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University College, Oxford

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JAKE A. ROBERTSON

they/he

RESEARCHER & STORYTELLER with a passion for bringing scholarship and art together. My years of experience as a professional theatermaker, historian and teacher have convinced me that history is full of untold stories that can help us understand our shared human experience. I believe the performing arts have the potential to transform research into creative experiences that inspire and educate far beyond the classroom.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Russian & Soviet History; Stalinism; Gulag Studies; Theater Studies; "Peripheral" Histories; Creative Engagement with Research

EDUCATION

University College, Oxford (Clarendon Scholar)

- DPhil (PhD) in Modern Languages (Russian) Exp. Completion, Mar 2025
- Supervisors: Polly Jones and Dan Healey
- Dissertation: "Stages of Captivity: Professional Theater in Gulag Capitals of Vorkuta and Magadan"

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Glasgow, UK)

- M.A. in Classical & Contemporary Text (Acting) - 2016

Princeton University (Princeton, NJ)

- B.A. in Slavic Languages & Literatures, summa cum laude - 2015
- Certificates: Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies; Theater

INITIATIVES & LEADERSHIP ROLES

Rethinking Soviet & Post-Soviet Research Project (Organizer)

- Decolonizing and Decentering Slavonic Studies at Oxford and beyond.
- Recipient of The Oxford Research Center for the Humanities (TORCH) Critical-Thinking Communities Grant (2023)
- Events: Network-Building, Reading Groups, New Archival Strategies Network, Decentering and Digitizing Soviet & Post-Soviet Research International Workshop (Oxford, September 2023)

Dragademia: Show & Tell (Founder/Host/Performer, Oxford 2023-Present)

Oxford Reimagining Performance Network (Convenor 2022-2023)

Kruzhok: Slavonic Work-in-Progress Group (Founder/Convenor 2022-2024)

- Interdisciplinary, interdepartmental initiative providing academic and mental health support and community-building for Oxford graduate students

RESEARCH & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Fellow in Russian History (Dept. of History, University of Warwick, 2024-25)

- HI3J7 Socialist Bodies: Dreams and Realities of the Physical in Soviet Russia

Undergraduate Lecturer (Modern Langs. Faculty, Oxford Jan 2024)

- "Gulag Worlds: Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov, Life & Culture Behind and Beyond the Barbed Wire"

Summer Course Instructor, Worldview Scholar Programme (2023)

- For this I created an original course: "Russia from the Outside In: A Decolonial History of Repression, Expression & Empire"

Freelance Russian Language Instructor (2018-Present)

REEEC Summer Research Laboratory Associate (University of Illinois 2022)

Asst. Instructor to Prof. S. Morrison (Princeton Global Seminar Moscow 2019)

Editor/Research Asst./Translator for Profs. Deborah Kaple, Caryl Emerson, Olga Hasty, and R. N. Sandberg (Princeton University 2017-2024)

PUBLISHED WORK

Jake A. Robertson, "Tragedies & Triumphs: Culture and Power in the Gulag Operas of Vorkuta and Magadan" Chapter in Precarious Identities: Theatre of Refuge and Risk in Russia and East Central Europe (Co-Edited Volume, Iowa University Press, 2026)

Jake A. Robertson and D. T. Kozlova. "Khudozhestvennaia kul'tura GULAGa kak fenomen v amerikanskoi i rossiiskoi istoriografii". Sotsial'no-kul'turnye protsessy na territorii Komi kraia: Istoriia i sovremennost' (Sbornik statei) (Syktyvkar, 2014)

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

Assn. for Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) Conference 2023

- 4-Panel Series: Decentering Soviet Theater (Organizer, Chair & Participant)
- Paper: "Proteges on the 'Periphery': The Gulag Legacy of Meyerhold, Stanislavsky, and Nemirovich-Danchenko"

Medieval & Modern Languages Graduate Conference (Oxford 2023)

- Paper: "Art on the Edge: Patronage and Precarity in Gulag Theaters on the Soviet 'Periphery'"

British Association for Slavonic & East European Studies (BASEES) Conference 2023

- Panel: "Freed with No Right to Leave: Former Gulag Prisoners & Their Lives on the Soviet 'Periphery'" (Organizer & Participant)
 - Paper: "Culture Held Captive: Art and Life for Former Gulag Theatermakers on the 'Periphery'"

ASEEES Conference 2022

- Panel: "Forgotten Faces of the Gulag: Interaction, Creation, and Liminal Spaces in the World of Forced Labor" (Organizer & Participant)
 - Paper: "Reviews with No Names: Patronage, Performance, and Precarity in the Gulag Theater of Vorkuta"

Slavonic Research Seminar (Oxford Faculty of Medieval & Modern Langs. (MML))

- Paper: "Russian Research Reinvented: Scholarship & Creative Engagement" (2022)
- Paper: "Patrons or Puppetmasters: Camp Bosses and the Gulag Operas of Vorkuta and Magadan." (2023)

SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

Clarendon Fund Scholarship of Oxford University & University College (2021-2025)

Oxford Research Grants:

- University College Grants: Old Members' Trust (2022, 2023), Keasbey (2023, 2024)
- Modern Langs. Grants: Ilchester Grant (2022, 2023), Graduate Travel (2022)

BASEES Postgraduate Research & Development Grant (2024)

Title VIII Research Grant (U.S. Dept. of State, 2022)

St. Andrew's Society of New York Scholarship (2015-2016)

Princeton Institute for International & Regional Studies Fellowship (2014)

HONORS & AWARDS

Moses Taylor Pyne Prize (2015)

- Princeton's highest undergraduate distinction, two conferred yearly

Nicholas Bachko Jr. Scholarship Prize in Slavic Langs. & Literatures (2014)

Phi Beta Kappa Member Class of 2015 Montgomery Raiser 1992 Thesis Prize (2015)

Lewis Center for the Arts Award in Theater (2013 & 2014)

Shapiro Prize for Academic Excellence (2012 & 2013)

LANGUAGES & SKILLS

Russian - Advanced

- Princeton in Petersburg Language Intensive (2012)
- American Councils Russian Language & Area Studies Program (2013)

Georgian - Intermediate

- Oxford School of Global & Area Studies Georgian Programme (2021-2023)

Other Relevant Skills:

- Theatermaking: Professional Actor (Off-Broadway, The Globe, Regional US & UK)
- Public Speaking, Workshop and Group Event Facilitation, Improv Performance, Comedy/Sketch/Lyric Writing, Clowning