

NewsNet

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Ryan Gourley,
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PhD Candidate,
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Intern at Museum
of Russian
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Francisco

Amid the instability of life in 2020, the ASEEES Internship Grant Program helped me to maintain a sense of belonging and purpose. Not only did working in the archive help to fuel my dissertation, but I managed to acquire hands-on skills. The staff at the museum facilitated virtual introductions with scholars in the field and provided me with opportunities to contribute to their ongoing projects. These kinds of experiences helped me to gain confidence as a professional.

None of this would have been possible without the support of ASEEES and the funders of the Internship Grant Program. Real world training outside of academia is imperative to our future success as experts in the field. My dissertation has only been enhanced by the materials that I have worked with in the archive and my conversations with specialists around the world. I am very grateful to ASEEES and the Museum of Russian Culture San Francisco for providing me with this opportunity.

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PLOTS AGAINST RUSSIA, An Interview with Eliot Borenstein

Excerpts from an interview with Eliot Borenstein (New York U) on his book, *Plots against Russia: Conspiracy and Fantasy after Socialism* (Cornell U Press, 2019), winner of the 2020 Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize, by Diana Dukhanova (College of the Holy Cross). The interview appeared on [New Books Network, April 16, 2019](#).

Diana Dukhanova: *In the preface to your book, you state the following: “This is an uncomfortable book to write. It is also the book that I’ve been preparing to write my entire adult life. Although there is no way I could have known it.” Could you talk about what you meant here and how this book represents, if I understand correctly, the culmination of your scholarly work so far?*

Eliot Borenstein: Sure. When I said that it was what I’d been working on my entire adult life, part of it was an acknowledgement that I have an attraction to fringe phenomena and to news of the weird in my own life. I try to develop a kind of healthy distrust of that instinct of my own when it comes to my scholarly work in Russia, because I get concerned that I’m just chasing after something very strange. But it is also the case that since I was in Moscow during the last couple of years of my graduate work or writing my dissertation in 1992, 1993, I was there at this perfect time to start watching some of the most interesting phenomena of post-Soviet culture developed, which led to my second book.

But along the way, I kept reading fringe newspapers, reading the extreme, right-wing red-brown coalition newspapers from the 1990s, buying all of these very strange pamphlets and books and so on, and then eventually following these phenomena online and of

course reading the popular fiction. And when I was working on my last book, *Overkill*, I had included a chapter called “Plots against Russia” about conspiracy and paranoia, and was advised that it didn’t really fit the book, which was fine with me. I really didn’t think I was going to be writing a conspiracy book for quite some time, largely because I was concerned that I might actually be distorting Russian reality or even Russia’s media reality, but enough time passed, and sadly I no longer had that concern.

DD: *You’re very cautious to avoid simplistic, demonizing, or orientalizing views of Russia, which the study of these topics might suggest. You describe it as the dangers of exoticising the Other. Can you talk a bit more about how your caution around this issue informs your work and especially your research in this book?*

EB: Well, for one thing, when I’m encountering a phenomenon, in this case related to conspiracy, that strikes me as particularly bizarre or hard to credit, I then go back and remind myself of something equally strange in my own native context here in the United States to get in the habit of reminding myself that that strangeness in an extreme thought and belief in things that one might think are impossible to believe in are hallmarks of most cultures. I’m trying to be very careful about that. And then also, to the extent that I can, gauge how prominent a particular phenomenon or idea is. That’s a problem because I don’t really engage in that kind of empirical research and I don’t go looking for statistics. I don’t particularly trust statistics in general and in Russia in particular. But I do try to keep in mind what’s out there that’s not strange and conspiratorial.

DD: *And you talk about your work being*

more on the side of discourse, right?

EB: Absolutely. I feel like, for the past 20 years or so, I practically started every talk by saying that I’m not talking about real life or real people. I’m not doing surveys. In a sense the view that I have is not really a bird’s eye view. I have a kind of internet couch potato surfer view on things. That is, if you ask yourself what view you would get of a culture simply by consuming media and not necessarily by going out inside and talking to people, that’s the material that I’m looking at. And I’m aware that there’s a whole world outside of the internet, apparently, but that’s not a world that I’m actually studying.

DD: *This connects to the process of assembling the research for this book, and the process that you’re using now for your next book, which started out as a blog. Can you talk a little bit about the development of this project and how it took its present form?*

EB: The blog thing—even though it’s a public-facing thing, and I like to think that some people are reading it—is largely about setting up a device that disciplines me and makes me work. Because what I discovered when I started the [All the Russias](#) blog was 1) that I really, really liked doing it; and 2) that this was a format that works very well for me and seems really natural for me.

DD: *Let’s get into some of the key terminology here. The first one, of course, is conspiracy and conspiratorial thinking. How do you define it? You’re very careful to specify that conspiratorial thought lies on a spectrum.*

EB: Yes. That’s a really complicated one because there is a large body of conspiracy scholarship, starting roughly around the post-World war II era. It’s large,

but it’s manageable to read basically all of it. What you see as a certain set of trends, a certain set of controversies that you really have to skirt around. And one of the big ones is the connection between conspiracy and paranoia. And conspiracy here being a bunch of people or entities working together to do something in secret and that presumably is not something that you would want. People point out that surprise birthday parties are conspiracies, but no one calls them that because people don’t tend to be upset by a surprise like this. I think this connection is an easy one to make because paranoia, if you set aside its most extreme clinical version, is a tendency to over-interpret, to make too many connections, and to assume that nothing is random. But the birth of all this, the primal scene of all of this is Richard Hofstadter’s famous essay and book, *On the Paranoid Style*, a lecture he delivered on the day that Kennedy was shot, actually. This essay, which was hugely influential in fact, and has gotten a real revival in the Trump age for, I think, obvious reasons, talks about how there is a paranoid style in politics and American politics in particular that comes around rather cyclically, and how understanding the paranoid style could help you to understand what’s going on with the politics.

This is an argument he made in *Harper’s*, originally. It is one of those arguments that immediately makes sense—you don’t need to be a scholar to follow it—which is exactly the sort of argument that scholars then immediately want to take apart, in part because it looms so large, and in part because, quite rightly, a lot of scholars felt that this connection between conspiracy and paranoia pathologizes people who believe in conspiracy theories and

defines them as essentially mentally ill. I can certainly see why there's been a hygienic impulse to separate the two, but I argue that there's no reason to separate conspiracy and paranoia that carefully as long as you realize that you are using the word paranoid in no way as a medical or psychiatric diagnosis, but in what I'm calling a mode, like irony, or a point of view that you could have or not your entire life. That distinction between a long-term paranoia and what I call the paranoid subject position is the theoretical contribution that I'm hoping other scholars of conspiracy end up noticing.

DD: *Could you say a little bit more about the paranoid subject?*

EB: I start off, first of all, with the notion that our entire worlds are constructed by narrative. It makes psychological sense to be constantly constructing a narrative because narrative is about taking a bunch of things that might not seem connected and seeing how they're connected so that everything is part of one big story. Paranoia certainly fits in with that quite well. When I'm talking about a paranoid subject position of conspiracy, I argue that in fact, it is fiction about paranoia and stories about conspiracy that condition us to be able to imagine conspiracy as something that's really possible. So the very fact that you can watch an hour of, say, *The X-Files* and for the course of that hour suspend disbelief and live in a kind of epistemological mindset in which aliens and conspiracies are possible, and then, in the next hour, you'll watch something else that's not possible suggests that we are always able to adopt a conspiratorial mindset when it's necessary or when it's useful or handy, and then dispose of it a minute later. There's no need to diagnose someone as paranoid. There's no need to see every manifestation of



conspiratorial thought as a symptom of a complete conspiratorial worldview, that in fact we all adopt conspiratorial modes and drop them back and forth over the course of our day. And that's what makes it possible for some to believe in conspiracy in a much more committed and sustainable fashion. But again, I think one of the mistakes that intellectuals make—and people talk about this a lot lately, particularly with regard to politics—is thinking of everything in terms of rationality. And then when you see a breakdown of rational explanation, you show how something is not working. But this is really a matter of affect, emotion, and habits of thought. And the fact that you can be conspiratorial for a little while and not be conspiratorial right afterward just seems to me very human and discursive.

DD: *What is it about post-Soviet Russia that makes the conspiratorial subject position one that is so often taken up?*

EB: That is a great question. And I would say that it's part of a longer process that has made Russia and the Soviet Union of the past several decades a great hope for conspiracy theory. Again, I'm saying that not to suggest that other places are not; certainly, the United States is a great breeding ground of conspiracy theory. But I'm coming out of different sources and for different reasons, at least initially. In the post Stalin era, conspiratorial thought was

enabled by the general lack of reliable information in the Soviet Union, and the widespread assumption that you're not being told everything. And in fact, every time there is a revelation of some past crime that is finally doled out, instead of letting you know, finally, the truth, it just reminds you of these other things being kept from you. So the restriction on information in late Soviet times facilitated conspiratorial thought. Then with Glasnost, with the opening up of the flood gates, that did a couple of things: it reinforced the idea that this information is being held from you, and it also made actual conspiratorial tracts, novels, and films available for mass consumption. By the time you get to the post-Soviet era, you have these longstanding habits of conspiratorial thought, but you have it in an informational ecosystem that is almost the opposite of the one you had in late Soviet times, and much more like the informational ecosystem that facilitates conspiracy here in the United States. There's so much information out there, so many competing sources and narratives, that each one relativizes the other and makes it possible to pick and choose or assume that they're all wrong.

DD: *That feeds into Russia's perceived role of a world leader on the vanguard of traditional values.*

EB: That is a quite recent one, but it's a variation on a longstanding conspiratorial nationalist trope that sees Russia as surrounded by enemies that want to destroy it. The traditional values thing works on multiple levels. For one, it can actually serve as a way for Russia to find allies in the world, but it can also justify why Russia should reasonably perceive of itself as a target, and why people hate Russia so much.

DD: *Would you say that the rise and conspiratorial thinking in Putin's third*

term is connected to this desire to reinforce Russia as a threat?

EB: I think that the Putin regime's use of conspiratorial discourse is related to that. It's remarkable how much of this stuff has gone from margin to center in the past several years. It was happening slowly over the first decade of the 21st century, but really kicked into high gear with Putin's reelection. The embracing of a conspiratorial worldview is hugely useful politically. For years they had been talking about the need for a national idea. If you take together traditional values, the notion that Russia is under attack from all sides—that's not an idea, but it is enough. Those things are enough of a national story to be a unifying fantasy, or at least I think that's what the regime is hoping, and it does seem to work fairly well.

DD: *Thinking about the roots of a lot of these conspiracies and key adversaries, anti-Semitism plays a large role, particularly the source text of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. But it goes back much further. Could you talk a little bit about the role that anti-Semitism plays, as well as its limitations, in understanding Russian conspiratorial thinkers?*

EB: Anti-Semitism is foundational to a lot of Western conspiratorial thought, going back in particular to *The Protocols*, which is a wonderful Russian plagiarized contribution to the world of conspiratorial lore. But there are obvious reasons why Jews would be a group that would be particularly useful for this kind of narrative. They are a group of people who can look sort of like you, but not entirely like you; a state within a state; a group of people who won't eat with you and won't eat the same foods as you; but are everywhere and therefore don't have local loyalties. All of this is really

well-established in the literature on anti-Semitism. It is particularly Jews, as boundary-crossing people, connected with the institutions of modernity that make them a great target for this kind of conspiratorial narrative, which is particularly well and stupidly embodied in *The Protocols*, which is just so badly written, it's just lots of fun if it weren't for the fact that it was so destructive. The master text of conspiracy for the 20th century and beyond is *The Protocols*. The result is that structurally, if a conspiracy has an international enemy, even if it's not named the Jews, it is homologous to the role that Jews played in *The Protocols*.

DD: *I wanted to transition to the idea of "gender ideology" featuring so prominently in conspiracy thinking. Can you talk a bit about why homosexuality is considered an attack Russian culture and values, and how it's used to frame this inimical relationship with the West?*

EB: I mean, the short answer is actually now homosexuality and Judaism for a lot of the conspiratorial world are the same thing. In terms of structural homologies, the LGBT people are in a sense the new Jews, the new internal enemies.

DD: *In terms of the idea that America is trying to make Russia gay, there's also this critique of liberalism, that over in America and the West, they have this liberal approach to politics that then creates these really harmful social trends. Can you talk a little bit more about this critique or fear of liberalism and particularly how it's used by the current administration?*

EB: The fate of liberalism in Russia has some parallels with what's happened and been happening with liberalism in the United States and Western Europe. As we know, liberal can mean at least two things that don't have to have very

much to do with each other. One is liberalism as economic policy, which is the Washington consensus or neo-liberalism, Thatcher and Reagan, and it's not a liberalism about procedural democracy or equality of rights. That liberalism also appears at the same time, but there's no reason to expect any average or even well-educated person who's being exposed to both these things at the same time to be able to distinguish between the two. And neither of them is popular. Economic liberalism led to the destitution of a huge portion of the population. And at the same time, you suddenly have this attention being paid to LGBT people, which a lot of people wouldn't even think of as something to be concerned about, and this change in values really disturbs people. So you end up with this kind of liberal bogeyman that is bad on just about every front. Everything about the 1990s becomes associated with liberalism and whatever liberalism means. And one of the things that Putin and people around him did extremely successfully was use the 1990s as a reminder of how bad things can get and how bad things will be if you don't let the leaders do what they're doing, because the liberals will come back and ruin our culture and economy. [...]

Listen to the [full interview](#) to hear Borenstein and Dukhanova discuss conspiratorial thinking and the weaponization of information in the conflict in Ukraine, the zombification metaphor, the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, and Donald Trump and the Mueller Report.

Diana Dukhanova is a Visiting Assistant professor of Russian at College of the Holy Cross. Eliot Borenstein is Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies at New York U.



BUILDING A NETWORK OF SUPPORT for Undergraduate Students of Color Interested in REEES

Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz (Howard U), Colleen Lucey (U of Arizona), Krista Goff (U of Miami), Kelly Knickmeier Cummings (Howard U)

I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion...Where to Start? - *Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz*

In my 25 years in the field – including my undergraduate years – I have only met two other Puerto Ricans with advanced degrees in any area of Slavic Studies. They specialized in history and social sciences, however. This – and I would like to be proven wrong – makes me the oldest Puerto Rican currently employed in the field of Russian language and literature. I share this experience with a lot of scholars of color in my generation. We have become quite used to always being the only one of our population at any domestic or international conference.

At the 2018 ASEES convention, I noticed that I was not alone in wanting to find fellow colleagues devoted to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I met Nicholas Detsch, from the U.S. Russia Foundation, who told me that the Foundation wanted to support projects expanding Russian Studies among undergraduates. I also met Colleen Lucey from U of Arizona. She told me about her classroom in Tucson where a diverse group of students were taking Russian. After some deep thought, I decided I wanted to bring these UA and Howard undergraduates together to explore the different opportunities they could have in the field. While I have enjoyed amazing mentorship and support from members in the field, I wanted to prevent another generation of students from having to wait decades to meet people that look like them in academia.

The project, “Building a More Inclusive Future: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies,” which is described in detail below, is an innovative undergraduate mentorship program designed to tackle this issue. Generously funded through a grant from the U.S. Russia Foundation, this initiative has been composed of three parts. In October 2019 students from the U of Arizona, U of Puerto Rico, and Howard U participated in a two-day professional and academic workshop in Washington, D.C. They visited institutions that engage with Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (REEES) beyond academia, learned about different types of professional graduate programs, and listened to more traditional research presentations.

In February 2020 we had an administrative conference where faculty and administrators contemplated how to innovate outreach programs for our field. Summer 2020 was supposed to end with us traveling to Russia with a group of students and administrators from the three participating Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Then the pandemic hit, and we unfortunately had to cancel our trip to Russia; however, we found new possibilities in virtual programming. We developed two initiatives, a Cybersecurity Simulation and a Think Tank, where students worked in teams with academic mentors to produce research projects based on the students’ interests. We found out a few important details. First, there are a lot more students of diverse backgrounds interested in REEES than we thought. Second, reaching out to them should not promote traditional exclusionist and elitist practices such as requiring three or four years of Russian before

students can participate in the program. We allowed beginning students to participate, as long as they showed up and put in the effort. Last, but not least, lots of faculty are willing to help mentor these students if you ask. And ask we did. We ended up with over seventy undergraduates from eight universities participating in both programs.

We also saw some of the disturbing national trends reflected in the group that worked with us. A considerable number of the faculty members that volunteered (including myself and a fellow Co-PI) are not tenure-track faculty. Hopefully the success of a program like this will indicate to our institutions the vitality and importance of REEES, and that our respective disciplines are alive, attracting new cohorts of students, and worth investing time, energy, and funds to continue growing.

Best of all, though, were the final projects: the performance on the day of the Cybersecurity Simulation and the digital research projects first presented at ASEES that will soon be on display on the Howard U Russian Minor homepage. With these successes in mind, I feel confident that this generation will not be alone.

II. Project Design and Learning Outcomes – *Colleen Lucey and Kelly Knickmeier Cummings*

“The whole Think Tank group felt more like a community and not just peers and faculty working together.” –Jessica Diez, undergraduate from U of Miami

After the October 2019 student workshop at Howard U, we realized that coordinating our efforts to bring more undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds to REEES would require broader support

from faculty and administrators across the U.S. We therefore held a meeting with Howard alumni, faculty from MSIs, representatives from several Title VI National Resource Centers, and a few others at Howard U in February 2020 to review best practices, the state of the field, and how we could coordinate across campuses. We had no idea that a month later we would rapidly transition to fully online teaching in the wake of Covid-19, but the meeting helped set the groundwork for a major outreach campaign to bring students of color to REEES through a mentorship program, a support network, and a comprehensive project that included a research stipend.

At the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, when it became clear that in-person meetings would not be possible for some time, the four of us reached out to a number of faculty at MSIs and institutions with large populations of underrepresented students to help recruit a cohort of undergraduates who would take part in two concurrent digital programs: 1) “Undergraduate ThinkTank: Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in REEES”; and 2) “U.S. – Russia Cybersecurity Simulation with Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins.” Thanks to the hard work of the following faculty, our team was able to recruit 33 students for the Think Tank and 38 for the Cybersecurity Simulation: Johanna Bockman (George Mason U), Choi Chatterjee and Timothy Paynich (Cal State LA), Natalie McCauley (U of Richmond), Sunnie Rucker-Chang (U of Cincinnati), Rachel Stauffer (Virginia Tech, James Madison U), and Julia Vaingurt (U of Illinois, Chicago). Together with students from Howard U, U of Miami, and U of Arizona this diverse undergraduate cohort came together with the tremendous help of the above faculty. Zachary Kelly,



Assistant Director of Berkeley's Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, has likewise offered invaluable support over the years and continues to assist with outreach and programming.

Students who took part in the Think Tank were grouped together based on similar interests and over a two-month period prepared a research presentation for the ASEES Convention. To help guide their research and acclimate them to the field, a generous group of scholars emerged to assist the undergraduates in their preparation for ASEES (see list of faculty mentors below). Without their efforts and countless hours of work with students, the project could not have gotten off the ground and we are immensely grateful for their dedication. The incredible support from ASEES staff, particularly Lynda Park, made it possible for this first cohort of undergraduates to take part in the convention; not only did ASEES staff accommodate a quick turnaround organizing panels, they also offered a warm welcome to this new generation of REES scholars.

Individual mentorship combined with the experience of taking part in a national conference offered students a unique opportunity to explore the disciplines of REES, and hopefully inspired them to continue their studies

now and in the future. "ASEES was a unique experience that allowed me to see the range of possibilities that are available to me in the future," reflected Marilyn Robles Valenzuela, a freshman at U of Arizona. "I learned how to adapt to the circumstances and work as a team with my group members," she explained. The Think Tank also successfully brought students together with mentors who are specialists in their topics of interest. Damian Cabrera, an undergraduate at U of Illinois-Chicago, reflected that "one of my favorite parts of this program was being able to connect with all sorts of fellow students and mentors/professors from all over the country, spanning many different ethnicities. This allowed me to gain new perspectives through collaboration."

Working together with their groups, students integrated feedback from their mentors and created a final digital humanities project. These projects will be posted on the Howard U website in March 2021. The wide range of presentation topics—from the African American experience in the USSR, to LGBTQ+ literary works, to climate change in Russia—showcase the variety of interests and expertise the students gained. In addition to developing research skills, students who wanted to complete podcast episodes based on their research

were able to study podcasting with Sean Guillory, host of the *SRB Podcast*. Student feedback illustrated that such projects were one of the most profound aspects of the program. Aissa Dearing, an undergraduate from Howard U, reflected, "I gained more skills in writing concisely, presenting online, and crafting a podcast episode! I also was able to practice converting difficult climate-related biological concepts into a presentation that was easy to understand."

III. Lessons Learned and Next Steps – Krista Goff and Colleen Lucey

As an undergraduate student-centered program that incorporated research projects and mentorship, the Think Tank could become a regular occurrence at the ASEES Convention and other conferences as well. It brought together a diverse cohort of students from across the country and helped them connect not only with other undergraduates but also with expert mentors, graduate program representatives, REES professionals who provided career advice, and ASEES members who attended their conference panels. It was important to us that we foster student autonomy, be flexible, and provide guidance and resources—including student stipends—to empower students participating in this inaugural Think Tank initiative. As De'Vonte Tinsley,

an undergraduate at Virginia Tech explained, "During the course of our research I learned the value of choosing the right topic, and knowing the limits of your skills and funding, which unfortunately can stop you from doing certain types of research. I also learned that it was okay to change direction in your research, as it happens to researchers fairly frequently."

With the support of the U.S. Russia Foundation, we will organize another Cybersecurity Simulation and Think Tank in 2021. We plan to recruit students from more universities, including undergraduates from smaller programs who join not as part of an institutional cohort but independently to gain fellowship opportunities outside their home institution. We also hope to build on last year's successes by maintaining a lasting sense of community among undergraduates, graduate students, and career and academic mentors. Ultimately, we want to foster more pathways between the Think Tank and further studies in REEES.

None of this would be possible if not for the generous partnerships that the program has benefitted from thus far. Going forward, we would like to see this initiative grow and intersect with other efforts to generate and support diverse cohorts of students in REEES. Building a robust network that will help all students feel welcome, less isolated, and excited about the future of this field is essential for the continuation of our disciplines. If you are interested in participating in the Think Tank as a mentor, institutional sponsor, or as an undergraduate scholar, please email Krista Goff (kgoff@miami.edu) or [click here](#). We need DH and subject-matter advisors for new student projects this year, but also professional mentors willing to offer career guidance to

participating students.

In planning the project, we sought input from students, scholars, and professionals of color in the field regarding what practices would improve the retention of underrepresented students in our disciplines. They consistently pointed to the need not only for more and better mentoring and networking opportunities for undergraduates, but a reassessment of how we think about programming, curricula, study abroad preparation, access to resources, K-12 outreach, and much more. While considerable efforts are needed to make REEES a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive space, ongoing initiatives like this one can help solidify our field's commitment to promoting and supporting new generations of scholars and professionals as they embark on their academic and professional careers in REEES.

We would like to express profound gratitude to the following mentors who worked with and supported this cohort of undergraduates: Naomi Caffee (Reed College), Joy Gleason Carew (U of Louisville), Emily Couch (Independent Researcher), Leah Feldman (U of Chicago), Thomas Garza (U of Texas at Austin), Sean Guillory (U of Pittsburgh), Erik Herron (West Virginia U), Julie Hessler (U of Oregon), Yvonne Howell (U of Richmond), Kimberly St. Julian-Varnon (U of Pennsylvania), Hilary

Lynd (U of California Berkeley), Marantha Miles (George Mason U), Aaron Retish (Wayne State U), Sunnie Rucker-Chang (U of Cincinnati), Valerie Sperling (Clark University), Anika Walke (Washington U in St. Louis), Emily Wang (U of Notre Dame).

B. Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz, PhD, is a Master Instructor of Russian at Howard U.

Colleen Lucey, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies at the U of Arizona.

Krista Goff, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Russian and Soviet History at the U of Miami.

Kelly Knickmeier Cummings, PhD, is a Lecturer in Russian at Howard U.



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THOMAS JESÚS GARZA, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Going West...Or East

Study abroad during the undergraduate experience has been described as crucial to the development of intercultural competence (Maharaja 2018), a boost to creative thinking (Lee, Therriault, & Linderholm, 2012), and a transformative experience (Stone 2014; Garza 2021). However, 2018-19 data from the Institute of International Education (IIE) indicate that of the 347,099 US students who participated in study abroad programs, only 31% identified as nonwhite and, as the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) remarks, “Although the diversity of study abroad participation has increased in recent years, minority students are still greatly underrepresented in study abroad programs” (NAFSA, n.d.). Abraham (2018) supports this position, citing cost and family situations as the primary reasons for lack of participation and, consequently, lack of diversity in US study abroad programs.

One solution to the issue of access to the benefits of study abroad is to create new or redesign existing programs that are more affordable and inclusive. Federally funded programs such as the National Security Education Program for Youth and the Critical Languages Scholarship Program for university-level students have been effective in creating access to study abroad for students at Tribal, HBCU's, Hispanic and Two-Year Colleges, and other learner populations that have been historically



underrepresented in study abroad. The Gilman International Scholarship Program, which provides funding to students with limited financial resources, has awarded more than 65 percent of its grants to nonwhite students. Programs such as these provide access to more students, but such opportunities are relatively few and cost still remains the primary reason given by students of color against studying abroad.

In spite of the evident inequities in study abroad, the inherent disparities in access to and success in such programs should not prevent BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students from enjoying the advantages of study abroad, nor should it deprive them of the spontaneous interaction and authentic contact with the language and culture that “culminates in a transformative learning experience” (Garza 2021, 91). Not only should funders continue to make more study abroad programs more financially accessible to lower-income students, educators must also guard against further isolating underrepresented populations by making BIPOC participation and success in study abroad an accepted and expected part of their undergraduate experience. Laying the groundwork for successful participation of BIPOC students in study abroad programs in Russia begins with recruitment and retention. Inclusive programs must

be branded and advertised as such, showing potential participants that students like themselves have had successful experiences.

(Un)Comfortable Conversations

Among many of the uncomfortable conversations taking place in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the related revelations of the extent and depth of institutional racism in the US, preparation of BIPOC students to undertake study abroad demands a focused engagement of university personnel with students of color that involves a level of candor and truthfulness not usually sustained in orientation programs. Pre-departure preparation of students going abroad has long been a part of university programs, but only recently have issues of racial and ethnic identity been brought to the fore in the scholarship (Goldstein 2017). The usual advising process for white students who have prior travel experience to white-dominant regions is not the same for BIPOC students, many of whom have already dealt with racist micro- and macro-aggressions domestically. For inclusive programs, advising and orientation are often enhanced by peer counseling and mentoring, if possible, by BIPOC faculty and/or staff. As our institutions develop records of successful, diverse, representative cohorts of students abroad, we will be

able to draw upon the expertise and experience of BIPOC alumni of these programs to help mentor and advise new students of color in our programs. First-hand accounts of experiences and challenges, both positive and negative, during study abroad are invaluable in dispelling anxieties and doubts some BIPOC students may have about programs in Russia.

It is at this early stage of preparation for study abroad that difficult conversations must be initiated. While most BIPOC students are already aware that racism and stereotypes know no geopolitical boundaries, some may not be prepared for the region-specific prejudices of post-Soviet communities. As with any orientation aimed at combatting aggressive forms of culture shock, establishing expectations of behaviors and/or practices goes far in helping students cope with them if and when encountered. Thus, BIPOC students will benefit from a candid discussion about white Russia’s contemporary attitudes towards Asians, people from the Caucasus, and indigenous peoples of Siberia, among others. This context helps to prepare them to understand why they might find themselves as the object of a racist comment or act, including public harassment. One key takeaway from this discussion is for BIPOC students who are victims of a racist act: Remember, it’s not your fault. Once students are able

to decouple their identity from the assault, it becomes more possible for them to process the incident and not focus blame on the individual(s) who committed the offence. As traumatic and offensive as the event is at the moment, non-engagement is the best response. That does not mean that episode should be forgotten or pushed aside; often writing about the incident can help students work through their responses in a productive way.

In addition to preparing BIPOC students for the study abroad experience in Russia, program group leaders accompanying the group also need to be made aware of the sociocultural particulars of the regional destination, as well as of the kinds of stereotyping and related racial aggressions that can occur. Their intervention will also be critical within the group, as incidents of racial/ethnic aggression are not unique to the environment abroad. Pre-departure role-playing activities of racial micro-aggressions can help participants to focus on potential situations and better understand their respective roles in ameliorating such occurrences.

Group leaders should also work closely with their partner institutions to ensure the creation of a safe and supportive ecology for all students once in country. Even in 2020 many post-Soviet universities are ill-equipped, institutionally or personally, to accommodate individual differences within a group of students. Simply meeting with local administrative and instructional staff prior to the group's arrival to discuss the expectation of a prejudice-free learning space can go a long way

to foster an ecology of equity and inclusivity for all students in class. Nonetheless, all programs abroad should have a "safety net" in place for BIPOC students who are faced with unexpected difficulties. This support system might be a dedicated faculty member at the institution abroad who had worked with program and US students of color before, and a US contact for matters that need resolution outside of the site abroad.

We're Not in Kansas Anymore

Upon arrival in Russia, all participants in the program should adhere to the "buddy system," ensuring that no person goes out unaccompanied by at least one other student. This policy,

which should be part of any group studying abroad, is essential for BIPOC students. Not only is it advisable to have a companion for safety in a new environment, it is also a practice that aids in building camaraderie and good will among the members of the student cohort. Empirical evidence also shows that BIPOC students, especially women, are more likely to avoid racist confrontations when with a partner (Willis 2015, 217).

It is important to acknowledge to BIPOC students that racist aggressions in the study abroad context are different from those that occur domestically, not only in substance, but also in effect. That is to say, for example, the

2021 ASEES Initiative for Diversity and Inclusion

We invite our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) colleagues to participate in a two-year (2021-2022) pilot program, the ASEES Initiative for Diversity and Inclusion. ASEES recognizes that BIPOC scholars and students in our field have often experienced isolation and marginalization. The aim of this initiative is for ASEES to provide structural support to create a community of BIPOC students, scholars, and professionals in the US so that they can network, share their experiences and mentor each other.

We are pleased to offer complimentary two-year memberships to eligible BIPOC students, scholars, and professionals who are working on topics in Eastern Europe, Russia, and Eurasia in or outside the academy or those who have an MA or PhD in the field but are working in unrelated areas or disciplines. Previous ASEES members whose membership has lapsed are especially welcome to rejoin the Association at no cost in 2021 & 2022.

As part of the aim to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in our field and provide professional benefits and support for our BIPOC members, we request that those participating in this initiative be willing to engage with other BIPOC students and colleagues in a designated online networking platform.

TO LEARN MORE

ASEES thanks Douglas Smith and Stephanie Ellis-Smith for their generous gift to fund this initiative.



overt use of racial epithets in public places is more commonplace in parts of the post-Soviet lands; but further, BIPOC students do not have access to the same kinds of support from family, friends, even institutions while abroad. Thus the impact of these micro- and macro-aggressions might be more intense and sustained than if they had occurred in the home institution.

Finally, the usual phenomenon of “culture shock” that is expected for many students travelling and studying abroad can be exacerbated by the occurrence of racial/ethnic aggressions. For BIPOC students abroad, studying and interacting in a different language, living with new people in a different environment, and eating new foods while having an identity that marks you as different at best, inferior at worst, creates a unique strain. Every minute of every day, BIPOC students are not only “foreign” students in Russia; they are “different.” And the response to that difference, in Goldoni’s (2017) words,

can be “innocent, investigatory, or prejudicial” (234). In cases of prejudicial treatment, BIPOC students may find a simple act, such as standing and waiting for the next metro train, to be the trigger for an act of racial aggression. Students of color might benefit from the practice of “process journaling,” the regular recording in writing of their experiences – good, bad, and ugly – during their program. This practice not only serves the immediate purpose of creating a sense of clarity to the day’s events, but it also ameliorates the pain of those events borne out of racial prejudice and ignorance. It will further serve as a record of survival and excellence for future BIPOC students who want to make the venture to the post-Soviet lands, ensuring that our programs abroad continue to be inclusive and equitable for all of our students.

Thomas Jesús Garza (Ed.D. Harvard University) is UT Regents’ and University Distinguished Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of Slavic and Eurasian

Studies, and Director of the Texas Language Center at the University of Texas at Austin, where he has received more than a dozen teaching awards during his 30-year tenure there. He has completed a manuscript on filmic and cultural portraits of machismo in contemporary Russian and Mexican cultures and is now working on a cultural portrait of Vladimir Vysotsky in the Americas.

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“YOU’RE DOING IT ALL WRONG” COURSE REVISION AND PLANNING IN MID-CAREER – TRUE CONFESSIONS

CHRISTIAN RAFFENSPERGER, WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY

My scholarly goal since finishing my dissertation in 2006 has been to reshape how medieval Eastern Europe, specifically Rus', is perceived in scholarship. Whether it was my grandiosely titled first book, *Reimagining Europe*, or more recent articles that question the place of Rus' in medieval European studies, I have been attempting to shift the perceptions of my peers in the academic world, asking them to reshape their own images of either the Slavic or medieval world to include a more nuanced and interconnected Rus'.¹

However, despite that lofty scholarly goal, my daily life as an academic is much more consumed with teaching my undergraduate students than shifting the attitudes of the current generation(s) of scholars. When I obtained my first tenure-track position at Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH, in 2007, I inherited a bipartite Russian history survey with a clean break at 1917. As a medievalist, and a young and eager one at that, I asked and received permission to reshape the class. Working within the existing framework of a bipartite class, I shifted the break to 1796 to try and give more space to the traditional 'premodern' period in Russia, and not emphasize the dominance of the Soviet Union in Russian history by making it the entirety of one semester. As a new faculty member, this was considered to be something normal to do. My colleagues in the History Department were immensely supportive of me putting my own stamp on the classes that my predecessor had taught for decades, as they would now be my classes for decades as well. It was also easier for me because I was writing my lectures

from scratch at the same time. Of course, when I say from scratch, I mean that I was cribbing items from my oral exam preparation at the University of Chicago with Richard Hellie and Sheila Fitzpatrick from earlier in the decade. In so doing, I was not just putting in my views about Rus', I was putting in Hellie's views about Muscovy and Imperial Russia, and Fitzpatrick's views about the Soviet Union.² This new bipartite division was a success, to my mind, as both halves regularly filled, it supported the university's Russian Studies Program, and it met my requirement of having more premodern content in the classroom.

When I was tenured and took my first sabbatical, I had the chance to take a mental break, work on new publications, and spend time discussing academic work with scholars at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute.³ Returning to Wittenberg in the fall, I endeavored again to reshape my courses, and created a tripartite division consisting of a Medieval Russian, Imperial Russian, and Soviet Russian history section, over a three semester rotation. Again, both the History Department and Russian Studies Program (now rebranded as the Russian and Central Eurasian Studies Program) were supportive. The main change that I made was in the first segment, my area of focus, where I incorporated more of my own research and expanded the piece on medieval Rus'. Eventually, I added to this a short book of my own that I wrote for a broad readership and an edited collection that I prepared with Donald Ostrowski, which was designed for classroom use.⁴ The content of the segments on Imperial Russia and Soviet Russia? Well, they stayed mostly the same – in fact,

multiple lecture notes, I am ashamed to say, still have “add more here” in bold at the top. Those materials were a minimum of eight years out from the most recent scholarship, more likely much more than that given that I had written the lectures from oral notes of a decade before, based on material from books and articles published long before that. Of course, I had added a few new details, items that I learned from my friends typically, and their ongoing research. But by and large, the place that I improved, changed, and kept current in the classroom was in the area on which I was doing research. This was fine, for me anyway, but the students that I was educating were taking all three classes (some of them at least), and so the ones taking Medieval Russia were learning a much more current idea of history than those taking Imperial Russia or Soviet Russia. In fact, the ones most left out, I think, were the ones taking Imperial Russia.⁵

Which leads me back to my scholarship once again. I have moved away from presenting regularly at ASEES and have become more comfortable at the International Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo or Leeds, or even the Medieval Academy of America. But at all of those venues, I talk about medieval Eastern Europe and how it needs to be integrated into the worldview of the scholars present, as

it was clearly integrated into the worldview of the people at the time. I implore my colleagues to consider what role and impact Rus', Russian women, trade connections, etc. might have on their own research and work. I also urge them, perhaps self-servingly to use work like *Portraits of Medieval Eastern Europe* in their classrooms, to introduce their students to a broader medieval Europe than perhaps they, or their instructors, are used to. All of this despite the fact that I still have lectures that include “add more here” and that may have been dated when I wrote them, much less today. I am certainly not practicing what I preach.

I am preparing to head into another sabbatical and reading widely in preparation for my plan of research projects. And while I conceive of myself as a medievalist and scholar, I am still the “Eurasian” historian at Wittenberg and have a responsibility to educate



The Fulbright U.S. Scholar award competition opens February 2021

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my students to the best of my ability – on all the fields and classes that I teach. So, while I have been housebound due to the pandemic, I have added to my reading books from my shelves about Muscovy, the Mongols, Poland, Lithuania, etc. in periods not my own. What I have found, not surprisingly, is that I am doing it (my classes) all wrong. The question then remains to me; what to do about it? When I was just starting out as a new faculty member, I was in a position where I had to write the vast majority of my lectures and class materials from scratch – not having had a great deal of teaching experience in graduate school. This was a hardship at the time, but it was also a boon to my own learning and my classes. Now that was over thirteen years ago, and many of those materials are out of date. I am at a position in my career where I want to devote the time allotted for academic work to my own research and publications. Which leaves me with a conundrum of how to fix my classes, and be true to my own ideal of encouraging others to change their own research and teaching to incorporate my ideas and material.

When I began reading and finding problems with what I was teaching; material wildly out of date, facts simply incorrect, perceptions updated based on new analyses and methodologies; I thought to simply open a lecture and replace a line or a date and be able to move on. Instead what I found when I tried that was that what was required to really fix and update my lectures was a wholesale rewriting, and rethinking, of not just the material, but how I approach the material. Once I realized that, my gut instinct was a familiar, “I don’t want to!” This was followed by a series of rationalizations

– everyone does this, my students will never know the difference, no one will care if I do this, and my university will not pay me more or less to improve or change my classes in any way. I admit that I lived with that for a bit, but I still felt uncomfortable with it and I think that instead of just living with the way things are (even though my rationalizations may all be correct), I need to make some changes.

This leaves me with a decision, and ideally a plan to be made. I need to devote some portion of my time over a summer, or during my sabbatical to reading something, or more likely somethings, about periods on which I teach, but do not actively research. And then, I need to sit down and really think and reconceptualize what I want my students to get out of those periods. I am continually appalled by the textbooks that present Rus’ as just a precursor to the greatness of Muscovy, or as a hotbed of internecine conflict because it doesn’t have what later polities have. I can well imagine that Muscovite and Imperial historians are similarly appalled by my Rise of Moscow lectures in which I repeat ideas that are several decades old, even though I know better; or present merely a litany of rulers in the nineteenth century with a focus on war and conflict rather than anything to do with the arts and sciences, or culture in the broadest form.

I know that for many of us time is at a premium. We have families, friends, jobs, research agendas, hobbies, and much more. And despite the fact that I have those things too, and despite the fact that I really do not want to spend precious time in other ways – I think that I need to. I have come to believe that updating my teaching regularly and learning new material will make me a better scholar as well as increasing the information and content that I can bring to my students in the classroom. So, I call on all of you who are still teaching from grad school notes to take time to read something new and try and incorporate it into your classes – there are a lot of us out there, I know. And, I admit, perhaps by doing this, I will have a little more validity in my own calls for scholars to integrate Rus’ into their classes – whether relative to the medieval or to the Slavic world.

Christian Raffensperger is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Pre-Modern and Ancient World Studies Program at Wittenberg U, Associate at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Christian Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus’ in the Medieval World, 988–1146* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012); “Reimagining Europe: An Outsider Looks at the Medieval East-West Divide” in *Medieval Networks in East Central Europe: Commerce, Contacts, Communication*, eds. Balázs Nagy, Felicitas Schmieder and András Vadas (New York: Routledge, 2018): 9-24.
- 2 The latter of which bothered my retired predecessor (and friend) immensely who was sure I wasn’t a communist, but perhaps was teaching like one!
- 3 Thanks to a Shklar Research Fellowship in the 2013-2014 academic year.
- 4 Christian Raffensperger, *The Kingdom of Rus* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: ARC Humanities Press, 2017); Co-Editor with Donald Ostrowski, *Portraits of Medieval Eastern Europe, 800-1300* (New York: Routledge, 2017)
- 5 Having recently heard a presentation from Erika Monahan on her book, *The Merchants of Siberia: Trade in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cornell University Press, 2016), I am quite convinced that I am woefully out of date in this class.

NEW FROM SLAVICA PUBLISHERS

David M. Griffiths, *No Collusion! Catherine the Great and American Independence*, ed. George E. Munro, xvi + 717 p., 2020 (ISBN 978-0-89357-499-4), \$44.95.

The fledgling United States desperately needed more than its single ally, France, to pursue its war for independence. Unwilling to engage in traditional European diplomatic behavior, the Americans developed a concept of "militia diplomacy," under which merchants would be sent to foreign ports to initiate friendly trading relations. Not fully realizing Empress Catherine II's intention to maintain absolute neutrality in order to mediate peace between Great Britain and its breakaway colonies, the Americans sent to St. Petersburg, uninvited and unannounced, a would-be ambassador. The empress refused to collude in any way.

Charles J. Halperin. *Ivan IV and Muscovy*, viii + 409 p., 2020 (ISBN 978-0-89357-501-4), \$44.95.

In many ways Ivan the Terrible's personality and reign remain mysteries. This anthology will attempt to shed new light on a variety of issues related to Ivan's person and 16th-century Muscovy, including accounts of the *oprichnina* written by Germans in his service, intrafamilial strife and foreign slaves in Muscovite society, the role of clergy in the documentary life of the Muscovite laity, the Muscovite perception of the political culture of the Crimean Khanate, diplomatic relations between Ivan IV's Muscovy and Lithuania, coinage, Ivan and the *rusaskaia zemlia*, Ivan as a charismatic ruler, and a historiographical analysis of Ruslan Skrynnikov's *Tsarstvo terrora* and *Reign of Terror*.



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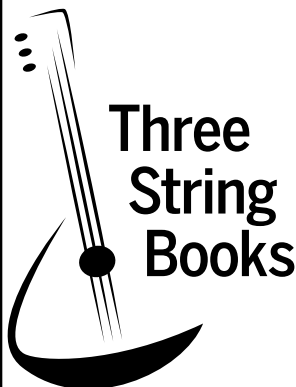
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Three String Books is an imprint of Slavica Publishers devoted to translations of literary works and belles-lettres from Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia and the other successor states of the former Soviet Union.

Anna Starobinets. *Look at Him*, trans. Katherine E. Young, xii + 151 p., 2020 (ISBN 978-089357-503-8), \$19.95.

In this groundbreaking memoir, Anna Starobinets chronicles the devastating loss of her unborn son to a fatal birth defect. A finalist for the 2018 National Bestseller Prize, *Look at Him* ignited a firestorm in Russia, prompting both high praise and severe condemnation for the author's willingness to discuss long-taboo issues of women's agency over their own bodies, the aftereffects of abortion and miscarriage on marriage and family life, and the callousness and ignorance displayed by many in Russia in situations like hers.



Pavol Rankov, *It Happened on the First of September (or Some Other Time)*, trans. Magdalena Mullek, viii + 267 p., 2020 (ISBN 978-089357-502-1), \$29.95.

Winner of the European Union Prize for Literature.

"It's where we've ended up. Not because of our own mistakes, because of politics. We weren't able to live our own lives; we had to live the way we were told to." —Maria (excerpt from book)

"*It Happened on the First of September* is a novel with epic sweep yet without the epic length as both the years it covers and its action fly by. Though much of the book deals with history's bleaker chapters, the novel is a page turner filled with humor, vibrant writing, and hope." —Michael Stein, Literalab, BODY



<http://kritika.georgetown.edu>

Kritika is dedicated to critical inquiry into the history of Russia and Eurasia. The quarterly journal features research articles as well as analytical review essays and extensive book reviews, especially of works in languages other than English. Subscriptions and previously published volumes available from Slavica—including, as of 16, no. 1, e-book editions (ePub, MOBI). Contact our business manager at slavica@indiana.com for all questions regarding subscriptions and eligibility for discounts.

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PUBLICATIONS

American Slavery and Russian Serfdom in the Post-Emancipation Imagination, by Amanda Brickell Bellows, was published by UNC Press in June 2020. The abolition of Russian serfdom in 1861 and American slavery in 1865 transformed both nations as Russian peasants and African Americans gained new rights as subjects and citizens. Analyzing portrayals of African Americans and Russian serfs in oil paintings, advertisements, fiction, poetry, and ephemera, Bellows argues that these depictions shaped collective memory of slavery and serfdom, affected the development of national consciousness, and influenced public opinion as peasants and freedpeople strove to exercise their newfound rights.

Big Ideas: A Guide to the History of Everything, by Cameron Gibelyou and Douglas Northrop (Oxford University Press, July 2020), narrates the history of the universe, Earth, life, and humanity while analyzing how grand stories are crafted and framed. The authors grapple with issues at the intersection of the natural sciences, history, literature, philosophy, religion, and the humanities while making a reasoned analysis of worldviews that underlie historical writing across many fields. And they bring a wide range of voices to bear on questions of where everything came from, how it got to be the way it is today, and where things might be headed in the future.

Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond, edited by Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mroziak, was published by Routledge in July 2020. This book provides a theoretical frame and overview

on several gender and generation narratives about communism, anticommunism, and postcommunism. It explores the belief that while methodological reflection on communism, as well as on generations and gender, is conducted extensively in contemporary research, the overlapping of these three terms is still rare.

Lukasz Krzyzanowski's book, *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City* (Harvard University Press, June 2020), draws on Radom Jewish Committee documents to recount the story of this largely forgotten group of Holocaust survivors. Amid the devastation of Poland, recurring violence, and bureaucratic hurdles, they attempted to rebuild local Jewish life, recover their homes and workplaces, and reclaim property appropriated by non-Jewish Poles or the state. This book tells the larger story of what happened throughout provincial Poland as Holocaust survivors faced new struggles along with massive political, social, and legal change.

Labor in State-Socialist Europe, 1945-1989: Contributions to a History of Work (Central European University Press, July 2020), edited by Marsha Siefert, re-examines the policies and problems of communist regimes and recovers the voices of the workers who built them. The contributors explore the relationship between politics and labor policy, dealing with topics including workers' safety and risks; labor rights and protests; working women's politics and professions; migrant workers and social welfare; attempts to control workers' behavior and to stem unemployment. Workers are presented as active agents in resisting and supporting changes in

labor policies, in choosing allegiances, and in defining the very nature of work.

Robert Litwak's *Managing Nuclear Risks* (Wilson Center, Fall 2020) assesses the heightened risks across the three major nuclear categories: relations among the existing nuclear-weapon states, the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons to additional states, and nuclear terrorism. Contemporary dangers across these categories present policy tensions that cannot be resolved, but, if clearly understood, can be better managed. Litwak lays out utilitarian options to ameliorate nuclear risks. This book is a timely reminder to ourselves what is at stake in maintaining the nuclear peace.

Michael Romanov: Brother of the Last Tsar, Diaries and Letters, 1916-1918, by Helen Azar (Translator) and Nicholas B. A. Nicholson (Annotator), was published by Academica Press in June 2020. This book presents, for the first time in English, Grand Duke Michael's annotated diaries and letters of 1916-1918. These documents offer insight into the fall of the Russian Empire, the rise and fall of the Provisional Government, and the terrifying days of the Bolshevik Revolution, after which Michael was a prisoner doomed to meet his end in the remote city of Perm, just over a month before the former Tsar and his family were murdered in Ekaterinburg.

New Drama in Russian: Performance, Politics and Protest in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, edited by J.A.E. Curtis, was published by Bloomsbury Academic in June 2020. New Drama, which draws heavily on techniques of documentary and verbatim writing, is a key means of protest in the Russian-speaking world; since the fall of the Soviet



Union in 1991, theaters, dramatists, and critics have collaborated in using the genre as a lens through which to explore a wide range of topics. This volume sheds light on performance, politics, and protest in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Orthodox Revivalism in Russia: Driving Forces and Moral Quests, by Milena Benovska, was published by Routledge in October 2020.

Orthodoxy has achieved a large scale revival in Russia following the collapse of Communism. This book explores the social background and moral attitudes of the “little flock” of believers who actively participate in religious life. It reveals that the complex moral beliefs of the faithful have a disproportionately high impact on Russian society overall; that there are strong collective ideas concerning religious nationalism and the synergy between the secular and the religious.

“Quiet Spiders of the Hidden Soul”: Mykola (Nik) Bazhan’s Early Experimental Poetry, edited by Oksana Rosenblum, Lev Fridman, and Anzhelika Khyzhnya, was published by Academic Studies Press in November 2020.

This bilingual Ukrainian-English collection brings together the experimental works by Mykola (Nik) Bazhan, one of the major Ukrainian poets of the twentieth century. As he moved from futurism to neoclassicism, symbolism to socialist realism, Bazhan displayed a creative approach to theme, versification, and vocabulary. This book makes works from his three early collections available for the first time.

The Retreat of Liberal Democracy: Authoritarian Capitalism and the Accumulative State in Hungary, by Gabor Scheiring, was published by Palgrave MacMillan in September 2020.

Scheiring argues that Hungary’s new hybrid authoritarian regime emerged as a political response to the tensions of globalization. He demonstrates how Orbán’s Fidesz exploited the rising nationalism among the working-class casualties of deindustrialization and the national bourgeoisie to consolidate illiberal hegemony.

Russia’s Entangled Embrace: The Tsarist Empire and the Armenians, 1801-1914, by Stephen Badalyan Riegg, was published by Cornell University Press in July 2020. This book traces the relationship between the Romanov state and the Armenian diaspora that populated Russia’s territorial fringes and metropolitan centers. Riegg demonstrates how imperial rule represented not hypothetical, clear-cut alternatives but simultaneous, messy realities. He examines why, and how, Russian architects of empire imagined Armenians as being politically desirable. *Russia’s Entangled Embrace* reveals that the Russian government relied on Armenians to build its empire in the Caucasus and beyond.

She Animates: Soviet Female Subjectivity in Russian Animation, by Michele Leigh and Lora Mjolsness (Academic Studies Press, November 2020), examines the work of twelve female animation directors in the Soviet Union and Russia. In addition to making a case for including these women and their work in the annals of film and animation history, this volume also explores why their work should be considered part of the tradition of women’s cinema. Leigh and Mjolsness focus on the changing attitudes towards both the woman in question and feminism by examining the films in light of the emergence and evolution of a Soviet female subjectivity that still informs women’s

cinema in Russia today.

Survival on the Margins: Polish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union, by Eliyana R. Adler, was published by Harvard University Press in November 2020. Adler’s book tells of 200,000 Polish Jews who escaped the Holocaust as refugees stranded in remote corners of the USSR. Between 1940 and 1946, these refugees endured hard labor, bitter cold, and extreme deprivation. But out of reach of the Nazis, they escaped the fate of millions of their coreligionists in the Holocaust. Adler rescues these stories of determination and suffering on behalf of new generations.

The Things of Life: Materiality in Late Soviet Russia, by Alexey Golubev (Cornell University Press, December 2020), is a social and cultural history of material objects and spaces during the late socialist era. It examines how the material world influenced Soviet people’s gender roles, habitual choices, social trajectories, and imaginary aspirations. Through its focus on materiality and personhood, *The Things of Life* expands our understanding of what made Soviet people and society “Soviet.”

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NewsNet features advertisements from organizations presenting scholarly publications, products, services, or opportunities of interest to those in the Russian, Eurasian, and Central European fields. Please contact newsnet@pitt.edu for rates, specs and production schedule.

2021 ASEES PRIZES CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL BOOK PRIZE COMPETITIONS:

For full rules and complete details about all prizes, [click here](#). The copyright date inside the book must be 2020.

- The book must be a monograph, preferably by a single author, or by no more than two authors
- Authors may be of any nationality as long as the work is originally published in English in the US*
- Textbooks, collections, translations (including self-translations/authorial translations), bibliographies, reference works, and self-published works are ineligible
- Works may deal with any area of Eastern Europe, Russia, or Eurasia*
- Additional eligibility requirements unique to each prize competition are listed below

*Except where otherwise indicated

Nominating Instructions:

- Fill out the Book Prize nomination form
- The deadline to nominate books is April 15.
- Each book may be nominated for up to two prizes
- Send one copy of eligible monograph to each committee member according to their stated preference. Please also send ebook (where available) to newsnet@pitt.edu. Mark submissions with the name of the prize(s)
- All nominated books must be received by May 15.

WAYNE S. VUCINICH BOOK PRIZE

Established in 1983, the Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize, sponsored by ASEES and the Stanford University Center for Russian and East European Studies, is awarded for the most important contribution to Russian, Eurasian, and East European studies in any discipline of the humanities or social sciences published in English in the US in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- The competition is open to works of scholarship in any discipline of the social

sciences or humanities (including literature, the arts, film, etc.). Policy analyses, however scholarly, cannot be considered.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Thomas Seifrid, U of Southern California
- Neringa Klumbyte, Miami U
- Nancy Condee, U of Pittsburgh
- Donald Raleigh, UNC at Chapel Hill

USC BOOK PRIZE IN LITERARY & CULTURAL STUDIES

The USC Book Prize in Literary and Cultural Studies, established in 2009 and sponsored by the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Southern California, is awarded for an outstanding monograph published on Russia, Eastern Europe, or Eurasia in the fields of literary & cultural studies in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- The competition is open to works of scholarship in literary and cultural studies, including studies in the visual arts, cinema, music, and dance.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Diane Nemec Ignashev, Carleton College

- Jon Stone, Franklin & Marshall College
- Louise McReynolds, UNC at Chapel Hill

REGINALD ZELNIK BOOK PRIZE IN HISTORY

The Reginald Zelnik Book Prize in History, established in 2009 and sponsored by the Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, is awarded for an outstanding monograph published on Russia, Eastern Europe, or Eurasia in the field of history in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

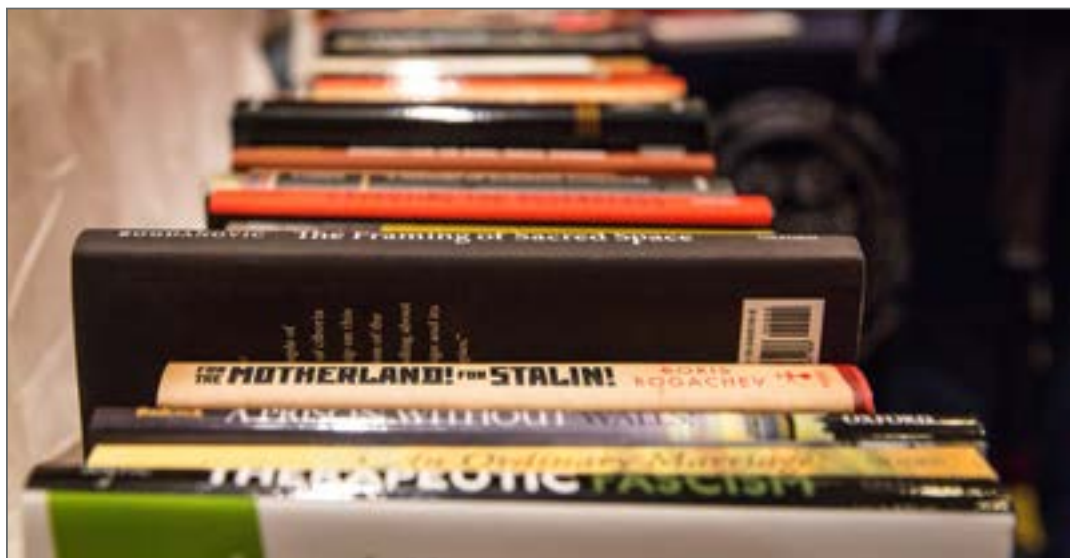
- The competition is open to works of scholarship in history

The winner will be chosen by:

- Wendy Goldman, Carnegie Mellon U
- Barbara Engel, U of Colorado
- Ronald Suny, U of Michigan

DAVIS CENTER BOOK PRIZE IN POLITICAL & SOCIAL STUDIES

The Davis Center Book Prize in Political and Social Studies, established in 2008 and sponsored by the Kathryn W. and Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University, is awarded for an outstanding



monograph published on Russia, Eurasia, or Eastern Europe in anthropology, political science, sociology, or geography in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- The competition is open to works of scholarship in anthropology, political science, sociology, or geography, and also to social science works that cross strict disciplinary boundaries

The winner will be chosen by:

- Emily Channell-Justice, Ukrainian Research Institute
- Jeffrey Kopstein, UC Irvine,
- Ola Onuch, U of Manchester

MARSHALL D. SHULMAN BOOK PRIZE

The Marshall D. Shulman Book Prize, established in 1987 and sponsored by the Harriman Institute of Columbia University, is awarded for an outstanding monograph dealing with the international relations, foreign policy, or foreign-policy decision-making of any of the states of the former Soviet Union or Eastern Europe published in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- Works must be about international behavior of the countries of the former Communist Bloc.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Jeff Hass, U of Richmond
- Jelena Subotic, Georgia State U
- Nikita Lomagin, European U at St. Petersburg

ED A HEWETT BOOK PRIZE

The Ed A Hewett Book Prize, established in 1994 and sponsored by the U of Michigan Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, is awarded for an outstanding monograph on the political economy of Russia, Eurasia and/or Eastern Europe, published in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- Works must be on the political economy of Russia, Eurasia and/or Eastern Europe.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Gerald Easter, Boston College
- Doug Rogers, Yale U
- Sarah Wilson Sokhey, U of Colorado Boulder

BARBARA JELAVICH BOOK PRIZE

The Barbara Jelavich Book Prize, established in 1995 and sponsored by the Jelavich estate, is awarded for a distinguished monograph published on any aspect of Southeast European or Habsburg studies since 1600, or nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ottoman or Russian diplomatic history in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:



- Authors must be scholars who are citizens or permanent residents of North America.
- The competition is open to works on any aspect of Southeast European or Habsburg studies since 1600, or 19th- and 20th-century Ottoman or Russian diplomatic history.

The winner of the will be chosen by:

- Kimberly Elman Zarecor, Iowa State U
- Theodora Dragostinova, Ohio State U
- Sean McMeekin, Bard College

KULCZYCKI BOOK PRIZE IN POLISH STUDIES

The Kulczycki Book Prize in Polish Studies, established in 1996 and sponsored by the Kulczycki family, former owners of the Orbis Books Ltd. of London, England, is awarded for the best book in any discipline on any aspect of Polish affairs, published in 2019.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- Only works originally published in English, outside of Poland, are eligible
- The book must be a monograph predominantly on Polish studies.
- Preference will be given to works by first-time authors.
- The competition is open to works in any discipline, dealing with any aspect of Polish affairs.
- Previous winners of this prize are ineligible.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Piotr Kosicki, U of Maryland
- Malgorzata Mazurek, Columbia U
- Benjamin Paloff, U of Michigan

W. BRUCE LINCOLN BOOK PRIZE

The W. Bruce Lincoln Book Prize, sponsored by Mary Lincoln, is awarded biennially (in even numbered years) for an author's first published monograph or scholarly synthesis that is of exceptional merit and lasting significance for the understanding of Russia's past, published in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- The book must be an author's first published monograph or work of synthesis.
- It must be published in English and in North America.
- The geographic area of study is broadly defined as the territories of the former imperial Russian state and the Soviet Union. The book may deal with any period of history.
- Books that have received other prizes are eligible.
- Scholarly merit, originality, and felicity of style will be the main criteria for selection.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Erika Monahan, Dartmouth College
- Christine Evans, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- David Brandenberger, U of Richmond

OMELJAN PRITSAK BOOK PRIZE IN UKRAINIAN STUDIES

The Omeljan Pritsak Book Prize in Ukrainian Studies, established in 2019 and sponsored by the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University, recognizes a distinguished book in the field of Ukrainian studies that was published in 2020.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- The competition is open to works in any discipline, dealing with any aspect of Ukrainian studies, including the works that put Ukrainian experiences in a broad comparative context.

The winner will be chosen by:

- Catherine Wanner, Penn State University
- Michael Naydan, Penn State University
- Steve Seegel, Northern Colorado U,

GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE

The ASEEES Graduate Student Essay Prize was established in 2006 and is awarded for an outstanding essay by a graduate student in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. The winner of the competition receives free roundtrip



domestic airfare to and room at the ASEEES Annual Convention and an honorary ASEEES membership in 2021.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- ASEEES Regional Affiliates and Institutional Members are invited to hold their own competitions for best essay among their graduate students, and submit the winning paper to the ASEEES Grad Student Prize Committee.
- Essay author must be a graduate student and must have written the essay in English while in a graduate program.
- Essays can be any of several formats: Expanded versions of conference papers; graduate level seminar papers; Master's thesis chapters; dissertation chapters

NOMINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Essays should be submitted by the Chairs of the Regional Affiliates or the primary representatives of the Institutional Members. Graduate students whose institution is not an ASEEES institutional member or is not holding a competition this year, are advised to check the rules for their regional competition. Students cannot self-nominate their papers/must go through the proper nominating procedures.
- Submitter must clearly indicate the format of the essay submitted and provide an abstract.
- Essays should have a word count of 7,500-14,000 (25 to 50 pages approximately) inclusive of footnotes and bibliography. Submissions must be double-spaced and include footnotes or endnotes.
- Essays should be emailed to Mary Arnstein, Communications Coordinator, at newsnet@pitt.edu and to all members of the prize committee.

Deadline for submissions: June 1.

The winner will be chosen by:

- [Jovana Babovic](#), SUNY Geneseo
- [Lauri Mälksoo](#), U of Tartu (Estonia)
- [Andrea Lanoux](#), Connecticut College

ROBERT C. TUCKER/STEPHEN F. COHEN DISSERTATION PRIZE

The Tucker/Cohen Dissertation Prize, established in 2006 and sponsored by the KAT Charitable Foundation, is awarded annually (if there is a distinguished submission) for an outstanding English-language doctoral dissertation in Soviet or Post-Soviet politics and history in the tradition practiced by Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- The dissertation must be written in English and defended at a university in the US or Canada;
- The dissertation must be completed and defended during the 2020 calendar year;
- The dissertation's primary subject and analytical purpose must be in the realm of the history of domestic politics, as broadly understood in academic or public life, though it may also include social, cultural, economic, international or other dimensions. The dissertation must focus primarily on Russia (though the topic may also involve other former Soviet republics) during one or more periods between January 1918 and the present.

NOMINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

- A nomination will consist of a letter from the faculty advisor explaining the ways in which the work is outstanding in both its empirical and interpretive contributions, along with a 700-1,000 word abstract, written by the candidate, specifying the sources and general findings of the research. A faculty supervisor may nominate no more than one dissertation a year.

Deadline for submissions: May 15.

The winner will be chosen by:

- [Matthew Lenoe](#), U of Rochester,
- [Valerie Sperling](#), Clark U
- [Bruce Grant](#), New York U

ASEEES CLIR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE LIBRARIAN AWARD

The ASEEES Committee on Libraries and Information Resources Distinguished Service Award, which was established in 2010, honors ASEEES member librarians, archivists or curators whose contributions to Slavic, East European and Eurasian studies librarianship have been especially noteworthy or influential. The effect of these contributions may be the result of continuous or distinguished service to the profession, but may also be the result of extraordinarily active, innovative or collaborative work that deserves national recognition. The deadline for nomination is June 1.

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY:

- Active participation in special projects, efforts or initiatives that have measurably impacted the profession
- Exemplary and influential research and/or scholarship pertaining to SEEEES librarianship
- Consistently superior ASEEES committee or subcommittee work and /or advocacy
- Exemplary leadership on ASEEES committees, subcommittees or in other initiatives
- Conceiving of and implementing innovative or creative ideas that benefit the profession
- Quietly but enduringly and effectively promoting and strengthening the profession

Deadline for nominations June 1.

The winner of the CLIR Distinguished Service Award will be chosen by:

- Joseph Lenkart, U Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Janice Pilch, Rutgers U
- Ana Arays, Yale U
- Alla Roylance, New York U
- Roman Ivashkiv, U Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Natasha Lyandres
- Heghine Hakobyan, U of Oregon

DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTIONS AWARD

ASEEES' Distinguished Contributions to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Award honors members who have made major contributions to the field. Distinguished Contributions may be conceived of in diverse ways, and ASEEES seeks to recognize outstanding service, leadership, scholarship, mentoring, and public outreach. In particular, we hope to receive nominations that highlight noteworthy contributions to public understanding, contributions that innovate and transform the way we understand our regions and our disciplines, and leadership that

opens our disciplines to new perspectives and encourages fresh voices in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

NOMINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

- The Committee accepts nominations in writing or via e-mail from any ASEEES member. The lead nominator should submit all documents and letters in one PDF file to the Committee Chair. The package should consist of:
 - one nominating letter not exceeding 3 pages discussing the nominee's service, scholarship, mentoring and leadership; there is no limit to the number of signatories it may append;
 - max. of 10 supporting letters of 2 pages each; letters must discuss evidence of the criteria categories;
 - the candidate's full CV including publications, editorships, curatorships, awards and prizes; and service to ASEEES and/or the profession.
 - Self-nomination is not accepted.

- The Committee positively encourages nominations from ALL disciplines in SEEES. It welcomes inclusive nominations that reflect the diversity of the profession, and the diversity of contributions colleagues can make.
- The Committee will seek to ensure a balanced pool of nominees and may survey the field for prospective award winners.
- The deadline for nominations is April 1.

The winner of this award will be chosen by

- Olga Shevchenko, Williams College, Chair,
- Eliot Borenstein, New York U
- Choi Chatterjee, California State U, Los Angeles
- Gerald Creed, Hunter College
- Dan Healey, Oxford U (UK)

University of Chicago hiring Postdoctoral Researcher at the Rank of Instructor

The department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, with support of the Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies, invites applications for a position as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the rank of Instructor. We seek a scholar who specializes in Russia/Eurasia and Eastern/Central Europe and who will further their own research at the University of Chicago. The selected candidate is expected to be in residence and conduct their own research under the mentorship of a faculty member. Further requirements include teaching two courses in the [Russian Civilization sequence](#) and participating in CEERES educator outreach activities. The position is open to applicants trained in any humanities or social sciences discipline.

In the tradition of the University of Chicago Civilization courses, Introduction to Russian Civilization focuses on the close reading of primary sources to understand ideas, events, cultural patterns, and social change. The course is usually taught as a discussion or a combination of lectures and discussions. Within this general framework, the selected candidate will have the autonomy to select the texts and to structure the course as they wish. For a description of the course, please see above link.

The selected candidate is also expected to participate in the Center's outreach activities while they are in residence. Possible educator outreach activities include (but are not limited to): Class visits to City Colleges of Chicago or Chicago Public schools; Presentations at educator outreach programs such as International Education Conference or the Summer Institute for educators, or other programs; and Public presentations based on their research to local community organizations and/or public libraries. The initial position will be for one year, with the possibility of reappointment for one additional year upon satisfactory review and contingent upon the continued availability of federal funding. The position is benefits-eligible.

Qualifications

Applicants must have completed all requirements for receipt of the PhD degree in a field related to the area of the position prior to the start of the appointment, including officially filing the dissertation, and must have no more than five years of cumulative experience working in a tenure track position following receipt of the PhD.

Application Instructions

Complete application materials include: CV; cover letter; statement of research interests; a writing sample; a teaching statement addressing the applicant's preparation to teach in the Russian Civilization sequence; and the names and contact information of three individuals familiar with the work of the applicant from whom letters of recommendation may be requested. All materials must be submitted at the University of Chicago's Academic Recruiting website at <http://apply.interfolio.com/85076> no later than 11:00pm central time on April 12, 2021. Additional materials may be requested at a later stage in the application process. For questions please email Tracy Davis at tracyd@uchicago.edu.

EEO Statement

We seek a diverse pool of applicants who wish to join an academic community that places the highest value on rigorous inquiry and encourages diverse perspectives, experiences, groups of individuals, and ideas to inform and stimulate intellectual challenge, engagement, and exchange. The University's Statements on Diversity are at <https://provost.uchicago.edu/statements-diversity>. The University of Chicago is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Disabled/Veterans Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law. For additional information please see the [University's Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Job seekers in need of a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process should call 773-702-1032 or email equalopportunity@uchicago.edu with their request.

JORDAN CENTER AT NYU

The Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia and *All the Russias* are pleased to announce the second annual Graduate Student Essay Competition. Enter for a chance to get published on the blog and win cash prizes!

The Jordan Center invites 750-1200 word submissions from full- or part-time MA and PhD students from any accredited academic institution in the United States, on any topic and sub-discipline within Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, broadly defined. Cultural criticism; public-facing treatments of scholarly work; political analysis; book, film, or event reviews; and more are welcome.

All submissions must be in English and observe the blog's [submission guidelines](#) and [full competition rules](#).

Essays are due no later than April 15th at 11:59 PM EST and must be submitted via [this Google form](#).

Seven (7) winners will be selected based on their pieces' originality, clarity, and argumentation, as well as their correspondence to the blog's general tone and interests as stipulated in the submission guidelines linked above. Winners will receive, respectively, \$500 (first prize); \$250 (second prize); \$100 (third prize); and \$50 (runners-up). Winners and runners-up will have their essays published in *All the Russias*.

Competition results will be announced by Summer 2021. Please direct any questions to alltherussias@gmail.com.

THE KENNAN INSTITUTE AT THE WILSON CENTER

During the coronavirus outbreak, the Wilson Center and Kennan Institute will be postponing onsite meetings and events. KI is working with awarded scholars to provide the option to work remotely or to postpone start dates. Please visit <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/kennan-institute-fellowships-and-internships> for the latest updates or email kennan@wilsoncenter.org.

Fellowship Opportunities

Title VIII Short-Term Scholarships

These grants allow scholars to spend up to one month using the library, archival, and other specialized resources while in residence at the Kennan Institute. Applicants must hold an MA degree or higher, or demonstrate commensurate professional achievement. You must be a US citizen to apply.

George F. Kennan Fellowships

George F. Kennan Fellows will be based at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC, for three-month residencies. Fellows will receive access to the Library of Congress, National Archives, and policy research centers in DC, as well as the opportunity to meet with key experts and officials. While conducting research, Kennan Fellows are expected to participate in discussions with the policy and academic communities, including speaking engagements at the Wilson Center as well as potentially outside of DC, and attending meetings, conferences, and other activities organized by the Kennan Institute and Wilson Center. **There are no citizenship requirements for this grant.**

Applicants have an option to apply for the fellowship as individuals or as part of a team. If applying as a

team of two (or three) applicants, **the applicants must be citizens of at least two different countries.** The goal of such joint fellowships is to promote collaborative research projects among US, Russian, and Ukrainian experts. George F. Kennan Fellowship Teams will: Produce joint paper(s) for policy-relevant publications; Present work at DC, Russia, and/or Ukraine events; Conduct meetings and engage with policymakers in DC. Applicants must submit a **completed application**.

Galina Starovoitova Fellows on Human Rights and Conflict Resolution

The Starovoitova Fellowship is available to scholars, policy makers, journalists, civic activists, and other engaged persons who successfully bridge the worlds of ideas and public affairs to advance human rights and conflict resolution.

Applicants with experience from a wide variety of backgrounds (including academia, government, the corporate world, the professions, NGOs, the media) are eligible for appointment.

All applicants are required to have a working knowledge of English.

For academic participants, eligibility is limited to the postdoctoral level, and normally it is expected that academic candidates will have demonstrated their scholarly development by publication beyond the Kandidat dissertation. For other applicants, an equivalent level of professional achievement is expected.

The Starovoitova Fellowship offers a stipend, research facilities, word processing support, and research assistance. One 6-month and one 3-month grant are available. Recipients must be in residence at the Kennan Institute for the duration of their grant. Starovoitova Fellows are expected to hold public lectures on the themes

of conflict resolution and human rights while conducting research on a specific topic. In addition, the Starovoitova Fellow will participate in discussions with the public policy and academic communities, including giving speeches and lectures at other institutions and taking part in meetings and conferences.

The application deadline for this fellowship will be **May 15, 2021**, *contingent upon renewal of grant funding*.

James H. Billington Fellowship

The Billington Fellow will be based at the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute for a nine-month term (one academic year). Fellows will receive access to the Library of Congress, National Archives, and policy research centers in DC, as well as the opportunity to meet with key experts and officials at the State Department, USAID, Department of Defense, and Congress. The Billington Fellow will be expected to actively participate in discussions with the policy and academic communities. These discussions can be in the form of speaking engagements at the Wilson Center and potentially outside of Washington, DC, as well as attending meetings, conferences, and other activities organized by the Kennan Institute and the Wilson Center. Upon completion of the fellowship, the Billington Fellow will join our growing list of alumni, for whom the Kennan Institute will continue to offer opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

Applicants for the Billington Fellowship must hold a PhD awarded within the past 10 years. Preference will be given to proposed research in the fields of Russian history and culture. **There is no citizenship restriction on this grant.**

The Billington Fellowship offers a monthly stipend, research facilities, a research intern, and computer access. Fellows are required to be in residence at the Kennan Institute, Wilson Center in Washington, DC, for the duration of the grant. Awardees are expected to begin their appointments within six months of accepting the fellowship.

The deadline for this competition is **May 15, 2021**.

The Kennan Institute welcomes its current and incoming scholars:

Title VIII Short Term Scholars

- **Samuel Casper**, Adjunct Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies, Hunter College, City University of New York, "The Bolshevik Afterlife: Posthumous Rehabilitation in the Post-Stalin Soviet Union," January – February 2021

US HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

CFA: Everyday Life of Jews in the USSR during the Holocaust and its Early Aftermath

The Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem and the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) are pleased to invite applications for a research workshop entitled, "Everyday Life of Jews in the USSR during the Holocaust and its Early Aftermath." The workshop is scheduled for August 29–September 2, 2021 at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

The workshop will focus on the Holocaust and everyday Jewish life during World War II and early years after the war in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Topics might include: antisemitism, evacuation and Jewish life in the Soviet rear, ghettoization, collaboration, hiding, resistance, gender, violence, Jewish children and families during the Holocaust, survival in camps and ghettos, Jews in the Red Army, trauma, art and literature.

Participants will be expected to submit a paper (no more than 15 pages) a month prior to the beginning of the workshop for circulation among all

participants. Daily sessions will include 30-minute presentations followed by a discussion (up to 30 min), as well as an opportunity for participants to do research at Yad Vashem's library and archives.

Applications will be accepted from doctoral candidates (aspirants) and scholars who obtained their PhD (or candidate of science degree) within the last five years. Applications are welcome from scholars working in all relevant academic disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, art history, geography, film studies, history, Jewish studies, law, literature, material culture, philosophy, political science, religion, sociology, and other fields.

Organizers intend to hold the workshop on site at Yad Vashem. However, if it is impossible to physically convene from August 29–September 2 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, then the workshop will be held either entirely online or in a hybrid in-person and online format. Details on the workshop's format will be sent out well in advance of the beginning of the program.

All application materials must be received by 23 April 2021. Incomplete applications will not be considered after this date. Late applications will not be accepted. The selected participants will be notified by 23 May 2021. Please email application materials to: shlomit.shulchani@yadvashem.org.il. Applications include: A current CV; an abstract of no more than 1000 words for your proposed paper (including title and discussion of methodological and theoretical issues); and a letter of recommendation (for students only) addressing the applicant's scholarly potential. Faculty recommenders must email their signed letters (on institutional letterhead) directly to shlomit.shulchani@yadvashem.org.il.

The organizers will cover the cost

of economy class flights to and from the workshop, lodging for the workshop's duration and meals. Participants must obtain their own health insurance.

The workshop will be conducted in English.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SUMMER RESEARCH LAB

The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center (REEEC) and the Slavic Reference Service (SRS) at the University of Illinois announce a Call for Applications for the 48th annual Summer Research Laboratory (SRL) program. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, this year's SRL will be held as a Virtual SRL (VSRL), with REEEC and SRS working to support scholars through remote research assistance, virtual programming, professional development opportunities, and collections and database access. VSRL will take place June 14-August 8, 2021.

WHAT THE LAB OFFERS:

- Designation as a Summer Research Laboratory Associate.

- Virtual research support for general and specialized queries throughout the Summer and beyond. Associates may also request a personalized bibliographic session with the Slavic Reference Service through Zoom.
- Access to digital and database collections of the Library for an extended period.
- Free duplication service for University of Illinois Library materials.
- Thematic and skill-building workshop events as well as opportunities to present and discuss work in progress. For a list of topics and dates, see below. A fuller abstract of these workshops may be found on our [website](#).

US citizens are eligible to apply for a \$1000 Title VIII Research Award to support their research work.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications to the VSRL are accepted through an online portal, found [here](#).

Applicants must provide a short narrative explaining their research

project, and indicate how they will benefit from access to University of Illinois resources and participation in the VSRL. Researchers conducting policy-relevant research projects will be prioritized for Title VIII grant support. All applicants must also submit a short-form CV. US Citizens who are applying for research support must also provide a clearly formulated statement of policy relevance.

FEATURED WORKSHOPS:

- [Climate and Society in Eurasia: Past, Present, and Future - June 28 - July 2](#)
- [A Woman's Work is Never Done: Female Life and Labor across the Imperial, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Eras - July 10-11](#)
- [Media Culture in Balkan and Eurasian Muslim Communities - July 15-16](#)
- [Frozen Conflicts in Eurasia: Origin, Status and Outlook - Dates TBD](#)

For more information, please visit: <https://reeec.illinois.edu/research/summer-research-laboratory>

Forthcoming in *Slavic Review* Vol. 80 Spring 2021

CRITICAL DISCUSSION FORUM: The Sociology of Protest in Belarus--Social Dynamics, Ideological Shifts and Demand for Change

Introduction: The Sociology of Belarusian Protest by Nelly Bekus and Mischa Gabowitsch

- "Echo of 1989? Protest Imaginaries and Identity Dilemmas in Belarus," by Nelly Bekus
- "'Tear Down These Prison Walls!' Verses of Defiance in the Belarusian Revolution," by Simon Lewis
- "Belarusian Protest: Regimes of Engagement and Coordination," by Mischa Gabowitsch
- "How Feminist is the Belarusian Revolution? Female Agency and Participation in the 2020 Post-Election Protests," by Natallia Paulovich
- "Class, Agency, and Citizenship in Belarusian Protest," by Elena Gapova
- "The Anatomy of Impatience: Exploring Factors behind 2020 Labor Unrest in Belarus," by Volodymyr Artiukh
- "The Moral Economy of the Koklhoz Worker, or Why the Protest in Belarus Seems not to Concern the Collectivized Countryside," by Ronan Hervouet

ARTICLES

- "Calendar Reform under Peter the Great: Absolutist Prerogatives, Plural Temporalities, and Christian Exceptionalism," by Andreas Schönle
- "An Ancient in Catherine's Russia: Classical Reception, Sensibility, and Nobility in Princess Ekaterina Urusova's Poetry of the 1770s," by Kelsey Rubin-Detlev
- "'To a Dog, a Dog's Death!': Naive Monarchism and Regicide in Imperial Russia, 1878-1884," by Daniel Beer



PERSONAGES

Sean Brennan was recently promoted to full professor at the University of Scranton.

National Gallery of Art is hosting a new exhibit on the "dacha" of Catherine the Great (also known as the "Chinese Palace") at Oranienbaum. [The exhibit](#) features an ensemble of images from a collection of nearly 149,000 digital images, negatives, and photographs of Russia donated to the department of image collections by the scholar and photographer **William Craft Brumfield**.

The International Vladimir Nabokov Society awarded **Tatyana Gershkovich** the Gene Barabtarlo Prize for her essay, "Suspicion On Trial: Tolstoy's The Kreutzer Sonata and Nabokov's 'Pozdnyshov's Address,'" *PMLA*, 134. 3 (May 2019): 459-474. <http://thenabokovian.org/node/52293>

Nigel Gould-Davies was appointed Senior Fellow for Russia and Eurasia, and Editor of *Strategic Survey*, at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

John P. Ledonne's *Forging a Unitary state; Russia's Management of Eurasian Space, 1650-1850* (University of Toronto Press) won the 2021 Prose Award for Best Book in World History by AAP, as well as the 2020 Mark Raeff Prize from the Eighteenth Century Association for Russian Studies.

Harriet Murav received an honorable mention from the Modern Language Association Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies for her book *David Bergelson's Strange New World: Untimeliness and Futurity*, published by Indiana University Press.

The third annual Jewish Book Council Biography Award in Memory of Sara Berenson Stone was given to *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History* (Wayne State University Press) by **Nancy Sinkoff**, which was also named a Natan Notable Book from Natan Fund and Jewish Book Council in fall 2020.

Valeria Sobol was selected as University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign LAS Dean's Distinguished Professorial Scholar for the academic year 2021-2022. Each year, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences awards those faculty that have shown exemplary scholarship and teaching amongst those being promoted to Professor.

Alexis Zoto is now the Chair of Design, 3D at the Roski School of Art and Design at University of Southern California.

TOP L-R: Harriet Murav, Anna Grzymala-Busse, William Brumfield, Valeria Sobol, Tatyana Gershkovich, Alexis Zoto

Bottom L-R: Anna Frajlich-Zajac, John Ledonne, Sean Brennan, Nigel Gould-Davies, Nancy Sinkoff.

The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America (PIASA) is pleased to announce its 2020 award recipient. Among them are two ASEES members.

The Susanne Lotarski Distinguished Achievement Award: **Anna Frajlich-Zajac**, Senior Lecturer Emerita of Polish Language and Literature, Columbia University, for her many contributions to Polish culture in poetry, prose, and literary studies extending over several decades.

The Bronisław Malinowski Award in the Social Sciences: **Anna Grzymala-Busse**, Michelle and Kevin Douglas Professor of International Studies, Stanford University, for her outstanding scholarship on the development and transformation of the state, political parties, religion and politics, and post-communist politics in Poland and East-Central Europe.

ASEES Awards First Book Subvention in Spring 2021

The winners of the Spring 2021 First Book Subvention are:

Cornell University Press for *Unsettled Heritage: Living Next to Poland's Material Jewish Traces after the Holocaust* by Yechiel Weizman.

University of Toronto Press for *In the Kingdom of Shoes: Bata, Zlin, and Globalization, 1894-1945* by Zachary Doleshal.

University of Toronto Emeritus Professor **Kenneth Alfred Lantz** passed away on August 29, 2020. Born on October 21, 1940, in Edmonton, Alberta, he received his BA in Slavonic and Soviet Studies from the University of Alberta in 1963. He received his MA (1967) and PhD (1974) from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto. He began to teach there in 1970, achieved tenure in 1976, and became a full professor in 1987, specializing in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature. His first book (1979) was on Nikolai Leskov; he also published reference books on Chekhov and Dostoevsky and was a noted translator. His translation of Dostoevsky's *Writer's Diary* won AATSEEL's prize for best translation in 1993. In 2006, in recognition of his service, Lantz received AATSEEL's annual award for Outstanding Contribution to the Profession. He served twice as chair of the Department and took on many other administrative roles in the University. He served as secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Association of Slavists (CAS), editor of the CAS newsletter for several years, and co-editor of *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*. He also digitalized the first nine volumes of *Dostoevsky Studies*. After Lantz retired in 2005, he translated a book of memoirs (*Voices from the Gulag*) and a book of Solzhenitsyn's short stories (*Apricot Jam: and Other Stories*). He had been working with Donna Orwin on an anthology of war and Russian literature to be published by Columbia University Press.

Orest Lubomyr Pelech (1947-2020), the long-time Slavic Bibliographer at Duke University, died at his home in Onancock, VA, on March 13, 2020, after a long illness. Born stateless in a German refugee camp, this first-generation Ukrainian-American attended Seton Hall Prep and Antioch College. Pursuing his interests in nineteenth-century Russian

and Ukrainian intellectual history, Pelech earned his MA (1971) and PhD (1976) in History from Princeton University. Two years before defending his doctoral dissertation, he began working as Bibliographer for Russia and Eastern Europe at Princeton University Library, a position he held for 11 years (1974-1985). During this period, he earned a MLS degree from Rutgers University (1978). In 1985, Pelech accepted the position of Slavic/Western European Bibliographer at Duke University, and later, he became the first full-time Slavic Bibliographer. Over the course of his two decades at Duke, he built a great research collection and was proud that he spent much of his professional lifetime establishing a collection of excellence. He was equally proud to serve as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. After his retirement, Pelech continued to teach adults and children in the community on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Excerpted from text provided by Ernest Zitser, Duke University.

Father Gerald Sabo, S.J., member of the Jesuit community and Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at John Carroll University, passed away suddenly on October 24, 2020, at age 75. Sabo spent forty years teaching Slovak, Russian, and Eastern European Literature at JCU. A native of Connecticut, he joined the New England Province of the Society of Jesus in 1969 and was ordained as priest in 1980. He celebrated his 50th anniversary as a Jesuit last year. An alumnus of Fairfield Prep and Fairfield University, he studied Theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, now part of Boston College. He also earned a doctorate in Eastern European Languages at Yale. Sabo transferred to the Midwest Province and joined the JCU faculty in 1981. He served as rector of the Jesuit Community from 2007-2013. At

the time of his death, he was working on a magisterial history of Slovak Literature. *Excerpted from his obituary.*

Judge Stephen F. Williams died on August 7, 2020, at age 83. Williams came to the field of Russian History late in life. He was an attorney and law professor at the University of Colorado before Ronald Reagan appointed him to the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, where he heard cases for three decades. In 2010, he (as part of a panel of judges) heard oral arguments in a case concerning the Brooklyn-based Lubavitch Hasidim's claim that they are the rightful owner of tens of thousands of books, pamphlets, and manuscripts that had come into the possession of the Russian State Library after World War I. The judges ruled that the materials belonged to the Lubavitchers and ordered repatriation of the collection. In the early 1990s, Williams enrolled in Russian classes so he could research the historical foundations of private property in post-communist Russia. Building upon his interest in the rule of law, particularly when it concerned the carceral state, he immersed himself in the study of property rights in the immediate post-1905 era and wrote his first book, *Liberal Reform in an Illiberal Regime: The Creation of Private Property in Russia, 1906-1915* (2006). His next book, *The Reformer: How One Liberal Fought to Preempt the Russian Revolution* (2017), was a biography of Vasilii Maklakov, a trial lawyer and prominent Kadet who advocated for the rule of law in tsarist Russia.

Excerpted from text provided by Bob Weinberg, Swarthmore College

AATSEEL

[AATSEEL](#) 2020 BOOK PRIZE WINNERS
The full citations are posted on the Awards page for the 2020 AATSEEL Book Awards winners:

Best Book in Literary Studies

- Galin Tihanov, *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory: Regimes of Relevance in Russia and Beyond*

Best Book in Cultural Studies

- Eliot Borenstein, *Plots Against Russia*

Best First Book

- Kelsey Rubin-Detlev, *The Epistolary Art of Catherine the Great*

Best Edited Multi-Author Scholarly Volume

- Eds. Julie Buckler, Julie Cassiday, and Boris Wolfson, *Russian Performances: Word, Object, Action*

Best Literary Translation into English

- Daša Drndić, *EEG: A Novel*, ed., translated by Celia Hawkesworth

Best Contribution to Language Pedagogy

- Irina Dubina and Olesya Kisselev, *Rodnaya Rech': An Introductory Course for Heritage Learners of Russian*

AATSEEL AWARDS FOR TEACHING, SERVICE, AND SCHOLARSHIP

AATSEEL congratulates the following award winners and acknowledge their significant contributions to the profession and to the organization.

- Excellence in Teaching (Pre-College): The Team at Pritzker College Prep, Chicago – **Phil Stosberg, Lauren Nelson, and Rebecca Kaegi**
- Excellence in Teaching (Post-Secondary): **B. Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz and Julia Vaingurt**
- Distinguished Service to AATSEEL: **Kevin Platt and Jon Stone**
- Outstanding Contribution to the Profession: **Karen Evans-Romaine**
- Outstanding Contribution to Scholarship: **Irina Reyfman**
- Emeritus Award for Outstanding Dedication to the Profession: **Janet Tucker**

ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN SLAVIC STUDIES

AWSS invites nominations for four [2021 Heldt prizes](#):

- Best book in Slavic/Eastern European/Eurasian women's and gender studies
- Best book by a woman in any area of Slavic/East European/Eurasian studies
- Best translation in Slavic/East European/Eurasian women's and gender studies
- Best article in Slavic/Eastern European/Eurasian women's and gender studies

To be eligible for nomination, books and articles must be in English and should be published between April 15, 2020 and April 15, 2021 (or from April 15, 2019 in the case of the biennial translation prize).

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

MARC RAEFF PRIZE IN 18TH CENTURY RUSSIAN STUDIES

ECRSA is now accepting submissions for the 2021 Marc Raeff Book Prize. We encourage both presses and individual scholars to submit nominations to the members of the prize committee.

The Raeff Book Prize is awarded for a publication that is of exceptional merit and lasting significance for understanding Imperial Russia during the long 18th century. The recipient of the award will be recognized with a cash prize, which will be presented in November 2021 at the ASEES annual convention in New Orleans.

Eligibility:

- The publication must be a monograph, translation, or reference work about any aspect of the long 18th century (the last quarter of the 17th to the first quarter of the 19th century) and focused on any of the territories of the former imperial Russian state. Textbooks, festschrifts, and edited collections of essays are not eligible unless they constitute significant and innovative contributions

to the field.

- The submitted work must bear a copyright date of 2020 or 2021.
- Books that were already nominated for the prize in 2020 are not eligible.
- Nominated works can be published in any language and in any format (analog or digital).
- Books that have received other prizes are eligible.

Nominating Instructions:

- Nominations must be emailed to Gregory Afinogenov (Committee Chair) at Gregory.Afinogenov@georgetown.edu or to any member of the ECRSA Prize Selection Committee.
- Publishers should send a printed copy to each ECRSA Prize Selection Committee member; where needed, ebooks may be accepted.
- Nominations must be received no later than 15 June 2021.

2020 ECRSA Prize Selection Committee:

- Elena Marasina, Ulitsa Dmitriia Ulianova 19, Institute of Russian History RAN, Moscow 117292, Russia
- Simon Franklin, Clare College, Cambridge, CB2 1TL, UK
- Gregory Afinogenov, 850 Quincy St NW, Apt 621, Washington, DC 20011
- Ricarda Vulpius, Schopenhauerstr. 60, 14129 Berlin, Germany
- Amanda Ewington, 218 Fairview Ln, Davidson, NC 28036

NORTH AMERICAN DOSTOEVSKY SOCIETY

STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

NADS invites its members to nominate outstanding student essays. Self nominations are also welcome. The topic is open; however, Dostoevsky and his works should be the main focus of the essay.

To nominate an undergraduate student essay, please send an email containing the student's name, email address, institutional affiliation, and the title and level/number of the course for which the essay was written (e.g. BIOL 322 "Dostoevsky and Spiders") to [Vladimir](#)

[Ivantsov](#). Attach the essay as a .pdf without identifying information about the author. The essay should be less than 4000 words; 12 font size, double-spaced; it should consistently follow either MLA or Chicago style and contain full bibliographic information on the sources used.

To nominate a graduate student essay, email the student's name, email address, and institutional affiliation to [Greta Matzner-Gore](#). Attach the essay as a .pdf containing no identifying information about the author. The essay should be no more than 8000 words, with the same formatting and citation instructions as above. Submissions will be accepted until June 1, 2021.

POLISH STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Historian, Jan Musekamp, and literary scholar, Agnieszka Mrozek, have been elected to serve three-year terms on its Advisory Board. They will be joining continuing board members, Michał Wilczewski of UIC and Northwestern University, and Kate Wroblewski at the University of Michigan.

REECAS NORTHWEST

27TH ANNUAL REECAS-NW CONFERENCE

VIRTUAL EVENT: APRIL 28-30.

REECAS Northwest, the annual ASEES Northwest Regional Conference for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, welcomes students, faculty, independent scholars, and language educators from the United States and abroad. Established in 1994, REECAS Northwest is an important annual event for scholars and students in the Pacific Northwest and beyond, with participant and partner universities from across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. The interdisciplinary conference is organized by the University of Washington's Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, which seeks to promote in-depth study of the many post-communist European and Eurasian sub-regions.

The conference hosts many panels on a variety of topics from a wide diversity of disciplines. Papers on Russia and all the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia are welcome, including the Uyghur region in China (Xinjiang and elsewhere).

There are no registration fees for REECAS Northwest conference participants or attendees.

- To submit a proposal by March 28, 2021 [click here](#)
- To register as an attendee: [click here](#)

If you have questions not answered by this webpage, please contact reecasnw@uw.edu.

SOCIETY FOR ROMANIAN STUDIES

THE SIXTH BIENNIAL SRS BOOK PRIZE
SRS invites nominations for the Sixth Biennial SRS Book Prize awarded for the best scholarly book published in English in the humanities or social sciences, on any subject relating to Romania or Moldova and their diasporas. To be eligible, books must

have been published between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020, as indicated by the copyright date. Books may be in any academic field, with a predominant focus on Romanian or Moldovan subject matter (including subjects relating to the activities of non-Romanian ethnic groups on Romanian or Moldovan territory). Edited books, translations, reprints or new editions of works published before 2019, and non-scholarly books are not eligible.

Either authors or publishers of books may make submissions. Submissions should be sent to the SRS prize committee by June 1, 2021. Questions or inquiries can be emailed to dragos.petrescu@fspub.unibuc.ro

SRS Book Prize Committee
Members: Ruxandra Trandafoiu, Michael Stewart, and Dragoș Petrescu (Chair)

For details of the Prize and past winners please see: <https://society4romanianstudies.org/awards-prizes/>

ASEEES Exploring Career Diversity Conversation Series: Spring 2021 Pilot Program

ASEEES is pleased to announce the Exploring Career Diversity Conversation Series for graduate students or recent graduates who are interested in broadening their career horizons. The events provide a space for informal conversations in Zoom breakout rooms with professionals in career fields outside of academia or within academia outside the professoriate.

Participants will learn about careers in secondary education, in academia beyond teaching and research, in government/government-affiliated organizations, and in business and consulting. They will also gain insights into how to transfer their skills into the professional world.

[For more information on eligibility and registration, click here](#)

aseees

Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies

53rd Annual Convention

November 18-21, 2021
New Orleans, LA

December 2-3, 2021
Virtual Convention

Registration information
Hotel information
Membership Renewal

Note: Panel/paper acceptance emails will be sent out mid-April

ASEEES offers travel grant for members to present their papers at the Annual Convention in New Orleans. Only current regular or student members may apply for the grants listed below:

- Kathryn Davis Graduate Student Travel Grant Program
- Russian Scholar Travel Grant Program
- Regional Scholar Travel Grant Program
- Convention Opportunity Travel Grant Program
- Diversity & Inclusion Travel Grant Program

