

ASEEES NewsNet



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Call for Photos: Summer Research Photos

Steven Seegel took a tour of Ukraine's rich collections and bibliographical compilations of geography, cartography, & map-related documents. July 2023.

Cover Photo: Sarah Cameron, "Sunset over the Aral Sea." Kazakhstan, 2023. This image was submitted as part of our Summer Research Photo series.

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Decolonizing the Comparative Politics of Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia: A Review of the Undergraduate Curriculum

By Ela Rossmiller and Anaida Fahradyan

What would it mean to de-colonize Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies? It would mean creating opportunities for students to study a range of political systems, economies, histories, societies, and cultures in their own right. Russia is important, but knowledge of Russia cannot serve as a proxy for regional knowledge. Yes, the region has been shaped by legacies of Russian imperialism, Soviet occupation and control, and Cold War competition, but it has been shaped by other legacies as well. While many support efforts to decolonize academic disciplines, it is not clear how to do it.

To move the conversation forward, we conducted a pilot project to gather empirical data on the state of undergraduate education in comparative politics in the United States, focusing on the countries of interest to the Association of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. We focused on undergraduate education because an undergraduate degree is usually the last stop for students pursuing higher education as well as a prerequisite for advanced study. We focused on a specific academic discipline to scale the project to a manageable size, and we chose a discipline in which we specialize, namely, comparative politics. Whereas a solid undergraduate curriculum in comparative politics prepares students to engage the region productively in domains such as business, foreign policy, diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, and more, a weak undergraduate curriculum limits productive engagement and closes the door to advanced study.

Taking Stock of the Undergraduate Curriculum

We reviewed course offerings published online for the top fifty schools of international relations using the most

recent ranking published by *Foreign Policy Magazine* (2018). We limited our review to undergraduate courses in comparative politics focused on Central and Eastern Europe as well as Eurasia. We excluded graduate courses, courses in other disciplines, and thematic courses with no regional specificity. We also limited our review to the top fifty schools of international relations because we reasoned that these schools would offer the most robust curriculum in international studies, including comparative politics. As such, they represent the upper limit. We recognize that a full study of all colleges and universities would be necessary to justify broader claims about the general state of affairs when it comes to the undergraduate curriculum in comparative politics, so we refrain from making broad generalizations. The underlying premise and purpose is twofold. First, can the best-case scenario be made better? Second, will this pilot project elicit interest in a full-scale study?

Our research shows that courses in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies have a strong presence at the top 50 schools, but they are not ubiquitous. While the majority (72%) of top IR schools offer at least one course on European politics, less than half (48%) offer a course covering the former Soviet Union, post-Soviet states, or Russia and Eurasia, while about a third (36%) offer a course in Central and East European politics as compared to Western Europe (24%). In terms of single-country courses, Russia has the highest coverage (36%), followed by Bosnia (2%), the former Yugoslavia (2%), and Ukraine (2%). No other countries received such exclusive attention. These statistics suggest that area studies related to the regions of interest to ASEEES continue to be a significant area of focus in the U.S., with a substantial number of top schools offering courses focused on these regions, but there remains room for improvement.

Even among top schools, there is no consensus on regional boundaries or nomenclature. For example, is the “eastern” frontier of Europe the borders of the European Union or further east? Some courses in European politics focus only on Western Europe while others focus on the European Union, and still others include Russia. There are also courses on Eastern Europe that include Russia, courses on the former Soviet Union or post-Soviet states, and courses on Russia and Eurasia.

Even among top schools, some do not offer any courses on comparative politics in the region, or offer only partial coverage. For example, a school might offer courses in Western Europe and Russia, but not Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Hiring practices reflect this patchy approach to the region. In 2022, the [American Political Science Association’s job board](#) posted positions for comparative political scientists with regional expertise in Western Europe, Russia, or Post-Soviet Eurasia, as though Central and Eastern Europe had fallen into a sink hole.

Strategies for Strengthening Area Studies in the Undergraduate Curriculum

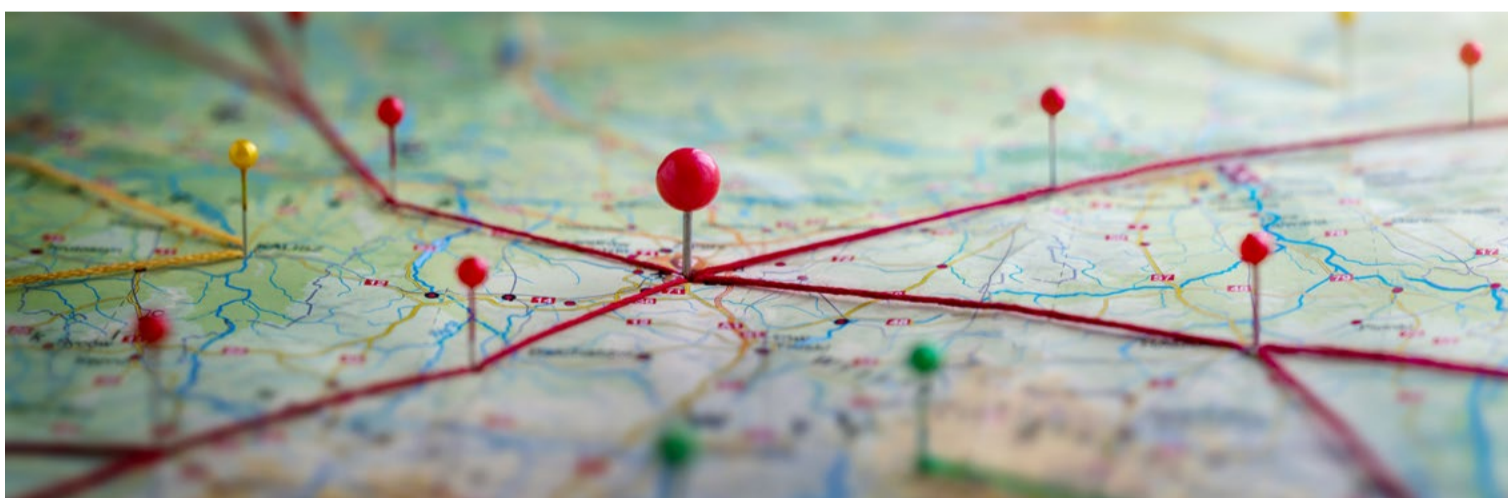
Offering regional and single-country courses beyond the more commonly studied countries would better reflect the diversity of the region. It would also diversify the curriculum, providing students with a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the region. This would enable students to gain knowledge about the unique histories, cultures, and political systems of various countries, thereby deepening their understanding of the region as a whole. Furthermore, this approach would help institutions meet the increasing demand from students to learn about diverse cultures and regions, thus making them more attractive to prospective students.

Unfortunately, most political science departments are resource-poor. Many colleges and universities never recovered from the 2008 financial crisis before the COVID-19 pandemic knocked them into a tailspin. Now the [looming demographic cliff](#) threatens to drive some schools into extinction. Amidst budget cuts, staffing shortages, hiring freezes, stagnant salaries, overwork, and exhaustion, few can garner the audacity to propose new tenure lines, courses, or initiatives. Fortunately, there are some low-cost or even cost-neutral ways to mainstream the study of

Central, East European, and Eurasian countries into existing programs by making simple, incremental adjustments.

1. Offer courses in European politics. Schools that only offer a course in either Western or Eastern European politics could consider expanding and re-tooling the course to cover all of Europe. Along these lines, the American Political Science Association’s job board might consider adding a category for Europe. The current options – Western Europe and post-communist Europe – risk marginalizing scholars on Central Europe, the Baltics, and the Balkans whose research does not focus narrowly on post-communism.

2. Integrate regional studies into survey courses in comparative politics. Nationwide, [79.6% of four-year colleges and universities offer an introductory course in comparative politics](#). Such courses can be adapted to include a reading, guest lecture, or other instructional materials covering under-represented regions. While some introductory textbooks devote attention to regional issues such as communism and post-communism (see Patrick O’Neil’s *Essentials of Comparative Politics* and its companion reader *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*), others do not (see J. Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood’s *Comparative Politics*). Fortunately, instructors can supplement otherwise excellent introductory textbooks with readings from textbooks focused on regional politics such as *Central & East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy* edited by Sharon L. Wolchik and Jane Leftwich Curry, *Central and East European Politics: Changes and Challenges* edited by Zsuzsa Csergő, Daina S. Eglitis



& Paula M. Pickering, and *Understanding Central Europe*, edited by Marcin Moskalewicz and Wojciech Przybylski. Aside from edited volumes, there are scores of excellent journal articles demonstrating the concepts and methods of comparative politics. For example, a lesson on parties and elections could include Alina Polyakova’s article, “The Backward East? Explaining Differences in Support for Radical Right Parties in Western and Eastern Europe.”

These are but a few examples illustrating possibilities for decentering Russia.

3. Encourage interdisciplinary approaches to regional studies. The regions of interest to ASEEES present complex issues that demand interdisciplinary solutions. Senior leadership can encourage faculty and students to take an interdisciplinary approach in studying these regions through research collaborations, interdisciplinary programs, cross-listed and team-taught courses, and guest speakers. Departments may be able to pull resources to support such initiatives, whether in the form of research grants, professional development funds, monetary awards, stipends for guest speakers, and more. Interdisciplinary initiatives can provide opportunities for demonstrating how specific cases illustrate, extend, or challenge abstract theories. For example, a comparative political scientist who uses large-N statistical analysis to analyze ethnic conflict could pair up with a historian versed in specific cases. Their collaboration could highlight the benefits of a mixed-method approach or, alternately, reveal the hidden biases of abstract theories developed within certain paradigms in need of decolonization.

4. Encourage study abroad and other forms of international education. Study abroad programs took a hit during the pandemic, but now they're bouncing back – and for good reason. Study abroad programs allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the region's cultures, languages, and societies through first-hand experience. By facilitating study abroad to less commonly visited countries in the former Eastern Bloc, students will have



direct contact with perspectives that challenge hegemonic narratives. Study abroad programs can take many forms involving different levels of institutional investment. If a school cannot afford to develop its own programs, it can use reputable third-party providers or cultivate partnerships with host institutions. Funding and resources to support students may come through many sources – not only school-based

scholarships, but also national scholarships such as the Critical Language Scholarship, NSEP, and Gilman, and third-party providers. For example, IES offers scholarships to students who study abroad through its programs. More recently, schools have begun offering virtual learning experiences such as team-taught classes bringing together faculty and students from different countries into a common virtual learning space in order to increase access

to international education for students who cannot go abroad.

5. Invest in professional development. Senior leadership in higher education could enhance offerings in regions of interest to ASEEES by investing in faculty expertise and resources. This could include hiring more faculty with regional expertise, providing funding and resources for research and conferences, and investing in digital resources such as online research databases, digital libraries, and online courses and webinars so that faculty and students have access to the latest developments, research, and news related to these regions. By supporting faculty whose research and teaching focuses on understudied areas, we enable them to expose students to the richness of the region and a diversity of viewpoints, including those previously silenced.

6. Collaborate with partners. Senior leadership can also collaborate with domestic and international partners to expand coverage. This could involve developing partnerships with universities, research institutions, NGOs, businesses, and community organizations in Europe, Eurasia, and other US institutions with a focus on these regions. For example, the organization Scholars at Risk (SAR) connects displaced scholars with host institutions in North America. Currently, SAR is seeking to place scholars from Belarus, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine.

Through collaboration and partnerships, institutions can leverage their resources and expertise to offer comprehensive and diverse coverage of area studies. In addition, senior leadership can foster collaboration with local communities in these regions to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities and to ensure that the education and research provided are relevant and responsive to the needs of the local communities. Such partnerships can also give back to the local communities and contribute to the overall mission of ASEEES.

7. Offer more courses in Slavic, East Asian, and Eurasian studies. Even with the low-cost options mentioned above, we must find a way to fund faculty to teach area studies courses at more schools. With a war waging on NATO's doorstep, it is unconscionable that less than half of America's top IR schools offer any courses on the comparative politics of post-Soviet states. Even fewer schools offer courses on the South Caucasus, Central Asia, the Balkans, or the Baltics. One option might be to offer special topics courses taught by visiting scholars recruited through Scholars at Risk. Visiting scholars could breathe new life into the curriculum while helping schools achieve institutional goals on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Building Momentum

The results of our pilot project may not be representative of the broader landscape of area studies in undergraduate education at all colleges and universities nationwide since it focuses on the top 50 IR schools. However, efforts are underway to gain a more comprehensive picture. In December 2022, Thomas Pepinsky (Cornell University), Jordan Gans-Morse (Northwestern University), and Daniel Gingerich (University of Virginia) launched a survey on political science and area studies to the membership of the American Political Science Association (APSA). The results will shed light on the role of geographic specialization and regional expertise in political science. This information could guide educational policy in political science departments across the United States as well as initiatives of professional associations such as the Association of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, including advocacy for a more robust curriculum in area studies. In the meantime, we hope this brief essay will spark reflection, conversation, brainstorming, and problem-solving.



***Ela Rossmiller** is an Assistant Professor of Global Studies at Wilson College, where she teaches courses in comparative politics, international relations, and global studies. Previously, she was a Title VIII CEE Research Fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington, D.C. where she researched Polish foreign policy priorities. She was also a Visiting Scholar at the University of Warsaw's Center for Research on Social*

Memory in Warsaw, Poland, where she researched the politics of memory surrounding reparations for martial law. She received a Ph.D. with Honors in International Relations from American University in Washington, D.C.



***Anaida Fahradyan** has a BA in History/Political Science and Business Management, minoring in Spanish. She graduated summa cum laude with her Honors thesis on the experiences of Armenian refugees of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War of 2020. Fahradyan hails from Armenia and is the youngest daughter of Armen and Anna Fahradyan. She has been inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, Pi*

Gamma Mu, and Omicron Delta Kappa as the Wilson College circle president. Her academic accomplishments have earned her accolades such as the Marel Harlow Cheng Memorial Prize in International Relations and the Wilson College Student Research Day Fund of 2022.

ASEEES Board Elections

Ballots due September 1

View candidate bios and voting details [HERE](#). Paper ballots can be requested by emailing aseees@pitt.edu.

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ASEEES welcomes Leah Valtin-Erwin



ASEEES is delighted to announce that Leah Valtin-Erwin has joined the ASEEES staff as Grants & Programs Coordinator and *NewsNet* Editor. Leah recently received a PhD in Eastern European History from Indiana University Bloomington. Prior to joining the ASEEES staff, she served as editor of the Society for Romanian Studies' semi-annual newsletter and as graduate assistant for the Polish Studies Center at Indiana University Bloomington.

[Contact Leah](#) for information about grants, webinars and other programs, or to submit article pitches for *NewsNet*.

Contribute to *NewsNet*!

NewsNet [invites](#) ASEEES members—including graduate students—to submit pitches for cover articles. *NewsNet* publishes public-facing original essays of 2,500-3,000 words on contemporary issues or matters of broad professional interest to the Association's membership. We especially encourage submissions on underrepresented areas of scholarship and pedagogy as well as reflections on the (possible) future(s) of the SEEES field. Please note that *NewsNet* is not a venue for extensive research essays and cover articles should be written in a conversational style. To read previous cover articles, see the [NewsNet archive](#). If you are interested in contributing to *NewsNet*, please send abstracts of no more than 300 words, including ideas for visual illustrations, to newsnet@pitt.edu.

**First Book
SUBVENTION**

ASEEES has dedicated \$10,000 per year for subvention of individually authored first books. Multiple awards will be made, with funds paid directly to the press.

Deadline: Sept 1, 2023
Apply Online

ASEEES Solidarity Mutual Aid Grants

Developments in recent years have highlighted the financial precarity confronted by many of our colleagues in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. For contingently-employed graduate students and faculty instructors in the SEEES field, the impacts of institutional austerity, rising living costs and other economic factors are particularly acute, warranting active intervention.

To support contingent faculty and graduate student members based in the US with urgent financial need, ASEEES has established a small mutual aid grant program in collaboration with the [Working Group for Solidarity in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies](#), an ASEEES affiliate organization.

To apply for financial assistance, please complete the [online application](#), available on the [ASEEES website](#), by **September 1**. Applicants will be eligible to apply for up to \$250, with grants disbursed on a first-come, first-served basis for each application round. Applicants may receive the mutual aid grant once.

Help us sustain this program. [Donate to the Mutual Aid Fund here](#).

55th Annual ASEEES Convention

Nov. 30 - Dec. 3, 2023 - Philadelphia, PA

Oct. 19 - 20, 2023 - Virtual

As ASEEES celebrates its 75th anniversary, the 2023 Convention promises to be a lively and stimulating meeting, with over 670 sessions and ancillary events, including 420 panels, 192 roundtables, and 5 film screenings.



REGISTER TODAY

Early Bird Rates end August 11

All presenters (panelists, discussants, roundtable members, and session chairs) **MUST** [become members](#) and [register](#).

Early Bird Pre-Registration Rates end August 11.

Pre-Registration closes on **October 17** for both the virtual and in-person conventions. There is no late registration for the virtual convention.

Diversity & Inclusion Travel Grant

DEADLINE: August 31

For BA, MA, and PhD students from all backgrounds studying in the humanities or social sciences. Apply [here](#).

Applicants need not be listed as participants in the convention program to apply.

[Donate](#) to the Convention Registration and Travel Grants Funds

[Sponsors, Exhibit, and Advertising Opportunities are available](#)

Philadelphia, PA

Reserve your room at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown



[Book a Room](#) at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown at the [ASEEES discounted room rate](#) until November 7.

Use the [roomshare locator](#) to contact ASEEES members about sharing a room.



Peruse the [Insider's Guide to Philadelphia](#) by Laurie Bernstein, Professor Emerita of History at Rutgers University - Camden

Online Program

View the online program for the most up-to-date schedule

[Create your own personal schedule](#) for the convention (does not sync with ASEEES app).

Session Organizers can request changes to their session using the [Change Request Form](#).

[#ASEEES23](#)

Please review the [Code of Conduct](#).

That Lingering Feeling of Unstoppability: Protest, Media, and Violence in Serbia

By Ljubiša Matić



5th Serbia Against Violence protest, June 3, 2023, Beogradska Street, Belgrade. Photo by Marko Drobnjakovic

If one of the most devastating tragedies that can befall a society is a school shooting, a still more shattering one would be an attack in which the shooter is a child himself, a 13-year-old schoolboy, allegedly the youngest mass murderer in the history of mankind. But what, then, happens if the very next day, as ill-luck would have it—in a spree killing which can be readily interpreted as an archetypal copycat crime—a 21-year-old young man with a minor criminal record (never convicted) whose idols are reality TV stars, and whose father is a military man with an arsenal of weapons at home, guns down a dozen of his townsmen, mostly his peers? A society in this situation, and particularly one which has never before experienced school shootings, must find a way to collect itself in the aftermath of a social disaster such as these two which struck Serbia in early May 2023 and in which 19 people, half of them children, lost their lives.

These events shook and thoroughly sobered those Serbians who self-identify as civically responsible. The back-to-back tragedies immediately triggered the protests known as “Serbia Against Violence” – at the moment I am writing this, they are held once a week, most recently on July 1st for the ninth time. A belief that “things” need to stop has been spreading as a catch phrase among these individuals, who soon began taking to the streets and blocking the roads of the Serbian capital. “Everything has to stop,” one can hear the citizens of Belgrade and, soon thereafter, of Novi Sad, Niš, and Kragujevac, saying to each other – “we can no longer afford to be overwhelmed and think that nothing can be done and thus it isn’t worth trying. ‘This’ must stop, that is to say, the causes of what we have lived through must be precisely identified and

we must start building our society on new foundations.” Throughout these protests, despite the indisputable change in the larger societal atmosphere they brought, one question lingers: can opposition to violence be the catalyst to join the forces of society into a common political struggle?

Taking place on Friday or Saturday evenings, each protest in Belgrade begins with a piano piece written by one of the elementary school massacre victims, 14-year-old Andrija Čikić. It is played on loudspeakers as citizens, solemnly but serenely, gather in front of the House of the National Assembly before being addressed by a small number of speakers, public figures and ordinary citizens alike. With thoroughfares in the heart of the city thus blocked, the crowd embarks on a two-to-three-hour walk to the site of one of the public entities implicated in the protest demands (the Government of Serbia, the seat of the

President of Serbia, or the Radio Television of Serbia). Most recently, the demonstrators ended their march on the Gazela Bridge that connects the old part of the city with New Belgrade, thus obstructing traffic on the international highway linking Budapest and Thessaloniki. Flowers initially used to quietly commemorate the victims have lately been replaced by spirited placard slogans, loud whistles, and sarcastic dolls depicting the ruling party politicians in prison uniforms. Although the vast majority of protest participants seem to harbor pro-Western sentiments and their list of demands is in line with the norms of the European Union, EU flags are not prominently displayed so as not to alienate protesters not in favor of Serbia's accession to the EU. So far, there have been no significant incidents and, apart from downtown areas being clogged up for three hours once a week, daily life in Belgrade and other cities has not been disrupted. (A heavier roadblocking across Serbia has, however, been announced for the coming rallies.) If one were to generalize on the protests' demographics, one would observe a prevalence of educated middle class citizens spanning different generations – from entire families with small children to senior citizens. The attendance of students is increasingly noticeable and, given the role this segment of the population had in the overthrow of ex-President Slobodan Milošević in 2000, may be crucial for the outcome of the protests.

Can opposition to violence be the catalyst to join the forces of society into a common political struggle?

Citizens of Serbia, as many would attest, suffer not from a lack of information, but from the barrage of bad news with which they are bombarded, at times strategically, on a daily basis. Persistent financial and other daily hardships coupled with an international environment which the majority of Serbia's population consider unjust – not least the European Union's double standards enforced against their nation – have left many disheartened and disengaged from social activism. However, now it seems a significant part of the population has finally come to a consensus about what bodies are most responsible for the social malaise they now find themselves in the throes of: namely, Radio Television of Serbia (the country's public broadcaster), the four television channels with national coverage, the print tabloids which promote violent content and breach journalism ethics by targeting political dissidents, the state-funded but nominally independent regulatory body called



7th Serbia Against Violence protest, June 17, 2023, Gazela Bridge, Belgrade. Photo by Vesna Andjić, RFERL

the Authority for Electronic Media, and Serbia's Security Intelligence Agency and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These latter two organizations are widely deemed prone to selective enforcement, corruption, and other catastrophic oversights, such as permitting minors at shooting ranges or ineffectively prosecuting perpetrators and persons of interest. It is the resignations of those at the helm of these institutions that those protesting demand most ardently.

How might we understand the motivations of these protests? Despite the fact that the so-called civic opposition parties – namely Narodna stranka ([People's Party](#)), Stranka slobode i pravde ([Party of Freedom and Justice](#)), Ne davimo Beograd ([Do not let Belgrade drown](#)), Moramo Zajedno ([We Must Together](#)), Ekološki ustanak ([Ecological Uprising](#)), and Demokratska stranka ([Democratic Party](#)) – are considered the formal organizers of the mass gatherings, the dissent on display seems to be a much broader and more organic reaction of a community that, immediately following the two related massacres, sought to identify their causes. This is a supra-party, perhaps even a supra-political, movement, and none of the opposition leaders has so far given a speech or tried to politically capitalize on the uprising. According to most demonstrators, the protests are a matter of the survival of their society; as they understand it, "evil has taken root for more than ten years now and will not be eradicated overnight." In support of the emerging consensus, a piece of information publicly disclosed in recent days revealed, to the dismay and disbelief of many, that Serbia is, along with the United States and Yemen, among the three countries in the world with the highest number of firearms per capita among the civilian population. (This prevalence of weapons, both legally and unlawfully acquired, is in large part a remnant from the civil wars fought in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and inadequate subsequent attention from the regulatory authorities.)

Though not yet the longest, “Serbia Against Violence” is the country’s largest anti-government demonstration since the October 5 “revolution” which overthrew Milošević in 2000. To understand these events, we might reflect upon three other recent and interconnected civil disobedience movements that had helped civic ideas simmer prior to this new outburst. Beginning in late 2018, the so-called “1 of 5 million” protests demanded press freedom as well as free and fair elections. It became one of the longest-running anti-government rallies in Europe before being suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. Subsequently, in the summer of that year, a series of riots alleging the government’s poor handling of the COVID-19 crisis forced the authorities to cancel the planned reintroduction of the curfew. Lastly, between September 2021 and February 2022, environmental protests compelled the Serbian legislature to repeal an expropriation law and postponed, until further notice, the Anglo-Australian corporation Rio Tinto’s operations in western Serbia where, having struck a deal with the government, it intended to exploit one of the world’s largest lithium deposits. For the most part peaceful, these protests occasionally included roadblocking, which subsequently caused occasional violent clashes with pro-government supporters and police forces.

That “Serbia Against Violence” has placed a particular genre of television–reality TV–at the top of the political agenda seems unexpected on the face of it. On second thought, however, the abolition of reality TV shows as one of the protestors’ most adamant demands is not surprising at all: this genre of television programming has not only been wholeheartedly supported by the state authorities over the last decade but has also helped the television stations with national coverage reap substantial benefits from violence and obscenity. For six consecutive seasons now, the most popular reality competition TV show (“Zadruga”, or “the Cooperative”) has broadcast on one of the national



Belgrade. Photo by Ljubiša Matić



“Something is rotten in the state of Serbia,”
Belgrade. Photo by Ljubiša Matić

channels for over nine hours a day. Its YouTube channel, surpassing 2 million followers (roughly one third of Serbia’s population), has made 145,000 videos widely accessible, the most watched of which are those which show overt violence. By contrast, no independent or opposition media has been awarded a national broadcasting license by the Serbian media watchdog committee: Serbia is ranked 91st out of 180 countries in the [2023 Press Freedom Index report](#) compiled by Reporters Without Borders.

As for the government itself, its immediate, knee jerk reaction after the shootings was to claim that “the system did not fail.” Underlying such argumentation was a refusal to identify any responsible individual or, for that matter, claim any responsibility whatsoever. Claiming that nowhere in the world does the opposition build its activity on tragic events that cannot even be predicted, let alone prevented, the government attempts to make the protests pointless. It accuses the organizers of a “color revolution” instigated by foreign services, in a well-known strategy employing established ideological matrices to further fuel the rift between pro-Russian and pro-Western (that is, pro-EU) factions in Serbian society. What’s more, a few weeks after the first protest, the party in power, the Serbian Progressive Party, organized a counter-rally called “Serbia of Hope,” in which—following the example of Milošević’s administration, which repeatedly attempted to outdo its opposition by staging gatherings larger than its opponents’—groups of people living outside the capital, reportedly cajoled into attendance by material rewards or even coerced through a highly developed network of entrenched participatory, were

bused to Belgrade to feign public and heavily mediatized loyalty to the head of state, President Aleksandar Vučić. The attendants of this counter-rally seem for the most part to be motivated by regime propaganda. Although (or precisely because) it seems that the entire media machinery harnessed to disavow the original civic protests is no longer effective, the President keeps pronouncing the creation of a new “all-Serbian” political movement with most likely, the goal of “rebranding” his political ideas to secure superficial political victories.

Vučić has also recently begun to assert that, in order to get out of the current impasse, new elections must be called at all levels (the previous ones were held only a year ago). As has been true throughout the contemporary history of Serbia, however, unequal electoral conditions, in conjunction with unlawfully unbalanced media coverage, remain an insurmountable burden that predetermines the outcomes of elections. The lack of transparency when it comes to party and campaign financing blurs distinctions between party and state activities. In addition to that, what too frequently looms over the political life of the country, as a potentially even more dangerous threat to democratic institutions, is Serbia’s long history of collectivism, frequently embodied in a strongly expressed need for a leader personified in one individual. Troubled by a growing concern that President Vučić has concentrated power under his thumb at the expense of the parliament, the unanimous stance of the civic opposition, at the moment, is to refuse to negotiate with him on anything, not even elections, unless the demands of the protests are first met. In a sense, the current state of the heightened antagonism is, thus, a stalemate, because calling elections would be a sure way to keep the crowds on the streets.

It is reasonable to expect that in a few weeks, due to summer vacations, the number of people attending protests will decrease. It is also very hard to believe that President Vučić, who ultimately still holds all the cards, would lose the next election. But it is nonetheless quite certain that these protests expose his reign as severely eroded and likely incapable of recovering to its previous instantiations. A sort of nervousness can be felt on the side of the government; it found itself in an unexpectedly subordinate position to *have* to call the shots through populist measures. Many times over the last decade, opposition circles have argued that this or that event is “the beginning of the strongman’s end;” still, everything that has happened over the past two months, especially the government’s reactions to these two catastrophic massacres, appears to represent a tipping point after which a downfall so eagerly awaited by many seems more plausible.

At the heart of “Serbia Against Violence” lies not only a confrontation with physical violence, committed with or without weapons, but violence writ large. To a certain degree, the ruling party’s identity has been built on narratives about real and fictitious “enemies.” Since Vučić’s government relies heavily on media to secure its political purchase, it comes as no surprise that maintaining such an identity, as a last resort, requires rendering the media discourse still more vituperative. After watching Serbian television, one is hard-pressed not to view opposition TV channels as political forces stronger than opposition parties themselves. To add insult to injury, a violence of its own kind is the President’s use of the “national” media for his countless addresses to the nation – such as helicopter money announcements wherein, at times of heightened social crises, he promises raises or bonuses to segments of his constituency such as the youth, retirees, schoolteachers or health professionals – which blatantly demonstrate the degree to which he violates his constitutional prerogatives. What’s new, nonetheless, is a critical mass of the Serbian population whom the two mass murders seem to have agitated to the point of identifying a link between media and the top-down generation of violence. This is why the protests underway have found such a strong impulse in the somewhat quixotic attack on the state media.

The protesters believe that it is via a rhetoric of discord and violence in all realms of social life, instead of a culture of public dialogue and debate, that the Vučić governments have caused a plethora of social issues. The unstoppable energy of freedom has awakened, week after week bringing together a growing number of citizens united, despite differing political views and ideologies, through their commitment to anti-violence. Again, as protesters march, the energy giving shape through their stride faces a paradoxical question: in the absence of a viable electoral outlet and without some kind of radicalization, how are we, the protesters, to prevent the momentum from simply fizzling out? Or, if the demands are not met, how to radicalize a protest against violence without letting it become violent itself?



Ljubiša Matić is an independent theatre scholar and stage director hailing from Belgrade, Serbia. He received an MFA degree in Theatre Directing from the University of Arts in Belgrade and a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies from Stanford University. Most recently, he has taught theatre courses at the University of North Dakota and University of Maine.

ASEEES is grateful to Djordje Popović (UC Berkeley) and Branislav Jakovljević (Stanford U) for their contributions to this feature.

NEW FROM SLAVICA PUBLISHERS

Linda Mëniku and Héctor Campos. *Advancing in Albanian*, textbook 451 p., workbook 324 p. (978-089357-518-2, set), \$94.95.

The authors' introductory textbook of Albanian (*Discovering Albanian 1*, U. of Wisconsin Press, 2011) received the AATSEEL award for best annual contribution to language pedagogy. Now Slavica presents their intermediate-advanced textbook, *Advancing in Albanian*, to provide enhanced access for students to one of the major, but less commonly taught European languages. Albanian has been on track to join the EU since 2014, and there are 5 million speakers of this language. The textbook and accompanying workbook transition from English to Albanian as the language of instruction over the course of the year, and are supported by substantial online downloadable

audio files, making it more feasible to achieve proficiency in Albanian without extensive in-country experience.

Jan Kochanowski. *Occasional Poems*, trans. Michael J. Mikoś, with a foreword by Roman Krzywy, xxiv + 97 p. (ISBN 978-089357-519-9), \$22.95.

Occasional Poems, the third in this series of Jan Kochanowski's works, contains seven occasional poems rendered into English for the first time. They are: *On the Death of Jan Tarnowski, Memorial, Epithalamium, Incursion into Muscovy, Concord, Satyr, and Banner or the Prussian Homage*. They are presented here in thematic order; the first two are elegies, the next two celebrate the wedding of a powerful magnate and his victorious military campaign, while the last three deal with important political and religious issues in 16th-century Poland.



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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.

Ivan Janković. *Kata Nesiba: The Authentic and Illustrated History of a Belgrade Whore and Her Struggles for Her Constitutional Rights, 1830–1851*, illus. Veljko Mihajlović, trans. Henry R. Cooper, Jr., xiv + 115 p. (ISBN 978-089357-516-8), \$19.95.

The 19th century in Serbia began with two uprisings against an Ottoman overlordship that had oppressed not only the Serbs, but all of Southeastern Europe for almost 400 years. Fired by memories of their medieval empire and determined to restore Serbia as a Christian state with European-style institutions, Serbia's two princely families, the Karađorđevićs and the Obrenovićs, vied with one another to modernize the country and eventually, in 1878, to achieve its full independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Kata Nesiba tells in vivid detail a major portion of the story of Serbia's emancipation and modernization. Based on extensive research in Serbian archives, the author and

illustrator uncover the tumultuous life of Kata, a Belgrade sex worker, as she lives and works in mid-century Serbia. They adduce numerous side stories, as well, to depict the sexual mores of the country at that time, not just of the "whores and harlots of Belgrade," but also of the cross-dressing tavern entertainers, the LGBT population, political figures both small and great—Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, the "Father of Serbian Literacy" among them—and the ever-diminishing power of the Turks in Serbia's political, economic, and social life. From dusty archives Kata Nesiba brings to life the authentic stories of the men and women who experienced some of the most tumultuous times in Serbia's long and fraught history. And, as the author and illustrator delight in pointing out, so much of what happened then is happening again, in a Serbia once again independent.



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Close Quarters

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, PDF). Contact our business manager at slavica@indiana.com for all questions regarding subscriptions and eligibility for discounts.

2023 ASEEES Distinguished Contributions to Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Award Winner

Lynne Viola, University of Toronto



The 2023 ASEEES Distinguished Contributions Award is presented to Dr. Lynne Viola, University Professor Emerita of History at the University of Toronto. A distinguished historian, generous mentor of graduate students, junior scholars, and peers, and a tireless contributor to academic networks and institutions in Canada, the United States, Eastern Europe, and Russia, Dr. Viola exemplifies the spirit of the ASEEES Distinguished Contributions Award in every possible way. She is an extraordinarily creative historian and her numerous monographs, edited volumes, document collections, and articles have reshaped our understanding of Stalinism and the history of the pivotal decade of the 1930s in the Soviet Union. Dr. Viola's deep and sustained research into the infinite complexity of human landscapes in the rural Soviet Union has set a new standard for scholarship in Soviet history. It is to Dr. Viola's credit that she has approached the history of the peasants in the Soviet Union from

three distinct perspectives: as supporters of the Soviet regime who participated in collectivization from above; as those who resisted Stalinism with every tool in their meager possession; and finally, as victims and guards in remote gulag settlements. Her significant body of work includes *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Peasant Culture of Resistance* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), and *Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2017). Dr. Viola was a key member of the "Stalin Era Research in the Archives Project" and has collaborated with numerous archivists and scholars in Russia and Eastern Europe to declassify archival holdings and publish an extraordinary trove of Soviet archival documents from the 1930s—nineteen volumes of documents and essays, to be precise.

Dr. Viola is also known for her outstanding mentoring of students and colleagues, including scholars from Russia and Eastern Europe. She has supervised numerous MA and PhD theses in subjects as varied as the history of Soviet peasantry, the role of religious institutions during World War II, and Bolshevik attitudes and policies towards homosexuality. According to a former student, "her graduate seminars were models of rigorous, critical scholarship, where the conversation about the core historiographical questions in Soviet studies, and controversies of the moment, demanded that students quickly adapt to a pacy reading schedule and close attention to sources, methodologies, and interpretations." Finally, Dr. Viola has served with distinction on the editorial boards of numerous scholarly journals, made significant contributions to research institutions and professional organizations in Canada, the United States, Russia, and Europe; and made valuable contributions as a public commentator and intellectual. ASEEES is proud to honor Dr. Viola's extraordinary achievements.

2023 ASEEES Volunteer Opportunities

Our association's greatest asset is the dedication of our members. ASEEES is currently recruiting [volunteers to serve on committees](#) beginning in 2024. The ASEEES President and Vice President use the volunteer list to nominate the committee roster for the following year, which the Board must approve. Please keep in mind that each committee usually has one open position in a given year.

ASEEES Committees

There are 23 [ASEEES committees](#) to choose from. This includes both standing board committees and prize committees. Each committee will be able to provide more specifics about volunteer duties and duration.

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 Communications Advisory Committee
 Committee on Academic Freedom and Advocacy
 Committee on Mentoring
 Committee for the Advocacy of Diversity & Inclusion
 Committee for Careers Beyond Academia
 Committee on Environmental Sustainability

Prize & Grant Committees

ASEEES Distinguished Contributions Prize Committee
 Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize Committee
 USC Book Prize in Literary & Cultural Studies Prize Committee

Reginald Zelnik Book Prize Committee
 Davis Center Book Prize in Political & Social Studies Prize Committee
 Marshall D. Shulman Book Prize Committee
 Ed A Hewett Book Prize Committee
 Barbara Jelavich Book Prize Committee
 Kulczycki Book Prize in Polish Studies Committee
 W. Bruce Lincoln Book Prize Committee
 Omeljan Pritsak Book Prize Committee
 Beth Holmgren Graduate Student Essay Prize Committee
 Tucker-Cohen Dissertation Prize Committee
 Dissertation Grant Committee
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 First Book Subvention Committee

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2023 Dissertation Research and Summer Writing Grant Recipients

Dissertation Research Grant Recipients



Sandra Grudić, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University

“Neighborliness and Neighborhood Violence in Bosanski Novi”

The microhistorical study, “Neighborliness and Neighborhood Violence in Bosanski Novi” explores how, why, and to what extent formerly amicable neighborly relations between Bosnians of different ethnoreligious backgrounds turned violent during the war in Bosanski Novi / Novi Grad, a small border town in northwestern Bosnia. While its population was evenly split between Serbs and non-Serbs (mostly Muslims and some Croats) before the war, by the war’s end in 1995 most local non-Serbs were expelled, and some were murdered. The process of ethnic homogenization in Bosanski Novi / Novi Grad resulted in the elimination and transformation of many interethnic social relations, including that of neighborliness. However, as this study aims to show, the relations between neighbors in Bosanski Novi / Novi Grad were complex, multi-layered, and multi-directional; some Serbs perpetrated violence against their neighbors, others dismissed the ethnic fervor and continued socializing, helping, and risking their lives for their non-Serb neighbors, and still others engaged in a variety of these behaviors, at times simultaneously.

Although collective violence is group-based, the commission of violent acts during episodes of neighborhood violence plays out on the interpersonal level. This study investigates the multifaceted motives for perpetration of violence during the Bosnian war and zeroes in on the role of social ties and interpersonal relations between neighbors in the escalation and de-escalation of local, neighborhood violence in Bosanski Novi / Novi Grad. My exploration of how intimate relations between neighbors often resulted in the constant negotiation of personal identity suggests that ethnic identities, even during ethnic conflicts, do not necessarily become essentialized. Rather, as I will argue, the strength of interpersonal relations between neighbors can both strengthen and weaken the potential for violence between them.



Alexander Langstaff, History, New York University

“Constructing Public Opinion: Polling and Democracy in Postwar East Central Europe”

My dissertation traces the forgotten emergence of public opinion polling under state socialism and its surprising persistence. I tell a story about the politically promiscuous work of pollsters in Prague, Warsaw, and East Berlin alongside the advent of ‘polling mania’ in popular culture and everyday life. Broadly, I hope to offer an alternative account of state socialism by focusing on how the citizen and consumer were recast as political figures by the new postwar social sciences.



Zinaida Osipova, History, Columbia University (Maya K. Peterson Research Grant in Environmental Studies)

“Soviet Nitrogen: An International History of Dzerzhinsk’s Chemical Industry, 1915-1941”

My dissertation places the development of Dzerzhinsk city and its nitrogen industry within the international context of the interwar years. It brings together a local story of Soviet industrialization and the worldwide adoption of new chemical technologies. It analyzes the political, social, economic, and environmental sides of the emergence of a new chemical center of the country, beginning the story with the upheavals of World War I that led to the expansion of nitrogen technologies in Europe and establishment of two chemical factories in the place that would be consolidated as Dzerzhinsk city in 1930 by the Bolsheviks. By tracing the way that Soviet chemists and politicians envisioned and developed the Dzerzhinsk factories in close technical and trade collaboration with Italian and German companies, the dissertation examines Dzerzhinsk as part of the European technological pursuit story. My dissertation pays close attention to the changing built and natural environment of the Dzerzhinsk area, seeking to understand how the emerging chemical factories changed the geographic world around them and the way people understood the relationship between industry and the environment at the time.



Zora Piskačová, History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“Torn Towns: Municipal Administrators between the Local and the National in Cieszyn and Český Těšín, 1919-1938”

My dissertation is a transnational urban history of the divided city of Teschen between the 1919 Polish-Czechoslovak War and the town’s reunification under Poland following the Munich Agreement in 1938. By focusing on the responses of municipal administrators to border-induced challenges, I examine both nationalization and stabilization, and explain how the Habsburg city of Teschen became Polish Cieszyn and Czech Český Těšín without ever fully separating. My examination of municipal records, local press and urban infrastructure demonstrates that rather than obedient servants of their central governments or victims of imported nationalisms, local leaders were pragmatic agents of borderland politics. They fought and appropriated centrally issued policies to improve the towns’ economic situation and deescalated conflict by an ongoing cross-border exchange. Their actions thus both reinforced and undermined the newly created borders. Overall, by shifting the focus away from violence and ethnic conflict to the mundane reality of city life, this study adds to our historical understanding of both, the multifaceted nature of local identities and the scope of small-town municipal agency in two increasingly centralizing states. Furthermore, by tracing local cross-border relations following a violent upheaval, it sheds light onto conflict resolution and consequently also processes of political and societal stabilization.



Khasan Redjaboev, Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“Communist Colonialism and Development: Forced Labor and the Unmaking of the Soviet Legacy “

The Soviet Union emancipated women in its imperial periphery and core through top-down cultural programs, political ideology, and progressive public goods between 1920s-1960s. The regions most affected through a fast-paced imposition of new social institutions were Central Asia, the Caucasus, and agricultural Russia and Ukraine. However, the modern-day attitudes towards women in those areas of the post-Soviet Eurasia 30 years after the collapse are not egalitarian and there is significant discrimination with gender-based violence. What explains this short-lived legacy? Using extensive archival work, I find that the Soviet Union’s emancipatory social policies in agricultural regions were led by the need for labor force. Women were allowed limited emancipation and inclusion to participate in systematically underpaid and forced labor practices. In return, the government provided police protection, legal rights, literacy schools (likbez), daycare, and reproductive access. I test my evidence causally, by estimating the treatment effects for key pro-women public goods and attitude outcomes in cash-crop intensive and non-agricultural areas. But the repressive and non-deliberative nature of these new social institutions created a gendered and non-deliberative authority. Only the most apt at forced labor mobilization and repressive enforcement were promoted, most often males. As a result, as the Soviet capacity weakened when the system collapsed, progressive social policy gains faded away.



Liudmila Sharaya, School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, Arizona State University

“Russian Emigres in a Transnational Perspective: Perception of Space, Political Evolution and Boundaries of Diaspora in Interwar Bulgaria and France “

My dissertation explores the adaptation, and its limits, concerning first-wave Russian émigrés in Bulgaria and France during the interwar period. I analyze how their concepts of ethnicity, religion, and gender were transformed during their exile; how their economic situations and precarious employment status altered their political leanings; the relationships between how and when they perceived the space of the host countries as Western and their own identity in the East-West conundrum; their views of host local populations and the attitudes of local populations towards them. My dissertation, which is the the first comparative research on the interwar Russian diaspora, is not only about the lives of Russian elites but about émigrés of more humble origins as well.

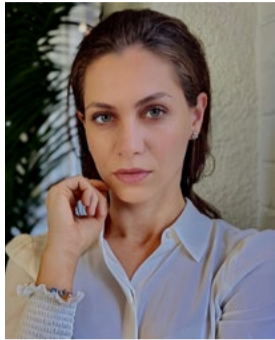


Ilya Slavutskiy, History, Rutgers University-New Brunswick (Dissertation Research Grant in Ukrainian Studies)

“Road Not Taken: The Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries and Ukrainian Socialism, 1917-1920 “

This project seeks to retell the story of the revolutionary and civil war period in Ukraine as not only a national revolution and making of the first political Ukrainian state or an eventual Soviet victory in the civil war but as a radical revolution of its own. It offers a view of the post-imperial Ukrainian provinces as a laboratory of revolution and civil war, with the Ukrainian non-Bolshevik socialist parties at its center, in particular the Ukrainian Party of Socialists-Revolutionaries (UPSR), the most electorally successful Ukrainian party in 1917, when elections were still held. This project hopes to highlight the socialism of the Ukrainian non-Bolshevik socialists and other radicals, both in their great and varied sweep and most particularly in the figures and programs of the UPSR, who played essential roles

in the quest for Ukrainian nation- and statehood but also presented the notable socialist alternative to Bolshevism in Ukraine and have not received any dedicated scholarly attention. In light of the current war in Ukraine, this project is significant in that it resurrects the rarely emphasized socialist aspect of the first modern Ukrainian state, challenging both purely national ideas about this state as well as ideas of Soviet or Russian “founding” of Ukraine.



Grijda Spiri, Music, University of California Santa Cruz (Dissertation Research Grant in Women and Gender Studies)

“Sing me a Song when I’m Gone”: The Oppression of Laments as Suppression of Social Practice in Communist and Contemporary Albania”

This dissertation aims to contribute to the understanding of how funerary laments sung by the women of southern Albania articulate gender identity as a process of emotional expression. It further explores how this practice has been used for political purposes under the communist regime and in the post-communist era, exploring issues of exile, standardization, professionalization, cultural sustainability, and decline. The primary questions raised in the dissertation include: (a) What role women played in preserving the tradition of laments for thousands of years in Albania? (b) How did Albanians interact with and express grief under a strict communist regime? and (c) What changes occurred in lamenting practices after 1991, and why has this practice declined just as communist control lifted? This dissertation is an interdisciplinary project that draws on methodologies and previous research at the intersection of ethnomusicology, anthropology, gender studies, and Balkan area studies. I explore the living experiences of people during an oppressive communist regime and the transformation of laments during political changes to existing ethnomusicological discourse on Albanian music. In addition, this dissertation seeks to understand women’s emotional expressiveness through laments and their community’s sense of belonging throughout Albania’s legacy of political change.



Patryk P. Tomaszewski, Art History, CUNY Graduate Center

“Socialist Realism on Display: State-Sponsored Exhibitions of Art in Poland, 1948-1956”

My dissertation offers the first scholarly examination of state-sponsored exhibitions of Socialist Realism in Poland during the Stalinist regime. Focusing on a series of exhibitions held in Warsaw between 1948 and 1956, first at the National Museum and then at Zachęta National Gallery of Art, I propose that the Soviet-imposed cultural doctrine of Socialist Realism introduced a dual sense of reality by concurrently establishing the lived experience and its fictitious counterpart. To scrutinize the integration of this doctrine into the socio-political milieu of the country during the period in question, I examine such key themes of early Stalinist propaganda as the physical and ideological (re) construction of the country under socialism, widespread educational initiatives, and comprehensive economic reforms. In tracing the gradual evolution of totalitarianism, my project also challenges the prevailing historiographical narrative of visual culture and artistic production in Poland in the first decade after World War II, where the imposition of Socialist Realist doctrine is portrayed as a sudden cultural rupture.



Valentina Viktorovskaia, History, UC Berkeley (Joseph Bradley and Christine Ruane Research Grant in Russian Studies)

“Empire’s Jews: From Russian Periphery to British Mandatory Palestine”

My dissertation research project explores comparative colonialism and Jewish intermediaries in the late Russian Empire and British Mandatory Palestine from the late nineteenth century into the 1940s. It studies Jews’ migration from three Russian peripheries: Transbaikalia in Siberia, Harbin in Manchuria, and Baku in the Caucasus, to British Mandatory Palestine in the 1920s. The project focuses on how Jewish merchants and technocrats interacted with Russian imperial authorities in the peripheries and how they adapted their experience to Palestine during its transition from Ottoman to British rule. It is, therefore, a story of Jewish intermediaries between three empires: Russian, Ottoman, and British.

Summer Writing Grant Recipients



Shawn Conroy, History, The Ohio State University

“Fording the Dnipro: A Region’s Transition into Independence”

My project looks at how the Dnipropetrovsk oblast in Ukraine managed the transition from the Soviet Union to independent Ukraine from 1987 to 1997. I focus on the perspectives of regional elites in politics, the economy, academia, and the media and how they viewed their personal and corporate role in constituting the new Ukrainian state. The analysis balances coverage of region—center and region—region dynamics. The concept of postcommunism plays a central role in the methodology.



Emily Cox, History of Art, Yale University

“Perverse Modernism: 1884-1900”

In the 1880s and 1890s, artists, writers, and philosophers in Russia and Western Europe responded to the tensions of nationalist and globalizing forces on an aesthetic register irreducible to either scale – one which challenges art historical methodologies. Studies of late nineteenth-century European art bound to a specific national or imperial tradition miss the way in which the fin de siècle emerged from the friction of nationalism, on the one hand, and global capital, on the other. That divide is even starker in the context of Russian art, which is rarely considered in dialogue with other European art of the late nineteenth century. Yet, in framing the fin de siècle’s cultural landscape as the product of capitalist and colonialist violence, I refuse to see its transnationalism as an innocent alliance. Opening with the 1884 “Scramble for Africa” and closing with the Russian Pavilion at the Exposition Universelle of 1900, I trace six paired motifs across countries and disciplines: “Tendrils” and “Garden”; “Dawn” and “Twilight”; “Procession” and “Globe.” In each chapter, I center one visual or textual work particularly evocative of the critical possibilities of one motif and constellate around it a set of interlocutors working at the same time but in different countries and media. Bringing together objects and texts from Russia, Britain, France, Norway, Germany, and Belgium, I locate a critical aesthetics of “perversion”: strategies which flouted disciplinary norms in order to subvert capitalist and imperialist logics. In so doing, my project unlocks new possibilities for resisting those systems in the present.



Margarita Delcheva, Comparative Literature, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Networks, Assemblings, Ephemera: The Performance of East European Mail Art 1971-1995”

This dissertation explores how the intermedial mail art work in Eastern Europe can be studied as a network performance, how the isolation of Eastern European mail artists catalyzed the formation of collaboration rituals and community-building through participatory projects, and how mail art in select countries of Eastern Europe galvanized networks of participants, including women. In this project, mail art is defined as a spectrum of postwar intermedial artistic practices that used postal routes to exchange messages between participants in a nonhierarchical rhizomatic network. Considering mail art’s lack of interest in the production of aesthetic objects, this dissertation explores mail art’s hybridity as object, documentation, and performance. It intervenes to study mail art’s temporal qualities: duration, process, collaboration, and activation through an audience, including eventual archivization. Practices discussed include rubber stamping, envelope interventions, concrete poetry, and collaborative works that use network participation as part of their concept. The case studies rely on archival materials from Special Collections in Santa Barbara and Berlin, especially the following mail art actions: Paweł Petasz’s intermedia booklets and conceptual participatory textile projects, J.H. Kocman’s stamp activities, Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt’s concrete typewriter poems, and Guillermo Deisler’s organization of visual poetry assembling magazine Peacedream project UNI/vers(;).



Semyon Leonenko, Slavic Languages and Literatures, UC Berkeley

“Labor Exchange: Employing the Poetic Voice in Early Soviet Literature”

My project examines the nexus of labor, unemployment, and literary work under the New Economic Policy (1921-1928). Through interpretations of three major writers of various styles and backgrounds, I trace how during the NEP era with its reintroduced, albeit short-term and in a limited manner, market capitalism, Soviet writers strove to develop new forms of economic imagination and conceived of their work in overtly economic terms. I have identified the theme of unemployment as one of the most salient within my corpus. Both a socio-economic reality of the turbulent times and an apt metaphor for the precarity of the Soviet literary market, unemployment is a condition to which early Soviet literature and theory offered remarkable aesthetic responses. While economic criticism often tends to focus primarily on circulation of the symbolic capital or on the transactional nature of literary devices and operations, my dissertation provides a theoretically informed account of labor (rather than capital) as the key operative category in the political economy of Soviet literature in the 1920s.



Liudmila Listrovaya, Sociology, University of Oregon

“In a Dark, Dark Wood: Morality, Politics and Ecological Inaction in Russia”

My dissertation employs mixed research methods—interviews, critical discourse analysis, and statistical analysis to engage broad questions which probe the study of environmental meaning-making, inequality, and governance, as well as the formation of environmental discourses on federal, industry, and media levels in Russia.



Matyas Mervay, History, New York University

“Habsburg Refugees in China: Postimperial Diaspora, Diplomacy, and Orientalism in the Republican Era (1918-1949)”

My dissertation is a study of displacement, humanitarian assistance, diaspora formation, and knowledge production in a twentieth-century Sino- East-Central European foreign relations context. At the core of my research are those individuals from the Habsburg Empire’s successor states who arrived as refugees to live in a China that struggled for unity and survival. My careful examination of the triangular relationship between the diasporas, the host country, and the country of origin aims at three goals. First, to complicate the conventional perspective on China’s internationalization process, allowing us to see the agency of the pre-Communist era Republican government, widely regarded in the literature, as too weak to represent its interests on the global stage. Secondly, to reveal the hitherto overlooked roots of the Shanghai Jewish refugee relief efforts that saved almost twenty thousand lives during the Holocaust. Finally, to account for the forging of the equal relationship between the two postimperial regions of post-Qing dynasty China and post-Habsburg Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, before the foundation of the People’s Republic.



Keti Tsotniashvili, Mary Loy Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University

“Transformation of Academic Identities in the Post-Soviet Time and Space: Narratives from Georgia”

My research explores and portrays the complexity of academic lives and academic identities that have been constructing, reconstructing and deconstructing along the multiple streams of non-linear, conflicting, and paradoxical transitions between the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet times and spaces. My research is guided by the decolonial and post-Socialist transformation theories and is built on the narrative ethnographic methodological approach. These theoretical and methodological choices allowed me to decenter the education policies and reforms from being a focal point of analysis and instead, to spotlight the identity formation of Georgian academics through their lived experiences, storytelling, and imaginations about the future.

The ASEEES Dissertation Research and Summer Writing Grants are funded through the generosity of our members. Please support the next generation of scholars by donating today.

[**DONATE**](#)

2023 Internship Grant Recipients

Ismael Biyashev (History, University of Illinois Chicago): Ab Imperio Quarterly

James Patrick Greene (History, University of South Florida): Institute for the Study of War

Akbota Karibayeva (Political Science, George Washington University): The Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs

Nikita Lumijoe (Graduate Program in International Studies, Old Dominion University): NATO Innovation Hub

Alexandra Noi (History, University of California, Santa Barbara): Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation/Wende Museum

Nathan Rtishchev (Russian and Slavic Studies, New York University): Krymov Lab NYC

Iryna Zhuchenko (Graduate Program in International Studies, Old Dominion University): Virginia Modeling, Analysis, and Simulation Center

Emily Ziffer (Slavic Languages and Literatures, Yale University): Deep Vellum Publishing



Reflecting on ASEEES' Exploring Career Diversity Program

A conversation with Madalina Veres and Liza Mankovskaya,
moderated by Kathryn David

In 2017, ASEEES launched the [Exploring Career Diversity](#) program to match professionals with SEES MA/PhDs employed beyond the professoriate (senior contacts) with graduate students and recent MA/PhDs who are interested in broadening their career horizons (junior contacts). The program provides the opportunity for a one-time informational interview or conversation with professionals interested in non-academic fields.



The video above is a conversation with two alumni of this program, Madalina Veres and Liza Mankovskaya, about their experience participating in the program as senior and junior contacts, respectively. Madalina and Liza connected through the program when Liza was beginning to explore career options while still a PhD student. They stayed in touch over the years, with Madalina providing career advice and mentorship to Liza over the course of her PhD program. After Liza completed her PhD, an opportunity opened up at Saint Joseph's University and Madalina recommended Liza apply. Today they work together in the field of corporate and foundation relations, where they both have been able to make excellent use of the writing, research, and communication skills they used in graduate school. Kathryn David, another alumna of the program, served as moderator for the conversation.

“The main challenge [in finding mentors for careers outside academia] was that they didn’t have the same background that I did...in the humanities, let alone specifically Slavic Literature and Languages...so, [seeing this] opportunity offered through ASEEES, I thought: ‘Well, this is perfect.’” **Liza Mankovskaya**

“It really takes somebody telling you: Hey! There’s an opening that I think might be a good fit for you...That’s why I think this type of mentoring program is very important, because it creates those connections between people with similar backgrounds... I saw the power of those connections first-hand.” **Madalina Veres**

“[PhDs] can learn a lot of quite complex information fairly quickly... Expressing what we are about in their terms to make it understandable to [potential employers]...is crucial.” **Liza Mankovskaya**

“Being able to land in a foreign city and figure out how to get to the box of documents you need, it’s actually pretty impressive. [This is] something to think about: how do you frame your research experience, regardless of your field, in a way that shows all you know how to deal with uncertainty?” **Madalina Veres**



Madalina Veres (Senior Contact)

Madalina Veres received her PhD in history from the University of Pittsburgh (2015) and is currently working as Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at

Saint Joseph’s University (SJU) in Philadelphia. After graduating, Madalina completed two postdoctoral fellowships (Central European University; American Philosophical Society) and taught as an adjunct faculty for one year (Widener University; Temple University). When deciding to pursue a career outside of academic teaching, Madalina benefited from the American Historical Association’s Career Contacts program. This experience motivated her to join the ASEEES Exploring Career Diversity Program. In addition to working with faculty and administrators across SJU to identify and secure funding from private foundations and companies, Madalina enjoys learning how to figure skate alongside her daughter.



Liza Mankovskaya (Junior Contact)

Liza Mankovskaya is an Associate Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at Saint Joseph’s University (SJU) in Philadelphia. She is proud of having written her dissertation during the pandemic while parenting a toddler and subsequently receiving a doctoral degree in Slavic Literatures and Languages from Princeton University. Liza is passionate about the mission and value of Higher Education. She is inspired by the fact that her daily work contributes

to the advancement of research, teaching and community work the University is conducting. Participating in the Career Diversity program by ASEEES has opened up the world of University Advancement for Liza. It has created a foundation of knowledge and connections that have ultimately led to the position she is holding now.



Kathryn David (Moderator)

Kathryn David holds a PhD in history from New York University. Participating in the ASEEES “Exploring Career Diversity” program allowed her to transition from academia to a position in the federal government. Currently she works as a historian for the State Department’s Office of the Historian. The views expressed in this interview do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. government.

New Publishing Consultation Service through the University of Illinois' Slavic Reference Service

Publishing a first article or monograph can be a daunting task that leaves scholars questioning everything from how peer review works to what the first step toward publishing should even be. In an attempt to help de-mystify this process, the Slavic Reference Service has started a new Publishing Consultation Service. The goal of the service is to offer year-round support and guidance through the publishing process for graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and early career scholars who work in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

Their services include helping authors identify journals and publishers that are a good fit for specific topics, offering one-on-one assistance with the peer review process, and providing guidance on incorporating feedback from reviewers. They additionally can provide more general insights for those who are thinking about starting the publishing process and are unsure where to begin. While they do not offer copyediting or translation services, they can assist with transliteration systems and citation issues as well.

Starting this fall, the Publishing Consultation Service will additionally be hosting a workshop series with potential topics including converting the dissertation into a book monograph and writing a successful book proposal. Information about upcoming events can be found on their [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

To schedule a consultation or learn more about the Publishing Consultation Service, please fill out their [Publishing Consultation Service form](#). To learn more about their other services, including their duplication service and personalized bibliographic consultation sessions, please see the [SRS website](#) or contact the Slavic Reference Service at srscite@library.illinois.edu.



ASEEES Committee on Gender Equity

Call for Submissions:

The [ASEEES Committee on Gender Equity](#) invites anonymous short comments (<300 words) on gender- and sexuality-based (in)equity in the field of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

The Committee welcomes personal anecdotes, commendations, complaints, best practices, success stories, and/or candid commentary. Topics might include negotiating pay, managing caregiving obligations, planning international travel, seeking out healthcare, navigating mentoring relationships, pursuing stigmatized research topics, or others among a wide range of possibilities. The Committee especially encourages submissions from queer and gender-nonconforming people, scholars of color, scholars with disabilities, scholars in Eastern Europe and Eurasia and/or living outside their country of origin, junior scholars, contingent faculty, and those in careers outside of academia.

The committee will review submissions received before November 15, 2023 in advance of a town hall discussion about gender equity in the profession at the ASEEES Annual Convention in December 2023. These findings will also be summarized in a report in *NewsNet* in 2024; the survey will remain live through the end of 2023.

SUBMIT HERE



ASEEES 1948-2023

This year ASEEES celebrates its 75th anniversary. The academic reach of ASEEES members and their commitment to the field have been key to the Association's longevity. In 2023, *NewsNet* celebrates ASEEES lifetime members' reflections, histories, and experiences with the Association as we look towards the future of our field.



My ASEEES membership has been critical for my ability to stay in touch with Slavic area studies. I study the economic history of the Russian Empire, and as an economist, I do not have many opportunities to converse with other scholars who focus on my region. ASEEES has introduced me to historians, political scientists, and sociologists (among others) with interests in economic topics. My favorite moments from the ASEEES meetings have been recent interdisciplinary panels on economic history and historical political economy. I look forward to many more years of these interdisciplinary conversations.

-Amanda Gregg



My membership in ASEEES has been invaluable for making and maintaining contacts throughout the profession as well as for keeping me abreast of developments in fields beyond my own specialization in literature. In reading *Slavic Review* and in attending panels at the convention, I have often been drawn to topics such as history, sociology and economics—partly out of general interest in all things related to the study of Russia and Eastern Europe, but also partly because I have found myself gleaning information that has ultimately proved useful in my own research.

-Barry Scherr



From the first convention I attended (1975) until this most recent one (2022), ASEEES meetings have provided me with opportunities to present my work, meet friends and colleagues, learn as a young scholar, advise as a senior scholar, and keep up with various fields. The special article cluster that I co-edited with Susan Woodward and Keith Brown for *Slavic Review* (Challenging Crossroads: Macedonia in Global Perspective, Vol. 69, No. 4, pp. 816-902) was important for us, but especially for the four young anthropologists whose articles constituted the cluster. The Distinguished Contributions Award was a welcome affirmation of my work, received the year before I retired.

-Victor Friedman

Consider supporting ASEEES through a [lifetime membership](#) for \$2,800. Not only will you never need to worry about a lapse in your membership, but \$2,300 of your membership is considered a tax deductible donation to the ASEEES fund. Lifetime memberships can be purchased in full or in four payments of \$700. For more information contact the [ASEEES office](#).

Thank you to our many [Lifetime Members](#) for their ongoing support of the field.

Submit your summer photos to NewsNet!



Above: Terrell Star (Independent Scholar) in Kyiv, Ukraine, July 2023.

Below: Marcus C. Levitt (Professor Emeritus, U of Southern California) with attendees of the Tolstoy Studies Journal Conference on Tolstoy and Russian Imperialism tour the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Mtskheta, Georgia, July 2023.



Annika Frieberg (Associate Professor, San Diego State U, @friebergannika) is a visiting scholar at Lund U in Sweden this summer, having received a two-month grant from the American-Scandinavian Foundation to research Swedish support for Solidarity in the 1980s.

Left: Lund U library façade Above: Lund U exhibition on Swedish support committee for Solidarity



Sarah Cameron (Associate Professor, U of Maryland) is writing a book about the causes and consequences of the disappearance of Central Asia's Aral Sea. *Left: Sarah Cameron standing on the former seabed of the Aral Sea during a research trip to the North Aral Sea (Kazakhstani side), May 2023.*

Steven Seegel (Professor, U of Texas at Austin, @steven_seegel) is traveling this summer to teach and to expand his project, "The February 24th Archive." *Right: Steven Seegel teaching summer school in Chişinău, Moldova. Above right: Visiting the 'Victory' exhibit by Kateryna Kosianenko at Sheptytsky National Museum in Lviv Ukraine, July 2023.*



PONARS Eurasia Online Academy

PONARS Eurasia Online Academy educational videos provide succinct overviews of policy-relevant research and contemporary scholarship on Russia and Eurasia.

Each video is accompanied by a list of additional sources, providing a foundation for those who would like to learn more about the specific topics addressed.

View the full library at www.ponarseurasia.org/online-academy/



Regional Affiliate News

Midwest Slavic Association

2023 Student Essay Winners

- **Graduate:** Clayton Marr, The Ohio State U, “The Angevin–Albanian element in the Albanian lexicon”
- **Undergraduate:** Sascha Rohde, Carleton College, “The Fundamentals of Propagating State-Approved Nutrition: Building Cultural Touchstones in the Kniga o vkusnoi i zdorovoi pishche and Kulinariia”

Central Slavic Conference

2023 Student Essay Winners

- **Graduate:** Madeline Styskal, U of Texas, “Prospector’s Waltz: Striking a Balance, Hitting a Nerve in Soviet Popular Songs”
- **Undergraduate:** Jennifer Dillard, Georgia Southern U, “The Magnitsky Act: Its History and Its Impact Internationally”

Northwest Regional Conference for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (REECAS NW)

2023 Graduate Student Essay Winner

- **Muhammad Abdulqayumov**, U of Washington, “The impact of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict on Russia’s role in Central Asia”

Regional Affiliate 2024 Conferences

Midwest Slavic Association

April 5-7, 2024 - Ohio State University

Western Association of Slavic Studies

April 3-6, 2024 - San Antonio, TX

Southern Conference on Slavic Studies

March 14-17, 2024 - Chapel Hill, NC
Celebrating 60 years

Northwest Regional Conference for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies

April 11-13, 2024 - University of Washington

Affiliate News

Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences of America (PIASA)

Inaugural Karol Pilarczyk Foundation Award to Promote Democracy and the Rule of Law

- **Marta Gorczynska**, human rights lawyer and co-founder of the NGO Grupa Granica (The Border Group), and head of the Migration Department at the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Warsaw.

Society for Romanian Studies (SRS)

Society for Romanian Studies (SRS) announces the Fifteenth Annual [Graduate Student Essay Prize](#) competition for an outstanding unpublished essay or thesis chapter.

Deadline: August 18, 2023

Society of Historians of Eastern European, Eurasian and Russian Art and Architecture (SHERA)

Graduate Student and Independent Scholar Research Grant

- **Sierra Nota**, Stanford U, “The Many Lives of Mezhyhirya: Property, Architecture, and Identity in Ukraine, 1786-2014”
- **Angela Wheeler**, Harvard U, “Between the Past and the Plan: Soviet Urban Heritage Planning, 1948-1989”

2022 Ab Imperio Awards

Best Book

- Andrii Portnov, *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City*, Academic Studies Press, 2022.
- Special Mention: **Claire P. Kaiser**, *Georgian and Soviet: Entitled Nationhood and the Specter of Stalin in the Caucasus*, Cornell University Press, 2022.

Best Article

- **Edyta M. Bojanowska**, “Was Tolstoi a Colonial Landlord? The Dilemmas of Private Property and Settler Colonialism on the Bashkir Steppe,” *Slavic Review* 81, no. 2 (Summer 2022).
- Special Mention: Robert Kindler, “American Russia: Fur Seals, Empire, and Conflict in the Northern Pacific after 1867,” *Ab Imperio* 23, no. 1 (2022).

Best Dissertation Chapter

- Roy Bar Sadeh, Columbia U, “Recasting Minority: Islamic Modernists between South Asia, the Middle East, and the World, 1856–1947.”
- Special mention: **Anastasiia Strakhova**, Emory U, “Selective Emigration: Border Control and the Jewish Escape in Late Imperial Russia, 1881–1914.”

New ASEEES Affiliates

Yugoslav Studies Association

“YSA reflects renewed scholarly interest in a country that no longer exists, but also to a methodological orientation shared by many of its members: an unwillingness to accept the fall of Yugoslavia as the only lens through which its historical, political, and cultural significance is to be viewed. The YSA also signals an orientation toward the future of Yugoslav research in which critical, social scientific, and cultural/artistic interventions matter again—in the region and beyond.”

[Medical Humanities in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies](#)

“MEDSEEES is an open working group for anyone interested in the interdisciplinary field of medical humanities with a focus on Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Our mission is to build a community of researchers in the field of medical humanities as it relates to this part of the world. We welcome scholars of literature, media, culture and arts, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, medical professionals, and everyone who wants to support and promote the humanities, social sciences, and the arts as an important aspect of medical education worldwide.”

Institutional Member News

[Kennan Institute](#)

The Wilson Center names [Jennifer Wistrand](#) as the new Deputy Director of the Kennan Institute.



[Pushkin House](#)

The Pushkin House awarded its 2023 Book Prize to Owen Matthews for [Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin's War Against Ukraine](#) (HarperCollins Publishers, November 2022).



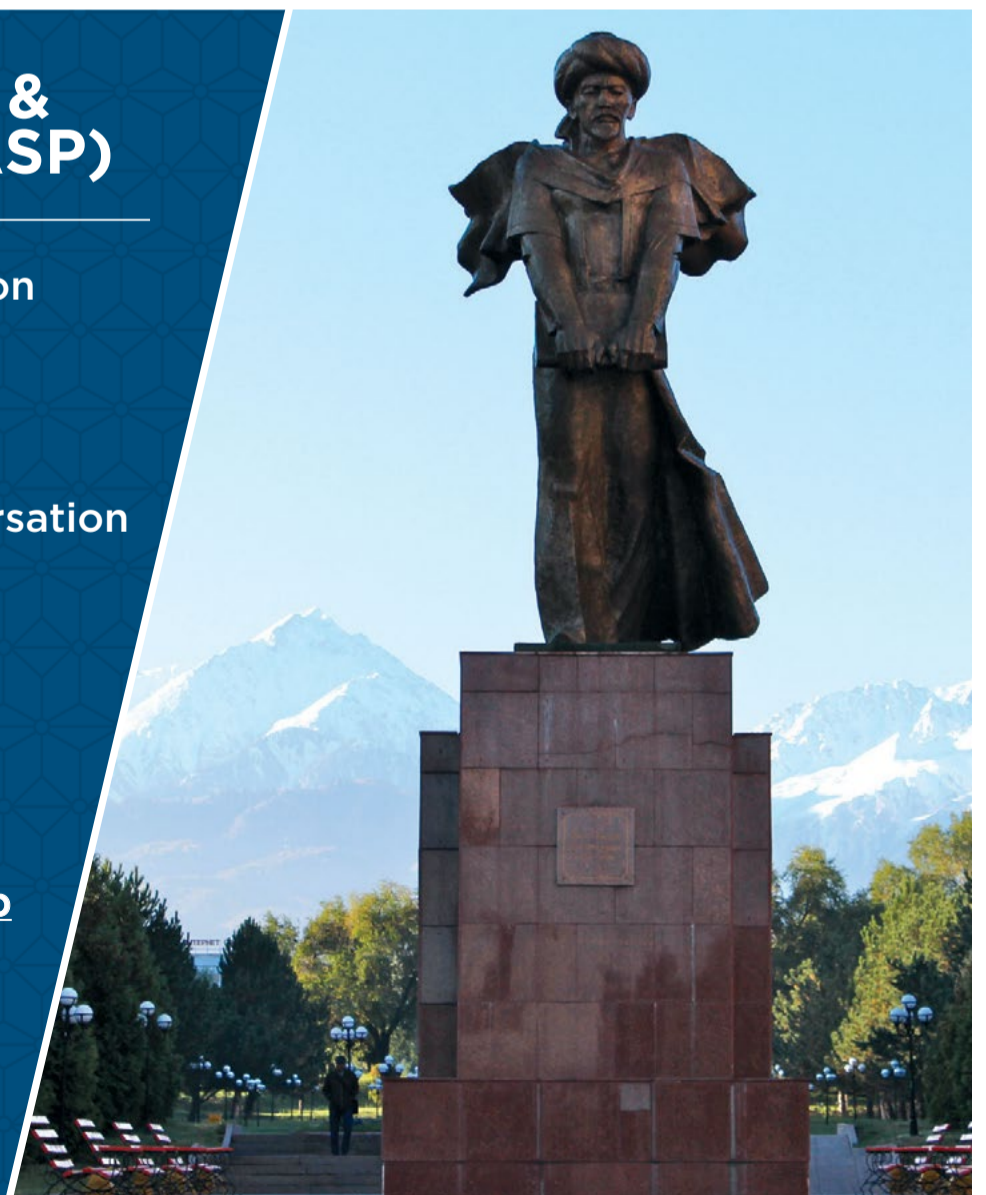
You can see a full list of ASEEES [Institutional members](#) on the ASEEES website. ASEEES thanks the institutional members for their support of the field.

ADVANCED RUSSIAN LANGUAGE & AREA STUDIES PROGRAM (RLASP)

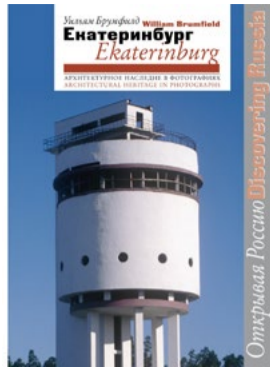
- Intensive Russian language instruction hosted in Kazakhstan and Armenia
- Housing with local host families
- Opportunities for internships, conversation partners, and regional field studies
- Full academic credit and financial support available on all programs

Learn more at:

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Member News



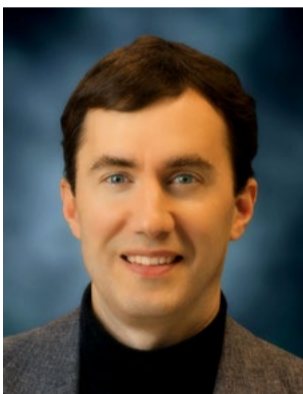
Barbara C. Allen was promoted to Professor of History at La Salle University.

Ekaterinburg: Architectural Heritage in Photographs (Екатеринбург: архитектурное наследие в фотографиях) by **William Brumfield** was published by Tri Kvadrata, 2023.



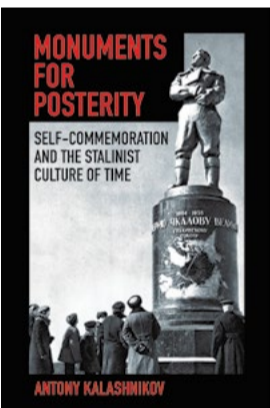
Den Slawen auf der Spur. Festschrift für Eduard Mühle zum 65. Geburtstag, edited by Matthias Cichon, **Anne Kluger**, Martin Koschny, and **Heidi Hein-Kircher**, was published by Herder-Institut, 2022.

Verflochtene Herausforderungen politischer und gesellschaftlicher Demokratisierung. Ostmitteleuropas Demokratien zwischen den Kriegen, edited by **Heidi Hein-Kircher** and Steffen Kailitz, was published by Herder-Institut, January, 2023.



David L. Hoffmann, Ohio State University, has been awarded a fellowship by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Energy/Waste: Approaches to the Environment in Post-Soviet Cultures, edited by **Maria Hristova**, **Alyssa DeBlasio**, and Irina Anisimova, was published by Slavica Bergensia, March 2023.

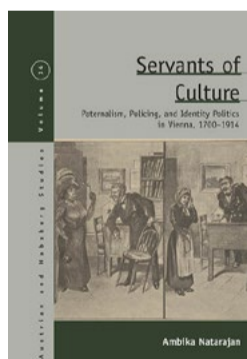
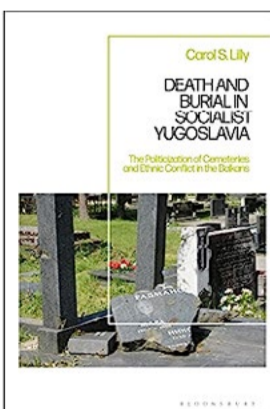


Kristy Ironside has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at McGill University (Canada), and named a William Dawson Scholar.

Monuments for Posterity: Self-Commemoration and the Stalinist Culture of Time by **Antony Kalashnikov** was published by Cornell University Press, April 2023.

Marlene Laurelle was awarded the [2023 George Washington OVPR Distinguished Career Award](#).

Death and Burial in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Politicization of Cemeteries and Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans by **Carol S. Lilly** was published by Bloomsbury Press, February 2023. In connection with her book, she has launched a website, [“Death and Burial in Socialist Yugoslavia.”](#)

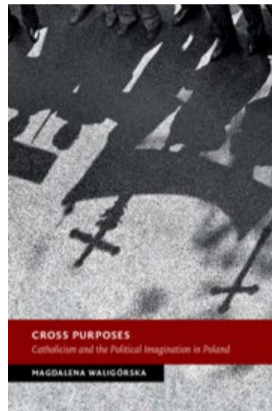
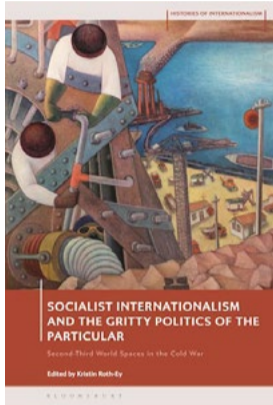
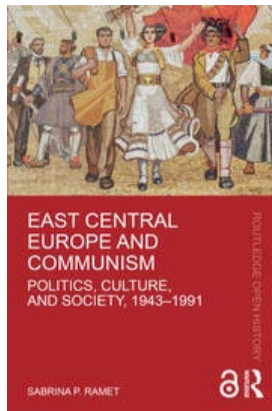
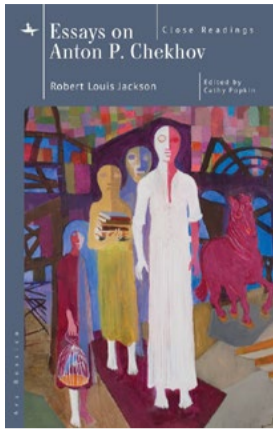


Servants of Culture: Paternalism, Policing, and Identity Politics in Vienna, 1700-1914 by **Ambika Natarajan** was published by Berghahn, May 2023.



Cassio de Oliveira was awarded a NEH Summer Stipend to research and write his second book, a study of the translations and reception of Mark Twain in the Soviet period, with special emphasis on the novels “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” and “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.”

Images of Otherness in Russia, 1547-1917, edited by **Kati Parppei** and Bulat Rakhimzianov, was published by Academic Studies Press, April 2023.



Essays on Anton P. Chekhov: Close Readings by Robert Louis Jackson and edited by **Cathy Popkin** with an introduction by **Robin Feuer Miller** was published by Academic Studies Press, May 2023.

East Central Europe and Communism Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943–1991 by **Sabrina P. Ramet** was published by Routledge, March 2023.

Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular Second-Third World Spaces in the Cold War, edited by **Kristin Roth-Ey**, with chapters by **Elizabeth Bishop**, **Malgorzata Mazurek**, and **Christine Varga-Harris**, was published by Bloomsbury Publishing, April 2023.

Cross Purposes: Catholicism and the Political Imagination in Poland by **Magdalena Waligórska** was published by Cambridge University Press, December 2022.

ASEEES can help you promote your news, book publications, scholarship, promotions, fellowships/grants/prizes won. Please let us know about your professional accomplishments [HERE](#) and we will announce them to our members via *NewsNet*, social media, our members-only website, and/or member spotlights on our website. *Please do not submit journal article publications.
