Faculty Highlight - Cynthia Buckley

This year REEEC welcomes Dr. Cynthia Buckley to the Department of Sociology. Prior to her arrival at Illinois, Professor Buckley was a faculty member of both the Department of Sociology and Eurasian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. While at the University of Texas, she taught courses focusing on methodology, population, health, and social development. Additionally, she served as the Director of CREEES, Chair of the Department of Eurasian Studies, Training Director for the Population Research Center, and was on the Executive Committee of the Faculty Council. For two years prior to her arrival at Illinois, Professor Buckley was on administrative leave from the University of Texas and served as a Program Director at the Social Science Research Council. During her time at SSRC, she directed fellowship and research programs for Eurasia.

Cynthia Buckley's research background focuses on population issues in Eurasia. She mentions that the region is influenced by the legacies of socialist policies, and the area is in need of socio-demographic study. She highlights that the last two decades witnessed evolving relationships between Eurasia and the global economy and are marked by greater integration. Cynthia Buckley has participated in the integration of Russia, the southern Caucasus, and Central Asia into broader debates concerning social development and population. Her research on population dynamics within Eurasia seeks to combine insights gained through field experience, as well as a strong area studies background with the generalizable theoretical and methodology insights of Sociology and Demography. Approaching Eurasian Studies as a social demographer enables her to combine academic research and teaching with activities centered on policy engagement and civil society development. Her research on social development and reproductive health highlighted the inequities in health knowledge in the region, and has led to continuing working relationships with UNESCO, UNAIDS, OSI, local women's groups, and NGO's working on HIV and AIDS related issues. Her research on migration has sought to include the Eurasian migration system into global discussions of migration control, human security, and development. At the same time, her work on migration also sought the opening of new avenues of collaboration and consultation with the U.S. Department of State, DoD, IOM, and numerous governmental and non-governmental groups which work on migration issues into Russia.

Cynthia Buckley enjoys working in the policy and administrative realms. However, she has a strong interest in teaching. At the University of Texas, she developed several courses which merged core sociological concepts with detailed examples from Eurasia. At the undergraduate level, these courses consisted of an entry level course focusing on state and society in Central Asia, a course which will be offered next year. Also, she developed a course on the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic which will be offered this spring, and an advanced course on Global Perspectives on Health and Societies. At the graduate level, Professor Buckley is looking forward to teaching a core seminar on Population, Health and the Life Course, which will be offered this spring. Additionally, she will be teaching seminars related to research design, demographic estimation, and methods.
Cynthia Buckley is currently in the process of completing a project funded by the NSF and Minerva Initiative entitled, “People and Conflict in the Eurasian Migration System,” concentrating on assessments of remittance receipts in sending countries and their impact on household economic stability and development. Additionally, this project seeks to analyze results from a survey of labor migrants in three Russian cities. In the spring of 2013, she will be submitting a new project for NIH funding which focuses upon the linkages between migration and health.

Cynthia Buckley came to Illinois because she believes it is an exciting environment for the study of social demography. She highlights that several internationally known population specialists work at the university. She also mentions Illinois’ centers for research in the area of health and amazing library resources which afford unique and valuable opportunities for research and training. Lastly, Professor Buckley hopes to build bridges between campus resources for the study of population and health and the community engaged in Russian and East European and Eurasian Studies.