REEEC is pleased to announce that Sarah Hummel has joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor of Political Science. Professor Hummel holds a B.A. in Political Science from Yale University, and she earned her Ph.D. at Princeton University. In addition, she served as a Visiting Scholar of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh while working on her doctoral degree. Her dissertation examined water and energy politics in Central Asia. She investigated domestic changes in the region, and how they impacted international agreements pertaining to water and energy. She found that water and energy policies offer certain benefits to some regions more than others. She also discovered that when a political leader sought support in a given region amongst protests, that leader would be “more likely to adopt” certain policies. Interestingly, she found that this held true even if the protests were unrelated to water and energy. She took three trips to Central Asia as part of her fieldwork. One of these trips was for a six month period. She spent time in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan conducting interviews in order to determine who benefited from international cooperation. She wanted to understand which members of a certain domestic group received benefits and which ones did not.

This semester, Professor Hummel is teaching Political Science 397 Authoritarian Regimes. The first half of her course focuses on the various ways in which dictators have remained in power throughout history, and the second half of her course will investigate the threats posed to the power of dictators. She is really enjoying teaching this subject matter. In addition to teaching, Professor Hummel is in the process of turning her dissertation into a book. She is currently determining which aspect of her work she would like to further expand. In particular, she wants to investigate how large dams in Central Asia change the “bargaining power of different countries.” She plans on returning to Central Asia next summer to conduct further research after first defining her specific objectives. This is Professor Hummel’s first time in Illinois, and she is enjoying living in Urbana-Champaign. She particularly likes the fact that it is a “friendly town.”