



**Friday, February 23, 2018
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm
348 Humanities Building
Free & Open to the Public**

Decoding the Language of Eugene Onegin: Diachronic Challenges to Understanding Pushkin's "Novel in Verse"

The talk is focused on a particular type of difficulty in reading Eugene Onegin that Anna Zalizniak has described as "the proximal semantic evolution effect." This is the name she gives to the misreading and misunderstanding of a classical text that arise from the fact that we often interpret words and constructions in their contemporary sense rather than the sense which they carried in Pushkin's lifetime. Such semantic shifts have taken place over a relatively small span of the history of the Russian language and are sometimes not easily recognizable even in well-known texts. The linguist Alexander Penkovsky wrote that this effect is "something similar to what are conventionally called 'false friends' in translation." The lecture will outline a typology of now-archaic forms and diachronic "false friends" in Onegin that are often misread by Russian-speakers today, as well as the resultant difficulties of translating Pushkin's "novel in verse" into English.



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