



Department of Russian and East European Studies

SPUTNIK

ANNUAL STUDENT PUBLICATION | ISSUE 5 | SUMMER 2018

Welcome to REES!

Our department features...

- a diverse group of students and scholars
- language programs for non-heritage and heritage learners
- exciting lecture series and roundtables on a broad variety of cultural and political topics
- talent shows, poetry readings, undergraduate research conferences, student trips
- a family atmosphere (complete with tea and chocolate!)

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*Our seniors who walked under the REES flag at the College Graduation Ceremony.
Read on to learn about the fun they had this past year!*



Congratulations to our Seniors!

This Spring, the Department graduated the following students:

Sydney Adams
Armen Bagdasarov
Irina Bit-Babik
Hunter Brakovec
Nicholas Emery
Zsombor Garzo

Natasha Kadlec
Vivian Kitainda
Benjamin Parker
Nicole Peinado
Liya Wizevich
Edward Zilberbrand

Our faculty and community would like to pass on our best wishes and congratulate our graduating seniors on their achievements!



Sput-nik:

Russian for (literally) 'fellow traveler'

Each of a series of Soviet artificial satellites, the first of which (in 1957) was the first satellite to be placed in orbit

Community Events

REES students and faculty enjoyed a wide array of events, from guest speakers to community celebrations.

The Department's calendar was filled with exciting events this year, including new additions as well as favorite traditions.

During the fall semester, students and faculty were excited to learn about journalism in Russia from **Yevgenia Albats**, editor-in-chief of Russia's *The New Times* and Penn's writer-in-residence, and **Masha Gessen**. Additionally, there were a number of events held regarding the centennial of the October Revolution, including a roundtable discussion with several core and affiliated REES professors.

The spring semester featured the return of some favorite traditions, such as the **Maslenitsa celebration** and the **Slavic Bazaar**, where students have the opportunity to present independent research. When the weather finally warmed, the Department also came together for the annual **REES barbecue** and enjoyed food courtesy of grillmaster **Dr. Kevin Platt**. On the day before Commencement, seniors and their parents gathered at the annual **champagne reception**, where they were presented with books to remind them of their time at Penn.



SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES, JOINED BY REES FACULTY, CELEBRATED GRADUATION AT THE CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION.

Lada Vassilieva, instructor of the evening section of RUSS001, and her students attended "The Sleeping Beauty" ballet on October 12, 2017

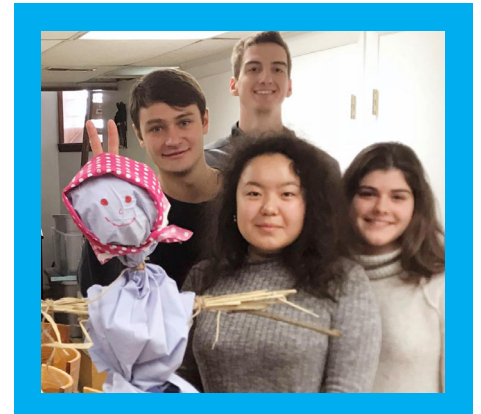


SPOTLIGHT: MASLENITSA

BY DJAMILIA NAZYROVA AND MARIA BOURLATSKAYA

On a sunny Sunday in February, faculty and students gathered together to celebrate Maslenitsa and learn about Russian traditions and customs.

Maslenitsa, also known as "Cheesefare week" or "Crepe week," is a traditional holiday of Eastern Slavs, celebrated on the last week before the Great Lent when eggs and dairy products are still permitted. Maslenitsa embraces both Christian and pagan elements, and traces back to the ancient Sun festival, which marked the end of win-



ter season in the agrarian society. In traditional Maslenitsa celebrations, the advent of Spring is welcomed by street festivities, burning the straw effigy of Maslenitsa, and cooking blini (thin yeast pancakes), the symbol of the sun's warmth and fertility.

At our Maslenitsa feast, we cooked blini and various fillings from scratch, made the Maslenitsa effigy, and had a wonderful time speaking Russian and getting to know each other.



Activities and Achievements

The Department is also excited to showcase the academic endeavors of our community, from extracurricular events to student and faculty accomplishments.

READING POETRY TOGETHER AT REES

BY DJAMILIA NAZYROVA

Reading poetry as a group is a captivating experience that stimulates creative thinking, imagination and emotional response. While enjoying poetry may seem like a private affair, a group reading could reveal more of a poem's meanings and nuances than a solitary reader can glean. Collaborative investigation of the poetic text, which is dark and enigmatic at the beginning, could suddenly lead to a chain of mutual insights and intuitions, as if the group was solving a mystery.

This sort of slow reading outside the classroom might seem an impossible luxury that the intensive life of a Penn student cannot allow but we found an hour once every three or four weeks to delve into the semantic conundrums of such giants of 20th century poetry as Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, and Boris Pasternak.

Poetry Reading Group was opened in Spring 2018 to everyone interested in interpreting and analyzing poetic texts. The group met in two iterations: one to read Russian poetry in the original and the other to read various poetic texts with parallel translation. There is a plan to continue meetings in the Fall of 2018, to which everyone will be invited.

REES STUDENTS SHINE IN ACTR ESSAY CONTEST

BY MARIA ALLEY

This year, on February 14, when the rest of the world was busy celebrating Valentine's Day, Russian-language students from first to fourth year participated in the 2018 Annual ACTR National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest. This year's topic, "My city," inspired some truly amazing essays. In this year's contest, there were 1,291 essays submitted from 60 universities, colleges, and institutions across the nation. Three judges in Moscow read each essay

and independently ranked them.

Two Penn students, **Michael (Сева) Ehart** and **Tathagat (Влад) Bhatia** were awarded the silver (second place nationwide) and bronze (third place nationwide) medals in the beginner's category respectively. Well done and very well deserved!

We want to thank all student-participants for making this event a tremendous success this

Faculty Spotlight:

Dr. D. Brian Kim

Beginning in July, Dr. Kim will be REES's newest Assistant Professor. He is joining us from Stanford University, where he earned his PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures and served as a postdoctoral teaching fellow. His research looks at the literary and cultural connections between Russia, Western Europe, and East Asia. Welcome, Dr. Kim!



year and for their contribution to the field of Russian. We hope that this experience will encourage all students, both seasoned and new, to continue their study of the Russian language and culture and to represent Penn in the future contests!



NATASHA KADLEC

Luba Zinkowsky Friedman Fund
Slavic Department Prize for Excellence in Russian Studies



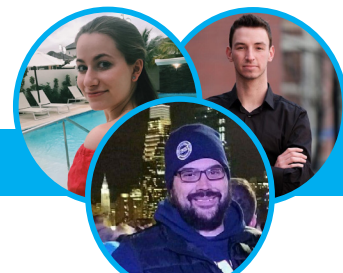
VIVIAN KITAINDA

Winner, 2018 ACTR Laureate



SYDNEY ADAMS

Penn REES Department Essay Prize



NICOLE VERECZKEY
BEAU STASO
CHRISTOPHER TREMOGLIE

Recipients of Luba Zinkowsky
Friedman Student Travel Fund
Awards

2018-2019 Preview

Fall 2018 Courses

Language Courses

EEUR 121 | Elementary Hungarian I (Mizsei)
EEUR 123 | Intermediate Hungarian I (Mizsei)
RUSS 001 | Elementary Russian I (Nazyrova/Alley/Vassilieva)
RUSS 003 | Intermediate Russian I (Alley/Peeney)
RUSS 311 | Advanced Russian I (Peeney)
RUSS 360 | Russian for Heritage Speakers I (Nazyrova)
RUSS 420 | Contemporary Russia Through Film
RUSS 474 | Anton Chekhov: Love and Death in Russian Culture (Nazyrova)
SLAV 501 | Elementary Polish I (Dziedzic)
SLAV 505 | Polish for Heritage Speakers I (Dziedzic)
SLAV 530 | Elementary Czech I
SLAV 590 | Elementary Ukrainian I (Rudnytsky)
SLAV 592 | Intermediate Ukrainian I (Rudnytsky)

Courses Taught in English

EEUR009 | Intro to Russia and Eurasia: Histories, Cultures, Societies (Platt)
EEUR 026 | Behind the Iron Curtain (Ghodsee)
EEUR 135 | Cold War: Global History (Nathans)
EEUR 153 | Communism (Orenstein)
EEUR 160 | Sex and Socialism (Ghodsee)
EEUR 164 | Russian and East European Film from the October Revolution to World War II (Todorov)
RUSS 111 | Poetics of Screenplay: the Art of Plotting (Todorov)
RUSS 145 | Masterpieces of 19th Century Russian Literature
RUSS 189 | Soviet & Post-Soviet Economics (Vekker)
RUSS 220 | Russia and the West
RUSS 518 | Old Church Slavonic: History, Language, Manuscripts (Verkholtantsev)

REES offers a major in Russian and East European Studies (REES) as well as minors in Russian Studies (RUSS) and East Central European Studies (ECES). Read more about our programs at rees.sas.upenn.edu/undergraduate.

Please see the department's web page at rees.sas.upenn.edu or PennInTouch for detailed information about courses and meeting times.

Student Reflections

"Communism (EEUR 153) perfectly blends political theory, comparative politics, and history to explain where Communism came from, why it attracted so many people and celebrated so many triumphs, and why it stagnated and collapsed."

-Ben Parker C'18

"Cold War (EEUR 135) is an excellent overview of the Cold War and the actors involved. This class is essential for anyone who wants to understand modern Russia or the state of the modern world generally."

-Ethan Woolley C'20

"Soviet & Post-Soviet Economics (RUSS 189) with Dr. Vekker is the best way to learn about the region's economics at Penn. The class thoroughly covers the Soviet and Russian systems, and I've applied what I've learned in this class to all of my other courses."

-Sydney Adams C'18

Upcoming Events

Weekly | Russian Tea & Conversation
Spring 2019 | Slavic Bazaar: Annual Undergraduate Research Conference
 ...and many more to be announced!

Thank you to our SPUTNIK 2018 contributors

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