

Melissa A. Chakars
Associate Professor
Department of History
Saint Joseph's University
5600 City Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131
610-660-1745
mchakars@sju.edu

Education:

- October 2008 **Indiana University**, *Ph.D.*, History
Major in Russian history and minors in Central Eurasian studies
and East Asian history.
- May 2000 **Indiana University**, *Master of Arts*, Russian and East
European Studies
- 1992-1996 **Hunter College, CUNY**, *Bachelor of Arts*, Double Major:
History and Russian language and literature
- 1994-1995 **Far Eastern State University**, Vladivostok, Russia, *Study Abroad*

Teaching Experience:

- 2010-present **Saint Joseph's University**, Associate Professor
- *Forging the Modern World*
 - *Stalinism: Terror and Transformation in the Soviet Union*
 - *Empire and Ethnicity in Russia and the Soviet Union*
(seminar)
 - *The Mongol Empire, 1100-1500*
 - *Tsars and Commissars: Russia and the Soviet Union, 1861-1991*
 - *War and Peace in Imperial, 980-1861*
 - *1989 and 1991: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (seminar)
 - *Philadelphia Area Internship Course*
 - *Genocide and Human Rights in the 20th Century*
- 2008-2010 **University of North Carolina Wilmington**, Adjunct Professor
- *Collapse of the Soviet Union*
 - *The Mongol Empire*
 - *Russian Language 101*

- *Russian Language 102*
 - *Independent Study in East European History*
 - *Russia since 1881*
 - *Western Civilization II, 1650 – present*
- 2009 **Cape Fear Community College**, Adjunct Professor
- *Western Civilization I*
- 1999-2003 **Indiana University**, Associate Instructor
- *Culture and Difference: The Mongolian Case*
 - *American History I*
 - *American History II*
 - *History of the Vietnam War*
 - *American Cultural History*
- 2003 **Riga, Latvia**, *English Instructor*
- 1995 **Vladivostok, Russia**, *English Instructor*

Publications:

Peer-Reviewed Publications

- 2019 “Free Time is Not Meant to be Wasted: Educational, Political, and Taboo Leisure Activities among the Soviet Buryats of Eastern Siberia,” *Nationalities Papers* 47/4 (2019): 1-14.
- 2018 “Disassembled in the Siberian City of Ulan-Ude: How Ethnic Buryats Reconstruct through Time and Space,” co-authored with Elizabeth L. Sweet in ed. Elizabeth L. Sweet, *Disassembled Cities: Social and Spatial Strategies to Reassemble Communities* (Routledge, 2018)
- 2015 *Modernization, Nation-Building, and Television History*, eds. Stewart Anderson and Melissa Chakars (Routledge, 2015)
- Co-editor for the entire book.
 - Co-author of the Introduction with Stewart Anderson, pp. 1-18.
 - Author of Chapter 8, “*Flowers, Steppe Fires, and Communists: Images of Modernity and Identity on TV Shows from Soviet Buryatia in the Brezhnev Era*,” pp. 147-164.

- 2015 “Daily Life and Party Ideals on Late Soviet-Era Radio and Television Programming for Children, Teenagers, and Youth in Buryatia,” *Études Mongoles et Sibériennes et Centrasiatiques et Tibétaines*, 46 (2015)
- 2014 *The Socialist Way of Life in Siberia: Transformation in Buryatia* (Central European University Press, 2014)
- 2014 “Professional Women and the Economic Practices of Success and Survival Before and After Regime Change: Diverse Economies and Restructuring in the Russian Republic of Buryatia,” co-authored with Elizabeth L. Sweet. *GeoJournal*, 79/5 (2014): 649-663.
- 2010 “Identity, Culture, Land, and Language: Stories of Insurgent Planning in Buryatia, Russia,” co-authored with Elizabeth L. Sweet. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 30/2 December (2010): 198-209.
- 2009 “Buryat Literature as a Political and Cultural Institution from the 1950s to the 1970s,” *Inner Asia* 11 (2009): 47-63.

Book Reviews

- 2019 Review of Kate Brown’s *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (W. W. Norton, 2019) in the August issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2019 Review of Joanna Lillis’s *Dark Shadows: Inside the Secret World of Kazakhstan* (I. B. Tauris, 2018) in the May issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2018 Review of Victoria Smolkin’s *A Sacred Space is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism* (Princeton University Press, 2018) in the December issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2018 Review of Victoria Clement’s *Learning to Become Turkmen: Literacy, Language, and Power, 1914-2014*. (Pittsburgh University Press, 2018) in the November issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2018 Review of S. Peter Poullada’s *Russian-Turkmen Encounters: The Caspian Frontier before the Great Game*. With translations by

- Claora E. Styron. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018) in the December issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2017 Review of Sergey Glebov's *From Empire to Eurasia: Politics, Scholarship, and Ideology in Russian Eurasianism, 1920s-1930s* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2017) in the December issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2017 Review of Ivan Sablin's *Governing Post-Imperial Siberia and Mongolia, 1911–1924: Buddhism, Socialism, and Nationalism in State and Autonomy Building* (London: Routledge, 2017) for the *Slavic Review*, 76/2 (Summer 2017): 553-555.
- 2017 Review of Botakoz Kassymbekova's *Despite Cultures: Early Soviet Rule in Tajikistan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016) for the April issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2016 Review of Janet M. Hartley's *Siberia: A History of the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014). *The Historian* 78/4 (Winter 2016): 811-812.
- 2016 Review of David G. Troyansky's *Aging in World History* (Routledge, 2015) for the December issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2016 Review of David Brophy's *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the China-Russia Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016) for the October issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2016 Review of Mark Bassin, Sergey Glebov, and Marlene Laruelle, eds. *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015) for the January 2016 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.
- 2015 Review of Stephen Hutchings and Vera Tolz's *Nation, Ethnicity and Race on Russian Television: Mediating Post-Soviet Difference* (Routledge, 2015) for the October 2015 issue of *The Russian Review*.
- 2015 Review of Christopher Kaplonski's *The Lama Question: Violence, Sovereignty, and Exception in Early Socialist Mongolia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015) for the August 2015 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Arsene Saparov's *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh* (London: Routledge, 2015) for the April 2015 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

2014

Review of Willard Sunderland's *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014) for the December 2014 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Eleanor L. Pray, *Letters from Vladivostok, 1894-1930*, Edited by Birgitta Ingelmanson, Biographical Sketch by Patricia D. Silver (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2013) in the journal, *The NEP Era: Soviet Russia, 1921-1928* vol. 8 (2014): 101-104.

Review of Alfred J. Rieber's *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge, 2014) for the October 2014 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Alessandro Stanziani's *Bondage: Labor and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Berghan Books, 2014) for the September 2014 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Jack M. Bloom's *Seeing through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Brill, 2013) for the June 2014 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Kees Boterbloem's *A History of Russia and Its Empire: From Mikhail Romanov to Vladimir Putin* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) for the March 2014 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

2013

Review of Evgeny Sergeev's *The Great Game, 1857-1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia* (Woodrow Wilson Center) for the October 2013 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Anne Applebaum's *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956* (Doubleday 2012) for the July 2013 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Donald Rayfield's *Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia* (Reaktion Books, 2012) for the June 2013 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of eds. Stephen M. Norris and Willard Sunderland's *Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012) for the March 2013 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

2012 Review of Stuart D. Goldman's *Nomonhan, 1939: Red Army's Victory that Shaped WWII* (Naval Institute Press, 2012). In November 2012 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Nanci Adler's *Keeping Faith with the Party: Communist Believers Return from the Gulag* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012) in the August 2012 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Review of Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann's *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (London: Routledge, 2011) in the May 2012 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

2011 Review of Catherine Evtuhov's *Portrait of a Russian Province: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novgorod* (Pittsburgh University Press, 2011). In November 2011 issue of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

2007 Review of Robert W. Montgomery's *Late Tsarist and Early Soviet Nationality and Cultural Policy: The Buryats and Their Language*, 2005. In *Sibirica* 5/2 (2007).

2004 Review of David Sneath's *Changing Inner Mongolia: Pastoral Society and the Chinese State*, 2000. In *Mongolian Studies* XXVI (2004): 123-125

Other Publications

2005 "The Study of the History and Culture of Indigenous Siberians in the West," in *Aktual'nye problemy istorii i kul'tury narodov*

aziatsko-Tikhookeanskogo regiona (Ulan-Ude: VSGAKI, 2005), 236-244.

- 2005 “Nekotorye aspekty ispol’zovaniia kompiuternykh tekhnologii v prepodavanii istorii v amerikanskikh universitetakh.” *Tezy: Formirovanie professional’noi kul’tury spetsialista v tekhnologicheskoi universitete* (Ulan-Ude: VSGTU, 2005).
- 2005 “Digging in the Archives in Buryatia,” *REEfication*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2005, pp. 1 and 13.

Conferences:

- March 2019 “Buddhism from Mongolia: Stories of Origin, Rivalry, and Negotiation from the Buryat Chronicles,” *Mongolia Society Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO
- November 2018 “Building a Home for Buddhism in Siberia in the 18th Century: Stories from the Buryat Chronicles,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Boston, MA
- April 2018 “Understanding the Destruction of Buddhism in Soviet Buryatia in the 1930s: A Historiography,” *British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies*, Cambridge, United Kingdom
- April 2018 Served as discussant on the panel, “(Post) Soviet Peripheries,” and as chair on the panel, “Soviet Visions,” *Northeast East European, Eurasian, and Slavic Studies Conference*, New York, NY
- March 2018 Served as chair on the panel, “Politics and Economics in Mongolia,” *Mongolia Society Annual Meeting*, Washington DC
- November 2017 Served as discussant on the panel, “Buddhism in Russia: Revolution, Repression, Reaction, and Revival,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Chicago, IL
- April 2017 Served as chair on the panel, “Identities, Politics and Protest in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine,” *Northeast East European, Eurasian, and Slavic Studies Conference*, New York, NY
- January 2017 “Promoting High Culture and Good Behavior in Late Soviet Buryatia,” *International Mongolian Studies Conference*, Mongolian Embassy, Washington DC

November 2016	“Museums, Theaters, and Clubhouses: The Role of Cultural Institutions in Soviet Buryatia,” <i>Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies</i> , Washington DC
May 2016	Panel Discussant, “Soviet Actions and Institutions of Oppression, Social, and Information Control,” <i>Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies</i> , Philadelphia
April 2016	Served as chair on the panel, “Memory of War, Revolution, and the Holocaust: Perspectives from the Soviet Union,” at the <i>North East, Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference</i> , New York
February 2016	“Developing and Debating Soviet Buryat Language and Literature,” <i>In Empire’s Long Shadow: Modern Constructions of Central Eurasia, 1900-1941</i> , Chicago
November 2015	“Daily Life and Party Ideals on Late Soviet-Era Radio and Television Programming for Children, Teenagers, and Youth in Buryatia,” <i>Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies</i> , Philadelphia
November 2014	“Land, Language, and Culture: The Buryat National Movement in Eastern Siberia,” <i>Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies</i> , San Antonio
October 2014	Served as chair on a panel titled “Historical Buddhism” at the <i>Conference to Celebrate the 130th Anniversary of the Dilowa Khutughtu</i> , New York
April 2014	“ <i>Steppe Fires, Flowers, and Communists</i> : Brezhnev Era TV Shows to Promote Modernity and National Identity in Buryatia,” <i>Association for the Study of Nationalities</i> , New York Also served as chair on a separate panel on the country of Georgia.
March 2014	“Championing Modernization, Nation-Building, and Success on Local Radio and Television Programming in Eastern Siberia from the 1960s to the 1980s,” <i>Northeast Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference</i> , Philadelphia
Nov. 2013	“Correcting Deviant Behavior with Educational Leisure in Eastern Siberia,” <i>Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies</i> , Boston
Nov. 2012	“The Best or the Worst Years? The Economic Strategies of Siberian Women from Late Socialism to the Early 2000s,”

Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies,
New Orleans

- March 2012 “Debating Geser: The History of a Siberian Epic Poem under Stalin,” *Northeast Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference*, New Jersey
Also served as chair on a separate panel on the history of Russian artists in the United States.
- Nov. 2011 “Promoting Progress on Local Television and Radio Programming in Siberia,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Washington DC
- March 2011 Panel Discussant, “Life and Thought in the Russian Province,” *Northeast Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference*, New York
- Nov. 2010 “Professional Advancement in Soviet Buryatia, 1945-1991,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Los Angeles
- Aug. 2010 “Siberian Media in the Twilight of the Soviet Union: The Buryat Press and Nationalist Inertia” *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication*, Denver
- Nov. 2009 “Buryat Schools in the Late Soviet Period: Teachers, Parents, and Educational Content,” *American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Conference*, Boston
- Nov. 2008 “The Language Issue: Education and Postwar Social Transformation among the Buryats” *American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Conference*, Philadelphia
- March 2008 “The Modern Soviet Buryat Woman: Upward Social Mobility and Local Institutions in Postwar Buryatia” *Central Eurasian Studies Conference*, Indiana University
- March 2008 “A Means to Soviet Modernity: Media and Culture among the Buryats, 1960-1980” *Midwest Russian History Workshop*, Chicago
- February 2008 “Indigenous People and Russian Colonization and Empire in Central Asia and Siberia,” *National Council for Social Sciences Great Lakes Regional Conference*, Indianapolis

November 2007	“Glasnost’ in Buryatia: The Media, the State, and the Nationalists” <i>American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Conference</i> , New Orleans
April 2007	“Literature in Postwar Buryatia: Intellectuals and the State” <i>Central Eurasian Studies Conference</i> , Indiana University
September 2006	“Geser and the Buryats in the Twentieth Century” <i>Central Eurasian Studies Society Conference</i> , University of Michigan
April 2006	“Buryat Language Education in the Twentieth Century” <i>Central Eurasian Studies Conference</i> , Indiana University
April 2005	“The Study of the History and Culture of the Indigenous Peoples of Siberia in the West” <i>Conference on the Actual Problems of the History and Culture of the Peoples of the Asia-Pacific Region</i> , Buryat State University, Ulan-Ude, Russia (given in Russian)
January 2005	“Several Aspects of the Use of Computer Technology in the Teaching of History in American Universities.” <i>Conference on the Formation of the Professional Culture of the Specialist in the Technical University</i> , East Siberian State Technical University, Ulan-Ude, Russia (given in Russian)
April 2003	“Settling the Buryats: A Comparison of Two Policies.” <i>Central Slavic Conference</i> , University of Kansas
April 2002	“The End of Nomadism in Buryatia.” <i>Central Eurasian Studies Conference</i> , Indiana University

Grants, Awards, and Honors:

2018	Saint Joseph’s University Summer Research Grant
2014	Saint Joseph’s University Merit Awards for Teaching and Research
2012	Saint Joseph’s University Faculty Research and Development Summer Research Grant
2007-2008	Social Science Research Council Eurasia Program Dissertation Write-up Fellowship.
2007	REEI Mellon Endowment Student Grant-in-Aid of Travel to

Conferences.

- 2004-2005 American Councils for International Education Advanced Research Fellowship Award for nine months of dissertation research in Buryatia, Russia.
- 2003 REEI Mellon Endowment Student Grant-in-Aid of Travel to Conferences.
- 2002 Indiana University International Programs Pre-dissertation grant to Buryatia, Russia.
- 2001 IREX Mongolian Language Training Grant to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- 2000 Indiana University History Department Fellowship.
- 1999 Social Science Research Council Language Training Grant for Latvian.
- 1999 Daniel Armstrong Memorial Research Essay Award.
- 1992-1996 George M. Pullman Educational Foundation scholarship.
- 1996 Magna Cum Laude and departmental honors in both History and Russian at Hunter College.

Public/Invited Talks:

- March 2017 New Books Network. Interview with Dr. Amanda Swain about my book, *The Socialist Way of Life in Siberia: Transformation in Buryatia*. The audio interview may be found here: <http://newbooksnetwork.com/melissa-chakars-the-socialist-way-of-life-in-siberia-transformation-in-buryatia-central-european-up-2014/>
- November 2016 “Marking the 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Soviet Union” Panel of two Saint Joseph’s University professors
- June 2016 “Geser: An Epic Poem for Communists, Nationalists, and Pan-Mongolists,” *Indiana University*
- June 2015 *Top of the Mind with Julie Rose, BYU Radio*
Radio interview titled “Nation-building and TV” with Stewart

Anderson and Melissa Chakars

- November 2014 *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: 1989 in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors
- October 2014 *World War I One Hundred Years Later: Art, Empire, and Ideology*
Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors
- September 2014 "Chew on This: Faculty Scholarship Series," Reading and discussion of my book, *The Socialist Way of Life in Siberia: Transformation in Buryatia*
- April 2014 *Perspectives on Russia's Annexation of Crimea*
Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors
- March 2014 *Annual Meeting of the Mongolia Society*
Presented paper, "Steppe Fires, Flowers, and Communists: Brezhnev Era TV Shows to Promote Modernity and National Identity in Buryatia," at the Dialogue Institute at Temple University
- April 2013 *The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: The Views from Pyongyang, Tokyo, Moscow, Beijing, Seoul, and Washington*
Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors
- March 2013 *The More Things Change the More They Stay the Same: Continuities between the USSR and Post-Soviet Russia*
Panel of two Saint Joseph's Professors and an honor's student.
- Nov. 2012 *Remembering the Cuban Missile Crisis: 50 Years Later*,
Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors
- March 2012 *Coping with Nuclear Disaster: A Panel on Fukushima and Chernobyl*, Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors
- March 2012 *Annual Oskars Kalpaks Lecture*, Gave talk titled, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Lands Contested by Hitler and Stalin" for the Latvian Society of Philadelphia
- Dec. 2011 *The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Twenty Years On*
Panel of Russian studies scholars at Saint Joseph's University.
Gave talk titled, "Women in the Transition from Socialism to Capitalism"

- Nov. 2011 *Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Studies Program Talk*,
Gave talk titled, “Europe for Batu the Hero: The Mongol Empire’s
Western Campaigns”
- April 2011 *Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society*, SJU
Gave the keynote speech, “Why Study (Russian) History?”
- March 2009 *UNCW Slavic Colloquia*
Gave lecture on Soviet education among the Buryats.
- June 2008 *Midwestern Siberian Bibliographic Workshop*, University of
Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Presented information on the National Archives of the Republic of
Buryatia and a bibliography to Midwestern Siberianists.
- July 2007 *Tibetan Cultural Center*, Bloomington, IN
Gave lecture about the history, culture, and religion of Buryatia.
- 2007-2008 *Title VI Workshops for High School Teachers*, Indiana
Designed lessons and presented and distributed information on the
history of Russia, Central Asia, and Siberia to be used in high
school classrooms for teaching about imperialism, colonialism, and
empire.
- Dec. 2005 *Buryat Academy of Sciences (BNTs)*, Ulan-Ude, Russia
Gave lecture about the history and present state of Mongolian
studies in the United States (given in Russian).

Other Professional Experience:

- July 2005-July 2007 **American Historical Review**, *Editorial Assistant*

Edited articles and book reviews, selected books for review, and
assigned reviewers for books on Russia, Asia, world, and
comparative topics.
- Summer 2001 **Proofreader**, Christopher P. Atwood, *Young Vigilantes in Inner
Mongolia’s Interregnum Decades, 1911-1931*. Leiden: E.J. Brill,
2002, 1,168 pp.
- Fall 2001 **Research Assistant**, Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military
History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*.
New York: Da Capo Press, 2002.

Oct. 1996-Aug. 1998 **ELS Language Centers, Wagner College, *International Student Advisor***

Sept. 1995-Oct. 1996 **Hunter College, NSE/Study Abroad Office, *Assistant Director***

Jan. 1995-May 1995 **Vladivostok News, *Copy Editor***

Memberships:

- Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
- Northeast Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, *currently serving on the board and as the treasurer*
- Mongolia Society, *currently serving on the board and as the secretary*
- American Historical Association
- Association for Women in Slavic Studies
- Association for the Study of Nationalities
- Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies
- American Center for Mongolian Studies

Languages:

Advanced: Russian

Intermediate: Mongolian, Buryat, Latvian

Elementary: Kazakh, French