This year, Laura Davies Brenier joins the REEEC affiliated faculty as a Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. She teaches all of the Czech language courses offered. Professor Brenier earned her Ph.D. from Princeton University in Slavic Linguistics and Theoretical Linguistics. Her dissertation was entitled “A Construction-Grammatical Analysis of Impersonalization in Russian.” Her work dealt with the notion of grammatical subject and logical subject, and subjectlessness in Russian. Professor Brenier has extensive experience studying and teaching foreign languages. Previously, she taught Russian at the Georgia Institute of Technology as an Adjunct Instructor, and while studying at Princeton, she taught both Russian and Czech. In addition, she has also taught Russian and Czech at Beloit College’s summer language program. Prior to her doctoral work, she received a Fulbright Fellowship, which allowed her to pursue a fascinating study as well as teach. She researched Czech sign language and taught American sign language at a school in Olomouc, a city in the Czech Republic. As an undergraduate, she also studied Czech in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Her current research interests are comparative Slavic Linguistics and comparative sign language. She is particularly interested in the spoken dialects on the border region between the Czech Republic and Poland, where there is an intriguing combination of Czech and Polish in use. This is a relatively unexplored area in linguistic study, which she believes needs attention, and there is much to investigate. She plans to pursue this study by first “looking at syntactic phenomena,” and she hopes to continue a thorough examination of this topic in the future. So far, Professor Brenier has really enjoyed her experience here at the University of Illinois and living in Urbana-Champaign. She likes the “friendly people” and really enjoys teaching in the department.