

Summer Scholars – A trip - A week of Summer Scholars
August 13-16, 2018

Summer scholars and update

I signed up for this week long series despite knowing I was gone on Friday and had to leave early on two of the days. Dr. Christopher Bellitto is one of my favorite lectures. I even considered going to Bologna Italy this summer where he was giving a series of lectures (but another schedule got in the way). Some of you may know him as having appeared on various television shows as a Catholic specialist. He has often also been on the lecture series with a Jewish fellow named Brooks and they are quite the amusing pair. Dr. Bellitto is author of a number of books on religion and especially on history.

I am fearful that I'm getting too used to being a retiree as it was tough getting up at 6:30 AM and being busy through early evening. I was between trips and still had laundry and desk work and packing for the next trip too.

Morning - History's Heroines, Heroes, And Legends Christopher Bellitto, PhD, professor of history, Kean University - "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." So we hear in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962). Indeed, we can add that every history has a legend and every legend has a history. Join us as we try to untangle one from the other as we learn from both. We will spend our time in the classical and medieval world as we move from ancient battlefields to medieval convents.

Afternoon - The Russian Bear's Resurgence George Reklaitis, PhD, chair, history department, Brookdale - Russian President Vladimir Putin refers to the collapse of the Soviet Union as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the [20th] century." Since coming to office in 2000, he has worked to restore Russia's place as a giant on the global stage. Russia's military maneuvering against its Eastern European neighbors, its backing of autocratic regimes around the world, and its economic bullying tactics towards trading partners stir the echoes of Soviet maneuvering during the Cold War. We'll focus on the history of the "Russian Bear," as it emerged from the shadow of the Mongol Empire to become an imperial giant under the Romanov dynasty, and its ascent to superpower status by the middle of the 20th century. Has the Bear truly come out of hibernation?

This afternoon class reminded me of a partial book on my desk: "Peter the great" by Robert K Massie, and the newly loaned and equally massive 1000-page plus "Russka" by a favorite Edward Rutherford. (Yes that is spelled correctly but I don't know why yet). I'll get back to "A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles soon. These were all gifts by Jack Breen, Nola Stewart, and my sister Beverly and in part because I thought I was going on a 15 day river cruise trip to Russia which never happened. Yet.

One fun and frivolous read was a historical novel and quick read called "Rasputin's daughter" by Robert Alexander.

And next I'm off to St. Louis for the wedding of Colin and Chelsea and the ceremony will have the participation of their sweet little 14 month old, Mallory. There will be a story about my getting off on this trip.