

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

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 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 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. *Социалистический образ жизни в Сибири: Преобразования в Бурятии*. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Academic Studies Press, Библиороссика, 2021.
 - This is the translation into Russian of my 2014 book, *The Socialist Way of Life: Transformation in Buryatia*, which was originally published by Central European University Press in 2014.
- “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.
- “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.
- “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.
- *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

- “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

- “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

- 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
- 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 and 2022
- First Year Seminar Certification Committee, 2016-2018, and Chair, 2017-2018
- History Hiring Committee for Administrative Assistant, 2017 and 2022
- Tenure Reviewer for three applicants, 2017-2019

Service to Profession:

- Mongolia Society, Board Member and Secretary, 2016-present
- Northeast Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies, Board Member and Treasurer, 2016-present
- Regularly serve as discussant and chair at conferences
- Regularly serve as reviewer for articles submitted to various academic journals
- Outside Reviewer for tenure applicant, 2018
- 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