

Melissa A. Chakars, Associate Professor
Department of History, Saint Joseph's University
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Education:

- 2008 **Indiana University, Ph.D., History**
Major in Russian history and minors in Central Eurasian studies
and East Asian history.
- 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*
 - *The Mongol Empire, 1100-1500*
 - *Tsars and Commissars: Russia and the Soviet Union*
 - *War and Peace in Imperial Russia*
 - *The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*
 - *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

- “Buddhism and the Siberian Buryat Chronicles: Stories of Origin, Rivalry, and Negotiation in the Russian Empire,” *History of Religions* 60/2 (2020): 81-102, DOI: 10.1086/710574
- “The All-Buryat Congress for the Spiritual Rebirth and Consolidation of the Nation: Siberian Politics in the Final Year of the USSR,” *Journal of Eurasian Studies* (2020), DOI: 10.1177/1879366620902863
- “The Repression of Buryat Buddhism in the 1930s: Competing Narratives of Soviet and Western Histories During the Cold War,” *Mongolian Studies* 38 (2020): 31-46.
- “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): 660-673.
- “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)
- *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.
- “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)
- *The Socialist Way of Life in Siberia: Transformation in Buryatia* (Central European University Press, 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.
- “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.
- “Buryat Literature as a Political and Cultural Institution from the 1950s to the 1970s,” *Inner Asia* 11 (2009): 47-63.

Other Publications

- “Creating Buddhist Sacred Geography in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Analyzing and Comparing Stories from the Buryat and Kalmyk Chronicles,” *Sacred Geography: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches in Space and Time* (Nur-Sultan: Nazarbaev University, 2020): 152-160.
- “Minority Education Policy: The Endangered Buryat Language and Inner Mongolian,” *Mongol Survey*, no. 41 (Spring-Fall 2020): 2-3.
- “The Study of the History and Culture of Indigenous Siberians in the West,” *Aktual’nye problemy istorii i kul’tury narodov aziatsko-Tikhookeanskogo regiona* (Ulan-Ude: VSGAKI, 2005), 236-244.
- “Nekotorye aspekty ispol’zovaniia kompiuternykh tekhnologii v prepodavanii istorii v amerikanskikh universitetakh.” *Tezy: Formirovanie professional’noi kul’tury spetsialista v tekhnologi-cheskom universitete* (Ulan-Ude: VSGTU, 2005).
- “Digging in the Archives in Buryatia,” *REEIfication*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2005, pp. 1 and 13.

Book Reviews

Books Reviewed for *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*

- Doğangün, Gökten Huriye. *Gender Politics in Turkey and Russia: From State Feminism to Authoritarian Rule* (I. B. Tauris, 2020)
- Laurence Broers. *Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019)
- Matthew W. King. *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood: A Mongolian Monk in the Ruins of the Qing Empire* (Columbia University Press, 2019)
- Kate Brown. *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (W. W. Norton, 2019)
- Joanna Lillis. *Dark Shadows: Inside the Secret World of Kazakhstan* (I. B. Tauris, 2018)
- Victoria Smolkin. *A Sacred Space is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism* (Princeton University Press, 2018)
- Victoria Clement. *Learning to Become Turkmen: Literacy, Language, and Power, 1914-2014*. (Pittsburgh University Press, 2018)
- S. Peter Poullada. *Russian-Turkmen Encounters: The Caspian Frontier before the Great Game*. With translations by Claora E. Styron. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018)
- Sergey Glebov. *From Empire to Eurasia: Politics, Scholarship, and Ideology in Russian Eurasianism, 1920s-1930s* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2017)
- Botakoz Kassymbekova. *Despite Cultures: Early Soviet Rule in Tajikistan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016)
- Review of David G. Troyansky. *Aging in World History* (Routledge, 2015)
- Review of David Brophy. *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the China-Russia Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016)
- 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)
- Christopher Kaplonski. *The Lama Question: Violence, Sovereignty, and Exception in Early Socialist Mongolia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015)
- Arsene Saparov. *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh* (London: Routledge, 2015)
- Willard Sunderland. *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014)
- Review of Alfred J. Rieber. *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge, 2014)
- Alessandro Stanziani. *Bondage: Labor and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Berghan Books, 2014)

- Jack M. Bloom. *Seeing through the Eyes of the Polish Revolution: Solidarity and the Struggle Against Communism in Poland* (Brill, 2013)
- Kees Boterbloem. *A History of Russia and Its Empire: From Mikhail Romanov to Vladimir Putin* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014)
- Evgeny Sergeev. *The Great Game, 1857-1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia* (Woodrow Wilson Center)
- Anne Applebaum. *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956* (Doubleday 2012)
- Donald Rayfield. *Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia* (Reaktion Books, 2012)
- Stephen M. Norris and Willard Sunderland. *Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012)
- Stuart D. Goldman. *Nomonhan, 1939: Red Army's Victory that Shaped WWII* (Naval Institute Press, 2012)
- Nanci Adler. *Keeping Faith with the Party: Communist Believers Return from the Gulag* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012)
- Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann. *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (London: Routledge, 2011)
- Catherine Evtuhov. *Portrait of a Russian Province: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novgorod* (Pittsburgh University Press, 2011)

Books Reviewed for other journals:

- Ivan Sablin. *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.
- Janet M. Hartley. *Siberia: A History of the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014) for *The Historian* 78/4 (Winter 2016): 811-812.
- Stephen Hutchings and Vera Tolz. *Nation, Ethnicity and Race on Russian Television: Mediating Post-Soviet Difference* (Routledge, 2015) for the October 2015 issue of *The Russian Review*.
- Eleanor L. Pray. *Letters from Vladivostok, 1894-1930*, Edited by Birgitta Ingelmannson, 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.
- Robert W. Montgomery. *Late Tsarist and Early Soviet Nationality and Cultural Policy: The Buryats and Their Language*, 2005. In *Sibirica* 5/2 (2007).
- Review of David Sneath's *Changing Inner Mongolia: Pastoral Society and the Chinese State*, 2000. In *Mongolian Studies* XXVI (2004): 123-125

Conferences:

- “Creating Buddhist Sacred Geography in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Analyzing and Comparing Stories from the Buryat and Kalmyk Chronicles,” *Sacred Geography Conference*, originally scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan, but due to Covid-19 was held online in September, 2020
- Panel discussant, “Mongolian History and Culture,” *Mongolia Society Annual Meeting*, March, 2020, Boston, MA. **Canceled due to COVID-19**
- Panel discussant, “Balancing External Influences and Domestic Responses in Romania, Kosovo, and Austria,” *Northeast East European, Eurasian, and Slavic Studies Conference*, New York, NY, April 2020, **Canceled due to COVID-19**
- “Buddhism in the Russian Empire: A Comparison of Kalmyk, Buryat, and Tuvan Experiences,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, San Francisco, CA, December 2019
- “Buddhism from Mongolia: Stories of Origin, Rivalry, and Negotiation from the Buryat Chronicles,” *Mongolia Society Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO, March 2019
- “The All-Buryat Congress for the Spiritual Rebirth and Consolidation of the Nation: Political Organization in Buryatia in the Last Years of the Soviet Union,” *Parliaments and Political Transformations in Europe and Asia: Diversity and Representation in the 20th and 21st Century*, Heidelberg University, Germany, February 2019
- “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, November 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
- Panel Discussant, “(Post) Soviet Peripheries,” and as chair on the panel, “Soviet Visions,” *Northeast East European, Eurasian, and Slavic Studies Conference*, New York, NY, April 2018
- Panel Chair, “Politics and Economics in Mongolia,” *Mongolia Society Annual Meeting*, Washington DC, March 2018
- Panel Discussant, “Buddhism in Russia: Revolution, Repression, Reaction, and Revival,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Chicago, IL, November 2017

- Panel Chair, “Identities, Politics and Protest in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine,” *Northeast East European, Eurasian, and Slavic Studies Conference*, New York, NY, April 2017
- “Promoting High Culture and Good Behavior in Late Soviet Buryatia,” *International Mongolian Studies Conference*, Mongolian Embassy, Washington DC, January 2017
- “Museums, Theaters, and Clubhouses: The Role of Cultural Institutions in Soviet Buryatia,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Washington DC, November 2016
- Panel Discussant, “Soviet Actions and Institutions of Oppression, Social, and Information Control,” *Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies*, Philadelphia, May 2016
- Panel Chair, “Memory of War, Revolution, and the Holocaust: Perspectives from the Soviet Union,” at the *North East, Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference*, New York, April 2016
- “Developing and Debating Soviet Buryat Language and Literature,” *In Empire’s Long Shadow: Modern Constructions of Central Eurasia, 1900-1941*, Chicago, February 2016
- “Daily Life and Party Ideals on Late Soviet-Era Radio and Television Programming for Children, Teenagers, and Youth in Buryatia,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Philadelphia, November 2015
- “Land, Language, and Culture: The Buryat National Movement in Eastern Siberia,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, San Antonio, November 2014
- Panel Chair, “Historical Buddhism” at the *Conference to Celebrate the 130th Anniversary of the Dilowa Khutughtu*, New York, October 2014
- “Steppe Fires, Flowers, and Communists: Brezhnev Era TV Shows to Promote Modernity and National Identity in Buryatia,” *Association for the Study of Nationalities*, New York, April 2014
- “Analyzing Brezhnev-Era TV shows from Buryatia,” *Mongolia Society Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, March 2014
- “Championing Modernization, Nation-Building, and Success on Local Radio and Television Programming in Eastern Siberia from the 1960s to the 1980s,” *Northeast Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference*, Philadelphia, March 2014

- “Correcting Deviant Behavior with Educational Leisure in Eastern Siberia,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Boston, November 2013
- “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, November 2012
- “Debating Geser: The History of a Siberian Epic Poem under Stalin,” *Northeast Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference*, New Jersey, March 2012
- “Promoting Progress on Local Television and Radio Programming in Siberia,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Washington DC, November 2011
- Panel Discussant, “Life and Thought in the Russian Province,” *Northeast Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference*, New York, March 2011
- “Professional Advancement in Soviet Buryatia, 1945-1991,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Los Angeles, November 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, August 2010
- “Buryat Schools in the Late Soviet Period: Teachers, Parents, and Educational Content,” *American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Conference*, Boston, November 2009
- “The Language Issue: Education and Postwar Social Transformation among the Buryats” *American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Conference*, Philadelphia, November 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, March 2008
- “Indigenous People and Russian Colonization and Empire in Central Asia and Siberia,” *National Council for Social Sciences Great Lakes Regional Conference*, Indianapolis, February 2008

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

Grants, Awards, and Honors:

- Morris Grant, 2020
- Saint Joseph’s University Summer Research Grant, 2018
- Saint Joseph’s University Merit Awards for Teaching and Research, 2014
- Saint Joseph’s University Faculty Research and Development Summer Research Grant, 2012
- Social Science Research Council Eurasia Program Dissertation Write-up Fellowship, 2007-2008
- REEI Mellon Endowment Student Grant-in-Aid of Travel to Conferences, 2007 and 2003
- American Councils for International Education Advanced Research Fellowship Award for nine months of dissertation research in Buryatia, Russia, 2004-2005

- Indiana University International Programs Pre-dissertation grant to Buryatia, Russia, 2002
- IREX Mongolian Language Training Grant to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 2001
- Indiana University History Department Fellowship, 2000
- Social Science Research Council Language Training Grant for Latvian, 1999
- Daniel Armstrong Memorial Research Essay Award, 1999
- George M. Pullman Educational Foundation scholarship, 1992-1996
- Magna Cum Laude and departmental honors in both History and Russian at Hunter College, 1996

Public/Invited Talks:

- “Desecration and Destruction: Stalin’s Repression of Buddhism in Buryatia” invited talk to be given at UC Berkeley’s Institute of East Asian Studies, March 2020, **Canceled due to COVID-19**
- New Books Network. Interview with Dr. Amanda Swain about my book, *The Socialist Way of Life in Siberia: Transformation in Buryatia* in March 2017. The audio interview may be found here: <http://newbooksnetwork.com/melissa-chakars-the-socialist-way-of-life-in-siberiatransformation-in-buryatia-central-european-up-2014/>
- “Marking the 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Soviet Union” Panel of two Saint Joseph’s University professors, November 2016
- “Geser: An Epic Poem for Communists, Nationalists, and Pan-Mongolists,” *Indiana University*, June 2016
- *Top of the Mind with Julie Rose, BYU Radio*, Radio interview titled “Nation-building and TV” with Stewart Anderson and Melissa Chakars, June 2015
- *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: 1989 in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, Panel of three Saint Joseph’s Professors, November 2014
- *World War I One Hundred Years Later: Art, Empire, and Ideology* Panel of three Saint Joseph’s Professors, October 2014
- “Chew on This: Faculty Scholarship Series,” Reading and discussion of my book, *The Socialist Way of Life in Siberia: Transformation in Buryatia*, September 2014
- *Perspectives on Russia’s Annexation of Crimea* Panel of three Saint Joseph’s Professors, April 2014
- *The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: The Views from Pyongyang, Tokyo, Moscow*,

- Beijing, Seoul, and Washington*, Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors, April 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, March 2013
 - *Remembering the Cuban Missile Crisis: 50 Years Later*, Panel of three Saint Joseph's Professors, November 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, March 2012
 - *The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Twenty Years On* Panel of Russian studies scholars at Saint Joseph's University, March 2011, gave talk titled, "Women in the Transition from Socialism to Capitalism"
 - *Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Studies Program Talk*, Saint Joseph's University, November 2011, gave talk titled, "Europe for Batu the Hero: The Mongol Empire's Western Campaigns"
 - *Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society*, Saint Joseph's University, April 2011, gave the keynote speech, "Why Study (Russian) History?"
 - *UNCW Slavic Colloquia*, Gave lecture on Soviet education among the Buryats, March 2009
 - *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.
 - *Tibetan Cultural Center*, Bloomington, IN, July 2007, gave lecture about the history, culture, and religion of Buryatia.
 - *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, 2007-2008
 - *Buryat Academy of Sciences (BNTs)*, Ulan-Ude, Russia, December 2005, 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*
- Association for Women in Slavic Studies
- Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies
- American Center for Mongolian Studies
- American Historical Association
- Philadelphia Society of Free Letts

Languages:

Advanced: Russian

Intermediate: Mongolian, Buryat, Latvian

Elementary: Kazakh, French