Stephanie Boissy

**Title:** “Women’s Lives in the Soviet Labor Camps”  
**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Ann Livschiz  
**Paper written for:** History J495: Senior Seminar “War and Memory” (Spring 2013)

Stephanie was born in Northwest Indiana and moved to Fort Wayne in August 2009. She will be graduating in Fall 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts in History, Certificates in Teaching English as a New Language (TENL) and International Studies, as well as minors in German and Linguistics. She is most interested in history of the Soviet Union and twentieth-century American Immigration. Last summer, she spent time in Dalian, China teaching English and traveling. She was recently rewarded the Judie and Ralph Violette History Scholarship for 2013-2014. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school.

**Abstract**

There were forced labor camps called Gulags that were located throughout the Soviet Union. These camps were first established shortly after the revolution in 1918, but the camps grew in size and prominence in the economic sector of the Soviet Union from the 1930s to 1950s during the Stalin era. Millions of people were arrested, convicted, and sent to the camps for a wide range of offenses. The work that was completed by the convicts was based on the camp location, but some examples of the work included mining metal ore, felling trees, growing crops, and digging canals. Although men constituted the majority of the population of the camps, women were also sent to the camps. This paper focuses on the memoirs of women who survived the Soviet labor camp system. Their experiences and memories of their arrest, imprisonment, and life in the camps offer a prism through which the Soviet system can be better understood.

**Selected Bibliography**


