



**Friday, October 23 at 3:30 pm  
Washington Hall 302**

**"Force of Habit: Modes of Time in  
Verse Works on the *Cheliuskin* Saga"**

**Elise Thorsen '06, PhD Candidate in  
Russian Literature at the University  
of Pittsburgh**

The dramatic 1934 rescue of the crew of the *Cheliuskin*, stranded in winter ice during an epic attempt to navigate the northern sea route, was acclaimed as the ideal subject of Socialist Realism. But what does that actually mean? Conventional representations typically elevated this event temporarily to a state red-letter day. Critiquing this strategy, Il'ia Sel'vinskii, in the epic poem *Cheliuskiniana*, characterized the shared calendar as a weak mode of time that distracted from more constructive senses of progress; in doing so, he broached important questions about imagined community and, ultimately, about the coherence of the Soviet Union at all.

