

NEWSLETTER
INDIANA UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
FALL 2023

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

JUSTIN MAXWELL

Dear all,

Greetings from Bloomington!

The fall color here in Bloomington this year was a slow due to the unseasonably warm weather. We still had color on the trees in late November! It reminded more of the falls I experienced in North Carolina growing up. It also made me wonder if this type of fall would be more common in the future with ongoing increases in global temperatures. I will say, that while it wasn't as impressive as other falls where everything changes at once, it was nice to see fall color for almost two months!



The 2nd year as the Chair for Department of Geography has been busy! But it has been the good kind of busy. We welcomed two new faculty, Dr. Diana Ojeda (spotlighted here) and Dr. Nubia Beray (will be spotlighted in the Spring newsletter). In the office, Shalom Drummond was promoted to fiscal officer and will be managing finances of not only our department but also other departments as well. We are lucky to welcome Terri Loyal (will be spotlighted in the Spring newsletter), who is the new office manager. We also have a new graduate coordinator, who is also the graduate coordinator for Anthropology, Robert Girard (spotlighted here). Finally, we have a new part-time office administrator, Ashley Franklin (spotlighted here). I am so happy to welcome all the new people and thrilled to have such a vibrant department.

In other good news, our enrollments continue to increase, and we had a slight bump in the number of majors this year. The opportunities our majors get from our amazing donors plays a large role in this increase and I look forward to continuing working on helping students achieve their goals and am so happy I'm able to provide our majors with several funded opportunities. As you all know, Geography plays a critical role in most of the world's problems today and we are training students to be equipped to not only deal with these problems but hopefully help solve them.

We welcomed a new cohort of graduate students this fall and it has been great to watch them add to our community with their new perspectives and ideas. Our faculty and graduate students are continuing their research and we have seen a lot of success. Several faculty received external funding over the last academic year, including Dr. Sally Letsinger from Indiana Finance Authority, Dr. Darren Ficklin from the United States Geological Survey and National Science Foundation, and Dr. Julio Postigo from Water Witness International. Dr. Mike Dwyer's book *Upland Geopolitics: Postwar Laos and the Global Land Rush* was published by the University of Washington Press. Lastly, two of our faculty have taken on administration roles for the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Elizabeth Dunn and Dr. Rebecca Lave are now both Associate Deans, congratulations to everyone

Lastly, two of our faculty have taken on administration roles for the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Elizabeth Dunn and Dr. Rebecca Lave are now both Associate Deans, congratulations to them!

I look forward to my second year as Chair and being a champion for the great work our students and faculty are doing.

Best wishes from Bloomington,
Justin Maxwell
Associate Professor and Chair

A handwritten signature of Justin Maxwell in black ink.

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In memoriam: Roman Zlotin

1940-2023

The Department of Geography and the R. F. Byrnes Russian and East European Institute (REEI) are saddened by the death of Senior Lecturer Emeritus Roman Zlotin, our beloved faculty colleague, at his residence on February 26, 2023. Roman was an outstanding and internationally renowned scholar in the field of biogeography, esteemed both by colleagues in his native Russia and at IU Bloomington, where he was additionally known as a versatile and popular instructor over the course of three decades. He remained active in fieldwork throughout his career.



Roman was born in Moscow, USSR on November 22, 1940. As a schoolboy he developed a keen and lifelong fascination with the natural world, actively participating in expeditions to nature preserves and wildlife parks under the auspices of the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Nature. He entered Moscow State University in 1958 as a student in the Faculty of Geography, where he specialized in biogeography until his graduation in 1963. Diploma in hand, he quickly accepted the position of research scientist in the Department of Biogeography at the Institute of Geography of the USSR Academy of Sciences. He soon established himself as a leading specialist on general and regional issues in biogeography and ecology. In 1970 he defended his Candidate of Science dissertation on the “Structure and productivity of high-altitude ecosystems in inner Tien-Shan,” a work that served as the basis for his monograph *Life in High Altitudes*. He went on to publish almost a dozen monographs and more than 100 articles during his career, chairing the Department of Biogeography of the Institute of Geography from 1983 to 1994.

Travelling extensively throughout the USSR as participant and leader of research expeditions to the frozen tundra of Siberia, the mountain vastnesses of the Caucasus and Tien-Shan, and the arid deserts of Central Asia, Roman also undertook research abroad to such destinations as Norway, Vietnam, and various islands in the Pacific Ocean. Roman first visited the United States in 1987 when he was invited to deliver a keynote address at the 4th International Wilderness Congress in Denver. In an interview for the REEI newsletter, Roman likened his initial impressions of the US to “love at first sight.” His newly conceived affection for the land, cultures, and people of the US and North America as a whole lasted throughout the remainder of his life.

In 1990, Roman set foot on the IU Bloomington campus for the first time in order to attend a conference devoted to environmental problems in the Aral Sea. That visit opened the door to an association with IU that ultimately led to multiple appointments over three decades, first for the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA, now O’Neill) where he taught “Environmental Degradation in the Former USSR”.



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In memoriam: Roman Zlotin

The course opened a new chapter in Roman's professional life, as he took on the role of instructor for the first time in his academic career, which up till then had been devoted to research exclusively. Roman's classroom debut was a success that led to a series of visiting appointments as both instructor and researcher with SPEA, the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, the Department of Geography, and the Center for the Study of Global Change. Alongside his activity at IU, Roman also formed an association with the University of New Mexico, first as a researcher and subsequently as an adjunct professor in its Department of Biology.

In 2002, Roman was appointed Senior Lecturer in the IU Department of Geography, a position he held until his formal retirement in 2019. Roman regularly taught such Geography courses as "Geography of Russia," "World Regional Geography," and "Russia and Its Neighbors." With the encouragement of REEI, Roman developed a Russian-only version of the latter course for students with advanced proficiency in the language as well as "Environmental Issues in Russia," another course taught exclusively in Russian. Housed in REEI, these courses proved highly popular among REEI MA students and undergraduate minors as well as students pursuing other programs of study. Even as a retired faculty member, Roman continued to offer a Russian-only course to IU students under the title "Contemporary Issues in Russia" through Spring 2021.

Those who knew Roman were invited to submit reminiscences and testimonials using an online document. Many former students remembered Roman's enthusiastic and outstanding instruction, which gave them the opportunity to explore topics in politics, environment, culture, society, and international affairs while refining their Russian language skills. A common theme was what a joy he was to be around with one former student commenting that going to Russian discussion every Friday afternoon was the highlight of their undergraduate experience. Roman also was very generous and every summer that he returned to Russia for research, he brought back a memento—often a lovely painting, such as a city or rural landscape—for REEI. These gifts now live forever at REEI in Roman's memory and as a testament to Roman's spirit of generosity.

We request that this memorial resolution be presented to the members of the Bloomington Faculty Council, that it be preserved in its minutes and archive, and that after its presentation copies be sent to Roman's wife Sonya Zlotin and son Alexey Zlotin.

Mark Trotter, Associate Director

Robert F. Byrnes Russian and East European Institute (REEI)

With contributions by:

Dan Knudsen, Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography

Sarah Phillips, Professor, Department of Anthropology and Director of REEI

Scott Robeson, Professor, Department of Geography

Faculty Spotlight: Diana Ojeda



Diana Ojeda joined the Department of Geography and the Department of International Studies this Fall. She moved from Colombia, where she was born and raised. Before coming to IU, she taught for many years at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana and Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá. She did her undergraduate studies in Economics and History, and holds MA and PhD degrees in Geography from Clark University (Worcester, MA).

Diana's research has paid attention to environmental issues such as climate change, ecotourism, pesticide use and the expansion of monocrops in relation to state violence and landgrabbing. Her most recent work analyzes how local communities in Cartagena (Colombia) are defending and reclaiming mangrove ecosystems. Diana is also Director of the Commons Program at the Ostrom Workshop where she will focus on commons-making in Latin America and the Caribbean in opposition to extractivism and the precarization of life.

Diana considers herself an interdisciplinary scholar who does feminist work. For her, this goes in line with Latin American thinker Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar's words: "No queremos gestionar el infierno, queremos desarmarlo y construir algo distinto" [We do not want to manage hell, we want to dismantle it and build something different]. She is a member of the Colectivo de Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, a countermapping feminist collective whose methodology for mapping the body-territory has been widely used by community organizations in Latin America and elsewhere. For over a decade, she coordinated the feminist and queer collective Espacialidades Feministas that, in alliance with the feminist and student movements in Colombia, worked towards creating less violent and exclusionary spaces in Bogotá. Part of this work was aimed at disrupting different forms of institutionalized misogyny, homophobia and transphobia in university spaces. She has also been part of different efforts towards attaining sexual and reproductive justice in Colombia.

At IU, Diana hopes to continue teaching "not for the world we have, but for the one we want", and to do community-engaged research on pressing local issues. She is currently writing a book on land and social reproduction (although she says she suffers from equal parts of writer's and mom's guilt) and slowly learning to bike. She is an aspiring gardener and seed keeper, a fierce texter, and a hardcore believer in chosen families, collective work, cooking and dog love. In Bloomington, she can often be found looking desperately for plantains (without much luck).

Office Staff Spotlight: Robert Girard



Robert Girard joins us as the Department of Geography's new graduate coordinator on top of his continuing duties as the graduate coordinator in the Department of Anthropology. His role is newly titled as: Senior Graduate Education Coordinator. He has worked here in the Student Building since December 2020, when he joined the Department of Anthropology. Through his collaborative work with previous graduate coordinators Shalom Drummond and Melissa Adkins, he was given the opportunity to become familiar with Geography's community even before joining the department.

In his role as the department's graduate coordinator, Robert primarily assists graduate students with understanding and navigating the many interweaving administrative bureaucracies and policies of the Bloomington Graduate School, College of Arts + Sciences, and the Department of Geography. Beyond these core duties, you will often find Robert thinking up new ways to engage the graduate student community and provide quality of life changes to their day-to-day participation in our department. He thrives off of collaboration and community engagement with faculty, staff, and students alike.

Robert received his Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology with minors in History and Italian from the University of Kansas in 2016; he then received his Masters of Education in Higher Education & Student Affairs with a concentration in Education for Social Justice from Iowa State University in 2020. Much of his work both as a graduate student and as a full-time professional has been geared toward community development, student & community advocacy, efficacy in assessment & evaluation practices, and collaborative engagement with community stakeholders to create an environment reflective of the needs of the educational communities he works with.

Hailing from the Crimson and Blue and the waving wheat of Lawrence, Kansas (home to the University of Kansas), Robert has lived exclusively in midwestern college towns throughout his life, often attending or working for those universities. He joined his spouse, an IU faculty librarian, in Bloomington at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic during March 2020. Since then, Robert has found great joy in the community's vibrant spirit, never-ending tide of local activities, and diverse gastronomic offerings. Robert is an avid consumer of public library-loaned books, an unabashed geek for the genres of fantasy and science fiction, a known lover of videogames, an unrepentant snob of the coffee variety, and if you can't find him doing any of the above, he is probably able to be founding hitting the pavement of the many trails and sidewalks of Bloomington as an endurance runner.

At the end of the day, Robert is an easygoing spirit with a penchant for talking your ear off if you'll let him. He is a frequent offender of bad jokes and hopes you will stop by the office to groan at his latest ~~travesty~~ attempt at humor.

Welcome to the Department Robert!

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Office Staff Spotlight: Ashley Franklin



Ashley Franklin joins us as the Department of Geography's new office assistant. She is a third year Dual Masters student studying Information and Library Sciences. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology here at IUB in 2020, dual minoring in psychology and labor studies. She is currently specializing Childrens and Young Adult Services for her MLS and Digital Humanities for her MIS.

Ashley is an Indiana native who grew up in Indianapolis, though she enjoys traveling during breaks. In her free time, she enjoys reading predominantly YA fiction and playing video games, favorites including Night in the Woods and Skyrim. Ashley has four cats and welcomes you to stop by for a chat during her work in aiding the department.

Welcome to the Department Ashley!