

Alexander J. McConnell

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EDUCATION

- 2023 **Ph.D., History**
University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI
- 2014 **M.A., Russian and Eurasian Studies**
European University at Saint Petersburg | St. Petersburg, Russia
- 2012 **B.A., History, with honors**
Grinnell College | Grinnell, IA

EMPLOYMENT

- 2025- **Assistant Teaching Professor**
Department of History
North Carolina State University | Raleigh, NC
- 2023-24 **Postdoctoral Fellow**
Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies
University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

- 2024 “‘Tragic Presentiments’: Maksim Gor’kii and the Invention of Soviet Humanism,”
Slavic Review vol. 83, no. 2 (Summer 2024): 300-317

Book Chapters

- 2022 “Masking the Void, Voiding the Mask: Viktor Pelevin and the Performance of
History,” in *Companion to Victor Pelevin*, edited by Sofya Khagi (Boston: Academic
Studies Press, 2022), 75-103

In Preparation

- Monograph *One Half of the Human Being: Defining, Debating, and Defending Humanism in
the Soviet Union* (working title)
- Journal Article “Religious Dissidence and ‘Secular’ Humanism during the Late Soviet Period,”
invited for submission to *Northwestern University Studies in Russian Philosophy,
Literature, and Religious Thought*, vol. 2 (2025)

Academic Reviews

- 2023 *The Soviet Myth of World War II: Patriotic Memory and the Russian Question in the USSR* by Jonathan Brunstedt (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 306 pp., *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* vol. 50, no. 3 (October 2023): 359-364
- 2019 *State of Madness: Psychiatry, Literature, and Dissent after Stalin* by Rebecca Reich (Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), 283 pp., *EuropeNow*, May 7, 2019

Essays & Literary Reviews

- 2023 [“Plight of the Living Dead: An Update on the Cinematic Saga of *Empire V*,”](#) NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia Blog, April 20, 2023
- 2022 [“*Empire V* meets Generation ‘Z’: The Awkward Business of a Would-Be Blockchain Blockbuster in Wartime,”](#) NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia Blog, September 7, 2022 (Judges’ Choice Prize Winner)
- 2019 [“Stepping in the Same River Twice: On Vasily Grossman’s *Stalingrad*,”](#) *Cleveland Review of Books*, November 26, 2019
- 2018 [“Pictures at an Execution: On Lev Ozerov’s *Portraits without Frames*,”](#) *Cleveland Review of Books*, December 4, 2018

Digital Scholarship

- 2024 [“‘Peace to the World’: Lessons from the Soviet Antiwar Underground,”](#) *Reverb Effect* Podcast, Season 5, Episode 3, February 20, 2024

GRANTS & AWARDS

- 2022-23 **Cohen-Tucker Dissertation Completion Fellowship**
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (\$25,000)
- 2022 **Robert J. Donia Graduate Student Fellowship**
U-M Donia Human Rights Center (\$6,000)
- 2022 **Judges’ Choice Prize, Graduate Student Essay Competition**
NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia (\$200)
- 2021-22 **Sidney Fine Teaching Partnership**
U-M Department of History (\$4,000)
- 2021 **ASEEES Summer Dissertation Writing Grant**
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (\$6,000)

- 2020-21 **Graduate Student Research Fellowship**
U-M Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies (\$5,000)
- 2019-20 **Title VIII Research Scholar Program**
American Councils for International Education (\$18,250)
- 2019 **Summer Research Laboratory Associateship**
University of Illinois Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center (\$1,500)
- 2018 **Sidney Fine Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor**
U-M Department of History (\$1,000)
- 2016 **WCEE Summer Research Grant**
U-M Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia (\$2,000)
- 2016 **Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship: Russian**
U-M Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (\$7,500)

INVITED TALKS

- 2022 “Maxim Gorky and the Invention of Soviet Humanism,” Department of History,
Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA, October 27, 2022

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Papers Presented

- 2024 “Religious Dissidence and ‘Secular’ Humanism in the Late Soviet Period” at
Religion, Human Dignity, and Human Rights: New Paradigms for Russia and the
West, Hamilton Center, University of Florida, November 1-2
- 2023 “‘I Sensed That He Was Just as Alone (Spiritually) as I Was’: Loneliness, Singleness,
and Desire for Human Connection in the Soviet 1970s” at ASEEEES 55th Annual
Convention, Philadelphia, PA, November 30-December 3
- 2022 “Humanism or Sentimentality? Debating Depictions of the Second World War in
Post-Stalin Soviet Cinema” at ASEEEES 54th Annual Convention, Chicago, IL,
November 10-13
- 2021 “Soviet Humanism after Stalin: Revision, Renewal, or Rupture?” at ASEEEES 53rd
Annual Convention, Virtual, December 1-3
- 2020 “Contest(ed) Moral Codes: Writing a Popular Book on Communist Morality,
1960-1962” at ASEEEES 52nd Annual Convention, Virtual, November 14-15

2017 “The Resurrection of the Icon in Post-Stalin Soviet Cinema” at The Image Reframed: Visions of Instability, University of Michigan, February 10-11

Panels Moderated

- 2023 “Atmospheres of Violence: Loss, Silence, and Affect in Archival Research,” Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, Ann Arbor, MI, September 29
- 2022 “How the ‘West’ Wrote Its History of the USSR” at A Hit Parade of Historical Turns: From a Russian Perspective, University of Michigan, March 12
- 2021 “Social Justice in the University Classroom” with guest Stephen D. Brookfield, Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, University of Michigan, March 8
- 2017 “The Year of Two Revolutions” at Revolutionary Longings: The Russian Revolution and the World, University of Michigan, March 8-11

Panels Organized

- 2021 “Exploring Topographies: Real and Imaginary,” Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, University of Michigan, April 2
- 2021 “Social Justice in the University Classroom” with guest Stephen D. Brookfield, Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, University of Michigan, March 8
- 2020 “Categorical Imperatives: The Stakes of Scholarly Units of Analysis,” Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, University of Michigan, October 30

WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS

- 2023 Taking Knowledge Public Workshop, Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies, Arizona State University, August 10-12
- 2022 Diversity and Inclusive Teaching Seminar, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan, October 24-November 16
- 2019 Summer Research Laboratory, Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center, University of Illinois, June 17-29
- 2018 Graduate Methods Training: Focus on Russia, Indiana University, September 14-15
- 2018 Summer Institute on Conducting Archival Research, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington D.C., May 29-June 1

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

North Carolina State University (2025-)

“History Methods and Writing” (Spring 2025)

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2016-2024)

Instructor of Record

“Stalin and Stalinism” (Winter 2024)

“Sport and Spectacle Under Socialism” (Fall 2023)

“Frenemies: The Russian-American Encounter Since 1850” (Fall 2021)

Graduate Teaching Assistant

“Minds and Brains in America” (Winter 2021)

“Russia and the USSR” (Fall 2020 and Fall 2017)

“Europe Since 1945” (Winter 2018)

“The Origins of Nazism” (Winter 2017)

“The Holocaust” (Fall 2016)

Grader

“American Addictions” (Spring/Summer 2021 and 2022)

“Minds and Brains in America” (Spring/Summer 2021 and 2022)

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

2015-24	Member and Presenter, Russian/Soviet History Workshop, University of Michigan
2015-24	Member and Presenter, European History Workshop, University of Michigan
2020-21	Co-Coordinator, “Teaching and Learning in the Humanities,” Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of Michigan
2020	Manuscript Reviewer, European and World History, Routledge Publishing
2018	Departmental Representative, HBCU Graduate School Exposure Tour, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan
2017	Assistant Conference Organizer, Revolutionary Longings: The Russian Revolution and the World, University of Michigan, March 8-11
2016	Discussion Leader, History Department Graduate Student Orientation, University of Michigan, September 2016

WORKING LANGUAGES

English (native)

Russian (professional fluency)

Italian (intermediate proficiency)

French (reading proficiency)

Ukrainian (beginner)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Historical Association (AHA)

Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)