REEEC Welcomes New Outreach and Programming Coordinator Sam Celmer

Samantha Celmer joined the REEEC staff as Outreach and Programming Coordinator of REEEC in late-December. She originally joined the REEEC community as a graduate student and spent a year as the REEEC Outreach Assistant, during which time she helped to develop REEEC’s Headstart programming, for which she created and executed lesson plans on the REEE-region for learners ages 3-5. As the Outreach and Programming Coordinator of REEEC, Samantha looks forward to working with faculty, staff, and students to build our programming through collaborations and creativity. Currently, in addition to preparing this spring’s speaker visits for our New Directions and Noontime Scholars Lecture Series, she is continuing to develop our programming with the Urbana Free Library, such as Slavic Story Time and other engaging events for young learners, and beginning to work with the Mahomet Public Library. She would love to expand the ways in which REEEC interacts with and supports the teachers and educators in our community and to continue developing online curriculum and resources, which can be used in classrooms across the nation. “Educators are important members of every community and deserve a wide range of resources to help them in lesson planning. We should work to give them the tools that they need in order to engage students with material involving these less commonly taught regions.”

Samantha earned her BA in History and Russian and East European Studies at Oberlin College in December 2013, after which, she spent time in Russia teaching English and working as a publicity intern for a language school in Tver, Russia. She entered the REEEC MA program in the fall of 2014 and will finish her Master’s thesis this year. Having a strong interest in education, Samantha’s thesis focuses on representations of Russia in children’s media in the 90’s and the problem of international relations in childhood development. In addition to education, Samantha has studied issues of human rights, woman’s rights, genocide, and crimes against humanity in the REEE-region. She hopes to use her area studies background to enhance our outreach programming and create a wide range of campus events for the community.