносова* (2018).

STEVEN ROSEFIELDE (Professor, Economics) published “Communist Economy: The Verdict of History” in *100 Years of Communism* (Central European University Press, 2018) along with *China’s Market Communism: Challenges, Dilemmas, Solutions* (with Jonathan Leightner, Routledge, 2017), and articles in the *Journal of Business and Public Administration* and *Contemporary Economics*. Professor Rosefelde also has two forthcoming books, *Rethinking American National Security for the New Millennium* (with Quinn Mills, Oxford, 2018) and *Putin’s Russia: Economic, Political and Military Foundations* (World Scientific Publishers, 2018).

LEAH VALTIN-ERWIN (MA Student, REEES) was selected as a Title VIII Fellow to study Romanian at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and at the University of Bucharest in the summer of 2018.

EWA WAMPUSZYC (Assistant Professor, Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures) published *Mapping Warsaw: The Spatial Poetics of a Postwar City* (Northwestern University Press, 2018), which received an ASEES First Book Subvention Grant. Professor Wampuszyc presented “Where has all the rubble gone?: (De-)Aestheticizing Warsaw’s Rubble in Postwar Non-Fiction Film (1945-1956)” at the ASEES convention in November 2017.

WILLIAM ZANG (MA Student, Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies) was accepted to Middlebury College’s Monterey Summer Symposium on Russia.

TRAVEL AWARDS

With CSEES Conference Travel Awards, we support an already strong showing of UNC faculty and students at the Southern Conference on Slavic Studies and other conferences.

CSEES congratulates Katie Aha (Political Science), Helen Orr (Religious Studies), Dakota Irvin (History), Oskar Czendze (History), Krissy Juergensmeyer (Global Studies), Kevin Hoepfer (History), and Emily Lipira (History).

From top to bottom: Klezmer violinist Alicia Svigals prepares to perform the score to the 1918 silent film “The Yellow Ticket” — Pop-Up Poster Exhibition “American Films in Polish Movie Posters” — Polish Ambassador Piotr Wilczek presents “Poland, Europe, and the World” in the Nelson Mandela Auditorium



From top to bottom: Sarah Daniels (MA Student, Global Studies) decorates *wycinanki*, or Polish easter eggs! — Polish Week organizers Krissy Juergensmeyer (MA Student, REEES), Oskar Czen-dze (PhD Student, History), and Kasia Leszczuk (BA Student, Central European Studies) — Director Donald J. Raleigh with CSEEEES benefactor Josef Blass



In the spring of 2016, I was awarded the UNC Global Gap Year Fellowship, which provides funding for students who are about to begin their first year at UNC to take a year off, serve a community, and travel. The fellowship is completely self-designed such that students can explore their interests in whatever geographic region they wish. After studying Russian in high school, I was fascinated by the reaches of the former Soviet Union, and I knew I wanted to work with queer activism. I worked for an LGBTIQ NGO called Labrys in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. I translated grant reports, facilitated workshops on topics ranging from privilege to queer health, and participated in community outreach through working with the only LGBT club in Kyrgyzstan. Additionally, I worked in a kindergarten as an arts and crafts teacher. During my time in Bishkek, I was exposed to the unique culture of Kyrgyzstan. I learned about colonialism, nationalism, Islam, and the value of nongovernmental organizations that are run locally and by community members. Now that I am at Carolina, the various events run by CSEES and UNC's Russian language program have been pivotal in continuing my interest in Central Asia and developing further connections in order to return.



LAUREN JURGENSEN
FIRST-YEAR,
ANTHROPOLOGY AND RUSSIAN



JACOB BELL
SENIOR, HISTORY AND ENGLISH

My Russian journey began in a used bookstore in South Carolina, where I found a biography of Nicholas II with 1990s *New York Times* clippings on the Romanovs stuck in the margins by the previous owner. Taking undergraduate Russian history courses, I quickly discovered I wanted to spend my life studying and teaching it—starting with my time at UNC. With support from a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship and a David Anthony Kusa Undergraduate Research Award award, I developed an honors thesis from archives in Washington, DC, and Annapolis, MD. Using the international reactions to a sexual assault case in eighteenth-century Russia, my thesis explores the debate between Catherine the Great and the West on how women fit into society and their relation to power, against the backdrop of Catherine's memoirs, letters, and plays. After graduation, I hope to complete a Ph.D. in history, which I view as a bridge toward greater understanding of the people and culture I love.

The numerous opportunities UNC provides in Russian and East European Studies, as well as Jewish Studies, have been among my best experiences at Carolina. I am currently writing a senior honors thesis in history on the Beilis case, an accusation of ritual murder that took place in Kiev from 1911 through 1913. This past summer, I was fortunate to receive funding from both UNC's History Department and Center for Jewish Studies in support of my research and traveled to the Center for Jewish History's archives in New York City. Last year, I returned to German language for a semester before beginning to study Hebrew and Russian this past fall. My interest in Jewish and Soviet history led me to the Soviet Jewish experience of the Holocaust, a subject I plan to pursue in graduate study. I am currently in the process of applying to programs in Jewish Studies, REEES, and History.



SOPHIE RUPP
SENIOR, HISTORY AND JEWISH STUDIES

LOUISE MCREYNOLDS
PROFESSOR, HISTORY



During the 2017 fall semester, I had the privilege of conducting research in Ukraine under the auspices of the Fulbright Senior Scholar Program. I spent one month in Odessa and two in Kyiv, working primarily in local archives. My project's topic is the history of the evolution of archeology into a profession in the Russian Empire throughout the 19th century. A multiethnic, multiconfessional empire, Russia found itself having to cope with the rise of nationalist movements. Archeology played a dual role here, because on the one hand, the burgeoning professionals were fulfilling objectives laid out for them by the Imperial Archeological Commission, to "search for objects of antiquity, predominantly relating to the history of the fatherland and the lives of the peoples who at one time lived in the territory currently occupied by Russia." On the other, the particulars of objects found in archeological digs could also be presented as evidence of cultural distinction, the basis for an independent polity. My work probes this tension between imperialism and nationalism in this archaeological context.

Ukraine is central to this project for multiple reasons. First, several of the most important archaeologists in the empire worked and taught there, including Volodymyr Atonovych, Khvedir Vovk, and Dmytro Bahalii. Additionally, two of the few noteworthy females, Ekaterina Mel'nik and Alexandra Efimenko, made essential discoveries in Ukraine. Not surprisingly, all had connections of some sort to the Ukrainian independence movement, and I learned much from working in their personal papers. Odessa, the Black Sea port built by Catherine the Great, offered an alternative view. Home to one of the empire's most important archeological museums and professional societies, archeologists here focused on the remnants of the interactions between Greek trading colonies, which had dotted the littoral from the 7th century BCE, and the Scythians, Russia's territorial ancestors. One of my great pleasures this semester was working in that museum, recurated after the British looted so much during the Crimean War. This research will produce a traditional scholarly monograph, because some of my conclusions have revisionist implications for what we know about Russian imperialism. I am also building a website, replete with visualizations of the multifarious aspects of archeology, so that I can present both visualizations of the excavations and the social networks that connected these men and women.

I recently returned from a year and a half of research and writing at the Institute of Advanced Study in Berlin, Germany, where I completed my book on political action, music, and sound in late twentieth-century Poland. This intensive writing stint was punctuated by routine archival and fieldwork trips to Warsaw. As someone with a long-term commitment to thinking about music, sound, and protest across East Central Europe, this was a year in which there were many opportunities to witness new and old strategies of organizing public action through sound. I did fieldwork at a range of demonstrations, open cultural forums, riots, and parades. Trips to concerts and conferences brought me to new sites in Eastern Europe, the pinnacle of which was a bike trip along the Danube through Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and Serbia. Along that ride I attended music festivals and researched "soundmapping" projects—attempts by artists and scholars to grapple with the coherence (and dissonance) of Eastern Europe by focusing on sound. This is one prong of a new research project on the history of sound recording in Eastern Europe.

Another component of that research is homemade records, a format of musical bootlegging that was common under state socialism. These records—in Polish they're called sound postcards—give historians like myself a glimpse into the music (wedding bands, rock ballads, cabaret acts) that people cherished and gifted each other. This provides an important counternarrative to one of the refrains about popular culture in Poland: that it was a site of defiant resistance, first and foremost. I've also been looking into the material history of these flimsy plastic 45s. They were often pressed at home by amateur recordists, so they share a lot with their 1970s and 80s cousin, the mixtape. They're quite tricky to research — I started a small collection of my own from friends, flea markets, and online estate sales. Because they were part of a state-approved alternate economy, I have gone digging in peculiar places, such as technology and industry museum archives. Instead of conducting traditional interviews, I have been inviting acquaintances who grew up with these postcards to listen to them with me. As the colorful records spin on my turntables—many of them are hand decorated—I try and prompt debate about the performers and songs that we hear.



ANDREA BOHLMAN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MUSIC

THE ROMANIAN FOOD LION? GROCERY SHOPPING AFTER COMMUNISM

My master's project began on a chilly winter day in Bucharest almost a year and a half before I arrived at UNC. Bucharest in December is invariably dark and wet, but Christmas cheer in the form of pastries covered in powdered sugar and strands of twinkling lights made bearable the wind. My mother and I were on a search for apples and cheese to take with us on our excursion to Braşov the following day. We soon found ourselves outside a grocery store bearing a startlingly familiar logo. At the time, the Romanian supermarket chain Mega Image was owned by the Belgian food retailer Delhaize Le Lion, which also operated the Food Lion chain headquartered in our very own North Carolina. The same stylized lion accompanies the shops' names in all branding and signage.

What does it mean for an international retailer to operate supermarkets across such divergent consumer markets? Can the same model be readily implemented in a post-communist society as in the American South? Did a capitalist supermarket satisfy post-communist shoppers?

I brought these questions back to Poland, where I was halfway through a field study semester. Poland underwent what was arguably the most programmatic transition from communism of all Eastern Bloc countries. Foreign grocery retailers invested in the Polish market soon after the fall of communism, bringing IKEA and Tesco to Polish shoppers a decade earlier than in Romania. As a Master's student at CSEES, I have been able to build on the language work I began in Poland to explore the questions that Mega Image had provoked, supported by several Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for summer and academic year language study. Last year, I dove into the world of Warsaw's first supermarket, the Austrian chain BILLA, which opened in December of 1990. Warsaw winters are even colder than in Bucharest, being some 700 miles to the north. Nevertheless, just as my mother and I did a quarter-

century later, Varsovians braved the cold air to shop that Christmas and in the years that followed.

Combing through Warsaw newspapers and archival materials for references to BILLA, I uncovered the inspiring story of the first post-communist Polish grocery shoppers and their interactions with BILLA's decidedly Western consumer experience. In December, I defended my thesis, in which I argued that shopper interactions with BILLA reflect a concerted effort on the part of Polish shoppers to demand a consumer experience that suited their own priorities, and not solely those suggested or imposed by shock-therapy reform. These interactions, which included critiques of BILLA's computerized cash registers and a hesitance to conduct their shopping on a weekly, rather than daily, basis, tell us a good deal about the atmosphere of early post-communist urban society.

Last summer, I visited the now abandoned site of the first BILLA shop, trekking out to Warsaw's Praga-Południe district as shoppers did in the early 1990s. The shops exist only in Polish memories now, replaced by larger hypermarkets and bulk wholesalers. The vast majority of the Polish urban retail landscape is foreign-owned, and many Poles have expressed concern that the Western retail model was implemented at the expense, rather than the nourishment, of Polish industries. Similar discontent can be observed in the Romanian case. That said, the story of Eastern European consumption in post-communism is certainly not identical across the countries, or even regions, in question. Indeed, it is precisely their differences that interest me. In the fall, I will begin a doctoral program in history at Indiana University, where my research will likely take a comparative approach, examining experiences of consumption, advertising, and urban development in Bucharest, Warsaw, and Berlin.



LEAH VALTIN-ERWIN
MA STUDENT, REEES



“DON’T BLINK. YOU MIGHT MISS IT.” REMEMBERING COMMUNISM IN POST-SOCIALIST ALBANIA



KAILEY ROCKER,
PHD STUDENT, ANTHROPOLOGY

In 2014, the Site of Witness and Memory Museum opened in a former Branch of Internal Affairs in Shkodra, Albania, followed by a bunker museum called BunkArt 1 on the outskirts of the country’s capital city, Tirana. That same year, local nongovernmental organizations (NGO) coalesced to discuss the possibility

of converting Spaç Prison, a former labor camp, into a museum. In 2015, Parliament passed law nr. 45/2015, or “the right to information from documents of the former State Security (Sigurimi) of the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania (RPSSh).” In 2017, a second BunkArt museum, focusing on the history of the Albanian Ministry of Internal Affairs, opened in the very center of the capital, shortly followed by the House of Leaves Museum in the former Sigurimi headquarters. In addition, the Authority established by law nr. 45/2015 proposed a plan to convert the former Tepelena Internment Camp into a museum memorial.

My project takes up the recent, explosive efforts in post-socialist Albania to deal with the historical memory of its communist past, or the period of time from 1944 to 1991/2. For this ethnographic project, I am currently living in Tirana, Albania, and working with two internationally-funded, local NGOs and one international body, all of which have begun to incorporate the historical memory of the communist period into their democratization efforts. In my research, I focus specifically on those efforts directed toward the first post-socialist generation born in the 1990s. Through qualitative methods like participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I examine the context and methodological processes behind the creation of these projects. Additionally, I explore how young adults are interpreting the project’s historical memory narratives in relation to their individual family histories, present lives, and hopes for the future.

With support from American Councils Title VIII and the Fulbright student program, I arrived at the end of May 2017, just in time for the fifth annual commemoration of the

1973 Spaç Revolt, when prisoners briefly wrested control of the site. Standing in the yellowed grass and looking up at the former prison clinic, I watched as a young man held up a red sash bearing the name of one of his relatives who had been one of the four prisoners executed in response to the short-lived uprising. I glanced away briefly to adjust my camera bag strap. When I looked back, he had disappeared into the large crowd of attendees. Amid the surge of museums, internationally-sponsored projects, and public debate, individual stories and familial experiences of the former regime stand out – a red sash against a blue sky.

During one night in early May 2018, around the anniversary of Victory Day in Europe, two artist-activists will project quotes from interviews with Albanians old enough to remember the RPSSh on well-known landmarks throughout the country. The installation will be visible only for a few hours, fading away as the next day approaches. At a recent promotional event for the project, I asked one of the artist-activists, “Why one night and why in early May around Victory Day?” She smiled and told me that these projections would shed light on what had happened in Albania over 30 years before, that people would wake up to a new day, giving Victory Day even more meaning. She laughed and added, “Don’t blink. You might miss it.”

I nodded and jotted a note to look for the installation in May, thinking back to the young man I saw at the Spaç Revolt commemoration and even further back to the dizzying number of activities, memorials, debates, and commemorations that had been performed since 2014, even since I had arrived only one year before. Without a collective memory or official historical narrative of the communist period, various actors, including collectives, individuals, artists, activists, historians, and politicians, are stepping forward to talk about that past, a past that continues to shape the present (and, as many of my interlocutors would say, the future).

Don’t blink. You might miss it.





CHAT WITH LYNN VIRGIL, MA '02

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT WORK. I am a Foreign Service Officer at the Department of State. The Foreign Service has a variety of positions and duties, but, in short, we are the face of the U.S. government around the world. We staff embassies and consulates in nearly every country of the world and provide assistance to American citizens overseas. I'm currently serving at the U.S. Consulate in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. My previous assignments have been in Bujumbura, Burundi; London, UK; Washington, DC; Athens, Greece; and Podgorica, Montenegro.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO RUSSIAN AND EASTERN EUROPE? After I finished my undergraduate degree at UNC in 1997, I applied to WorldTeach, an NGO with a volunteer teaching program similar to Peace Corps. I spent a year teaching English at a public high school in northeastern Poland. After that year, I moved to Warsaw and took a position with an English-language publishing company. I ended up staying in Poland for two and a half years and spent a large chunk of my time traveling the region. While working in Warsaw, I met Bob Jenkins who, at the time, directed the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies. I moved back to North Carolina to start graduate school in 2000 and studied the role of international organizations in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). While working on my MA, I did an internship with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Drvar, BiH. After finishing my MA, I returned to Bosnia to work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF YOUR TIME AT UNC? For me, the most valuable part of my time at UNC was the flexibility of the MA program. When I applied, I knew

I wanted to know more about Eastern Europe, but I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to learn more about or how to turn it into a Master's degree. The interdisciplinary nature of the program gave me a lot of space to experiment with classes and gradually build my thesis.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU OFFER TO CURRENT STUDENTS WITH CAREER AMBITIONS IN THE FIELD? A lot of people think Russia and Eastern Europe are somewhat "done" or over-analyzed. Russia may be an exception, especially at the moment; but in general, there is still a lot of interest in the region. I never would have expected that I would end up in the Foreign Service, just by going to Poland in 1993. But, I've had wonderful, impactful experiences. It really is what you make of it.



CSEEEES congratulates Andrea Pető, who will be awarded the 2018 All European Academies Madame de Staël Prize for Cultural Values in recognition of her work on gender studies and European contemporary history. Professor Pető was the first scholar to take part in the UNC-Visegrad Program.

Connect with us for upcoming events:
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