

Connections



UNC
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Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



Photo by Matthew Richmond

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

We were delighted to see so many of you at our second annual welcome back reception in September. Since then, those of you on our listserv have received two circulars announcing upcoming events and opportunities. We think you will agree that we have a wide range of exciting speakers, seminars, and other activities scheduled for the fall semester, with more on the way.

Support from the College, the award we received from the Visegrad-4 University Studies Grant program, the backing of our benefactors for our “Democratization Processes in Eastern Europe and Beyond” initiative, and contributions we have received from the Center’s friends and alumni are making this all possible. We thank you. It’s never too late to make a contribution to CSEEEES. You can do so on our website (cseeees.unc.edu).

We have some great news to report: first, thanks to support from the College and from Mr. Laszlo Birinyi, UNC will conduct a search for an Assistant Professor in Central European Studies with expertise in Hungarian, to begin July 1, 2017. This hire will bolster the Slavic Depart-

ment’s new track in Central European Studies as well as our UNC-Visegrad Studies program.

Second, in collaboration with CSEEEES, Michele Rivkin-Fish received a grant from the U.S.-Russia Peer-to-Peer Dialogue Program to implement a project “Increasing Public Awareness about Inequality in Children’s Lives.” The project will culminate in an exhibition at UNC in May. Stay tuned for details.

We would like to welcome our six incoming MA students, who represent a very diverse and academically strong group. Check out their profiles on pp. 4-5. We are also delighted to welcome two new interns, Marius Patulea and Nicole Stavrojohn. Of Romanian heritage, Marius is majoring in Philosophy and Russian. Nicole, a freshman from Holly Springs, NC, plans to major in Peace, War, and Defense and Political Science. She is also the managing editor of this issue of our newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming CSEEEES-sponsored events this year.

- Donald J. Raleigh

ANDREA BOHLMAN (Assistant Professor, Music) published an article about the soundscape of protest in Gdańsk, Poland, in 1980 ("Solidarity, Song, and the Sound Document") in the *Journal of Musicology*. For the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in Louisville, KY, she organized a panel on tape recording, music history, and the Cold War. During the academic year 2016–17 she is a EURIAS Junior Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin, where her research is also supported by fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies.

CHAD BRYANT (Associate Professor, History) published *Walking Histories, 1800-1914* (Palgrave 2016), which he co-edited with Paul Readman and Arthur Burns. He also contributed to the volume an essay on strolling and the emergence of middle-class urban spaces in early nineteenth-century Prague. He spent much of the summer conducting research in Prague for his book project on the city's history.

VIRGINIA OLMSTED (PhD Candidate, History) received a 2016 Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant for her dissertation "Soviet by Design: Fashion, Consumption, and International Competition, 1944-1982."

DAKOTA IRVIN (PhD Candidate, History) is currently in Ekaterinburg,

Russia, conducting twelve months of dissertation research supported by a Cohen-Tucker Dissertation Research Fellowship. He was also awarded a Fulbright IIE Fellowship for Russia and received a travel award for conference presentations from CSEES and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

DONALD J. RALEIGH (Distinguished Professor, History) was awarded the 2016 Faculty Excellence Award in Doctoral Mentoring. During the summer he conducted research on his biography of L. I. Brezhnev in Moscow and Almaty, Kazakhstan.

STANISLAV SHVABRIN (Assistant Professor of Russian, GSLL) has published two books: Brian Boyd, *Blednyi ogon' Vladimira Nabokova: volshebstvo khudozhestvennogo otkrytiia* (Russian translation of Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire: The Magic of Artistic Discovery*, Princeton University Press, 1999), Translated from English with an Introduction by Stanislav Shvabrin (St. Petersburg, Ivan Limbakh, 2015), and also Georgy Ivanov, *Disintegration of the Atom. Petersburg Winters*, Translated from Russian, Annotated, and with an Introduction by J.H. Katsell and S. Shvabrin (Brighton, MA, Academic Studies Press, 2016).

LOUISE MCREYNOLDS (Distinguished Professor, History) published a chapter on "Anastasia Verbitskaia and Elinor Glyn: A Novel Perspective on Russia and the West," in V.

V. Noskov et al., ed., *Россия и США: познавая друг друга (Russia and the United States: Perceiving Each Other)* (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2015), and her chapter appeared in the online text from Oxford: "Urban Russia at the Fin-de-siècle," in Simon Dixon, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Russian History*. She gave an invited talk at St. Andrews University, derived from her research in archaeology in nineteenth-century Russia.

STEVE ROSEFIELDE (Professor, Economics) published *Transformation and Crisis in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges and Prospects* (Routledge, 2016) with Bruno Dalago. His book *Kremlin Strikes Back: Russia and the West after Crimea's Annexation* will be published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press.

SILVIA TOMÁŠKOVÁ (Professor, Anthropology) is the recipient of a National Geographic Society Research Grant: "Ways of Making: Prehistoric Engravings in the Northern Cape of South Africa". She was also elected the Associate Chair of the Chair's Council of the College of Arts and Sciences.

MILADA ANNA VACHUDOVA (Associate Professor, Political Science) has been awarded a Jean Monnet Chair of European Studies. As one of the most prominent scholars in the study of post-communist politics and EU enlargement, Vachudova will use the funds from this chair to support her pursuit of EU studies at UNC.



Photo by Katherine Cayton

Join us in congratulating Eren Tasar and his wife Lola on the birth of their son Leo Mikhail, as well as Karen Auerbach and her partner Roland on the birth of their daughter, Madeline Barbara Ottewell. Best wishes to the families.

INTERVIEW WITH STOCKTON BUTLER, MA '01

What was your first job out of grad school?

After completing my M.A. at UNC, my first job was as an analyst at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), which is the investigative arm of Congress. I worked at GAO for 8 years, mostly reviewing US non-proliferation programs in the former Soviet Union. My work at GAO allowed me to travel to Russia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe and gave me great insights into U.S. efforts to secure nuclear, chemical and biological weapons materials overseas.

Describe your current work.

Knowledge of the location and status of nuclear material worldwide is essential for an effective strategy to prevent illicit acquisition of such materials by terrorists, non-state actors or rogue nation-states. To address this issue, the Nuclear Materials Information Program (NMIP) was established by Presidential Directive in August 2006, as a national-level program to organize, consolidate, and assess information concerning worldwide nuclear materials holdings and security status. The program is managed by the U.S. Department of Energy and I have served as the director since 2010. Among other things, I oversee the U.S. National Nuclear Forensics Library, which is a resource that would be called upon to assess the provenance of interdicted nuclear materials that are found outside of regulatory control (such as interdicted samples) or used in an improvised nuclear device.

How did your career path lead you to where you are right now?

While at GAO, I led reviews of U.S. efforts to secure nuclear materials in Russia and other countries. Later, I also managed GAO's first review of the U.S. technical nuclear forensics program. These experiences gave me an excellent base of knowledge, which has benefited me in my current position.

What drew you to studying East Europe?

As an undergraduate, I double majored in Chemistry and Russian Language. The M.A. program at UNC offered an opportunity to continue to combine language and regional area knowledge with technical classes.

More than anything, I've found that being able to multitask and balance work and family life are the skills that have helped most in my career and life.

What courses or experiences at UNC best prepared you for your career?

As an undergraduate at UNC, I was on the varsity fencing team and I continued on as a volunteer assistant coach while completing my M.A. Juggling academic demands and playing a varsity sport helped hone my time management skills.

What is the one thing you miss the most about UNC and Chapel Hill?

I'm lucky to still have family in Chapel Hill, so I've been able to visit somewhat regularly since graduating. I do miss being able to support UNC athletic teams in person, but believe that if I cheer loud enough, they can hear me through my TV.

What advice do you have for graduate students on starting their careers?

Internships or fellowships are a great way to get your foot in the door, especially for government work. I was lucky enough to participate in the Nonproliferation Graduate Fellowship Program (NGFP) run by the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) during my tenure at UNC. Through the fellowship, I was able to get a security clearance, which helped make me more competitive for positions in the national security arena.



Photographs on pp. 1-2 are submissions to the 2015 Carolina Global Photography Competition

Incoming REEES MA Students



From left to right: Walter Gay, Paige Haynes, Leah Valtin-Erwin, Kristina Juergensmeyer, Sophia Ashley, and Michal Brzezicki.



Sophia Ashley

As the first in my family to attend college, I earned my Bachelor's degree in Psychology (with a minor in International Studies) with highest honors from Berry College. I received the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship and studied abroad in Moscow, Russia, for the summer of 2015. Having always been fascinated with foreign language, this experience deepened my passion for the Russian language. Since then, I have been awarded the Foreign Affairs Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship beginning 2016, and I will be commissioned as a Foreign Service Officer upon graduation with my Master's degree in the REEES track in Global Studies.

Walter Gay

I originally hail from Trinidad and Tobago and I attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Three years ago, a simple scholarly curiosity about the Russian language gradually blossomed into a vibrant enthusiasm for all aspects of Russian culture. I am pleased that my academic journey has led to this fantastic opportunity to enter UNC as a candidate for the MA in Global Studies program under the REEES track. My research interests include radicalism in Imperial Russia during the late 19th and early 20th century and the infiltration of communist/socialist ideology in Latin American and the Caribbean after World War II.



**Kristina Juergensmeyer**

I graduated from Emory University with a major in Linguistics and a minor in Anthropology. I am half Polish and half American, and grew up splitting my time between the two countries. My love of languages and the study of language stems from the extensive traveling I did around Europe as a young child. I pursued my interests in a linguistics degree, and have taken advantage of my college career to study as many languages as possible (including Russian, Italian, and Creek Muskogee). I decided to pursue a Masters in Global studies specializing in Russian Eastern European Studies in order to continue exploring my interests in Slavic languages, history, and culture. My current research focuses on Polish emigration to Brazil, sociocultural changes to various Slavic languages, and comparisons of languages within the Slavic family.

Paige Haynes

I graduated from Wake Forest University with a BA in Political Science and minors in International Studies and Spanish. After completing my Spanish requirements, I enrolled in Russian-language classes and became fascinated by the history of Russia and geopolitics of modern Eastern Europe. Upon graduation, I interned in the Economic Crimes Division at INTERPOL Washington and participated in the Young Leaders Program at the Heritage Foundation before becoming Research Coordinator for former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. I am currently pursuing my Master's at UNC in order to examine the inverse correlation between transnational crime and civil society in post-Soviet countries, specifically in relation to human trafficking and the political engagement of youth in the region.

**Leah Valtin-Erwin**

I hold a B.A. in East and Central European Studies from Hampshire College and the Five College Consortium in Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley. My undergraduate work focused on physical legacies of communism in the Eastern Balkan nations by exploring post-communist material culture and the emergence of a nostalgia industry in Romania and Bulgaria. In the past 3 years, I have worked as part of *Yiddishkayt's The Helix Project* exploring prewar Jewish life in Belarus, Eastern Poland and the Baltics, with Jagiellonian University in Kraków as a field study student, and with the U.S. Ukraine Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Michal Brzezicki

I completed my undergraduate studies in International Relations at North Carolina State University, with a minor in Russian Studies. I was born in Eastern Europe, have spent significant amounts of time there, and have always had a passion for the history and politics of the region. Just this summer, I interned at the Polish Foreign Ministry in Warsaw. My research interests include geopolitical conflicts, the process of democratization, and the future of Eastern European politics.



A SUMMER IN BISHKEK

By Ashley McDermott

My favorite sight in Bishkek isn't in any guidebook. It is a simple house in the district of Jal. It's a plain, old, two-story brick structure with a brand-new corrugated steel roof. On the side that faces the street, in the left upper corner, is a bright blue plate stating its number and the Kyrgyz street name "Akhunbaev Kochosu". In the upper right corner is a rusted metal sign, giving its address in Russian as "Oktyabr" street.

To me, the house is representative of Bishkek—old and new, Soviet and post-Soviet, Kyrgyz and Russian. The house also happens to be valuable data for my thesis on the reality of language policy and planning in post-Soviet Bishkek.

Bishkek is a city still transitioning. Its streets are filled with both old Soviet trolleybuses advertising fares in rubles and new Mercedes Sprinter vans working as marshrutkas (routed taxis). Many of the major streets have been renamed to Kyrgyz national names, but most refer to them by the old names, like "Sovetskaya." The downtown is lined with Turkish-owned luxury shops, but used books

sold by old men are strewn on the worn sidewalk in front of them. The architecture is an interesting mix of Soviet and "new" apartment buildings that are half-empty and have been under construction for the last 10 years.

I came to Bishkek for two reasons. The first was to study Russian. I've studied Russian for five years now, but Central Asia changed my perspective on the language. Bishkek introduced me to the other Russian-speaking population, the millions of people outside of Russia making Russian one of the most spoken languages in the world. Through my experience with Russian in Kyrgyzstan, my Russian education has been enriched by new literatures, new ideas, and new cultures.

The second reason I came to Bishkek was to conduct my first research abroad. I was overwhelmed, excited, and anxious to begin the process. Though my first interviews were awkward, through practice, the advice of my advisors, and the patience of my subjects, I adapted and learned to be a better researcher. It was fascinating to gather first-hand data, and every new



thing I learned was exhilarating. People welcomed my questions and happily volunteered for my research. I am lucky that Bishkek is a great place to do research.

Though Bishkek is rough around the edges—there are frequent power outages, no AC, and the sidewalks flood daily—I would return in a heartbeat. The minor inconveniences are worth witnessing such a fascinating place in transition and worth exposure to a different face of the Russian language.



RAKIA WOES & RELIGIOUS TOLERATION IN ALBANIA

By Mary Elizabeth Walters

I travelled to Albania and Kosovo on a National Security Education Program Boren Fellowship and a FLAS to learn Albanian and conduct research for my dissertation on the 1999 Kosovo Refugee crisis, a massive exodus into Albania and Macedonia of roughly 800,000 ethnic Albanians fleeing ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces in Kosovo. During that time, both Albania and Kosovo made headlines for high profiled judicial cases of fighters and imams with links to ISIS. *New York Times* journalist Carlotta Gall even described Kosovo as a “fertile ground for ISIS.” I went looking for this extremist land, but I found a region of religious tolerance that challenged the binary of Muslim and Christian.

Albanian nationalist Pashko Vasa wrote in 1880, “The religion of Albanians is Albania.” This phrase has become a point of pride for Albanians, whether they live in Albania, Kosovo, or another country. For Albanians, a shared language and culture is far more important than whether you go to mosque on Friday or church on Sunday, if you go at all.

Albanian Muslims in Kosovo and Albania practice a liberal, secular version of Islam. Men and women enjoy an easy relationship, and while ethnic Albanians undeniably have a very patriarchal society, this is a common point between Muslims and Christians. Muslim fathers support their daughters going to university, and even going to Europe or America for education and work. Albanians have a long-standing tradition of strong women. Men may think they lead the family, but it's often the mother of the family who holds it together.

Sallagrazdha is a small village in southern Kosovo near the border of Albania and has a mixed population of Albanian Muslims and Catholics. I asked around for any problems between Christians and Muslims either before or



Photos by Mary Elizabeth Walters.

after the events of 1999. The only grievance that the villagers could think of centered on Christmas Eve. Every year, Muslim men visit their Christmas neighbors to celebrate together. In Albanian culture, the host is obligated to provide refreshments for guests. When these guests are men, this means *rakia*, the local potent brandy. So, by the end of Christmas Eve night, after visiting seven or more families, these Muslim revelers feel wonderful. The grievance comes from how poorly they feel the next morning -- I've been assured the headaches are terrible. Sitting next to each other enjoying a *rakia*, a Muslim villager complains to his Christian friend, “Every year you have us drink so much!” After much laughter, the other villager replies, “But isn't it great that it is the Christians getting the Muslims drunk!”

This tale of Christmas Eve alcohol-induced woe helps to illuminate the relations shared among Muslim and Christian Albanians. Catholic and Muslim families share the same traditional dress, the same music, the same food. Traditions surrounding a birth, birthday, engagement, marriage, and death are the same. Elements of these major life markers may take place in a mosque or church, but the broader moments share common cultural elements.

In the end, the Kosovo and Albania I found is not a font of extremism, but a model of tolerance. Back in Sallagrazdha, a Christian villager reprimanded me for asking about the “relationship” between Muslims and Catholics. Pal argued, “It is impossible to ask about a relationship,” because it implies that there are two distinct communities. Instead, “We are one community, we are neighbors and friends. You can't speak of relationships when two communities don't exist.”



GRADUATING STUDENT PROFILE

GRIFFIN CREECH, B.A. IN HISTORY '16

Tell us about your undergraduate work at UNC, your honors project, your work on *Traces*, and your interest in Russia and Russian.

I became seriously fascinated with the field of Russian and Soviet History and, in particular, the idea that the experience of Soviet socialism could be explained through a lens other than the traditional notion of totalitarianism. Ever since, I have been fascinated by Russia's past and the ways in which individuals and institutions within and outside of the Soviet Union understood and related to Soviet socialism. This interest led me to study Russian language and to take advantage of UNC's generous Russian studies' course offerings, spanning literature, language, political science, and history. During my junior and senior years, I had the opportunity to research, write, defend, and present at two conferences my honors thesis, a history of American relations with tsarist and revolutionary Russia (1916-1921) as told through the story of Samuel N. Harper, America's premier academic expert on Russia at the time. During my time as an undergraduate, I also served as editor of *Traces: The UNC-Chapel Hill Journal of History*. This experience brought me into contact with much outstanding undergraduate scholarship and helped me to get a better handle on how scholarship is produced, edited, and disseminated. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to pursue Russian studies while an undergraduate at UNC. Thanks to outstanding history faculty including Donald Raleigh, Louise McReynolds, and Eren Tasar, and Eleonora Magomedova in the department of Germanic and Slavic languages, I came away from UNC with a thorough and full knowledge of Russia that will aid me greatly in the future.

What are you doing in Saratov?

I am spending this semester in Saratov, a Russian provincial city of 850,000 located about 500 miles south of

Moscow, where I am studying Russian. I chose Saratov purposefully in an effort to lessen my likelihood of coming into contact with English while in Russia. I live with a host family and practice my Russian on a daily basis, whether at the dinner table in the evenings, on the street, or during class time. Saratov makes the ideal location for bettering one's Russian since it has many of the cultural attractions of Russia's capital cities, yet is smaller, easier to navigate, and has fewer English-speaking inhabitants. By the end of this semester, I hope to be able to converse more fluidly in Russian and to be able to make my way through Russian texts efficiently.

What are your long-term career plans?

In the next few years, I hope to gain acceptance to a respected PhD program in Russian and Soviet history in the United States where I will continue pursuing my interest in understanding how a diverse array of domestic and international actors understood and reacted to the advent, progress, and eventual demise of Soviet socialism. In the longer term, I aspire to become a professor of Russian history at a small liberal arts college. My goal is to combine a passion for teaching with scholarly contributions to the field that continue to invigorate and push it in new directions.



Picture courtesy of Griffin Creech

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