

# REEIfication

ROBERT F. BYRNES RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN INSTITUTE



## DIRECTOR'S GREETING

SARAH D. PHILLIPS, DIRECTOR

REEI started off the fall 2022 semester with the good news from the U.S. Department of Education that our application for Title VI National Resource Center (NRC) and FLAS funding for the 2022-26 cycle was approved. We have many exciting initiatives and partnerships planned for the next four years, with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the REE region; global indigenous studies; Russia's war on Ukraine; and more.

Our NRC grant will fund initiatives with HBCUs and MSIs across the country, including Howard University (where funds will support instruction in Russian language and Russian politics) and Hampton University (where funds will support guest speakers on REE topics at the Hampton School of Business).

FLAS fellowships over the next four years will provide valuable funds for IU students to study languages and cultures of the REE region while advancing towards their degrees.

We are grateful to all the colleagues who supported our Title VI application with ideas, networks, and valuable feedback on our proposal—we could not have done it without you!

Things have been busier than usual at REEI this semester (and that's saying a lot!), with a lot of our efforts focused on the launch of the [IU-Ukraine Nonresidential Scholars Program](#) (see article in this issue) and laying the groundwork for the next four years of Title VI engagement. REEI is also proud to introduce our new undergraduate credential—the [Russian and East European Area Studies Certificate](#). Activities through the [Russian Studies Workshop](#) proceed apace, including a lecture series, a [documentary film series](#), and support efforts for graduate students in Russian Studies: [a graduate writing group](#), a [methods training workshop](#), and a fellowship program.

REEI's longtime Associate Director and Outreach Coordinator Mark Trotter has been out of the office on medical leave this semester, and we wish Mark a full and speedy recovery.

Meantime, our intrepid staff of three new Graduate Assistants—Lindsey Grutchfield (Outreach), Daniel Schumick (Communications) and Caroline Tatum (Curriculum) actively advance REEI's mission by compiling and sharing event calendars, maintaining the REEI website, developing outreach programs on the REE region for students, teachers, and the broader community, assisting with curricular innovations, interfacing with other National Resource Centers at IU and nationwide, and more. They are an incredible team!

Student Services Coordinator Elliott Nowacky is working overtime in Mark Trotter's absence and we are grateful for his exceptional efforts during this busy time.

This issue of REEIfication includes several faculty profiles, an alumni profile, a profile of the 2022-23 US Army War College Fellow, a course profile, a feature on "Hoosier Connections," and more. We encourage [alumni](#), [faculty](#), and [students](#) to submit your news so we may feature your updates and accomplishments in future issues. We look forward to hearing from you!

## FALL 2022

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**Newsletter Editors:**  
**Lindsey Grutchfield and**  
**Daniel Schumick**

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## REDISCOVERING 20TH CENTURY MODERNISM:

## A LECTURE FROM MIROSLAV SHKANDRIJ

DANIEL SCHUMICK

Ukraine is home to many of the world's most influential modernists. However, until fairly recently many of these artists were labeled by museums around the world as Russians. In the wake of Ukrainian independence, Ukraine has rediscovered and reclaimed Ukrainian Modernism. One scholar aiding the reclamation effort is Myroslav Shkandrij, a professor emeritus of Slavic studies at the University of Manitoba.

On October 28, 2022, Professor Shkandrij came to Indiana University to speak about the rediscovery of Ukrainian Modernism and comment on the Eskanazi Museum of Art's Ukrainian collection. This talk came about after Professor Svitlana Melnyk engaged the Eskanazi Museum about the possibility of showcasing some of the museum's Ukrainian art. The Museum, in coordination with the Robert F. Byrnes Russian and East European Studies Institute and the IU Slavic Languages and Literature Department, pulled out a number of works and invited Professor Shkandrij to speak.

Professor Melnyk began the talk by acknowledging that "today, it is very important to spread the news not just about Ukraine's fight but also about its Ukraine's accomplishments. One such accomplishment is the Ukrainian artistic tradition." According to Professor Shkandrij some of the biggest names in the Avant Garde world were Ukrainians, and they said they

were Ukrainian. Such artists include, among others, Kazimir Malevich, Aleksander Archipenko, David Burliuk, Aleksandra Ekster, and Mykhailo Boychuk.

Until recently, many Ukrainian artists were recognized as Russian artists. For example, Kazimir Malevich's work reflected late 19th and early 20th century Ukrainian village aesthetic, particularly contrasting the color of village clothing as compared to those of the factory workers. Malevich's art was distinctly Ukrainian, and Malevich proudly claimed his Ukrainian heritage. Nevertheless, Malevich was, and still is, claimed by Russia as a Russian artist. His art was even used by the Soviet Union in exhibitions throughout 1989-90 to display the "great Russian soul."

Today, artists like Malevich are being rediscovered as part of a revival of interest in Ukrainian modernism. This revival is not only about reclaiming the artists nationality, but also reconnecting with the artists' works and their distinctly Ukrainian influences. For example, many contemporary Ukrainians are noticing the influence of Ukrainian village life in the works of famous artists like Archipenko, Burliuk, and Boichuk.

This revival in Ukrainian art and heritage has also led to a rediscovery of Ukrainian Modernism's Jewish Connection. The Kultur-Lige school in Kiev, for instance, was the epicenter of Jewish art in Eastern Europe in the early 20th century. The school disseminated Yiddish culture through art throughout Europe.

As the war in Ukraine continues, the importance of re-claiming and reinterpreting Ukrainian art has become an important part of solidarity with Ukraine. Museums around the world have begun the process of reattributing artists from "Russian" or "Russian/Ukrainian" to "Ukrainian."

While at home, Ukrainians have taken pre-existing Ukrainian works and re-interpreted them. One famous statue, created to glorify the working class of the Soviet Union has now been re-interpreted as a symbol of the strength of the Ukrainian worker. In his concluding remarks, Professor Shkandrij noted that this symbol of the Ukrainian worker is "facing East. He is facing the invasion from the East."

**REEI SPONSORED EVENTS**

**FALL 2022**

**September**

“Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Village Heads in Polish Villages during the German Occupation and the Holocaust.” (talk, Professor Łukasz Krzyżanowski, University of Warsaw)

“Unpacking “Traditional Values” in Russia’s Conservative Turn: Gender, Sexuality, and the Soviet Legacy” (talk, Valerie Sperling, Alexandra Novitskaya, Janet Elise Johnson, and Lisa Sundstrom)

“Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City in Poland” (talk, Professor Łukasz Krzyżanowski)

“Night Without End: New Scholarship on the Holocaust in Poland” (talk, Jan Grabowski, University of Ottawa)

“Hungary Between Two Empires: 1526-1711” (talk, Professor Géza Pálffy)

“An Old Realm in a New Monarchy: Habsburg Coronation in Early Modern Hungary” (talk, Professor Géza Pálffy)

Lotus Festival (various bands)

“Looking Over the Brink: The Relationship Between Nuclear Crises and Arms Control” (talk, Dr. Sarah Bidgood, Middlebury Institute of International Studies)

“Biopolitics and Disability: A Gender Analysis of Medical Discourse about Able-Bodiedness in Interwar Romania”(talk, Maria Bucur and Alicja Fidowicz)

Graduate Methods Training Workshop (workshop)

**October**

“Gay Foreign Agents and Queer Dissidents: The Sexual Geopolitics of Post-Soviet LGBTQ Migration” (talk, Alexandra Novitskaya)

Volunteers for the People: The Leisure-Cultural Context of Transylvanian Hungarian Populism (talk, Mark Loustau)

**REEI AT ASEEEES**

LINDSEY GRUTCHFIELD

November 10th to 13th marks the 54th annual ASEEEES (Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies) conference, held this year in Chicago. A number of REEI-affiliated faculty and students will participate, and REEI will host a reception at the conference as usual.

The ASEEEES conference, held every fall, is the leading conference held in the US for the field of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies. “This international forum makes possible a broad exchange of information and ideas, stimulating further work and sustaining the intellectual vitality of the field,” according to the ASEEEES website.

The theme of this year’s conference will be ‘precarity.’ REEI-affiliates will be presenters as well as panel and roundtable participants on themes ranging from Almaty’s architecture (Gardner Bovington) to the politics of heritage in Ukraine (Iryna Voloshyna), and everywhere in between.

A full list of IU scholars at ASEEEES can be found [here](#).

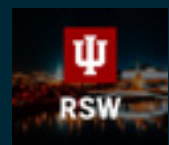
Funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York

***Violent Affections: Queer Sexuality, Techniques of Power, and Law in Russia***



A book discussion with author Dr. Alexander Kondakov (University College Dublin) and RSW Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Alexandra Novitskaya

**TUESDAY, NOV 8**  
**4:30 PM**  
**GA2067 + Zoom**



**REEI Sponsored Events cont'd**

RSW Film Screening: *Life of Ivanna* (film screening)

RSW Film Screen: *Garagenvolk* (film screening)

Eskenazi Guest Lecture and Art Viewing: Ukrainian Art (talk, Professor Miroslav Shkandrij)

**November**

*Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812* (theatre production)

"Violent Affections: Queer Sexuality, Techniques of Power, and Law in Russia" (Talk, Professor Alexander Kondakov, University College Dublin, Alexandra Novitskaya)

**IU-UKRAINE NONRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM LAUNCHES**

SARAH D. PHILLIPS

REEI and Indiana University stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Thanks to the IU-Ukraine Nonresidential Scholars Program, 32 scholars in Ukraine will be able to continue their research, writing and teaching supported by a stipend, library access, and opportunities for collaboration and professional development during the 2022/23 academic year.

Faculty from across the IU Bloomington campus have generously agreed to partner with the nonresidential fellows, and some also contributed funds to support the initiative. The nonresidential visiting scholars and IU faculty partners will attend monthly virtual workshops

to share work in progress and build intellectual community. The nonresidential scholars will also be invited to virtually present their work at the 2023 4th Annual Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Studies Conference at IU.

REEI and the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies will administer the IU-Ukraine Nonresidential Scholars Program with administrative and financial support from across campus, including the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for International Affairs, the Kelley School of Business, IU Libraries, Maurer School of Law, School of Education, Office of the Vice President for Research, Borns Jewish Studies Program, Department of Germanic Studies, and the Food Systems Studies Emerging Areas of Research program.


We at REEI are gratified to coordinate this activity in support of the scholars and institutions of higher education in Ukraine who have shown such resilience in spite of the violence of war. See a full list of the scholars and their research interests on our website [here](#).

**Nonresidential Scholar Spotlight****Hanna Bondarenko**

PhD in History, Associate Professor at the Institute of International Education V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Since 2016, teaching: "History of Ukraine", "Culture and Traditions of Ukraine", "History of Kharkiv region", "History of Kharkiv University". She participated in the following international projects: "Kharkiv as a Multicultural City of Eastern Ukraine: Advantages, Contradictions, Challenges and Prospects for Development (1991-2020)", funded by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (2020); "Practices of the Self-Representation of Multinational Cities in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Era" (2018-2021) support of the Kowalski Program and the Program for the Study of Modern Ukraine of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta (<https://cityface.org.ua/>); "Integration and Adaptation of Foreign Students / INTERADIS Erasmus+.



# CHECK OUT REEI'S NEW UNDERGRADUATE CREDENTIAL!



**TO DECLARE OR FOR  
MORE INFORMATION,  
CONTACT OLGA BUEVA  
AT [OBUEVA@IU.EDU](mailto:OBUEVA@IU.EDU)**

## AREA CERTIFICATE

**RUSSIAN AND EASTERN  
EUROPEAN (REE) STUDIES**

**24 CREDITS IN REE HISTORY  
AND GEOGRAPHY, SOCIAL  
SCIENCES, LITERATURE AND  
CULTURE, PLUS  
INTERDISCIPLINARY  
ELECTIVES**


**MORE THAN A MINOR**

- Intermediate Proficiency in an REE Foreign Language
- Independent Research
- Pre-Professional Training

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Prerequisite - 2 years of an REE language

**CAREERS IN ACADEMIA,  
GOVERNMENT SERVICE,  
NGOS, AND NON-PROFITS**



**HAMILTON LUGAR**  
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
Robert F. Byrnes Russian and East European Institute

## AMBASSADOR JAMES F. COLLINS: A LIFE OF SERVICE



*Ambassador James F. Collins (pictured above with his wife, Dr. Naomi Collins) is a 2022 recipient of IU's Distinguished Alumni Service Award, IU's highest award for alumni. He attended IU from 1961-1967 and studied in REEI as well as the History Department. The following article is reprinted with permission from the IU Alumni Association's press release about the award ceremony.*

Ambassador James F. Collins is one of the U.S.'s leading authorities on Russia, the former Soviet Union, and the countries of East Europe and Eurasia. A retired career member of the Senior Foreign Service, he is presently senior fellow and former director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

During a broad and distinguished diplomatic career overseas and in Washington, D.C., Collins served as the U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation from 1997 to 2001, as well as previously serving in a variety of diplomatic roles in Moscow. Collins's other postings included assignments in Jordan and Turkey, in addition to a number of senior administrative positions in the Department of State and other government offices in Washington, D.C.

He has received extensive recognition and numerous awards from professional and academic institutions for his contributions, including the U.S. Department of State's Distinguished Service Award and Distinguished Honor Award in 1993, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1995, and the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service in 2016. He holds honorary degrees from several institutions, including IU, and is also an honorary professor at Moscow State University.

Collins has also served on boards and advisory panels of organizations concerned with U.S. foreign policy and American relations with Russia and Eurasia and is a frequent speaker and occasional contributor to publications on Russia and Eurasia. He has appeared often on radio and television in the U.S. and Russia in connection with developments in Russia and Eurasia. *(Photo: IU Alumni Association)*

## STUDENT AND ALUMNI NEWS

**George Andrei** (PhD, History), presented at the IU Department of History's European History Workshop, on "I am a poor man with a family': Rangers, Social Welfare, and Monitor Networks in the Forests of Interwar Zlatna, Romania."

**Filip Mitričević** (PhD, History) won a Judges Choice Award at NYU Jordan Center's third annual Graduate Student Essay Competition for his piece, "Searching for Missing Compassion: Serbia and the War in Ukraine."

**Antonina B. Semivolos** (MA/JD, 2014, currently IU Media School) will have her work on facial recognition cameras and their legality in Moscow and Russia featured in the *Cardozo Journal of Equal Rights and Social Justice*.

**John C. Stanko** (PhD, Political Science) will publish his article on Russia-China relations in the Russian Far East in *Global Studies Quarterly*. He was also a participant in the Russian Studies Workshop Graduate Methods Training Workshop last week, presented at the Wisconsin Russia Project Young Scholars Conference in June, and will present at ASEES in November.

**Laszlo Szabolcs** (PhD, History) gave a presentation entitled "Window unto the World? The Institute of Cultural Relations during the 1960s-70s" at "Kádár-period, Kádárism, Limited Agency: A Hungarian Model?," a conference organized by the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Miskolc. The upcoming winter issue of *Hungarian Studies Review* will feature a historical document that he discovered during his dissertation research-- a detailed travel diary written by Robert F. Byrnes about his visit to state socialist Hungary in 1962-- which will be published with Szabolacs' introduction and analysis.

**Iryna Voloshyna** (PhD, Folklore and Ethnomusicology) was awarded the inaugural Presidential Award for exceptional meritorious service at the American Folklore Society annual meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Graduate and undergraduate students affiliated with REEI are welcome to submit their recent academic accomplishments for inclusion in upcoming REEI newsletters via our [Student News Survey](#). REEI-affiliated alumni are welcome to submit their accomplishments for inclusion in upcoming REEI newsletters via our [Alumni News Survey](#).



REEI is pleased to welcome our new MA cohort. From left: Elijah Kelsey, Ryan Lumsden, Lindsey Grutchfield, Victoria Henretty, Brandis Malone, and Bossan Abdyeva. (Photo: Lindsey Grutchfield)

## CLASS PROFILE

### ACCESSING CENTRAL AISA: DR. MARIANNE KAMP'S POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN CENTRAL ASIA CLASS

BOSSAN ABDYYEVA

*Politics and Society in Central Asia* (CEUS-R 315/515), taught by Dr. Marianne Kamp, is popular among students for its engaging and unique style.

Since this class is a shared space between graduate and undergraduates, there is a unique exchange of thoughts and reflections about readings that allows for students to experience different perspectives. The readings are diverse in the many scholars that we have studied.

Dr. Kamp provides supplemental materials for the class, like tourism websites. Additionally, there are special seminar days where Dr. Kamp brings in guest speakers and traditional items from Central Asia for us to study.

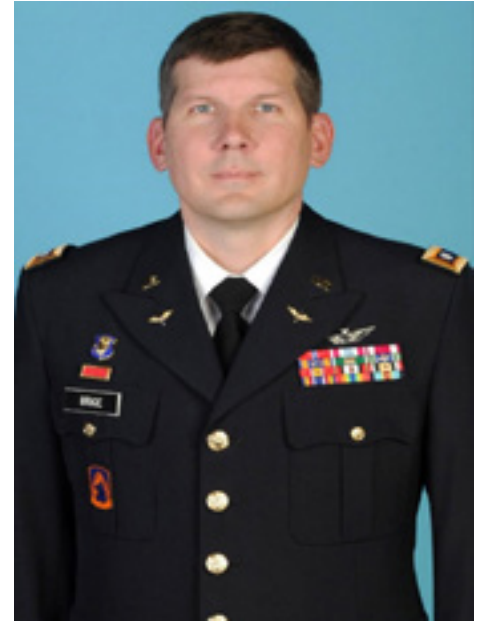
One student said about guest speakers, "having a guest from Central Asia was very helpful in getting a local perspective regarding the foreign and domestic affairs of a nation. I learned a lot from our speaker [Professor Alisher Sobirov] about the religious system in Uzbekistan and how it is practiced today. I liked how he spoke in Russian, which was an important factor in making us feel like we were in the region."

Dr. Kamp is an exceptional professor and a key resource for this course because she has been in the Central Asian region and has personal experience to draw upon. Another student said, "I love Professor Kamp's class because we have discussions every class period. Such sessions help me engage with reading materials a lot and I enjoy listening to different thoughts, approaches, and topics."

Personally, being from Central Asia, I believe that Dr. Kamp is able to explain cultural and community values in a respectful manner which stays true to each culture we are studying.

## LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAN BRICE

REEI is pleased to welcome our AY '22-'23 Strategic Russian and East European Fellow Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Dan Brice to the Hamilton Lugar School and REEI. He is a US Army Russian Foreign Area Officer and entered active-duty service in 1994. LTC Brice is one of 80 officers taking academic and language coursework this year at universities across the United States in partial fulfillment of their US Army War College Fellow educational requirements. He'll be with REEI through May of 2023.



Prior to his arrival to IU in mid-July, LTC Brice to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, where he served as a New Start Nuclear Inspection Team Chief. Previous assignments include Russia Military Advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander-Europe, SHAPE, Belgium; Assistant Army Attaché, Defense Attaché Office, Yerevan, Armenia; and Company Commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 3-159th Attack Recon Battalion in Illesheim, Germany and Basra, Iraq.

LTC Brice's formal military education over the pasts 24+ years is extensive. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff Officer Course, the Joint Military Attaché School, the Russian Language Course at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, and the Aviation Officer Captain's Career Courses.

LTC Brice has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and a Master of Arts degree in international security studies from the Universität der Bundeswehr in Munich, Germany.



## WELCOMING DR. CLARE GRIFFIN TO REEI

LINDSEY GRUTCHFIELD

Dr. Clare Griffin is a new IU faculty member with a focus on the old—specifically, on the peculiarities of the early modern world, in Russia and beyond.

Her new book, *Mixing Medicines: The Global Drug Trade and Early Modern Russia*, is an exploration of the material culture of medicine in early modern Russia. Each chapter focuses on a different type of medicine, and Dr. Griffin draws on often difficult to find research materials, such as prescriptions, to examine the place that these medicines had in early modern Russia.

One particularly interesting issue that Dr. Griffin explores in *Mixing Medicines* is that of American plants in Russia in the 17th century. Tobacco was banned in Russia until the 18th century, and this was prior to Alaskan products making their appearance in the Russian court, so the presence of plants like sassafras is a historical oddity, according to Dr. Griffin.



“We’re not supposed to have American goods in Russia by that point,” she said.

Dr. Griffin’s appointment is shared between the History department and REEI. She is currently teaching a second eight-week course entitled *Russian Expansionism: Propaganda and History*. “The university wanted someone doing pre-Soviet history, and so the issue then is ‘how do we get students to come do this kind of history?’” she said.

To that end, the course highlights current Russian propaganda featuring historical events and digs into the history behind it. “If you look at the propaganda regarding the invasion of Ukraine, if you look at a lot of the talking heads about this, they keep going back to East Slavic history,” she said.

Dr. Griffin also looks forward to working with IU’s graduate students, seeing what projects they are working on and finding how she can help. Next semester, she will be teaching a graduate-level course on global histories, and how regional studies scholars can position themselves into bigger, global issues.

As a newcomer to Bloomington, Dr. Griffin has quickly immersed herself in life outside of the university, becoming a member of Beth Shalom Congregation and a writing group, *Women Writing for Change*. She loves Bloomington’s street fairs, the fact that there is always something to do, and the ever-present deer.

Like others in her field, Dr. Griffin’s work has been fundamentally disrupted by the war in Ukraine. Much of her work would normally take her to access the archives in Moscow and partner with professional contacts in Russia—a virtual impossibility now, when even requesting digital copies from the archive might violate international sanctions, and any formal connections with Russian universities could put them in danger.

There is also the toll that the war has taken on research materials themselves, like in the case of a 16th century Old Church Slavonic herbal which Dr. Griffin used in her research for *Mixing Medicines*. “It survived the time of troubles in Moscow—it was kind of found in the rubble, supposedly,” she said. “It may not have survived Putin’s war.”

Even Dr. Griffin’s personal relationships have been affected. “Everyone is just kind of in this constant state of shock. It’s horrific for the Ukrainians; every Russian I know is very anti-Putin, very anti-war, and I get messages from people like, ‘we’re still friends and colleagues, right? You’ll still speak to me, right?’ Every single aspect of Slavic studies has been just kind of broken by the war.” (*Photo: Clare Griffin*)

## A MARGINAL DISCIPLINE: PROFESSOR WATERS' STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW



RYAN LUMSDEN

Timothy William Waters is a professor of International Law at Indiana University's Maurer School of Law. He writes frequently on topics ranging from the laws of war, secession, changes in state's borders, and international criminal law.

Prof. Waters' interests are war crimes, the changes in states' borders and how they are understood broadly. He got interested in these topics during the Yugoslav conflicts in the 1990s, saying "I've always been interested in that region and that's how I've gotten involved with the Russian and Eastern European Institute."

Prof. Waters currently teaches a new class on the war in Ukraine, in which he hopes students will see the ways this conflict shapes the practices and expectations of law and order in the international sphere. Along with his other classes, he hopes to highlight common themes.

"A consistent theme across them is seeing international law not as a doctrinal field but one that is embedded in and governed by politics, so I try to bring that out to show how marginal this discipline is," he says, "and why that actually makes it a really interesting field."

Additionally, Prof. Waters is currently working on a project regarding judicial secrecy. The project aims to see how the International Criminal Court uses secrecy and confidentiality in their internal processes, looking at how secrecy affects the ability to pass judgment. It also looks to explain when do people testify in closed sessions, why documents are treated as confidential, and what the processes are for deciding confidentiality.

Before joining the faculty at IU, Prof. Waters worked for multiple organizations such as the Peace Corps, the Open Society Institute, Human Rights Watch, OSCE, and at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. When asked about how his experiences shaped his interests and current work, he talked about seeing the events of the late 1980s unfurl, and the desire to see the region where those events were happening. From an opportunity in Hungary with the Peace Corps, he became interested in the events occurring in Yugoslavia.

Prof. Waters said about the future of international law, "It's true of many academic disciplines, people think about their fields changing in interesting ways. With that being said, I think there's a case that international law can be particularly susceptible to the idea that things are in permanent crisis. It may be due to the uniquely marginal nature of the field."

He went on to outline how changes in the perception of international law have changed after the Cold War and through the decades that followed. In the 10 to 15 years after the end of the Cold War, internationalism was a dominant ideology, and at present that has declined, according to scholars in the field. Prof. Waters said that he believes we are heading back to a multipolar world, which could put further limits on international law's usefulness. *(Photo: Juliet Dervin)*

## UNCOVERING DISABILITIES AND GENDER IN EASTERN EUROPE: THE WORK OF DR. MARIA BUCUR

LINDSEY GRUTCHFIELD

Dr. Maria Bucur's research interests have changed over time, but she has always had an abiding interest in studying marginalized communities, from her past work on the history of eugenics to her current work on disability.

"I want to get us to think about people who are left on the margins of society, who are virtually invisible," she said, "and what that does to those categories of folks, but also what that does to how we understand responsibility of the state, how we understand citizenship, how we make knowledge."

According to Dr. Bucur, able-bodiedness, mental and physical, is still the default framework for how a lot of knowledge is made. Her current work on disability allows her to engage with questions that are much bigger than those around eugenics in the 1920s and 30s, the period she primarily studies.

"What I'm interested now is to look through the lens of both the lives that people with disabilities live and how those around them understand those lives, as a way to interrogate what it is that we understand as the wellbeing of a society," she says.

To that end, Dr. Bucur will complete a five-month fellowship at the New Europe College in Bucharest during the spring semester this year. There, she will study discourse around disability in public materials, such as educational documents and the press.

Apart from her upcoming fellowship, Dr. Bucur is currently organizing a conference with her working group colleagues from the United States and Poland, which will take place this summer. She will be back at IU next fall, and she hopes to teach a graduate class focused on gender and Marxism next year.

In addition to disability, Dr. Bucur also remains interested in questions of reproductive control and misogyny, not only as a gender studies scholar and historian, but as someone who grew up in communist Romania. She remains affected by the tragic consequences of the near total abortion ban there, especially as reproductive rights issues come to a head in the United States.



"Of course we can't repeat the past, what happens in the future will be what happens in the future. But I think the extent of trauma that women in Romania suffered for two generations is something that we really need to be cognizant about," she says of Indiana's current climate with regard to reproductive issues. "It's going to demand resources, it's going to have serious impact, and it's going to shape what Indiana University is going to look like in the future." (Photo: Maria Bucur)

## FROM SIDESTAGE TO CENTERSTAGE: DR. LASZLO BORHI'S CAREER IN ACADEMIA

VICTORIA HENRETTY

Dr. Laszlo Borhi started his academic career at a crucial point in Russian, East European and Eurasian history. After beginning his doctoral degrees in the early 1990's, Dr. Borhi faced a process of change in Hungarian academia. "Certain discourse was absolutely not allowed," explained Dr. Borhi, "only that the Soviets allowed us to begin on the road to liberation. Anyone who challenged this had a problem."

Dr. Borhi's research explores the origins of the Cold War, and his defense of his dissertations in the 1990s came with much fraught debate. "There was public debate on my dissertation and many, frankly, communist historians were outraged. All of my defenses were quite difficult because I like to ask the big questions," said Dr. Borhi.



This year Dr. Borhi published *Strategies of Survival: Life and Death between Hitler and Stalin*, which explores some of these big questions. Each chapter of the book investigates how ordinary people survived terrible situations, such as concentration camps. "I take a look at civilians in the camp, camp society, asking ultimately about personal responsibility. What matters more: the individual or the structure?" said Dr. Borhi.

The historical lessons that come out of tragedy are especially salient as a war continues in Ukraine. For Dr. Borhi, the violence in Ukraine can be traced to historical patterns. "This current war gives me an opportunity to explain why it is important to understand a little bit of history," said Dr. Borhi.

Since the late nineties Dr. Borhi's research has been warning about this type of aggression by Russia. Dr. Borhi explained that the history of international relations follows the laws of physics: every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

This view of history stems from his years dedicating himself to his studies, but also from his lived experiences in Soviet Hungary. Lessons on totalitarianism are no longer just theoretical when taking a course with Dr. Borhi. "My advantage is that when I teach about totalitarian regimes, I lived in one," said Dr. Borhi.

Understanding themes of complacency are crucial in addressing contemporary issues. Students can learn more about these topics next semester in the courses Soviet American Rivalry and War Between Hitler and Stalin. In his current course on the history of international politics from Napoleon to Putin he points out that wars can occur that nobody wanted in the first place. "World War I will tell you that it was a conflict that nobody wanted," explained Dr. Borhi, "the world ended up in it because they were complacent."

Despite the fact that Dr. Borhi's research was initially met with reservation today his work is highly praised in the U.S. and in Hungary and is a part of the canon when teaching Hungarian history. The trajectory of Dr. Borhi's career from the end of the Soviet Union to 2022 reflects larger trends in post-Soviet studies, a growing curiosity about totalitarian regimes, and how their history molds our contemporary politics. *(Photo: Laszlo Borhi)*

## FACULTY NEWS

**Lazlo Borhi** (Central Eurasian Studies) is the editor of the Studies in Hungarian History series at Indiana University Press, which published two volumes in 2022. His monograph in Hungarian, *Strategies of Survival: Life and Death under Nazi and Communist Dictatorships, 1944-1953*, was also published this year by the Center for Humanities in Budapest.

**Maria Bucur** (History) published “The Little Entente of Women as Transnational Ethno-Nationalist Community. Spotlight on Romania,” in *Aspasia* and “Indiana’s Abortion Ban: Lessons from Dystopia,” in *Against the Current*. She also presented at *Nationalism, Populism, Fascism, and Democratic (In)Stability in Eastern Europe: Historical Continuities and Transformations*, a conference hosted by the New Europe College in Bucharest, as well as for the project *Disability Studies in Eastern Europe*, hosted at Jagiellonian University, Krakow.

**Halina Goldberg** (Musicology) organized the “Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Johannes Brahms” concert and symposium, featuring a wide array of performers and speakers.

**Frank L. Nierzwicki Jr.** (O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs) met with Anna Plater-Zyberk, Director of Polish Academy of Sciences’ International Cooperation Department to discuss expanding joint research opportunities with IU.

**K. Andrea Rusnock** (IU South Bend, Women’s and Gender Studies) received an American Councils Title VIII Research and Language Training Program Grant in Russia, as well as a Faculty Research and Development Grant from IU South Bend.

**Tatiana Saburova** (History) published her co-edited (with Svetlana Gorshenina, Sergey Abashin and Bruno De Cordier) book *Photographing Central Asia: From the Periphery of the Russian Empire to Global Presence* in August, supported by a 2021 SHERA Publication Grant. She also has a chapter in that book, entitled “From Siberia to Turkestan: Semirechie in Writings and Photographs of Vasili V. Sapozhnikov.” Additionally, Saburova received an Indiana University Summer Writing-Teaching grant for summer 2022 and a Summer Incubator grant from the Institute for Digital Arts & Humanities.

**Regina Smyth**, (Political Science), was a panelist at this year’s PONARS Annual Fall Conference, held at George Washington University.

**Russell Scott Valentino** (Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures) served on the selection committee for the National Book Awards in the translated literature category. In 2022, he also published “Giving Words to Violence: Translating ‘Ukrainian Fury’” in *The Ryder* magazine and a review of Caterina Bernardini’s *Transnational Modernity and the Italian Reinvention of Walt Whitman, 1870-1945* in *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*.

*REEI affiliate faculty are welcome to submit their recent (within the last semester) publications, grants, or other professional accomplishments for inclusion in upcoming REEI newsletters via our [REEI Faculty News Survey](#).*

## HOOSIER CONNECTIONS

### CROATIA IN INDIANA: THE LIFE AND WORK OF IVAN MESTROVIC

MARIE RIDER

Sculptor, painter, architect, and political activist Ivan Mestrovic was born on August 15, 1883, and died on August 16, 1962. While he grew up in Vrpolje, Croatia, he lived throughout Europe and finally settled in the United States, where he died in South Bend, Indiana. Although he had little formal education in his early years, Mestrovic's ability to teach himself reading, writing, and woodcarving, along with collected funds from those in the town, allowed him to enter the Vienna Art Academy in 1900.

Mestrovic's art style is smooth, abstract, avant-garde, and typical of the central layout technique. He made his pieces out of plaster, wood, stone, marble, and bronze. His pieces are characteristic of large, clear forms that evoke observations of the people and cultures of the cities he lived in.

Mestrovic's work can be found in Washington D.C., New York, Indiana, and Illinois as well as at various museums and two universities, Syracuse University and the University of Notre Dame. Moreover, his style of art and portrayal of important figures and situations highlight a fundamental universality with which every culture and country deals. His art not only makes an impression on his audience at hand but also draws together anyone who has heard of him or his artistic legacy.

Indiana is one state that stands out. While beginning his career as a sculptor and artist, Mestrovic later became a professor at the University of Notre Dame in 1955. There, he not only sculpted many works for the university to cherish but passed on his knowledge and artistry to his students.

Contributions to Notre Dame University are seen not only throughout the university but also in churches around it. Mestrovic frequently depicted religious figures from Christianity in his statues, Christ and the Samaritan Woman, multiple statues of saints at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, and his own version of the Pieta.

His influence in the arts, especially at the University of Notre Dame, continues to shape how artists and sculptors view art and create their own art. His art depicts his Croatian heritage and Catholic upbringing, which further brings awareness to Croatian life and culture. His generosity to the Notre Dame campus demonstrates how much of his art was done during his time in Indiana.

While Mestrovic taught at the University of Notre Dame and not Indiana University, his artwork still connects everyone throughout Indiana. IU South Bend and IU Bloomington contain multiple bronze and marble statues and if one looks closely, there seem to be similarities between Mestrovic's works and between some of the figures found on these other two campuses.

Mestrovic did not make these sculptures, but they invoke certain expressions, styles, and forms that Mestrovic created. For example, when looking at the Showalter Fountain on IU Bloomington's campus or the multiple figures on the IU South Bend campus, the open forms and expressions resemble Mestrovic's. Beyond these two universities, his art continues to inspire connectivity and kinship, all while bringing prominence to Croatia.