

ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE ON SLAVIC AND EAST/CENTRAL EUROPEAN STUDIES

2014
STUDENT ABSTRACTS

Roy Ginsberg

Economics and Russian Language & Literature, University of Wisconsin – Madison

“The Personal Transformation of Pierre Bezukhov during his Time in French Captivity in Tolstoy’s War and Peace”

This paper examines the spiritual transformation of Count Pierre Bezukhov during his time in French captivity. As a result of his experiences as prisoner, Pierre gains a better understanding about not only the world around him, but also his role in the world. In War and Peace, Tolstoy portrays Pierre Bezukhov as an outsider in Russian higher society, who is desperately searching for meaning in his life. In the harsh conditions of his imprisonment, Pierre comes to the realization that there is very little in this world that he can actually control; however, despite his harsh conditions and seemingly pessimistic revelation, Pierre embraces his situation and finally understands the meaning of happiness. Pierre’s experiences in French captivity allow him the opportunity to evaluate his life and adopt a new, holistic perspective of the world around him. Pierre recognizes that uncontrollable circumstances make it nearly impossible to accomplish material goals or superfluous desires; however, Pierre determines that the acceptance of these restrictions and the peace of mind that comes as a result of overcoming countless hardships allow him to finally become perfectly happy. Through his experiences as a prisoner, Pierre realizes that, regardless of the circumstances that surround him, there is an independent eternal force that keeps him content.

Dmitry Neronov

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English and Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

“How Shall I Compare Thee?: Translating Shakespeare’s Sonnets into Russian”

The legacy of William Shakespeare’s works goes beyond adding thousands of works to the English language and redefining theater. Few if any writers could illustrate the universal themes of love, nature, and sadness in such a captivating way as Shakespeare. In order for Shakespeare’s works to be truly recognized throughout the world, the onus falls onto translators and writers to make Shakespeare’s writing as captivating in other

languages as it is in English. It is challenging enough to adapt Shakespeare's Middle English to a modern audience, but it is more challenging to adapt Shakespeare to modern foreign audiences due to semantic differences among languages. Though more known for his tragedies and comedies, Shakespeare demonstrates his prowess of language in his sonnets. Only Shakespeare could compress the complexity of human life into 14 lines of well-woven poetry. It takes other brilliant minds to accomplish this in a foreign language, especially one as complicated as Russian. This report will examine the structure and diction of two sonnets and their Russian translations in particular: Sonnet XVIII, which deals with the power of love and immortality of verse, and the melancholy Sonnet LXVI. In spite of semantic and cultural differences between Russian and Elizabethan English, multilingual writers such as Boris Pasternak have been able to capture the riveting emotions of Shakespeare's sonnets while also upholding the poetic integrity of those sonnets by preserving meter and rhyme scheme.

Lucas Fronk

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Majors: Philosophy & Russian/Flagship, Portland State University

“Daniil Kharms and Soviet Political Ideology”

In the 1920's, not long after the formation of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party introduced a social mandate, according to which all art and literature had to conform to and promote Soviet ideals. Government censorship was strict and the consequences for violating this mandate were severe. By looking at the life of avant-garde poet Daniil Kharms, one can see the extent to which the ideology of the time limited writers of the 20's and 30's not wanting to adhere to the creative model laid out by the social mandate, for whom the only options were children's literature, writing “for the desk,” or exile. Despite dedicating his mere 36 years of life to writing, Kharms was unable to publish his adult works with few exceptions, and received no renown for his now respected children's literature during his lifetime. His persistent support of the avant-garde in the face of a literary environment that strove to standardize, rather than evolve, resulted in arrest, exile and eventually contributed to his imprisonment in a prison psychiatric hospital and death. While Kharms' actions are generally mild compared to other writers of the time, his fate shows the harmful disadvantages of political ideology governing artistic expression and production.

Matthew E. Borbon

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Comparative Literature, UCLA

“Consumer Goods with Wings’: Three Women Authors in and above the Balkans”

Though the world of fiction is, to a great extent, autonomous, many fictional works also offer a unique perspective on the sociopolitical reality of a country. By focusing on the experience of individuals at a certain place and time, these works can serve as a register of the effect of governmental policy on the people to whom it is applied. By presenting three contemporary short stories by female authors from Romania, Bulgaria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the fictional prose creates a snapshot of reality while simultaneously highlighting the inequalities of the governmental policy. Ana Blandiana's "Consumer Goods with Wings," Olga Shurbanova's "Aerobics," and Jozefina Dautbegovic's "Vacation" – three works by women authors from Romania, Bulgaria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina – demonstrate and dramatize the various coping strategies these authors and their characters employ to deal with the sociopolitical and economic realities of communism and post-communism.

Yelena Muratova

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Russian Language and Literature and Sociology, UCLA

"Tracing the Trajectory of the Russian Gay/Lesbian Identity"

In 2013, after the passing of similar laws by various city and regional governments, the Russian Federation approved a federal amendment that forbade the propagandizing of alternative sexual relations in the presence of minors. The international protest to this imposition on freedom of speech was sizable, but the consequences were negligible, resulting in misunderstandings, even among activists from Russia and abroad. In an effort to move beyond the barriers created by cultural context, this paper compares the trajectories of the development of the gay and lesbian identities in the United States and Russia from the Orthodox Slavs to the modern day and the various social forces that played a part in this development. It illustrates that these trajectories are indeed parallel. They lead to different iterations of the gay/lesbian identities that cannot imperialistically be reduced to points on a single historical model.

Ashley Moe

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Russian, Portland State University

"The Ecological Impact of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia"

This research project explores the ecological impact of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. Working for NBC as an intern during the 2014 Olympics, I had the opportunity to see the region and the structures built for the events, which led to an interest in understanding the overall impact of the Winter Games on this region. The bulk of the information used for my research comes from a report issued by the Russian organization "Экологическая Вахта по Северному Кавказу" ("Ecological Watch on

Northern Caucasus"). This project will explore what had been proposed for the construction of the Winter Games in Sochi, proposals which had promised responsible use of natural resources, construction of facilities that conformed to green standards, and an overall development of regional infrastructure that sought to improve general ecological conditions in the area. According to groups such as Ecological Watch, these promises were not met, and the Krasnodar Region has, as a direct result of the Winter Olympic Games, suffered a precipitous decline in regional environmental conditions. Specifically, I would like to examine the Sochi region itself, highlighting the nature reserves that are present in the area, and determining how the facilities and infrastructure built for the Winter Olympics directly impacted the flora and fauna of the region. Many plants and animals found there are in Russia's Red Book (Красная книга), which is the Russian Federation's list of endangered species, or species especially at risk for extinction.

Miles DeVinny

Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

“An Introspective Look at Russia's Domestic Policy from Soviet Era to Present Day”

This paper takes a look at the trajectory of domestic policy adopted within Russia from the Soviet era to the present day and argues the point of how much of these said policies have been widely influenced by the inherent fear of an "internal enemy," that is, a threat from within the country. Much focus is placed on Chechnya, a republic of Russia that lies within its borders and declares itself an independent state.

Nadia Riabkova

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“The Problem with Russian Science: Pseudoscience and the Public Health Crisis”

There are undoubtedly many issues plaguing post-Soviet Russia, ranging from corruption to the economy to public health and education reform, but one often overlooked but significant issue is the pervasive and common acceptance of pseudoscientific publications and theories. This has in many ways turned into a cultural phenomenon, a sort of “popular pseudoscience” similar to the popular science of the West, and the extent to which these theories are disseminated and believed is certainly cause for concern. Russian pseudoscience has its roots in the “bourgeois pseudoscience” of the Soviet Union, wherein a field which appeared to conflict with the party line was quickly discredited and replaced with an equivalent field that could be manipulated to reflect communist ideals. In this fashion, the field of genetics in particular was all but obliterated

and replaced with the work of Trofim Lysenko (1898-1876), an agricultural “geneticist” whose ideas drew on the work of an earlier Russian scientist, Ivan Michurin, and were generally Lamarckian in nature. Today, Russia faces a significant public health crisis, which is also greatly affected by the popularity of pseudoscience. Globalization and the rise of the Internet make this issue increasingly important to the rest of the world, since growing rates of Russian travel abroad coupled with a lack of proper knowledge of even basic epidemiology and public health practices could lead to a pandemic of resistant disease bred by outdated and improper public health education and actions by doctors which could rightfully be considered malpractice outside of Russia.

Gladys Rivas

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“A Comparative Analysis of El burlador de Sevilla and Каменный гость: How Character Development Can Change the Meaning of Death”

The character of Don Juan is among the great fictional figures of world literature and as such has been adapted into various forms since its creation. This presentation will be, as the title suggests, a comparative analysis of two different representations of Don Juan. The first work, El burlador de Sevilla by Tirso de Molina, is the first known complete dramatization of the character and the second work, Каменный гость by Alexander Pushkin, is an adapted version of the original story. In contrast to more recent adaptations of the character, Pushkin’s version is markedly similar to Molina’s in regards to considerations of location and plot. However, Pushkin’s version is often considered to be a tragedy, while Molina’s is declared a comedy. The drastic difference in genre can seem strange, but not when character development is taken into consideration. Therefore, the primary focus of this presentation will be a discussion on how character development can affect the perception of a character’s death and how that perception has implications in determining the genre of a play.

Nicole Marcelino

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European Studies; Russian Studies; German Studies, University of California, Irvine

“Muselmänner and Dokhodiagi: Goners in the Nazi Concentration Camps and the Soviet Forced Labor Camp System”

The concept of the Russian dokhodiaga resulted from the prisoners' experience in the gulag forced labor camp system. In the German Konzentrations- and Vernichtungslager was its counterpart the Muselmann. Drawing from the writings of Primo Levi, Varlam Shalamov, Sarah J. Young and other scholars, I will illustrate what it means to be a "goner" and

the loss of the will to live.

Maria Mirabella Spektor
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“Chekhov’s Depiction of Progressive Women in Nineteenth- Century Russia”

Anton Chekhov is a nineteenth century writer famous for his short stories and theatrical plays. Unlike other previous Russian authors, such as Leo Tolstoy, Chekhov is not concerned with preaching a moral lesson, but instead he focuses on the struggles of everyday life and how his characters cope with them. The biggest difference between Chekhov and writers that came before him, such as Leo Tolstoy, is his progressive depiction of women. Most notably, it is the women in Chekhov's four major plays "The Seagull," "Uncle Vanya," "Three Sisters," and "The Cherry Orchard" that find happiness independently and against their traditional household roles. The women in his plays can be divided into two main categories: progressive and conservative. The women living in the present or towards an idea of a better future are progressive, whereas women who adhere to their traditional household roles are more conservative. The women living in the past are conservative and they all share a longing to return to a memory or idea of a previous life. Chekhov’s progressive women strive for professional success, place great value on education, and are sexually liberated. They break free from the conventional representation of women in nineteenth century Russia with their unconventional aspirations in finding happiness. Chekhov's objectivity in story-telling without judgments on his characters is an essential element in his wide popularity as a writer today.

Rafaela Bradvica
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“The Evolution of the Family Structure in Central and Eastern Europe in the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries”

The institution of the family is a complex and dynamic social structure that has transformed through history and varied across different cultures. Changing economies, societal revolutions, and political transformations have historically contributed to the increasing complexity of the institution of the family. Central and Eastern Europe in the late 20th and early 21st centuries underwent societal and political changes that radically affected family structure. Central and Eastern Europe transitioned from the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century to democratic governments, a transition that affected Central and Eastern Europe politically, economically, socially, and culturally. Historically, marriage and childbearing are hallmarks of the familial unit, and these societal changes affected these conventional characteristics. The late 20th century exhibited a trend of

increasing marriage age, an increase in extra-marital births, a higher divorce rate, and an increase in extra-marital cohabitation as a replacement for marriage. The size of the family also decreased in Central and Eastern Europe as a direct effect of the rising cost of maintaining a family. A careful examination of the economic, political, social, and cultural trends from 1980 to 2010 explains these changes.

Yannelly Perez

Psychology & Social Behavior (B.A.) & Applied Ecology (B.S.), minor in Women's Studies, UCI

“Comparative Analysis of Ukraine as Conveyed by U.S. and Russian Online Media”

The value of online media as a political tool has not been lost upon the U.S. and Russia as the recent events concerning the fate of Ukraine continue to unfold on the global stage.

The widespread accessibility of the internet has made it an ideal vehicle for promulgating the differing U.S. and Russian agendas in order to legitimize past and evolving action in the region. On the whole, pro-Russian online media justifies the Russian response within a legal framework that seeks to curtail unwelcome U.S. hegemony in a country with strong historical, economic, and cultural ties to Russia as well as to relate the intent to safeguard the lives of ethnic Russians residing therein. In contrast, online media in the U.S. largely conveys that the U.S. motive is to preserve international law and security as it aims not only to ensure Ukraine’s freedom and an increasing alliance with the West, but also to guarantee the safety of its NATO allies in the face of unbridled Russian aggression. In addition, U.S. media also tends to communicate a resurgence of a Soviet-era climate in Russia, evoking memories of the Cold War when relations between the two countries were at their lowest. In this presentation, I will focus on major events within the evolution of the situation in Ukraine—the Euromaidan protests & departure of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, the Crimean referendum, and the pro-Russia protests in Eastern Ukraine—and comparatively analyze each from the U.S. and Russian perspectives as related by internet-accessible media.

Porey Lin

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Political Science major, Russian Studies minor, UCLA

“Explaining Repression: How Legislatures Increase the Likelihood of Repression”

Why do countries resort to repression when faced with protests, despite the existence of other options to repression? Why do some countries refuse to negotiate or concede to the demands of the protestors, despite having the capacity to do so? One explanation is that negotiations with protestors would delegitimize certain political institutions. In non-democratic countries, seemingly-democratic institutions such as the legislature is used as

a way to curtail protests: grievances and demands, otherwise expressed in the form of protests on the streets, can be expressed in the controlled environment of the legislature. Negotiations with protestors delegitimize the role of the legislature as a forum to discuss grievances and demands. Countries, therefore, have an incentive to swiftly stifle protests in order to prevent the delegitimization of the legislature. This leads to a counter-intuitive conclusion: the more competitive and effective the legislature, the more repressive the response to protests on the streets. This presentation will show how legislatures increase the likelihood of repression by using data on protests in Eastern European countries between 1990 and 2009. Statistical analyses show that countries with effective and competitive legislatures are more likely to violently repress protests than do countries with ineffective legislatures. The strengthening of democratic institutions can, therefore, lead to the violation of democratic principles of civil liberties by increasing repression of protests.

Marta Polovin
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“Taking to the Streets: A New Age of Expression in Belgrade”

Following the unrest and violence of the 1990s in the Balkans, Serbia underwent profound economic, political, and social shocks. Rising out of the uncertainty and difficulty of those times, a young generation of Serb artists have taken to the streets of Belgrade to paint a portrait of post-war trauma. Amidst the dilapidated relics of socialist architecture and ruins from the 1999 bombings, street art is claiming a foothold in the modern cultural landscape of Serbia. This artistic revival, born out of humble yet rebellious roots, is signaling a process of healing and a simultaneous call for activism. My work detail the importance and relevance of street art, which has typically been historically marginalized. I will also show the visual imagery of Belgrade and its growing reputation as one of Europe's best "open air galleries.”

Miriam Goldman
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Majors: Psychology and Russian, Portland State University

“Substance Abuse among Russian-Speaking Youth in the Portland Metropolitan Area”

This research aims to examine psychological factors that contribute to substance abuse in Russian-speaking youth living in Portland, Oregon. As an intern for the Portland Police Bureau, I have been involved in community outreach with Slavic immigrants living in Portland. Since 1991, there has been an increase in crime, substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide.

Through attendance of monthly Slavic Advisory Council meetings, I help familiarize the American law system into the Russian-speaking community. It has been found that the Slavic immigrants residing in Portland are disconnected from the societal norms of American culture, which leads to miscommunications and rise in criminal activity. Working with police officers, our goal is to incorporate community-policing efforts to easily recognize emerging threats and prevent threats from materializing. This research is a qualitative analysis that discusses the psychological, political, religious, and cultural dimensions that may influence youth to fall in the path of addiction. This research reveals the prevalence of drugs being used today and how the perception of drug addiction influences its method of treatment. I will provide statistical data compiled by efforts of the Portland Police Drugs and Vice Unit, and observations gathered from informal interviews with community youth and faith-based leaders. I will discuss effectiveness of cross-cultural communication, epidemiology, and mental health intervention strategies specifically targeted towards this 'invisible' community.

Ryan Wauson
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Russian Studies, UCLA
“Insecurity in Uncertain Times”

The early 1900s and the 1990s in Russia marked times of great uncertainty in Russia. Insecurity with the perceived greatness of the country pervaded the popular culture. In this essay, I will argue how the two eras compared and differed from one another in their related causations, symptoms reflected in popular culture, and the effects they had on the future of both periods.

Braunny Ramirez
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“Russia and North Korea’s Nuclear Program: Russia’s Policy towards North Korea’s Nuclear Program and its Response to the North Korean Crisis”

North Korea, officially known as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPKR), began developing its nuclear program in the late 20th century with the aid of the Soviet Union. This support was originally meant to promote cooperation between the two countries in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. By the 1970s, North Korea began to establish its own independent nuclear energy development program through the creation of nuclear plants and energy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korea began to rapidly develop its own nuclear weapons, culminating in its first nuclear weapons test in 1994. This paper analyses the Russian Federation’s policy towards North Korea’s nuclear program and its responses to the North Korean missile and nuclear tests after

1993, when North Korea officially withdrew from the “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).”

Hristiana Petkova
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Political Science and Russian Studies, UCLA

“Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Roosevelt: Miscommunication in an Age of Realism”

In scholarly circles, the rhetoric regarding the Cold War varies. While there are those scholars who believe that the conflict was at least in part a clash of ideology, others maintain that the Cold War is a perfect example of “realism” in action. The theory of realism mandates that the world’s politics are shaped by states pursuing hegemonic power, and that in the long run, states look out for their own security above all—meaning the leaders of the Allied powers at the end of WWII were only concerned with their countries respective security. This argument implies inevitability to the Cold War. However, there are ways to observe and analyze the origins of the Cold War without assuming it to be an inevitable phenomenon. Deborah Welch Larson proposes an alternative theory to explain Franklin Roosevelt’s motivations behind his foreign policy decision making, which states that he and Stalin were working to create a world order in which the United States, the Soviet Union, and, to an extent, the United Kingdom, would reign supreme. The reason this world order did not come to fruition was due to misunderstandings between the respective states’ leaders and government apparatuses, rather than any realist worldview. While Larson is correct in her analysis of the misunderstandings that occurred between the three main Allied powers of WWII, her complete rejection of realism as an explanation of their foreign policy decision making is not sound; the leaders of the “Big Three” (Churchill, FDR, and Stalin) were allies despite ideology—they were all “diplomatic” realists, who were aiming to be the main powers in their own respective spheres of influence. And they might have been successful, had it not been for key misunderstandings in the period right before the conclusion of WWII.

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"Russia's Relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Perceived Imbalance and Inequality"

The questions of why Russia has not become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) within the last twenty-five years while many countries of the former Soviet bloc have and whether such exclusion has been prudent are both widely prevalent and heavily debated. This paper examines major political and military actions

of NATO since the collapse of the Soviet Union through the lens of the alliance's relationship with the Russian Federation and attempts to determine a reason, or at the very least a possible explanation for why Russia has not attained membership in this collective security apparatus. The aforementioned significant political and military actions of NATO analyzed in this paper are as follows: the continuation of NATO's existence after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the fall of the Soviet Union, the first phase of NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe, direct military intervention by alliance troops in the autonomous region of Kosovo during the ethnic conflict there in the late 1990s, and finally the second stage of NATO enlargement made official in 2004. In each of these four events the expressed policy preferences of Russia with regards to NATO activity during negotiations that preceded the actions themselves are juxtaposed with what policy is ultimately realized by NATO's decision-making apparatus. From these comparisons, the conclusion is drawn that throughout the relationship between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization there is a marked tendency of NATO's disregard for Russian policy preference on matters of significance, leading to a perceived marginalization of Russia on the international stage.

Alex Lenk

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Economics and Medieval History , UCSB (exchange)/University of St Andrews (home university)

“Chernorizets Chrabar’s Treatise ‘О письменехъ’ as an Assertion of the Emergence of a New Academic Community in late 9th-century Bulgaria”

The current paper challenges traditional historiographical studies of Chernorizets Hrabar's Treatise ‘О письменехъ’ that overemphasize its Pan-Slavic value in terms of the creation of a new Slavic cultural identity driven by the appearance of a new written alphabet, the Glagolitic. Although the polemico-apologetic tone that persists throughout the treatise succeeds in defending the new Slavic alphabet against the Greek alphabet, this defense was a means of justifying a different cause and not an end in itself. This paper argues that Hrabar’s treatise, by demonstrating a rhetoric mastery and exceptional textual education, was a tool to assert the presence of a developing community of Slavic scholars--domestic and international--that had ambitions to equal and even surpass the reputation of the established community of Byzantine and Latin scholars. In this respect, the birth of a new Slavic linguistic identity that is the treatise’s leitmotiv should be understood in the context of a ‘scholarly’ power struggle. Careful consideration of both the ideological content of the treatise and its primary audience support the new analysis.

Daniel Rosas

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“The effect of Islam on Russian Society since 1991”

Islam is and has always been an integral part of Russian society- from the times under the Russian tsarists, to the Soviet Union, and now today in the 21st century, Islam holds quite an integral place in Russian society, especially in its geopolitics. This research will draw implications from Islam's past effect on Russian society in order to correctly ascertain the present and perhaps future trajectory and breadth of effect Islam has and will have on various integral parts of Russian society, Including: Geopolitics, law, public opinion, civil strife and media. Moreover, this research will answer the ever-relevant question in an increasingly globalized society: Can Islam and pluralism exist in, and thrive in the Russia of today, or is Islam's effect on Russian society counter-productive to Russia's culture and projected societal image? These themes and more will be discussed in this research, which will conclude by analyzing the most relevant data from Russian society from 1991-2014 in respect to the interrelationship between Islam in the Russian context post the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Julianna Jerosch

Political Science and Economics, University of Wisconsin – Madison

“The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian State”

This paper analyzes the evolving relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian government since the fall of the Soviet Union. It examines the Church's ideal relationship with the state, symphonia, which is a form of cooperative governance between the state and Church. It also examines the potential of the Orthodox Church to contribute towards the growth of civil society, and thus democracy, in Russia, and the extent to which its pursuit of symphonia interferes with this. A review of the Church's efforts to increase its own status in Russian society, including legislation and other attempts to grant itself a position as the de facto state religion, have prevented the Russian Orthodox Church from contributing significantly to the growth of democracy in Russia. These actions also contradict the separation of church and state as spelled out in the Russian Constitution. Russian opinion polls reveal that the Russian population supports the separation of church and state, though they do not appear to look unfavorably on the current relationship between the Church and the Russian state.

Daniela Bradvica

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Central and Eastern European Languages and Cultures, and Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics, UCLA

“Human Trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe”

Human trafficking, specifically trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, is a social problem that has historically plagued Central and Eastern Europe and continues to do so today. In Central and Eastern Europe, the main causes of the issue have been the open borders, immense poverty, and foreign military occupation that characterized the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. Today, Central and Eastern European countries are origin, transit, and destination countries of human trafficking. The European Union and U.S. Government are two entities that play a major role in eliminating human trafficking. The European Union enforces Directive 2011/36/EU, which identifies anti-human trafficking measures expected of the Member States. The U.S. Government assesses each country's efforts to adhere to the minimum standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and ranks the country as Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 2 Watch List, or Tier 3 based on their compliance or efforts to comply with these standards. Through these efforts, the European Union and U.S. Government combat human trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe. The purpose of this presentation is to draw attention to this crime, identify the historical causes, pinpoint common transit routes, and analyze the roles of the European Union and the U.S. Government in eradicating human trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe. This presentation will also include human trafficking country profiles for Poland, Croatia, and Russia.

Alexander Mitrushina

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“Political Ties between Russia and Ukraine throughout History”

Ukraine and Russia's historical pasts are intertwined since the beginning of the first Slavic state, Kievan Rus. The 12th century marks the earliest mentioning of Ukraine in the records, meaning 'border-land' of Rus. Over the centuries different regions of Ukraine were controlled by different countries that shaped diverse political perspectives of the Ukrainian people. In the 17th century these differences materialized in a split of the loyalties, with East Bank being loyal to Russian Empire and West Bank being aligned with the Western countries. The situation in Ukraine today mirrors this 17th-century conflict. The current conflict is even more complex, as the ethnic identities of people on both sides have changed. In the Eastern Ukraine these changes are the result of two processes: 1) the natural process of ethnic integration of Ukrainians and Russians, creating an inter-ethnic community; 2) many people are products of mixed marriages and, therefore, assume both Ukrainian and Russian identities. In contrast, the Western Ukraine was historically dominated by Western countries. Moreover, the utmost Western regions of Ukraine (parts of Galicia and Volyn) did not spring from Kievan Rus, but have Hungarian and Polish roots. Thus, the split in loyalties that permeates now-a-day Ukraine has historical roots. The proposition of establishment of a Ukrainian Federation discussed in light of these differences between the two regions of Ukraine.

Nenad Sapungin
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Economics, UCLA

“Serbia's Potential Acquisition”

The European Union was formally established on November 1, 1993. The goal of the community is to promote peace, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the well-being of its people. As of today, there are 28 members of the union, all primarily located within the European continent. However, Serbia is one of the last European countries that has not been accepted. Serbia's corrupt politics, contracting economy, and past problems with Kosovo have excluded it from EU criteria, until now. Today, Serbia has met the political and economic qualifications needed to be a European Union candidate. Membership would help Serbia instill core principles necessary to develop their economy, decrease corruption and deliver a better quality of life to their citizens. On March 1, 2012, Serbia received full candidate status to the European Union. Today, their acquisition is in negotiation among EU members.