

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

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Katya Balan

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Major: Global Studies, Minor: Russian Studies (UCLA)

Title: **Russian Community in Los Angeles**

Abstract: The goal of my research was to find out whether there was a strong and united Russian community in Los Angeles that many Russian immigrants or Russian-speaking immigrants from former Soviet republics are part of. I was also interested in the preservation of the Russian language and culture in the community. I have interviewed UCLA students who were born in various parts of the former Soviet Union. My interview questions ranged from family and social life to future educational and career goals. For comparison, I conducted interviews in San Francisco that has an older and more established Russian community. The conclusions of my research show that while the Russian community in San Francisco is stronger than the community in Los Angeles, as I had expected, both communities have a strong interest in the preservation of the Russian language and culture.

Natalya Berenshteyn

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Double major: Political Science and European Studies, Minor: Russian Studies (UCLA)

Title: **Émigré Russian in the U.S.: An Analysis of Modifications in the Spoken Language of the Diaspora**

Abstract: The Russian language is not static; under the influence of a multitude of factors, it is constantly evolving. With time, changes occur in both the —standard|| language spoken in Russia and in the language of the Russian-speaking diaspora abroad. The growing dissimilarities between —Standard|| Russian and —Émigré|| Russian could create difficulties for members of the diaspora who desire to maintain links to Russia. Sociolinguistic analysis of émigré speech can elucidate the process of linguistic modification that occurs in the diaspora and could point to conditions that contribute to optimal language retention. For my project, I interviewed four members of the Russian-speaking diaspora in the United States. I hypothesize that the age of arrival in the U.S. and how frequently they utilize Russian in everyday life explain the interviewees' differing levels of Russian oral proficiency.

Rhea Blasdel  
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Major: Mathematics Minor: Russian Literature (UCSD)  
Title: **The Catalyst of Death: Illusions of Life Dispelled**

Abstract: Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych* explores the internal struggle of a man faced with death. Ivan Ilych spends his life as deemed appropriate by society and he successfully avoids any discomfort by turning away from it. A seemingly insignificant fall while decorating his apartment ultimately turns to fatal illness, which prompts Ivan Ilych's spiritual awakening. His approaching death leads him to the ultimate question: he was born and now he is dying, and there is nothing he can do to stop it; how can he find a way to accept it? The text reveals the emergence and evolution of the protagonist's consciousness, which eventually leads him to see the virtue of a simple and spiritual existence.

Rebecca Calinsky  
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Major: Russian Language and Literature (UCLA)  
Title: **Poshlost and Nabokov's Posh-lust**

Abstract: —The absence of a particular expression in the vocabulary of a nation does not necessarily coincide with the absence of the corresponding notion but it certainly impairs the fullness and readiness of the latter's perception. Vladimir Nabokov's *Poshlost*, a Russian word for which native Russian speakers claim there is no English equivalent, is introduced to English speakers in Vladimir Nabokov's critical biography *Nikolai Gogol*. It is Nabokov's belief that this word embodies the very essence of characters found in Gogol's *Dead Souls*. But what does *poshlost* mean? In Nabokov's descriptions of the word, this definition is not explicit as never once does he tell the reader how Russians define it. Instead, he addresses instances of *poshlost* found in situations concerning a wide variety of topics from materialism to German culture. He subsequently goes on to describe the plump physical characteristics of *poshlost*, yet whether the word was meant to embrace such qualities is doubtful. Nabokov's attempt to relay to his readers its meaning only spawns the creation of a whole new word he dubs —*poshlust*,<sup>||</sup> in which a —*u*ll has been put in place of the second —*o*.<sup>||</sup> While more phonetic-friendly, his *poshlust* leaves new implications for the word that never before existed and serve no purpose other than to make the term more appealing to English-speaking readers. His *poshlust* becomes *posh-lust*, suggesting an overpowering and even sexual desire for the *posh*. It is his *posh-lust* and not Russia's *poshlost* that he speaks of in his analysis.

Johana Fiserova  
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Major: Political science (UCLA)  
Title: **The Importance of women in the political process of the Czech Republic**

Abstract: In 1948, when the former Czechoslovakia (presently Czech Republic) was overtaken by the communist regime, the Women's Union became the women's section of the Communist Party. However, after the year 1952, that same organization was suddenly abolished and the regime assumed that the so called —woman question had been resolved. With the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the communist regime faced a stalemate and was overthrown. For women, the need to broaden the political horizon of the Czech Republic seemed apparent. Little did they know that the 40 years of communist regime was still embedded in the minds of male politicians who were —democratizing the Republic. Today, women may be absent to an extent from politics but they have certainly not been absent from the nascent Czech civil society. While women have made important social gains, they remain the missing piece that would complete the Czech Republic's transformation from communism.

Elizaveta Fouksman

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Major: History, Double Minor: Russian Literature and Global Studies (UCLA)

Title: **Character and the Face: the Role of Physiognomy in Tolstoy's War in Peace**

Abstract: Though physiognomy may be a word that few of us recognize today, it is a concept that has played a key role in human understanding from antiquity to the present. Physiognomy states that there is a direct correlation between an individual's physical appearance, particularly their facial features, and their personality and moral character. Though we still make judgments based on this premise (think of such expressions as —eyes are the window to the soul or commonplace statements such as —he looks like an unpleasant person), physiognomy attained a particular height in the late 18th and the 19th century. During this time, physiognomy was considered a fully legitimate science, and the key —scientist of physiognomy was Lavater. The writings of Lavater not only codified the system of physiognomy, but brought a new surge in the popularity of physiognomic ideas. This popularity profoundly affected the culture of the 19th century, and was particularly influential in the Romantic and Realist literature of this era. Russian literature is no exception. This paper traces the direct impact of the ideas of Lavater and of the pseudo-science of physiognomy on the writing of one of Russia's great 19th century authors – Lev Tolstoy. In particular I examine the both the use of and the challenge to physiognomic ideas in Tolstoy's magnum opus: War and Peace.

Rostislav Klibaner

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Major: English (UCLA)

Title: **Rockin' Russia**

Abstract: Rock took the Russian music scene by storm and was supremely influential in building national awareness of social crises and troubles. Like its Western counterpart, Russian rock music dared to say what people only yearned to. There was thus something dangerous about rock

music, and just the same, instantly alluring. People were drawn to it for the controversy and for the sheer power of the music and the words. Much like jazz in the early 30s in America, rock brought about a cultural revolution. Urging hope and prosperity for the future, rock music blended different styles together in the spirit of cooperation and union. Moreover, through its lyrics, rock spoke the truth about Russia's state as a troubled nation, and bravely stated that only through care and love does Russia stand a chance to survive.

Anna Kovalchuk

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Double Major: International Studies - Economics / Literatures in English (UCSD)

Title: **The Miracle of Belief in The Brothers Karamazov**

Abstract: Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* grapples with the role miracles play in the progression of personal belief. The proclaimed hero Alyosha, a novice monk and man, experiences a testing of his faith once outside the monastic walls. Alyosha's youthful faith, which is grounded in and conditional upon his very nature, is tested through Ivan's polemic of the Grand Inquisitor, the death of the elder Zosima coupled with the corruption of his body, as well as the character of Grushenka. Throughout the progression of the novel Alyosha acquires a more strengthened belief system, one not contingent upon personal disposition but one which rests upon a universal connection to humanity. Miracles which stem from this teeming humanity are shown to be the most affirmative of god's will, while those resulting from a realist's necessary faith are both dangerous and misleading. Alyosha's heroism is thus established by this process of change and growth.

Emilia Bogdanova Liberty

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Major: Russian Literature (UCSD)

Title: **Nature and Prince Andrei's quest for spiritual truth and the meaning of life in Lev Tolstoy's War and Peace**

Abstract: Lev Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, raises the issues of the search for life's true meaning and purpose, as well as questions about the soul's connection to higher spiritual truth. Protagonist of the novel Prince Andrei Bolkonsky is tormented and lost on his journey through life. The tone of a uniquely Russian suffering of a divided person, with his potential for kindness and openness towards the world, characterize Andrei Bolkonsky. The main influences that change his outlook on life come from a connection with nature through Natasha Rostova. The immediate forces of nature impact him as well. They work from the outside in, as is the case with the sky above the battle of Austerlitz and the old oak-tree. They fuel Prince Andrei's quest, leading him on the path towards meaningful life and love for humanity.

Molly E. McCann

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Double Major: Linguistics & Slavic Languages & Literatures (UC Santa Barbara)

Title: **Chinese Pidgin Russian in Dersu Uzala**

Abstract: Chinese Pidgin Russian is an extinct contact language which was once spoken in Eastern Russia and Manchuria and is based on Russian, Chinese, and indigenous languages. There is little recorded data of the pidgin, which makes Vladimir Klavdievich Arseniev's book *Dersu Uzala*—an account of his 1907 expedition in the Ussuris—a vital source of information on the language. My project includes a brief history of the language, language issues surrounding Arseniev and his book, and an overview of the phonologic, morphologic, lexical, and syntactic features of Chinese Pidgin Russian.

Justine Miller

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Majors: Communications and Linguistics, Minors: Russian and French (UCSB)

Title: **Consumerism and the American Dream as a Way of Life at Home and Abroad During the Twentieth Century**

Abstract: Created by the U.S. government and advertisers to enforce capitalism in America during the early part of the twentieth century, the American Dream became not just an ideal, but a domestic policy. This policy, as discussed by Cynthia Lee Henthorn's book *From Submarines to Suburbs*, showed that happiness (a.k.a. The American Dream) was achieved through private consumption of such products as automobiles and washing machines. This consumerist strategy of enforcing capitalism through transforming Americans into mass consumers was so effective in the post-World War II U.S., that the government looked to expand this concept to deal with communist countries overseas. Thus, this domestic policy was used in addition to containment strategies during the Cold War to promote democracy and capitalism and to fight communism and socialism abroad. As Greg Castillo points out in his article —*Domesticating the Cold War*, through American dream home exhibitions like the ones in Germany and Russia in the 1950's, and ensuing events like the kitchen debate, the domestic policy of consumerism was successfully applied as foreign policy during the Cold War.

Gabriela Mirejovsky

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Major: Slavic Languages and Literatures (UC Santa Barbara)

Title: **Russian Women Speaking on the Topic of Work**

Abstract: This presentation is an analysis of female narratives on the topic of work. It will compare and contrast the testaments of older women who built their careers during the USSR to interviews of young Russian women about to enter the changing Russian workforce. Specifically,

the presentation will examine the ways in which these women speak about their co-workers, their wages, and their positions as women in, or soon to be in, the professional sector.

Ross Nolan

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Major: Political Science, Minor: Russian (UC Santa Barbara)

Title: **Narodnaya Volya: Terrorism in the Russian Revolutionary Movement**

Abstract: The group "Narodnaya Volya" (in English "The People's Will") was a revolutionary group in 19th century Russia who was dedicated to bring about social reform in Russia. They separated from the revolutionary group "Zemlya i volya" preferring much more strong and radical action against the tsar's government to Zemlya i Volya's approach. After several attempts, they finally assassinated Tsar Alexander II on March 13, 1881. In the aftermath of the assassination, Narodnaya Volya's ability to partake in further terrorist activity was crushed by a strong response by Alexander III. Narodnaya Volya, however, did influence future revolutionary groups and political parties who eventually achieved some minor reforms in the revolution of 1905 and a final revolutionary victory in 1917.

Maryna Pecherska

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Major: General biology, Minor: Russian and Soviet Studies (UCSD)

Title: **Korney Chukovsky's Writing for Children in Soviet Russia**

Abstract: During the early 1900s children's literature was deteriorating due to the overuse of revolutionary ideologies, and by the 1920s had almost disappeared in the dogma of the new communist government. Over-politicized children's books were filled with morals and lessons, the imagination of the young readers was forgotten, until Korney Chukovsky began publishing his wild and imaginative stories. By applying stylistic devices of the avant-garde and modernist eras Korney Chukovsky created a new kind of children's literature appealing to the young readers' social, spiritual and emotional needs. Fighting bans, negative comments, and criticism Chukovsky's poems such as "The Crocodile", "The Cockroach" and "Moidodyr," gave rise to children's literature, as a genre that people know and love until this day.

Patrick Jeffery Osborne

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Double major: History /Slavic languages (UC Santa Barbara)

Title: **The Changing Image of Stalin: Images of Stalin in Media from the 1930's-1950's**

Abstract: Stalin's image by the time of his death was that of a triumphant social and military leader. But his image was not always that of a military leader. His status as a public figure and

administrator was easily immersed with that of an image of a great military leader. This only happened through Soviet military victories in the Great Patriotic War and then through propaganda which propelled this image of him as military leader. Stalin's image was depicted minimally at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. His image as military leader was not gained in conventional military fashion, but his successful image was made through posters, mass songs, and speeches from the war period and was continually fostered. Stalin's image as leader of the USSR drastically changed and evolved over the last twenty years of his life.

Yelizaveta Rapoport

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Double Major: International Political Science/ Russian and Soviet Studies (UCSD)

Title: **Fyodor Dostoevsky: An Analysis of Existentialism within Notes From Underground**

Abstract: Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote the short novel Notes From Underground in 1864. The work, published in late nineteenth century Russia achieved high levels of respect and popularity within the intellectual circles of Europe and the West. After writing Notes From Underground Dostoevsky has been acknowledged by the forerunners of philosophical thought as a brilliant contributor to the development of existential thought and an inspiration to philosophical progress. The novel encompasses the life and thoughts of a lonely, spiteful, sickly man ranting into a journal. Dostoevsky's "underground man" is often grotesque, generally cruel, and arguably completely isolated from fellow men. The rants of the anonymous "underground man" are brutally honest and intensely independent. The novel encompasses the struggle of one man with himself, with his surroundings, and with other beings. Notes from Underground is a tremendous achievement in existentialist thought because it illustrates the existence of a single individual man, who in the midst of his infinite failures struggles to exist, to define himself, to define the universe around him, and to belong. He struggles to define the nature of moral action, of free will, and most importantly of independence. What makes this novel unique, especially in its time, is the self-introspection of the "underground man", and his desire to escape the subjugation to basic human nature. His failure to crawl out of the underground only adds levels of dimension to his struggle. This is why Notes From Underground is an existentialist masterpiece.

Chris Records

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Major: History (UC Riverside)

Title: **Fatherlessness in modern Russian film and its political and social implications**

Abstract: In the past 15 years, many Russian directors have dealt with the theme of fatherlessness, connecting it to the social and political situation of Russians living in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union. They have also used it to deal with the legacy of Joseph Stalin, the conflict in Chechnya, and the political\_ fatherlessness' of post-Soviet Russia itself. This presentation examines some key contemporary Russian films that feature the theme of

fatherlessness and connects them to the social and political realities of Russia in the immediate aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR.

Erin Rectenwald  
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Major: Slavic Languages and Literatures (UC Berkeley)  
Title: **Dostoevsky: Theater of Ideas**

Abstract: In this paper I suggest that the chief function of scandal is to dramatize the ideological underpinnings of Dostoevsky's works. Through scandal scenes, author and reader work together to realize a multi-faceted truth that is expressed dramatically to the reader. Author, character and reader are linked in their need to endure inescapable discomfort, making scandal a means by which Dostoevsky's ideological priorities become the reader's priorities.

Kristine Romanchuk  
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Major: Global Studies (UC Santa Barbara)  
Title: **The Trafficking of Moldovan Women for Sexual Exploitation**

Abstract: Due to high amounts of political instability, a poor economic situation, and high levels of government corruption, Moldova has become a main country of origin for the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation throughout Europe. The trafficking of women is affecting many European countries by increasing transnational organized crime networks, forcing stricter border regulations, and causing difficulty in the ability to ensure basic human rights to the people within their borders. Three potential solutions for Moldovan trafficking that will be addressed are: fighting the feminization of poverty, combating organized crime and corruption with better law enforcement, and increasing awareness to the methods of recruitment for trafficking through educational programs. By addressing poverty and economic instability, Moldova will be successful in preventing the trafficking of Moldovan women for sexual exploitation.

Corinne A. Seals  
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Double major: Law & Society/Sociocultural Linguistics, Minor: LGBTQ Studies (UCSB) Title:  
**Unusual Palatalization in English Songs by Native Russian Singers**

Abstract: Palatalization is expected in different frequencies and linguistic environments in English than in Russian. This presentation will offer a brief sociocultural linguistic analysis of this one aspect in regards to what makes pronunciation of English lyrics sound "different" when sung by Russian natives. The well known Russian duet t.A.T.u will serve as the primary example for this study, as I briefly explore their use of unusual palatalization in English and how their



native Russian language influences this. Furthermore, I will present a possible culturally based explanation behind the differences in the frequencies of each singer's use of unusual palatalization in English music.

Xenia Tashlitsky

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Major: Political Science and Minor: Russian Studies (UCI)

Title: **Lost in Translation: Winnie the Pooh in Russian and English**

Abstract: In translations of children's literature, the balance between conveying the meaning of individual words and the message of the work as a whole often tips towards communicating the spirit and style of the author rather than the word for word translation of the text. —Meaningful scholar Zahar Shavit alleges that the literary community does not apply the same standards of accuracy to translations of children's literature because children's literature is at the bottom of the literary food chain. However, —messagel scholar Riitta Oittinen argues that the literary community benefits when children's books are translated in accordance with the cultural context of the reading audience. In my research, I discovered that despite their textual and illustrational differences, the English and Russian editions of —Winnie the Poohll each effectively appeal to their target audiences. Consequently, I would like to argue that we should expand our criteria forevaluating translations to include not only textual accuracy but cultural relevance. In other words, we should ask not only —Is this translation accurate?ll but —Is this translation appropriate for the message of the author and the age, society, and culture of the audience?

Lily (Lilit) Tovmasyan

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Major: Psychology, Minor: Russian Literature (UCLA)

Title: **Marina Tsvetaeva: The Duality of Life**

Abstract: My topic includes a deep stylistic and thematic analysis of two contrasting poems by Marina Tsvetaeva called "I love you all my life and every hour..." and "I like that you are obsessed, but not by me...". Tsvetaeva has explored and utilized certain stylistic tools in order to establish the theme of contrasting ideas and events that are prevalent in human life. Both poems touch upon a deep philosophical analysis of the idea of human life and its core components which puzzle the minds of every single human being independent of age, race, or culture. In addition, the author has brilliantly utilized the theme of love which establishes human interaction in order to demonstrate that life as a whole is a combination of opposing ideas and concepts which make it beautiful and worth to fight for.

Alex Wang

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Major: Psychology, Minor: German / Russian (UC Santa Barbara)

Title: **Cultural adaptation of Russian Orphans in the States**

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to support the notion that complete assimilation isn't necessary for cultural adjustment into the States for Russian Orphans. The study evaluates the effectiveness of how different external conditions influence the adjustment of Russian orphans in the United States, that of complete assimilation with cultural replacement and that of some degree of cultural retention. While substantial research exists on the study of childhood development far less data exists on the social and cultural development of Russian orphans who are subjected to more challenges such as linguistic and cultural barriers than that of an average child. For this study, research data was obtained from an interview of an adopted Russian orphan as well as data from stories of other adopted informants. The interview inquires thoroughly about the conditions of the orphanage(s) and at home conditions post adoption. The interview also facilitated in obtaining data on the linguistic progression and variances that occurred throughout the adoptee's childhood. It also asks the interviewee to elaborate on the different aspects of the social and cultural adjustments throughout their process of assimilating. Further sources that were implemented into this study includes analysis of the Russian orphan Andrei from the film series 7-14-21 & up produced by Sergei Miroshnichenko. Each adoptee was examined thoroughly by their environment pre and post adoption and their current level of adjustment. This research hopes to encourage cultural retention of Russian adoptees by supporting evidence that it's sacrifice isn't necessary for complete cultural adjustment into the United States.