

Curriculum Vitae  
October 2020

**ROBERT ALLEN KOPACK**

Department of Geography and Planning  
University of Toronto  
Sidney Smith Hall, 100 St. George Street, Room 5047  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 3G3, Canada  
Phone: 919.397.2332  
robert.kopack@mail.utoronto.ca  
www.robertkopack.com

---

<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario</b> <i>Department of Geography and Planning</i> <i>Supervisors: Robert Lewis, Ph.D., Matthew Farish, Ph.D.</i> <i>Dissertation: "The Afterlives of Soviet Secret Cities: Environment and Political Economy in Defense Industry Sites in Kazakhstan after 1991"</i>	<b>2020</b>
<b>M.S.</b>	<b>Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan</b> <i>Department of Geography</i> <i>Supervisor: Kyle Evered, Ph.D.</i> <i>Master's Thesis: "Monuments and Memory in the Landscapes of Kazakhstan"</i>	<b>2013</b>
<b>B.A.</b>	<b>University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado</b> <i>Majors: History; Russian Studies</i>	<b>2006</b>

**Research Interests**

Military landscapes, defense industries and security, the Cold War, industrial development/deindustrialization, energy policy and political ecology, environmental history, social justice and public health, former Soviet Union

**Peer-Reviewed Publications**

- 2021** **Kopack, Robert.** "The Making of an 'Inland-Offshore' Commercial Launch Complex in Kazakhstan: Post-Soviet Space Economies and the Baikonur Cosmodrome." *Culture, Theory, and Critique*, special issue "Special Territorial Status and Extraterritoriality." (in press)
- 2020** **Kopack, Robert.** "Commemorative Substitutions in Kazakhstan: How Soviet Heroes Hide the Environmental Legacies of Soviet Industrialization." *Area*. (under review)
- 2019** **Kopack, Robert.** "Rocket Wastelands in Kazakhstan: Authoritarian Governance and the Baikonur Cosmodrome." In *Environmental Governance in an Authoritarian/Populist Era*. James McCarthy Ed. (Reprint)
- 2019** **Kopack, Robert.** "Rocket Wastelands in Kazakhstan: Authoritarian Governance and the Baikonur Cosmodrome." *Annals of the American Association of American Geographers*. 109(2):556-567, special issue "Environmental Governance in Authoritarian and Populist Regimes."

*Special Issue Guest Editor*

- 2020 Kopack, Robert and Zachary Androus (eds.).** “Introduction: Special Territorial Status and Extraterritoriality.” *Culture, Theory and Critique*, special issue “Special Territorial Status and Extraterritoriality.” (in press)

**Languages**

Russian (Fluent); Polish (Fluent); German (Literate); Turkish (Beginner); Kazakh (Beginner)

**Academic Positions**

- 2020 Instructor**  
Department of Geography. University of South Carolina. Columbia, South Carolina
- 2020 Instructor**  
Department of Anthropology. University of South Carolina. Columbia, South Carolina
- 2018 Graduate Teaching Assistant**  
University of Toronto Department of Geography and Planning. Toronto, Canada
- 2017 Visiting Scholar**  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of Geography. Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- 2013-16 Teaching Assistant**  
University of Toronto Department of Geography and Planning. Toronto, Canada
- 2015 Research Assistant**  
Archival research into US defense contractors and industrial dispersal in the United States during the Cold War. University of Toronto Department of Geography and Planning. Toronto, Canada
- 2014 Research Assistant**  
Archival research into legislation and policies related to the dispersal of industry in the United States during the Cold War. University of Toronto Department of Geography and Planning. Toronto, Canada
- 2012 Teaching Assistant**  
Michigan State University Department of Geography. East Lansing, Michigan

**Invited Lectures**

- 2017** “*The Afterlives of Closed Cities in Kazakhstan.*” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of Geography. November 15, 2017
- 2013** *The Cold War and American Popular Culture.* University of Toronto, Department of Geography and Planning. December 2, 2013

## **Grants and Fellowships**

- 2020** *European Research Council* in collaboration with the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Project title: "The Social Life of Space Debris." Co-PI with Christine Bichsel Ph.D., Department of Geosciences. (pending: \$250,000)
- 2015** *Association of American Geographers (AAG)/National Science Foundation (NSF)*. (\$1,200 travel award to attend International Geographical Union (IGU) annual convention in Moscow, Russia)
- 2015** *University of Toronto. Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL)*. Almaty, Kazakhstan. (\$4,350 for Kazakh language)
- 2014** *Department of Geography and Planning University of Toronto. Graduate Improvement Award for Travel and Research*. (\$1000)
- 2013** *Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS)*. Academic Year Fellowship. (\$33,500 declined in lieu of other funding). Michigan State University
- 2013** *Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS)*. Summer Fellowship. (\$7,500 declined in lieu of other funding). Michigan State University
- 2012** *International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), Individual Advanced Research Opportunity (IARO)*. Project PI. Fellowship used for four-month thesis fieldwork and archival research in Kazakhstan. (\$10,500)
- 2012** *Foreign Language Areas Studies (FLAS)* Academic Year Fellowship, Turkish. (\$33,500). Michigan State University
- 2012** *Graduate Office Fellowship (GOF)*. Awarded by Department of Geography, Michigan State University for summer research in Kazakhstan. (\$1,500)
- 2012** *Departmental Conference Funding Award*. Michigan State University, Department of Geography. for present a paper at the American Association of Geographers Conference in New York, NY. (\$850)
- 2011** *Museums, Community, and Collaborations Abroad Educational Grant* for Atomic Testing Museum (Nevada) and the Karaganda EcoMuseum in Kazakhstan titled *Nuclear Weapons Legacy: The Tale of Two Cultures*. Recipients: Atomic Testing Museum, Las Vegas, Nevada and The Karaganda Ecological Museum and Center, Karaganda, Kazakhstan. (\$120,000)
- 2011** Northern Eurasian Earth Science Partnership Initiative (NEESPI). Irkutsk. *Land Use Change on Nuclear Ground: The Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site as Research Laboratory and Traditional Pasture Land*. (\$6,000 travel grant. declined in lieu of other funding)

**TOTAL FUNDING: \$219,000**

**Professional National and International Conference Presentations**

- 2019** American Association of Geographers (AAG). Washington D.C. April 3-7. Presenter: *Monotown Renaissance: Waste, Governance, and Boosterism in Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan.*
- Island Dynamics. Special Territorial Status and Extraterritoriality: Exceptional Sovereignties and Sovereign Exceptions. Longyearbyen, Svalbard. January 20-24. Presenter: *Former Closed Cities in Kazakhstan: Governance and the New Political Economies of Industrial Reinvestment and Decline.*
- 2018** American Association of Geographers (AAG). New Orleans, Louisiana. April 10-14. Presenter: *Rocket Wastelands in Kazakhstan: Scientific Authoritarianism and the Baikonur Cosmodrome.*
- The Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Boston, Massachusetts. December 6-9. Presenter: *From Secret to Spectacle: Bioweapons, Uranium, Rare Earths and the Post-Soviet Afterlives of Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan.*
- 2016** American Association of Geographers (AAG). San Francisco, California. March 29-April 2. Presenter: *Commercializing the Naval of the World: Information, Ecology, and the Baikonur Cosmodrome*
- 2015** International Geographic Union (IGU). Moscow, Russia. August 17-21, 2015. Presenter: *Yuri Gagarin, Abay Kunanbayev, and Karlag: Monuments and Memory in the Landscape of Karaganda.*
- The Association of American Geographers (AAG). Chicago, Illinois. April 21-25. Presenter: *Is There a Future to the Soviet Past in Kazakhstan: New Monuments to Heroic Figures and Baleful Episodes.*
- 2014** The Canadian Association of Geographers Ontario Division (CAGONT). Toronto, Ontario. October 24-25. Presenter: *Is there a Soviet Present in Kazakhstan: New Nationalism and Old Figures in Karaganda's Everyday Landscapes.*
- Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). San Antonio, Texas. November 20-23. Presenter: *Roadside Picnic in Kurchatov: Science Fiction in the Landscapes of Kazakhstan.*
- 2013** Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Boston, Massachusetts. November 21-24. Presenter: *Reading the Russian Villain in the X Files: The Waning Use-Value of the Cold War in American Popular Imagination.*
- The Association of American Geographers (AAG). Los Angeles, California. April 9-14. Presenter: *Refashioning the Soviet Techno-Industrial Landscape for a New Kazakh Future.*
- 2012** Graduate Student Conference: Ethnography and Biography: The Practice and Product of Writing Lives. Boulder, Colorado. September 27. Presenter: *Scientist and City: An Ethno-Biographical Sketch of Two Kurchatovs.*
- Northern Eurasian Earth Science Partnership Initiative (NEESPI). Irkutsk June 24-July 2. Presenter: *Land Use Change on Nuclear Ground: The Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site as Research Laboratory and Traditional Pasture Land.* (unable to present in person due to visa restrictions).
- The Association of American Geographers (AAG). New York, New York. February 24-28. Presenter: *The Power of Symbols in Kazakhstan: Memorial Landscapes and Contested Memories.*
- The Association of Central Eurasian Students (ACES). Bloomington, Indiana. March 3. Presenter: *Neglected by Neoliberalism: Soviet Memorial Landscapes in Transition.*

### **Conference Panels Organized and Chaired at National and International Professional Meetings**

- 2017** American Association of Geographers (AAG). Boston, Massachusetts. April 5-9. Panel Organizer: *Geographies of the Wasteland*. Presenter: *Kazakhstan's Defense Installations and Emergent Economies of Ruin*.
- 2015** The Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Philadelphia. November 19-22. Panel Chair/Presenter: *From the Cold War to the Global Market: Baikonur and the Legacies of the Soviet Space Program*

### **Teaching Experience**

**Instructor** (University of South Carolina, Department of Anthropology, and Department of Geography)

- ANTH 102 Understanding Other Cultures (100-level; 50 students)
- ANTH 203 Comparing Cultures Through Film (200-level; 50 students)

**Graduate Teaching Assistant** (University of Toronto, Department of Geography and Planning)

- Cities and Urban Life (100-level; 700 students)
- Historical Geography of North America (200-level; 100 students)
- Historical Geographies of Urban Exclusion and Segregation (200-level; 80 students)
- Geography of the USA (200-level; 200 students)

**Graduate Teaching Assistant** (Michigan State University, Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Sciences)

- Introduction to Meteorology (100-level; 150 students)

### **University and Department Service**

- 2016** University of Toronto Department of Geography and Planning Professional Development Committee
- 2013** University of Toronto Department of Geography and Program in Planning. Member of the Graduate Geography and Planning and Society (GGAPSS)
- 2012** Michigan State University Department of Geography. Graduate liaison to Faculty

### **In the Media**

- 2016** *Postcards from Stanland*. Athens: Ohio University of Press, Mould, David. Contributed book cover photograph; interviewed for the book.
- 2012** "Warming to Life in the Hot Zone." *Times Higher Education*. January 12, 2012. p. 41-43 Mould, David. Interviewed for the article.
- 2011** "In Kazakhstan, the Grass is Greener on a Nuclear Test Site." *Transitions Online*. June 9, 2011. <http://www.tol.org/client/article/22461-in-kazakhstan-the-grass-is-greener-at-the-nuclear-test-site.html>, Mould, David. Interviewed for the article.

**Professional Memberships**

The American Association of Geographers (AAG). Member since 2011

Russian, Central, and East European Specialty Group. Member since 2011

The Center for East Russian and Eurasian Studies (CESS). Member since 2011

The Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Member since 2011

National Russian Honor Society, *Dobro Slovo*. Member since 2006