Visiting Scholar Highlight - Sang Chul Park

REEEC Welcomes Professor Sang Chul Park, a visiting scholar for the 2015-2016 academic year at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prof. Park graduated from Seoul National University with a major in Russian History. He lived in St. Petersburg for two years (1996-1998) while working on his Ph.D. dissertation, which examined the political thought of P.A. Stolypin, a monarchist minister who was assassinated in 1911. Prof. Park lectured at several institutions in Seoul before accepting a position at Chonnam National University in 2005. He has taught courses on Russian History, Historical Principles, the History of Western Civilization, and Reading and Understanding Western Historical Sources.

Currently, his research is focused on the history of Russian politics in the early 20th century, particularly in the pre- and post-World War I era. He is interested in how the Russian government of the time responded to military defeat and social opposition. Specifically, he is examining the response of liberal Russian political parties (such as the Kadets) to the war, especially in their support for “L’union sacrée” and their involvement in the Progressive Bloc. He is also interested in how major government figures like I.L. Goremykin and A.V. Krivoshein conceived of autocracy. According to Prof. Park, Krivoshein held that the interests of the Russian people were not identical to those of the tsar, a belief which foreshadowed those of the ministers involved the February Revolution.

In part, Prof. Park’s interest in Russian history was sparked by the military dictatorship in South Korea when he was a student in the 1970s. He says that many students at the time asked the question, “How can we enact political change?” Specifically, his interest in Russian history stemmed from questions of revolution and reform, and their applications for the political situation in South Korea.

Prof. Park first came to Champaign-Urbana in 1994. He cited the U of I Library’s Slavic collection as a major reason for his decision to return. Over the next year, he plans to continue his research, audit courses on Russian history, and attending as many REEEC-affiliated events as possible. His personal goals for his sabbatical include traveling around the Midwest and experiencing American culture and academic life.

Matthew McWilliams is a REEES M.A. student and a FLAS Fellow for the 2015-16 academic year for the study of Russian.