

Melissa Chakars
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EDUCATION

Indiana University

Ph.D., History, 2008

M.A., Russian and East European Studies, 2000

Hunter College, CUNY

B.A., History and Russian Language and Literature, 1996

TEACHING EXPERIENCE at Saint Joseph's University

- HIS 154, Forging the Modern World
- HIS 102 Movements in World History
- HIS 337, Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881-1991
- HIS 338, War and Peace in Imperial Russia
- HIS 339, The Mongol Empire
- HIS 340, Stalinism: Terror and Transformation in the Soviet Union
- HIS 341, Genocide and Human Rights in the 20th Century
- HIS 471, Seminar: Public History in Philadelphia
- HIS 473, Seminar: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union
- HIS 491, Philadelphia Internship Course
- HON 324, Russia as a Global Power

PUBLICATIONS

- Chakars, Melissa and Nikolay Tsyrempilov, eds. *Buryat Intellectuals in Empire and Revolution* (Routledge, 2026)
- “The Cooperation of Lamas and Lay Leaders in Introducing, Expanding, and Protecting Buddhism among the Buryats, Kalmyks, and Tyvans,” *Mongolian Studies* 42 (2025): 44-66.
- *Социалистический образ жизни в Сибири: Преобразования в Бурятии*. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Academic Studies Press, Библиороссика, 2022.
 - This is the translation into Russian of my book, *The Socialist Way of Life: Transformation in Buryatia*, which was originally published by Central European University Press.
- “Buddhism and the Siberian Buryat Chronicles: Stories of Origin, Rivalry, and Negotiation in the Russian Empire,” *History of Religions* 60/2 (2020): 81-102.

- “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): 62-71.
- “Minority Education Policy: The Endangered Buryat Language and Inner Mongolian,” *Mongol Survey*, no. 41 (Spring-Fall 2020): 2-3.
- “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: Nazarbayev University, 2020, 152-160.
- “The Repression of Buryat Buddhism in the 1930s: Competing Narratives of Soviet and Western Histories During the Cold War,” *Mongolian Studies* 38 (2019): 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), 156-170.
- *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.

SELECTED SCHOLARLY & CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Mongolia in the World: Modern Influences,” Panel Discussant, *Mongolia Society Annual Conference*, Washington DC, October 2025
- “Perspectives on Early Soviet Nationalities Policies: Caucasus, Middle Volga, and Central Asia,” Chair, *Northeast East European, Eurasian, and Slavic Studies Conference*, New York, NY, April 2025
- “Managing Buddhism in the Russian Empire: Buryats, Kalmyks, and Imperial Officials,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Boston, November 2024. Also served as chair on “Buddhists, Marxists, and Pan-Mongolists: Buryat-Mongol Intellectuals in History”
- Panel discussant, “Mongolian History and Language,” *Mongolia Society Annual Conference*, Washington DC, October 2024
- Poster, “A Cross-University Collaboration to Revive and Reimagine a History of Pharmacy Museum,” *American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy*, in collaboration with Ed Foote, Emma Gunuey-Marrs, Anne Krakow, Rebecca Andrade, Deborah Lenert, Presented by Ed Foote and Emma Gunuey-Marrs in Boston, June 2024
- Roundtable panel speaker, “Decolonizing Russian Studies: Reclaiming Buryat, Kalmyk, and Mongol Narratives,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Philadelphia, November 2023
- Panel discussant, “Ritual and Language in Mongolia,” *Mongolia Society Annual Conference*, Pittsburgh, October 2023
- “The Cooperation of Lamas and Lay Leaders in Introducing, Expanding, and Protecting Buddhism among the Buryats, Kalmyks, and Tuvans,” *Buryat Studies: New Perspectives*, New York University, October 2023
- “Building Buddhism in the Russian Empire: Buryat and Kalmyk Monasteries in the 19th Century,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Chicago, November 2022
- “Buddhists in Russia: Lamas, Leaders, and Lay Believers,” New York University, invited talk, October 2021
- “Buddhism in Tuva: From the Qing Dynasty to a Russian Protectorate,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, New Orleans, November 2021
- “The Endangered Buryat Language: A Local and Global Phenomenon,” *Central Eurasian Studies Society Conference*, online in October 2021
- “What to Do with Symbols of Hate? From Columbus to Genocide to the 2021 Insurrection on the US Capitol,” *Day of Dialogue*, Saint Joseph’s University, January 2021 and 2022

- “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
- “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.
- “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 Discussant, “Buddhism in Russia: Revolution, Repression, Reaction, and Revival,” *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Chicago, IL, November 2017
- “Promoting High Culture and Good Behavior in Late Soviet Buryatia,” *International Mongolian Studies Conference*, Mongolian Embassy, Washington DC, January 2017
- “Geser: An Epic Poem for Communists, Nationalists, and Pan-Mongolists,” *Indiana University*, June 2016
- “Developing and Debating Soviet Buryat Language and Literature,” *In Empire’s Long Shadow: Modern Constructions of Central Eurasia, 1900-1941*, University of Chicago, February 2016

SELECTED PUBLIC TALKS

- “Desiderium: A Conversation about Displacement,” panelist with Krista Svalbonis and Mary Kalyna, Center for Emerging Visual Artists, February 2024
- “A Russia Victory Will Mean Hell: Two Years In, The State of War in Ukraine,” KYW News Radio in Depth, February 2024

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-russia-victory-will-mean-hell-two-years-in-the/id449926026?i=1000646046250>

- Author panel participant, “Reclaiming Narratives and Modern Translations of Ancient Texts,” Kalmyk Youth Coalition Event, December 2023
- “Vladimir Putin: Emboldened, Happy, and as Strong as Ever?” KYW News Radio in Depth, December 2023
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/vladimir-putin-emboldened-happy-and-as-strong-as-ever/id449926026?i=1000637868371>
- “A Russian Paramilitary Group Rebelled—Now What Are the Consequences?” KYW News Radio in Depth, July 2023
<https://www.audacy.com/podcast/kyw-newsradio-in-depth-0da71/episodes/a-russian-paramilitary-group-rebelled-now-what-are-the-consequences-290fb>
- “One Year of War Between Russia and Ukraine – Where Are We Now?” KYW News Radio in Depth, February, 2023
<https://www.audacy.com/kywnewsradio/podcasts/kyw-newsradio-in-depth-229/one-year-of-war-between-russia-and-ukraine-where-are-we-now-1552971446>
- “Vladimir Putin is Scrambling; Here is the Evidence,” KYW News Radio in Depth, September 22, 2022
<https://www.audacy.com/kywnewsradio/podcasts/kyw-newsradio-in-depth-229/vladimir-putin-is-scrambling-heres-the-evidence-1526460581>
- “Three Months Later: Russia’s Missteps in Ukraine,” KYW News Radio In Depth, Podcast Interview with Matt Leon, June 2, 2022
<https://www.audacy.com/kywnewsradio/podcasts/kyw-newsradio-in-depth-229/three-months-later-russias-missteps-in-ukraine-1444762595>
- “War in Ukraine: A Panel Discussion,” campus-wide public talk at Saint Joseph’s University panel of three professors, March 2022
- “Tremors in Europe: Ukraine, Russia, US, NATO,” campus-wide public talk at Saint Joseph’s University panel of three professors, February 2022
- “Russia Invades Ukraine: ‘The Worst Military Action in Europe Since World War II,’” KYW News Radio In Depth, Podcast Interview with Matt Leon, February 24, 2022
<https://www.audacy.com/kywnewsradio/podcasts/kyw-newsradio-in-depth-229/russia-invades-ukraine-the-worst-military-action-in-europe-since-world-war-ii>
- “How Vladimir Putin is Trying to Rewrite the End of the Cold War in Ukraine,” KYW News Radio in Depth, Podcast Interview with Matt Leon, January 2022
<https://player.fm/series/kyw-newsradio-in-depth-2454167/how-vladimir-putin-is-trying-to-rewrite-the-end-of-the-cold-war-in-ukraine>
- “The United Nations and Human Rights after WWII,” Neumann University, invited talk, December 2021

- “What to Do with Symbols of Hate? From Columbus to Genocide to the 2021 Insurrection on the US Capitol,” *Day of Dialogue*, Saint Joseph’s University, 2021 and 2022
- 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/>

RECENT GRANTS

- Saint Joseph’s University Teaching Innovation Grant, 2024
- Center for the Conservation of Art and Historic Artifacts Grant, 2023
- Saint Joseph’s University Teaching Innovation Grant, 2022
- Virtual Summer Research Laboratory Associateship, University of Illinois, 2021
- Morris Grant, Saint Joseph’s University, 2020
- Saint Joseph’s University Summer Research Grant, Russia, 2018

SELECTED SERVICE

Saint Joseph’s University:

- Department of History, Chair, 2021-present
- Administrator, Marvin Sampson Museum for the History of Pharmacy, 2022-present
- Strategic Planning Committee, 2024-2025
- America250@SJU Committee Chair, 2024-present
- College of Arts & Sciences College Council, Executive Committee, from 2016, Chair, 2020-2021
- University Council, Representative, 2020-2021
- Day of Dialogue, Speaker, 2021-2023
- Hayes History Student Journal, Faculty Mentor, 2016-present
- Faculty Policies and Procedures, committee member, 2017-2019
- Honor’s Committee, 2016-2019, 2022-present
- Student Commencement Speaker Committee, 2016-present
- Burton Fellow Search Committee, 2019, 2022, 2025
- First Year Seminar Certification Committee, 2016-2018, and Chair, 2017-2018
- History Hiring Committee for Administrative Assistant, 2017, 2022, 2024
- Tenure/Promotion Reviewer for six applicants, 2017-2025

Service to Profession:

- Atux Forever, Board Member, 2026-present
- Mongolia Society, Board Member and Secretary, 2016-present
- Northeast Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies, Board Member and Treasurer, 2016-present
- ASEES Dissertation Prize Committee, 2023-2025
- Regularly serve as discussant and chair at conferences
- Regularly serve as reviewer for articles submitted to various academic journals
- Outside reviewer for tenure and promotion applicants, 2018 and 2024
- Served on dissertation committee, 2019
- Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, Conference Planning Committee, 2016

LANGUAGES

- *Advanced*: Russian
- *Intermediate*: Mongolian, Buryat, Latvian
- *Elementary*: Kazakh, French