



University of Toronto

Department of History

## Master Class for History Graduate Students

### *The Use and Interpretation of Photographs in Historical Research*

Monday, 4 March 2019  
3:30-5:30 p.m.

Natalie Zemon Davis  
History Conference Room,  
Sidney Smith Hall, Rm. 2098

*Refreshments will be served*



The use and interpretation of photographs by historians has increased exponentially over the past two decades, but few historians have seriously grappled with the significant methodological challenges that the interpretation of a photographic image implies for any modern historian. This master class intends to engage graduate students interested in using visual primary documents for their own research by discussing and comparing two very different analytical journeys/projects in the fields of Russian and German history.

We will compare and contrast critical decisions we have made in our own use of extensive photographic sequences and the larger conclusions we have drawn from analyzing these images in their historical context. We will try to answer deceptively straightforward questions such as: How do scholars select and read an image for a given historical project? What constitutes “truthfulness” in this context? Can an image be appreciated alone? How can we determine authorship or audience of an image? What determines the relationship between image and text, then and now?

**Rebecca Manley and Marline Otte**

**Rebecca Manley** is Associate Professor and Chair of History and Acting Director of Jewish Studies at Queen’s University. She specializes in the history of Russia and the Soviet Union. She is the author of *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Cornell University Press, 2009) and is currently working on a book-length project entitled “Tsar Hunger: Conceiving Hunger in Modern Russian History.” This project charts the way both the causes and consequences of hunger were understood from the late nineteenth century through the Second World War.

**Marline Otte** is Associate Professor of History at Tulane University in New Orleans. She graduated in 1999 from the Department of History at the University of Toronto and is the inaugural Helen E. Graham Visiting Fellow 2019. She specializes in modern European history and German cultural history. Her first book was *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890-1933* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). She is currently working on a book project that explores the intricate three-way relationship between photographic memory of soldiers and civilians on the Eastern front during the First World War, historical preservation efforts during wartime, and the complex ways that policies of occupation and conquest, urban planning and recovery, intersected with a resurgence of Polish nationalism and an ongoing humanitarian crisis.