

Victoria Smolkin
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PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

2010-Present Assistant Professor of History, Wesleyan University (Middletown, CT)
Tutor, College of Social Studies
Core Faculty in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

EDUCATION

Ph.D. 2010, History, University of California, Berkeley (*With Distinction*)
Dissertation: "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: Soviet Atheism, 1954-1971"
Committee: Yuri Slezkine (Chair), John Connelly, Thomas Laqueur, Olga Matich

M.A. 2005, European History, University of California, Berkeley

B.A. 2002, European Literature and History, Sarah Lawrence College

RESEARCH and PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming Book

A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism (Princeton University Press, February 2018).

Peer-Reviewed Articles

"The Confession of an Atheist Who Became a Scholar of Religion": Nikolai Semenovich Gordienko's Last Interview," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 596-620.

"The Ticket to the Soviet Soul: Science, Religion and the Spiritual Crisis of Late Soviet Atheism," *Russian Review* 73, no. 2 (April 2014): 171-197. *Received Honorable Mention for 2015 Distinguished Article Prize from the Association for the Study of Eastern Christian History and Culture.

"The Problem with the 'Ordinary' Soviet Death: The Material and the Spiritual in Atheist Cosmology [*Problema 'obyknovnoi' sovetskoi smerti: Material'noe i dukhovnoe v ateisticheskoi kosmologii*]," *State, Religion, and Church in Russia and Abroad* [*Gosudarstvo, religiia i tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom*] 3-4, no. 30 (2012): 429-462. In Russian.

Edited Volumes and Other Publications

Guest editor and introduction co-author (with Peter Rutland) of theme issue on "Looking Back at Brezhnev," *Russian History* 41, no. 3 (2014): 299-306.

“‘Our task is to understand’: The last interview of N. S. Gordienko [‘*Nasha zadacha—poniat*’]: *Poslednee interv’iu N. S. Gordienko*,” *Vestnik Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta imeni A. S. Pushkina: Nauchnyi zhurnal* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 274-286. In Russian.

“Cosmic Enlightenment: Scientific Atheism and the Soviet Conquest of Space,” in *Into the Cosmos: Space Exploration and Soviet Culture in Post-Stalinist Russia*, eds. James T. Andrews and Asif A. Siddiqi (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 2011), 159-194.

“The Contested Skies: The Battle of Science and Religion in the Soviet Planetarium,” in *Cosmic Enthusiasm: The Cultural Impact of Space Exploration on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe Since the 1950s* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2011), 57-78.

“The Voices of Silence: The Death and Funeral of Alexander Blok,” in *Petersburg/Petersburg: Novel and City*, ed. Olga Matich (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 305-331. <http://stpetersburg.berkeley.edu/index.html>

“‘A Sacred Space Is Never Empty’: Atheist Education in the Soviet Union, 1964-1968” in *Reserve Stock: Debates about Politics and Culture* [*Neprikosnovennyi zapas: debaty o politike i kul’ture*] 3, no. 65 (Summer 2009): 36-52. In Russian.

Book Reviews

Book review: Sonja Luehrmann, *Religion in Secular Archives: Soviet Atheism and Historical Knowledge*, *Russian Review* 75, no. 4 (October 2016): 731-733.

Book review: E. B. Ershova, *Skvoz’ cheredu vremen (Rossiiskaia sem’ia v XVIII–XXI vv.)*, *Russian Review* 74, no. 1 (January 2015): 172-174. Co-authored with Nikolai Mitrokhin.

Book review: Anton Weiss-Wendt, *Small-Town Russia: Childhood Memories of the Final Soviet Decade*, *Russian Review* 71, no. 2 (April 2012): 352-353.

Works in Progress

Book Project: *The Crusade Against Godlessness: Religion, Communism, and the Cold War Order.*

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, and AWARDS

External: National and International Grants

2015	Association for the Study of Eastern Christian History and Culture, Distinguished Article Prize (Honorable Mention)
2014-2015	Woodrow Wilson Center Kennan Institute Research Fellowship, Washington, D.C.
2013	Princeton University, Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies Fellowship
2012-2014	Social Science Research Council Eurasia Post-Doctoral Research Award
2012	Sherman Emerging Scholar Lectureship, UNC-Wilmington (\$5000)
2011	Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson Center Small Research Grant
2010-2011	American Council of Learned Societies Mellon Dissertation Fellowship (declined)
2009-2010	Woodrow Wilson Foundation Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship in Religion and Ethics
2009	UC Berkeley Dean’s Normative Time Dissertation Fellowship
2008-2009	Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship
2007-2008	American Councils (ACTR/ACCELS) Advanced Research Fellowship
2007-2008	Allan Sharlin Memorial Fellowship, Berkeley Institute of International Studies

2007 Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship
 2005 Fulbright-Hays Heritage Speakers Summer Program in Pittsburgh and Moscow
 2004 George and Ludmilla Patrick Fellowship, Berkeley History Department
 2000-2002 Sarah Lawrence College Rosenthal Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities

Internal: Wesleyan University Grants

2017 Carol A. Baker '81 Memorial Prize (Wesleyan University Public Affairs Center)
 Fall 2017 Center for Humanities Fellowship, Wesleyan University
 2011-2017 GISOS Project Grants
 2017 The Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs First (1740-1823) Grant (History Department):
 Research in Germany, Ukraine, Lithuania, United States
 2015-2016 GISOS Faculty-Student Research Internship Grant: James Reston
 2015 The Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs First (1740-1823) Grant (History Department):
 Research in Switzerland
 Spring 2014 Center for Humanities Fellowship, Wesleyan University
 2012-2014 GISOS Faculty-Student Research Internship Grant: Emily Hoge
 2012-2013 Creative Campus Teaching Grant
 2011-2012 Teagle Foundation Grant to Support Faculty Teaching Expository Writing
 2011 The Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs First (1740-1823) Grant (History Department):
 Research in Russia, Ukraine
 2012 The Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs First
 Research in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania

INVITED LECTURES, SEMINARS, and SYMPOSIA

12/7-8/2017 Invited paper, "The Russian Revolution in the Long Twentieth Century." International Symposium, Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University. Sapporo, Japan.
 10/26-28/2017 Invited paper, "The Socialist Way of Life," *Rethinking Communist History: A Global Perspective*. Conference, Gramsci Foundation. Rome, Italy.
 9/21-21/2017 Invited paper, "God-seekers versus Dogmatists: Soviet Atheism's Last Stand," *Defending the Faith: Religious and Secularist Apologetics in Twentieth-Century Politics*. Symposium, British Academy. London, England.
 6/27/2017 Invited lecture, "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism," Forschungsstelle Osteuropa at the University of Bremen. Bremen, Germany.
 6/16-17/2017 Invited paper, "Atheism as a Vocation: Experts, Enthusiasts, and Apostates in the Soviet Atheist Establishment," *Religion and Socialism in the Long 1960s: Encounters and Legacies*. Conference, University of Groningen. Groningen, Netherlands.
 5/18-19/2017 Invited paper, "Putting the Communist Home in Order: Religion and Revolution in the (Bolshevik) Family," *100 ans de la Révolution d'Octobre*. Conference, École Normale Supérieure. Paris, France.

- 5/4/2017 Invited paper, "Putting the Communist Home in Order: Religion and Revolution in the (Bolshevik) Family," *Ten Days that Shook the World: Reflections on the Russian Revolution, 100 Years Later*. Kemp Symposium, Bowdoin College. Brunswick, Maine.
- 3/16-17/2017 Invited plenary lecture, *International Symposium on U.S.-Russia Relations in Global Context*, co-sponsored by Kennesaw State University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the Atlanta Council on International Affairs. Atlanta, Georgia.
- 2/5/2016 Invited lecture, "Cosmic Enlightenment: Scientific Atheism and the Soviet Conquest of the Cosmos," *Revealing the Cosmonaut*. Symposium, British Science Museum. London, England.
- 6/26/2015 Invited paper, "The Religious Front: Secularism and Atheism under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1943," *The Interwar Kulturkampf: Transnational Struggles over Secularism*. International Symposium, Queen's University. Belfast, Northern Ireland.
- 6/1/2015 Invited public lecture, "The Second Baptism of Rus?: The Return of Religion and the (Soviet) Origins of Russian Patriotism." Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars. Washington, D.C.
- 5/9-11/2015 Invited paper, "From Confidence to Crisis: The Quiet Divorce of Secularism and Modernity," *Modernization in China and the West: Comparative Perspectives Forum*. Conference, hosted by *History and Theory*, Wesleyan University's College of East Asian Studies, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Guilin, China.
- 4/22/2015 Invited lecture, "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty": How Soviet Atheism Was Born, Lived, and Died." Slavic Colloquium, Yale University. New Haven, Connecticut.
- 4/10/2015 Invited lecture on religion in contemporary Russian political discourse. Undergraduate course on Contemporary Russia (SIS216), American University. Washington, D.C.
- 4/9/2015 Invited workshop on "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty." Woodrow Wilson Center Kennan Institute. Washington, D.C.
- 3/11-15/2015 Invited participant, Kandersteg Seminar on "Sovereignty." Remarque Institute Seminar, New York University. Kandersteg, Switzerland.
- 6/2/2014 Invited lecture, "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: Atheism and the Spiritual Life of Soviet Society." European University. St. Petersburg, Russia.
- 5/21/2014 Invited lecture, *Religious Cultures in 19th and 20th Century Europe*. Colloquium of the International Research Training Group Center for Advanced Studies, Ludwig Maximilians Universität. Munich, Germany.
- 4/7/2014 Public lecture, "Lessons from the Land of Godlessness: How Atheism Changed the Spiritual Life of Soviet Society." Center for Humanities, Wesleyan University. Middletown, Connecticut.
- 11/8/2013 Seminar presentation, "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty." Princeton University Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies. Princeton, New Jersey.

- 5/16-17/2013 Invited paper, "The Ticket to the Soviet Soul: Science, Religion, and the Spiritual Crisis of Soviet Atheism," *Science, Religion, and Communism in Cold War Europe*. International Conference, European Studies Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University. Oxford, England.
- 3/20/2013 Invited seminar, "The Ticket to the Soviet Soul: *Nauka i religia* and the Spiritual Crisis of Soviet Atheism." Russian History Workshop Series, University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 11/3/2012 Keynote Address, "The Battle for Communism and the War against Religion," *Atheist at the Machine: Early Soviet Anti-Religious Propaganda*. Museum Exhibition, Saint Louis University. St. Louis, Missouri.
- 10/19-20/2012 Invited paper, "Lessons from the 'Department of Godlessness': Cultural Revolution in Moscow's Crematorium No. 1," *An Extended Family-Russian Modernism in International Context*. Conference in Honor of Olga Matich, University of California-Berkeley. Berkeley, California.
- 10/16-19/2012 Virginia and Derrick Sherman Endowed Emerging Scholar Lecture, "A Sacred Space: The Spiritual Life of Soviet Atheism." University of North Carolina - Wilmington. Wilmington, North Carolina.
- 3/30-31/2012 Invited paper, "Utopia's Orphans: Soviet Atheists and the Spiritual Crisis of Late Soviet Communism," *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era*. International Workshop, University of Amsterdam. Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- 11/15/2011 Invited lecture, "Atheism as a Vocation: The Spiritual Crisis of Late Soviet Communism." Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, Trinity College. Hartford, Connecticut.
- 4/18/2011 Invited presentation, "A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: Soviet Atheism, 1954-1971," Russian and East European Reading Group, Yale University. New Haven, Connecticut.
- 12/4/2009 Invited presentation, "A Sacred Space Never Remains Empty: Soviet Atheism's Appeal to the Spiritual," *Carnegie Seminar on Ideology and Religion*. UC-Berkeley Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Berkeley, California.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 11/8-12/2017 Paper, "Subversive Voices: Religious Propaganda and Atheist Counter-Propaganda in the Soviet Borderlands," *Foreign Temptations and Soviet Transgressions in the Cold War*. Convention, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Chicago, Illinois.
- 4/8/2017 Paper, "The Political Death of Scientific Atheism," *Soviet Humanities between Ideology and Science*. Southern Conference on Slavic Studies. Alexandria, Virginia.
- 11/17-20/2016 Paper, "Utopia's Orphans: The Quiet Death of Soviet Atheism," *Science, Spirituality, and the collapse of the USSR*; discussant, *Mediated Orthodoxy: Images and Narratives of*

- the Russian Orthodox Church in Digital Media and Beyond*. Convention of Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Washington, D.C.
- 6/26-28/2016 Paper, "The Second Baptism of Rus': The Soviet Foundations of Contemporary Russian Patriotism." ASEEES-MAG Convention, Ukrainian Catholic University. Lviv, Ukraine.
- 4/8-9/2016 Discussant, "Space Race/Arms Race," *Cold War Narratives Reimagined*. Conference, Yale University. New Haven, Connecticut.
- 4/1-2/2016 Paper, *Religion, Secular Values, and National Public Life*. Biennial Boston College Conference on the History of Religion, Boston College. Boston, Massachusetts.
- 12/4-5/2015 Discussant, *Political Catholicism: Law and Catholic Politics in a Disenchanted World*. Conference, Remarque Institute, New York University. New York, New York.
- 11/19-22/2015 Round table, "Perestroika and Moral Crisis." Convention, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 10/21-23/2015 Paper, *Origins and Narratives of Contemporary Russian Patriotism*. Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki and Finnish Centre of Excellence in Russian Studies. Helsinki, Finland.
- 1/2-5/2015 Paper, "From A Society Free of Religion to Freedom of Conscience: How Toleration Emerged from Within Totalitarianism," *Religion in Europe after the Secular 1960s*. Conference, American Historical Association. New York, New York.
- 10/17-19/2013 Paper, "We have to figure out where we lost people": Soviet Atheists, Religious Studies, and the Problem of Indifference," *Social and Human Sciences on Both Sides of the Iron Curtain*. International Conference, Poletayev Institute for Theoretical and Historical Studies in the Humanities, National Research University Higher School of Economics. Moscow, Russia.
- 6/7-9/2013 Paper, *The Varieties of Russian Modernity: Rethinking Religion, Secularism, and the Influence of Russia in the Modern World*. International Conference, Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration. Moscow, Russia.
- 4/20/2013 Discussant, *Using the Past in Russian Nation-Building*. Convention, Association for the Study of Nationalities, Harriman Institute, Columbia University. New York, New York.
- 11/15-18/2012 Paper, "Their Strength Is Our Weakness: Religious Studies at the Institute of Scientific Atheism," *Manufacturing Soviet Ideology: Institutes and Mechanisms*; Discussant, *The Time Between: What Happened After the Thaw and Before Stagnation?* Convention, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 4/23-24/2012 Paper, "How Gods Are Born, Live, and Die: Death in the Soviet Ritual Cosmos," *Death in Central and Eastern Europe: Past and Present*. International Conference, Center for Advanced Studies, Ludwig Maximilians Universität. Munich, Germany.

- 2/16-18/2012 Paper, "The Meaning of Life: The Making of the Soviet Ritual Cosmos," *Lived Religion in the USSR: Survival and Resistance under Forced Secularization*. International Conference, Russian State Humanities University. Moscow, Russia.
- 11/17-20/2011 Paper, "The Spiritual Crisis of Late Soviet Communism," Panel on *Confronting Religious Belief in Socialist States: Atheist Propaganda in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after 1945*, Convention, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Washington, D.C.
- 11/17-21/2010 Paper, "'If everyone is a savage, then I too am a savage': The Institute of Scientific Atheism and 'concrete, real reality' (1964-1968)," *Soviet Religion and Religiosity in the Postwar Period*, Convention of Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Los Angeles, California.
- 4/1-2/2010 Paper, "The Meaning of Life: The Making of the Soviet Ritual Cosmos," *Divining the Message/Mediating the Divine*. Conference, Columbia University. New York, New York.
- 11/12-14/2009 Paper, "'A Parasite on the Unsettled Questions of Communist Construction': The Transformation of the Soviet Ritual Cosmos," *Atheism in Russia over the Longue Durée*. Convention, American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (ASEEES). Boston, Massachusetts.
- 1/22-24/2009 Paper, "Cosmic Enlightenment: Cosmonauts and the Conquest of Space in Soviet Atheist Education," *Cosmic Enthusiasm: The Cultural Impact of Space Exploration on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe Since the 1950s*. Conference, University of Basel. Basel, Switzerland.
- 8/18-25/2008 Paper, "The Soviet Cosmos: Life-Cycle Rituals, Family Culture, and the Socialist Way of Life, 1956-1985," *Confronting Cold War Conformity: Peace and Protest Cultures in Europe, 1945-1989 (European Protest Movements Since 1945)*. Conference, Charles University. Prague, Czech Republic.