

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

**2012 UCLA**

Hayk Barseghyan

[haykbarseghyan@ucla.edu](mailto:haykbarseghyan@ucla.edu)

Majors: Physiological Science & Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“Football in Russia Today”**

Football is one of the most popular entertainment games in the whole world. It delivers fun, joy, happiness, sadness, tears, love, hate, loyalty and many other things to the lives of those who enjoy watching it. It was not long ago when technology evolved so much that it became the most widespread source of information, news, entertainment, games and more. Since then the game of football became not just an urban entertainment for the countrymen, but with evolving television and Internet football became a widespread mass entertainment. Today, millions of people watch this game live at a stadium, and billions more watch it on television and the Internet. It has become the most viewed game on the planet, and the profits from it are extremely high. In this paper, I will devote my attention not to the development and progress of international football, but rather to the development and survival of this game in a specific time period and a particular country where football has been and still is greatly appreciated as a sport and entertainment for millions of fans. This country is Russian Federation, which was formerly part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) but became a separate country with its own government after the USSR fell apart in 1991. We will look at things such as economy, leaders of the country, wealthy people known as oligarchs and advertising that affected Russian football and made it the way as it is today.

Mariam Barseghyan

[barseghyanmariam@gmail.com](mailto:barseghyanmariam@gmail.com)

Majors: Russian Language and Literature & Physiological Science, UCLA

**“The Origins of Modern Racism in Russia”**

Instances of racism in Russia have reached frightening heights. Many foreigners traveling to Russia are now significantly concerned about their safety. On 6.5 million square miles of Russian

land historically lived and still live various ethnic groups as well as a large number of immigrants from the neighboring countries. Though Russia is a multicultural and multiethnic country, for historical reasons, racism is deeply entrenched in many Russians' minds. A type of Russian racism that has deep roots in Russia's past is anti-Semitism. After the collapse of the Russian Empire, the fledgling communist regime embraced mutual racial tolerance as an ideal of Soviet life. The ideology of soviet internationalism aimed for establishment of racial, ethnic, and cultural equity. Nonetheless, the collapse of the USSR changed the racial and ethnic situation in the country, resulting in a surge of xenophobia. With the growing economic capabilities of Russia on the verge of the new millennium, racism in the country gained additional power. Since then, nationalism in the country has only strengthened, following the same goal of eradication of foreigners from Russia until the racist slogan "Russia for Russians" becomes the reality of everyday life. Financial and political supporters are necessary in order to provide for the actions of radical nationalists, demonstrating the existence of alleged benefit for the former. It has been twenty years since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the revival of suppressed during the years of the USSR racism, and yet the government seems to disregard or be ineffective in the face of this major problem.

Bianca Beloiu

[bibeloiu@gmail.com](mailto:bibeloiu@gmail.com)

Major: Slavic Languages and Literature, UCSB

**"Slavonic Influences on the Romanian Language"**

This study expands on the idea of the Slavonic influence on Romanian through the detailed study of Moldova. In order to do so, it is important to look back on the first Slavic influences on Romanian during the 16th century. Here, we can see a progression stemming from Orthodoxy that affected the clerical system and the alphabet, emphasized by the use of Cyrillic in the writing of Romanian. This historical influence is a nice backdrop for the issues with which Moldova is currently dealing. The syntax and grammar is a significant point of interest in relation to the idea of the Moldovan language. These are, in part, a result of the mentality of the Moldovan person that is different from the Romanian. The way the Moldovan combines Latin words with Slavonic grammatical structures is a key point to my analysis of the Moldovan language, differentiating it completely from Romanian. This independent identity is further analyzed by taking into account the influence of the Soviet Union specifically on Moldova, and how its geographical placement makes it unique. The conclusion of my analysis is the statistic information of the mix between Russian and Romanian. In researching multiple sources that are predominantly in the Romanian language, this study further strives to meet these two languages half-way. This essay is reaching back into the historical past and seeing the progression of Slavonic over the Romanian language, and finally ending with the interesting but not unproblematic blend of these two languages: Moldovan.

Dustin Chavkin

[snowdrummer@ymail.com](mailto:snowdrummer@ymail.com)

Major: Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“English Borrowings in Contemporary Russian”**

Language is a perpetually evolving organism. One of the many methods by which languages are developed is through borrowings and adaptations of words and concepts from other languages. This study is an examination of the extent to which the English language has been adopted (both directly and indirectly) into Russian. Specifically, we will delve into the areas of technology and slang/popular culture. Owing to the fact that Russia was highly censored and had very restricted interaction with the rest of the world during the time of the Soviet Union, the evolution of the Russian language was greatly restricted. After the fall of the Soviet Union, however, Russia regained many of its former international relations. Through exchanges between Russian and English speaking cultures, Russia has been exposed to many new concepts and areas of study. With respect to technology, many of the advancements in this field were done in English speaking countries, and as such, had their terminology and phraseology adapted into contemporary Russian language. Furthermore, as with French in the past, English has become the language of the younger generations (e.g. people find themselves to be cool, upbeat, and in-tune with the times if they use English instead of Russian equivalents).

Sona Gichyan

[sona.gichyan@yahoo.com](mailto:sona.gichyan@yahoo.com)

Majors: Political Science & Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“Gorbachev, and The Culture of Drinking During Perestroika”**

One of the biggest problems that Russia faced during Perestroika was alcoholism, a pernicious consequence of Russia's traditional culture of drinking. The Russian culture of drinking has existed for hundreds of years. Continued drunkenness among large portions of the population, and its adverse effects on the economy and social stability, led Mikhail Gorbachev to enact and enforce the “dry law.” Gorbachev was faced with many political, economic, and social problems in the 1980s, but one of the biggest challenges was to “reinvent the market.” The alcohol crisis played a role in Gorbachev’s economic program: Vodka may have been part of traditional Russian culture, but during Perestroika, it was perceived as a barrier to reforms. According to Gorbachev, drunkenness influenced all aspects of social life, from the economy to family life, morality, and individual consciousness. According to official statistics at the time, 90% of hooliganism was caused by intoxication. It is reported that Gorbachev had personal motivation for his anti- alcohol campaign: his brother in law had suffered from alcohol addiction for over 33 years. Gorbachev faced the problem head-on, introducing a ban on alcohol production and consumption. The consequences of this reform demonstrated the internal contradictions of late Soviet government and society.

Joanna Danielak

[jdanielak88@gmail.com](mailto:jdanielak88@gmail.com)

Majors: English & French, UCLA

**“Business Development in the Polish Countryside since the Introduction of Capitalism”**

Poland is credited as having been highly influential in bringing about the end of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. Since then, the country has enjoyed great success in its appropriation of capitalism, and more recently, in its slow but steady integration into the European Union. Even in the Polish countryside, the quintessence of pastoral living, the effects of this period of economic regeneration are visible. This study takes a typical Polish *gmina*, a district comprised of a group of small villages, and focuses on the advances made within the community’s business environment during the last twenty years. Named Kłaj, this *gmina*, with a population of roughly 10,000 people in an 83.1 square kilometer area, exemplifies the progress seen by Poland as a whole since the fall of communism in 1989. Once predominantly comprised of farming communities, this district is now seeing a renewal in interest from Polish businesses as well as from larger, international companies whose ventures into the countryside have so far yielded favorable results. The introduction of these new businesses is indicative of a positively changing business climate within this farming community. Furthermore, such development in the area suggests growing entrepreneurial attention by Western European businesses to former communist countries. This study focuses on the new opportunities that these businesses have been given within this particular *gmina* and the results of their presence on the surrounding rural community since the establishment of capitalism.

Derek Groom

[derek.groom@gmail.com](mailto:derek.groom@gmail.com)

Major: Russian Language and Literature; Minor: English, UCLA

**“The Evolution of the Thieves' Code: An Analysis of Russian Criminal Tattoos”**

Russian criminal tattoos not only display a convict’s criminal record, but also help establish the social hierarchy of the criminal world. The placement and imagery of each tattoo is anything but accidental; tattoos are a form of visual language understood only by criminals, law enforcement, and experienced researchers. The meanings of criminal tattoos have been thoroughly studied and documented by researchers such as Danzig Baldaev, and some work has been done on the current state of the criminal code in Russia. The collapse of the Soviet Union radically destabilized the traditional hierarchies of the Russian criminal world, and this destabilization has, in turn, affected the “language” of criminal tattoos. For instance, whereas during the Soviet period, a *vor v zakone* (thief-in-law) earned his marks of honor as (a star on each shoulder and knee) by committing the crimes depicted by the tattoos on his body, an aspiring criminal can now simply buy these tattoos and, therefore, secure a position of authority in the criminal hierarchy. In this paper, I plan to analyze the “language” of tattoos in the context of the Soviet criminal underworld, as well as discuss the transformation of this underworld and its code after

1991, paying particular attention to the effect of this transformation on tattoos. I will also discuss the consequences of these paradigmatic shifts for the criminal world and for law enforcement.

Ludmila Gubin

lgubin@uci.edu

Major: Political Science; Minor: International Studies, UCI

**“The Newly Emerged Dubious Slogan Of Democracy In Russia”**

Dominant groups in sociopolitical infrastructure have the most to obscure about the ways in which the society they have created really works. Just as the current position of the United States foreign policy is not solely based upon the ideal of promoting democracy, Russia’s new administration uses a slogan of democracy as a dubious tactic to fuel relations with the developed West while never fully allowing open politics to take place in Russia. Encouragement of mass democratization and economic aspirations suggest that democracy remains a tool for maintaining the facade of a foreign policy dedicated to democracy promotion. When decisions are being made, high-powered elites of both United States and Russia understand that, “truth is always revolutionary.” Open politics, the key to democracy, will never come under Putin’s control. Putin’s drive toward dictatorship will always trump any legitimate attempts to have democratic discourse in Russia. The current “Reset” policy of the Obama administration is important for the process of democracy promotion in Russia, as well as the strengthening of closer US-Russian cooperation, which is in the best interests of both nations and of the world as a whole. If both nations work together effectively, current key global challenges, such as assuring nuclear non-proliferation and overcoming the global financial crisis, will be less difficult to manage.

Leyla K. Hasanzade

leylahasanzade@ucla.edu

UCLA; Major: Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“Bulgakov’s *The Heart of a Dog*: Analyzing Realistic and Fantastic Aspects of the Novel”**

*The Heart of a Dog*, a novel by Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov, was written in 1925, during the NEP period. The novel is commonly read as an allegory of the Communist revolution. The publication of the novel was originally banned; however, eventually it was released in 1987. The plot of the novel has some similarities with *Frankenstein* and *Dr. Faustus*. The theme of the novel can be interpreted as a satire of medical experiments and the attempts of Communists to create a new person. Bulgakov created a tremendous novel by combining fantastic and realistic subjects. This kind of combination can also be seen in *Fatal Eggs* and *Diaboliad* and other stories. All of Bulgakov’s satirical novels contain some kind of a warning directed towards everyone past’s, today’s and future generations to keep their distance from scientific creations and discoveries that may get out of control because no one is safe while experimenting with the forces of nature. This was Bulgakov’s scientific warning that had not been heard by people. The

other warning may be interpreted as the formation of a new person, represented by Sharikov in the novel. Consequently, throughout the novel there are two main problems that deeply and profoundly exist: fantastic and realistic themes.

Ruta Heinman

[annaruta@yahoo.com](mailto:annaruta@yahoo.com)

Majors: Economics & Mathematics & Russian, UCSB

**“Magic of the Flower *Ruta* in Slavic Folklore”**

*Chervona Ruta* is a flower that comes to life through Slavic folklore. “*Chervona*” is Ukrainian for “red” or “beautiful” and “*Ruta*” is a fern. In other languages, the flower goes by different names, but its importance in folklore has made it a proper noun in the Ukrainian language. Although it is scientifically impossible for a fern to bloom, it often does just that in Slavic folklore. On the day of Ivan Kupala, the youth gather to celebrate water, fire, and relationships. It takes place on the summer solstice when the days are longest and nights are shortest. When the night nears midnight, single women are sent into the forest to seek the *Chervona Ruta*, because it is said that only at midnight, for a few moments, the flower blooms red. Whoever finds the red fern will fall happily in love. Single men follow the women into forest, and if a couple walks out of the forest together, then they are engaged. The theme of the fern bringing true lovers together also appears in the Ukrainian folk song called “Chervona Ruta.” The male singer begs his lover not to seek the red fern because his love is pure and he is all that the woman needs. Lastly, N.V. Gogol based his early stories on folklore where he also writes about this powerful flower, but shows the evil side effects of obtaining it. Although *Chervona Ruta* goes by a different name for everyone, each Slavic culture has a place for it in their legends.

Sydney Heller

[blubberbo@gmail.com](mailto:blubberbo@gmail.com)

Major: Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“Cyber Crime”**

Since the movement of societal infrastructure and activity from the physical, tangible world to the cyber one began, criminal activity utilizing technological means has significantly increased. After the Cold War, the main conflict between East and West became linked to cybercrime and cyber-terrorism. Cybercrime rapidly became the most frequent medium for individuals and governments to target their enemies for economic as well as clandestine reasons. Governments around the world have identified the magnitude of cyber threats and pour resources into shielding themselves from sources such as Wikileaks and the hacker group Anonymous. This paper will aim to prove that the United States, in this modern struggle for cyber dominance, is falling behind Russian-speaking countries, and that one of the primary reasons for this lagging is the United States’ smothering of entrepreneurship and innovation, particularly among young programmers who could collaborate with law enforcement. The government of the Russian

Federation actively recruits academically educated programmers from universities as well as self-educated and successful hackers to deal with both domestic issues as well as international matters of intelligence and espionage. Through analysis of both the Russian and the American national characters, coupled with each government's public and private stance on how to deal with domestic influxes of experienced and skilled cybercriminals, it is clear that the unbounded success of Russian-speaking hackers on the global scale and their innovative ability to consistently defeat their opposition is a product of their national culture and the ease with which they are allowed to work.

William F. Holden

[wholden@pdx.edu](mailto:wholden@pdx.edu)

Majors: History & Russian, Portland State University

**“Representations of the Soviet Reader: A Case Study”**

Feedback from readers in the form of letters was an important element of Soviet newspapers. In this paper, I examine three articles published in 1969 as an example of what Jeffrey Brooks has called the “interactive sphere” of the Soviet media. This paper first considers an article entitled, “On i Ona” (“He and She”), published in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* in the autumn of 1969. The article, a parable written by Victoria Tokareva regarding the marital complications that arise as a result of a woman's decision to attend graduate school, was published alongside three professional commentaries on the parable. Next, this paper examines two subsequent articles that published in response, each consisting of letters allegedly written by readers and sent to *Literaturnaia Gazeta*. I discuss the contours of discourse in these responses, ranging from traditionalist to contentious, in order to show the ways in which a particular spectrum of readers' opinion is represented in these articles. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates a narrative of opinion that is formed as a compilation of these publications, culminating in a very acute and traditionalist response from the readers to the problems raised in Tokareva's parable. This shall inform our understanding of the machinations of the “interactive sphere,” and, in a more general sense, of the Soviet press.

Harrison Homel

[hthomel@pacbell.net](mailto:hthomel@pacbell.net)

UCLA; Major: Political Science, UCLA

**“Истина and Truth”**

The loyal and happy citizens of the Soviet Bloc states were notorious for their ideological dedication and avid engagement in public life. They proudly served socialism in their independent governing structures, and actively sought healthy ties to the global movement in equal partnership with the Soviet Union. The citizens reaped great benefits from their state, not least of which was piece of mind.

At least, this was the story the Russians were telling. For two generations, the USSR enforced a compelling lie as fact on their satellite states, and those citizens tried to live as they were expected to. The extreme dissonance of this narrative with the reality of the situation had a profound impact on the collective psyche of those being oppressed. Using literature and film from this period as a cultural window into this complicated reality, this paper seeks to understand the effects of leading a collective double life.

Paloma Jeretic

[pjeretic@haverford.edu](mailto:pjeretic@haverford.edu)

Majors: Russian & Mathematics, Haverford College

**“Soviet Education in Mathematics: Success in spite of Its Failure”**

Mathematics were of great importance to the Soviet government, and the emphasis put on education in this subject cannot be overlooked. What were the causes of this phenomenon? How did its quality compare to that of Soviet education in other subjects such as the arts, and to that of education in mathematics in other developed countries? Most importantly, what were its results? The very high quality of Soviet upper level education in mathematics produced a considerable number of great mathematicians, who uniquely contributed to exceptional advances and discoveries the field. Its extraordinary results were largely influenced by the political goals of the government. Much effort was made to stress the enormous importance of mathematics for the country, and encourage its development in research. Mathematics was thought of being the basis for technological advances essential to economically dominating the West. The Soviets tried to reduce imports of foreign modern consumer goods, as they wanted to produce their own goods within the country, and thus develop their own technologies, based on their own scientific discoveries. However, the results did not often meet the goals: the success of the education in mathematics clashed with the failure to apply it in other areas.

Mika Kennedy

[mikakennedy@gmail.com](mailto:mikakennedy@gmail.com)

Major: English & Russian, UCSD

**“So in the Soviet Union when the Sun Goes Down”: Beatniks, Bolsheviks, and Vassily Aksenov”**

Drawing heavily from Aksenov’s 1987 essay, “Beatniks and Bolsheviks.” in this paper, I will examine the extent of formal and political influences of the 1960s West in Vassily Aksenov’s *Ticket to the Stars (Zvezdnyy билет, 1961)*, Though Danish scholars Inger Lauridsen and Per Dalgaard link the American Beat and the Soviet “New Wave” movements in terms of their chronological similitude and their spirit of protest, Aksenov proposes that whatever the Beats’ celebrity in the Soviet Union, he and his New Wave contemporaries drew greater influence from their own forbearers, the Russian avant-garde. He further argues that the political contexts that shaped both movements differed crucially in their “cold war” experiences, namely, how the

repercussions of war and Stalinism affected the Soviet Union in forms alien to Ginsberg or Kerouac. I sympathetically explore Aksenov's position by specifically applying its historical tenets to his novel, *Ticket to the Stars*, and its formal and thematic treatments of "jazz culture" in the 1960s Soviet Union. I also draw comparative examples from Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and American neo-conservative critic Norman Podhoretz, as well as Aksenov's New Wave contemporaries. Ultimately, I propose a reading of *Ticket to the Stars* that organizes the period's many sources of influence and suggests that what provided Aksenov's impetus for writing comprises a parallel, but separate, intellectual event.

Alexandra Kohut

[akohut@brynmaur.edu](mailto:akohut@brynmaur.edu)

Major: Russian, Bryn Mawr College

**"Abortion in Russia: the Church and State"**

Russia sustains one of the highest rates of abortion in the world. Due to the early legalization of abortion, shortages within the domestic markets in soviet times, which effectively eliminated access to birth control, and the soviet suppression and persecution of the church and its followers, abortion as a political issue does not maintain the same morally controversial status in the current Russian Federation as it does in many other countries. However, Russia also struggles with a serious demographic problem and thus there arises a political controversy surrounding the issue of abortion that takes on a very unique structure. Opposition to women's access to abortion in Russia is largely founded on political needs rather than religious or moral principles, and religion is used by the government as a medium to effect change in society that will fulfill those needs. That is not to say that there does not exist a moral or religious element for many Russian citizens with regard to how they individually relate to the topic of abortion, but rather that the political movement takes root primarily in demographic concerns. This religious-political paradigm that has arisen surrounding the issue of abortion reflects a recent trend in the government's policies under the influence of former and future President Putin towards the erosion of the separation of church and state. This trend may very well prove dangerous for citizens of the Russian Federation as well as religious institutions and therefore is well worth observing.

Pola Lem

[plem@haverford.edu](mailto:plem@haverford.edu)

Major: Russian & Creative Writing, Haverford College

**"Substance Abuse in the Russian Federation: Perceptions and Approaches"**

Should addicts be forced to undergo treatment against their will? How will newly passed laws affect the future of substance abuse in Russia? This presentation examines the issue of substance abuse in the Russian Federation, taking into account how perceptions of drug addiction influence its method of treatment. I begin by providing historical background on attitudes toward addiction

before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While the Soviet authorities led a strong anti-alcoholism campaign, they considered issue of narcotics abuse a problem of the East; it was largely ignored, and denied. The problem worsened in the 1990s as organized crime rose and as Russia saw an influx of heroin from Afghanistan. Next, I focus on modern-day Russia in order to ask: how widespread is drug use among Russians, and what are the prevalent drugs being used today? This paper also discusses epidemiology, a field strong affected by substance abuse, as well as geographical distribution (where high drug rates occur, and for what reasons). Finally, I analyze the current government's management of this problem by considering the benefits and shortcomings punitive approaches to substance abuse, as opposed to rehabilitative ones.

Miguel Liberato

[miguelliberato55@gmail.com](mailto:miguelliberato55@gmail.com)

UCSB; Majors: Biology & Slavic Languages and Literature

**“A Communist Mutation: Stalinism vs. Leninism”**

Joseph Stalin inherited a confederation of fledgling republics attempting to rise from the ashes of revolution. I will discuss the differences and similarities in political, social, and economic policy characterizing the regimes of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. In so doing, I will prove that Stalinism was neither a distortion nor a continuation of Leninist ideals, but instead a set of mutations of an already hybrid ideology incorporating the rudiments of Leninism, all while adding novel ideologies that were sensitively contingent on timing and subjective ambition. Vladimir Ilych Lenin rose to power in a dismantled society victim to the residual political, social, and economic fragmentation of a three hundred year old czarist empire. Among these tribulations were food shortage, overpopulation, and a complete lack of political or social infrastructure. It was for this reason that there was little room for political hesitation: every single one of Lenin's tactics had to be planned to not only address these pressing problems but also to maintain the radical nature that characterized his initial coup of the czarist regime. At times, in order to uphold the radical nature of his political ideologies, he would be forced to commit the most abominable acts against humanity, acts of sheer terror. Throughout this presentation, I hope to make clear how Lenin's unrepentant use of violence is often eclipsed by those horrendous crimes against humanity that took place under Stalin's regime.

Todd Long

[cemistrunka@gmail.com](mailto:cemistrunka@gmail.com)

Majors: Music & Russian, Portland State University

**“Poetic Rhythm in Blok's ‘12’: Controlled Chaos”**

Aleksandr Blok's poem “12” uses a variety of different meters, changing between them often and quickly to create a feeling of chaos that matches the chaotic atmosphere of the Russian Revolution. However, in this chaos (or carnival, as one critic put it) there is a method that has been overlooked by some critics, one of whom described the poem as “amorphous” and

“arhythmical.” That method is the use of what Marina Tarlinskaja calls “rhythmical figures,” which are deviations from a set meter that “serve semantic purposes.” For example, the first stanza of “12” begins in a trochaic meter, but the fourth line suddenly breaks into anapest. This is not arbitrary: the meter “slips” when the image of a person slipping on ice suddenly appears in the poem. This example is not isolated. Another slipping person is mentioned at the end of stanza 2, at which point the meter breaks from *dolnik* into free verse. This essay explores other such examples of rhythmical figures in the poem and technically analyzes how they can be identified and understood by counting syllables and stresses. A conclusion is made about their relevance to symbolism, a literary movement of which Blok was a part and which was characterized by the use of mysterious mystical metaphors. The fact that critics have often overlooked the hidden use of rhythm in this poem and seen only chaos underscores the mystery with which Blok wrote it, and hopefully this essay’s analysis will shed some light on that mystery.

Alexandra Lototsky

[alototsky@umail.ucsb.edu](mailto:alototsky@umail.ucsb.edu)

Majors: Slavic Language and Literatures & Political Science, UCSB

**“Homophobia in Russia: Causes and Influences”**

This paper examines the multilayered nature of homophobia in Russia throughout the country’s history and speculates on the conditions that foster its existence and perpetuation. The paper includes a short overview of Russia’s Imperial Era and a longer discussion of the Soviet Era and modern Russia. Homophobia has been a prevalent form of discrimination in Russia throughout history, existing in its social, political and legal forms. While religion takes part of the responsibility for the perpetuation of social homophobia as often seen in other countries, the example of Russia clearly demonstrates that political and legal homophobia, as well as the perpetuation of social homophobia, is the product of a strong government for which it will serve a political purpose necessary for the government’s continual function and existence. This paper traces the laws and attitudes, political and social, pertaining to the LGBT community through Russia’s history, highlighting the effects that shifting political atmospheres had on these laws and attitudes. Particular emphasis will be placed on the political utility of homophobia as well as an answer to the question as to what the government has to gain from social homophobia. More generally, this paper contends with the popular opinion that the existence of conservative organized religion, such as Christian Orthodoxy which is Russia’s leading religion, is the main pre-condition for homophobia and points out a much more insidious source in the face of totalitarian-leaning government.

Sonja Magnuson

[smagnuson@umail.ucsb.edu](mailto:smagnuson@umail.ucsb.edu)

Majors: English & Slavic Studies, UCSB

**“ $2 \times 2 = 5$  and  $\sqrt{-1}$ : Irrationality and Symbolic Logic in Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* and Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*”**

Tension between the rational and irrational connects Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* and Zamyatin's *We*, where rationality is understood to represent the highest extent of the intellect and irrationality the origin of consciousness and the freedom to go against what is commonly held as true. The supposition, or even fear, that two times two could equal five or that the square root of negative one is an imaginary number have usually been analyzed to link Dostoevsky and Zamyatin's shared anti-utopian ideas. Using incomplete aphorisms that provoke the question of what happens when someone chooses to believe something that they know cannot be rationally true or possible within the confines of a utopia, I will argue, that irrational symbolic logic structures the ideological loci of these texts. Using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on aphorisms as failed, impersonal verities that cannot be detached from the totality of a work, I will examine how logic loses its dogmatic quality when it begins to contain only subjective, rather than objective, significance. Further, I will explore how symbolic logic is subverted when it is converted from a numerical representation to a linguistic structuring of both the Underground Man and D-503's narrative discourses. For Dostoevsky's Underground Man, this occurs in a narrative framework that fails to equate ideas, while Zamyatin's D-503 waivers between the stability of arithmetic and whole numbers, and imaginary ideas.

Thomas Mahoney

[tmahoney@haverford.edu](mailto:tmahoney@haverford.edu)

Major: Russian, Haverford College

**“The Soviet New Wave: The Influence of the French New Wave on the Form and Content of Soviet Cinema of the 1960's”**

Soviet film has a fascinating history. Filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov were pioneers in the art of cinema, whose radical techniques and vision still influence filmmakers today. However, like so many forms of art in the Soviet Union, in the 1930s with the advent of socialist realism, cinema came under increasing censorship. In the 1960s, however, Soviet cinema would experience a sort of Renaissance, during which many of the most popular films in Russian film history were produced. These unique films and their creators were heavily influenced by other film movements occurring at that time, mainly the French New Wave. Even the most popular mainstream films of the time reflect the rebellious and iconoclastic film and editing techniques of their French counterparts. However, Soviet film failed to follow the strong social and political critiques of Godard and other French filmmakers as a strong history of censorship and control in the Soviet Union prevented such blatantly critical commentary. The radical techniques of the French New Wave gave Soviet filmmakers a vocabulary in which to express themselves artistically, even if they were paired with trivial or politically correct content. This presentation will seek to explore the influence of the French New Wave on the form and content of Soviet cinema. Analysis will focus on Soviet directors Mikhail Kalatazov, Andrei Tarkovsky, and Leonid Gaidai, as well as the work of several French New Wave directors, including Louis Malle, Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, and Alain Resnais.

Armine Manukyan  
manukya@ucla.edu

Majors: Psychology & Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“Why is Domestic Abuse so Widespread in Russia, and are its Causes Culturally Specific?”**

Domestic violence is one of the main causes of women's suffering and even death. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, this topic has often been passed over in silence all over the world. However, in the past 10 years, things have changed: women have begun to make their voices heard, and have finally started seeking help. But is this true for women in Russia? First we need to define what constitutes domestic violence. The Department of Health defines domestic violence as “a continuum of behavior ranging from verbal abuse, physical, sexual assault, to rape, and even homicide.” This definition includes such violence as violence in dating, animal abuse, child abuse, violence in same-sex families, violence between intimate partners, as well as violence between neighbors and friends. This paper focuses on domestic violence between intimate partners, both married and unmarried. According to the Acting Head of the Department of Public Order of Russia, every fourth family in Russia experiences some type of domestic violence, and two-thirds of homicides are due to family and domestic violence. To give a sense of the scale and severity of the disaster which in Russia is often simply referred to as “family problems,” about fourteen thousand women die at the hands of their husbands or other relatives and 40 percent of all serious violent crimes annually are committed within families. Just to compare the scale, it should be noted that within 10 years of war between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, seventeen thousand people were killed.

Maria Manukyan  
mmaria@ucla.edu

Majors: Linguistics and Psychology & Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“Mass Media in Post-Soviet Russia”**

The collapse of a Soviet Union was the beginning of a new Era for Russia. After the fall of the Soviet Union as the transition to democracy appeared to be more complex than first assumed, the Russian Federation faced chaos. Today, Russia presents itself as a democratic country; however, it does not fulfill all the criteria for democracy. Once Boris Yeltsin’s protégé Vladimir Putin became president, he began a vigorous reform of the ruling apparatus, the aim of which was the centralization of the administration and a “perestroika” of the media system. The result of these reforms is a governmental monopolization of control over television, radio, and newspapers. Although freedom of speech is provided by Article 29 of the Russian Constitution, which states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and speech. The freedom of the mass media is guaranteed. Censorship is prohibited,” the government exerts pressure on mass media via threats to cancel licenses or to begin criminal prosecutions. A number of Russian journalists who were brave enough to speak out have even been murdered by unknown assailants for their professional activity in Russia. This paper will show that, in part because of the factors outlined in the

previous paragraphs, and in part because of factors that are yet to be discussed, Russian mass media has been degraded, becoming a tool of political propaganda and losing the people's trust.

Polina Mareninova

[pmareninova@ucla.edu](mailto:pmareninova@ucla.edu)

Majors: Russian Language and Literature & Political Science, UCLA

### **“Legal Education in Russia Today”**

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been struggling with defining and understanding individual rights and freedoms. This delays the development of social, political and economic reforms, as well as the promotion of legal rights of the Russian people. The present outlook on the legal profession in Russia is pessimistic. In order to promote societal trust in the legal profession, it is necessary to establish procedures and norms for legal institutions with regard to the rule of law and to develop a proper legal culture. This paper looks at the present status of the legal profession in Russia and how it is affected by the country's history. It is important to analyze the history of Russia's legal traditions in order to draw conclusions about current legal problems and find a way to a democratic future. This paper also considers legal education in Russia today and the opportunities for graduating students. Further, I will consider the question of why increasing government funding for legal education is a benefit to Russia as well as the question of the proper role for the United States in helping Russia to build an environment that attracts foreign and domestic investment. U.S. aid should support the rule of law and encourage Russia to develop a legal culture of its own. After all, dealing with a democratic Russia is in turn beneficial to the U.S. In conclusion, there is a need for programs in Russia that develop and train Russia's future lawyers by introducing them to concepts of the rule of law.

Mikael G. Miller

[gatsby.miller@gmail.com](mailto:gatsby.miller@gmail.com)

Majors: Russian & Linguistics, UCLA

### **“Как травинки сквозь асфальт: The Emergence of LGBT Rights in Post-Soviet Russia”**

The fall of the Soviet Union was accompanied by not only sweeping economic, but also social reforms. While the existence of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people is not a foreign idea to most Russians and is certainly not unheard of in Russian history, the idea of LGBT people as a protected social class has been met with less than enthusiastic responses. While the Russian Federation has been ahead of many other countries on certain issues (the right of gay men to donate blood, legal service for LGBT people in the Russian armed forces), in most respects, Russia has a very conservative view toward gay rights. Traditionally, Russian history has alternated wildly between extreme liberalization and extreme oppression, often at the same time in different ways. However, like most countries, the political path toward the western definition of equality is slowly skewing toward acceptance of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and

transgender people. In Russia, particularly vehement anti-gay sentiments in politics and the public sector create an environment in which the development of an LGBT rights movement can be studied and analyzed to determine the ultimate course of those rights in the new post-Soviet Russian world. In the contrasting experience of LGBT rights as well as in anecdotal and personal experiences, we are able to see trends in Russian law, leading to the conclusion that Russia tends toward liberalization. As democracy becomes more entrenched in the Russian psyche, there is a strong possibility of gay marriage as a right.

Maria Milova

[maria.milova@yahoo.com](mailto:maria.milova@yahoo.com)

Majors: Economics & Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

**“The Origin of Alexander Pushkin’s Economic Thought: The Role of Socio-Economic Factors in His Life and Literary Works”**

Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin is alive not only in the mind of virtually every Russian person, but also in the minds of foreigners, who have encountered him upon making even the slightest effort to learn the Russian language. In the enormous mass of work devoted to Pushkin, a certain number of articles are concerned with his ideas on economics and the reflection of socio-economic problems in his writing. J.F. Normano writes: “Pushkin’s works, especially *Eugene Onegin*, are an encyclopedia of Russian life of the time, of its economic history, ideas and truths. The study of his economic views would be an enriching task, although difficult. I hope one day to give it my time.” This work has not yet been done, either by Normano or by anyone else in the West, and until the publication of Andrei V. Anikin’s “The Contribution of Pushkin to the History of Economic Thought,” this theme has been studied less from the point of view of the professional economist than from that of a literary historian. In an attempt to enlarge and complete the idea we may have of Pushkin’s economic views, I propose to show the impact of socio-economic factors on Alexander Pushkin’s biography and literary works. Alexander Pushkin's economic thought stems from his education in the Imperial Tsarskoye Selo Lycée, his obsessions with gambling, the philosophical stance of the Decembrists, and his close relationship with the most eminent economist among them, Nikolai Turgenev, as well as his interaction with the imperial family.

Katja Nelson

[knelson15@ucla.edu](mailto:knelson15@ucla.edu)

Majors: Political Science & Russian Studies, UCLA

**“The Future of “Reset”: The Current Provisions and Future Implications of the Obama-Medvedev Commission”**

U.S.-Russian relations improved greatly during the 1990s, but in the 2000s, they have encountered a new set of conflicts that has increased tension in the relationship. On July 6, 2009, the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission, better known as the Obama-Medvedev

Commission, produced a set of goals through which Russia and the United States hope to better both cooperation and communication as a way to “reset” relations. Since 2009, there has been both success and failure in the goals delineated by the Commission. In this presentation, the relevant provisions of the Commission will be outlined, and failures and achievements from the past three years will also be discussed. The current status of salient provisions will be explained, and I will speculate how they will progress following the re-election of Vladimir Putin in March 2012. The political protests witnessed in the 2012 Russian presidential election were unprecedented, and signaled an environment of change in Russia that may challenge the Putin administration’s status quo. The political, economic, and cultural atmospheres of Russia and the United States will be discussed in relation to their effects on the goals and future of the Commission. The presentation will close with an analysis of the future of Russo-American relations under Putin, Obama, and the next president of the United States.

Anne Redmond

[aeredmond@wisc.edu](mailto:aeredmond@wisc.edu)

Majors: Russian & Comparative Literature, University of Wisconsin

**“Estrangement to the Highest Degree: A Comparative Analysis of Victor Shklovsky’s Formal Method”**

In his essay “Art as Technique,” Victor Shklovsky proclaims: “Art exists in order to restore the sensation of life... the technique of art is estrangement.” To open my paper, I will briefly expand on this key passage, and explain how it represents the thought of the school of Russian Formalism. In so doing, I will cover what distinguished Russian Formalists from other schools of thought, thereby addressing the question of why it is that they consider a given work from the point of view of its form rather than its meaning. Contrary to what some of his critics have said, Shklovsky’s theory does not discard the fact that art conveys meaning. However, since all language exists in order for humans to communicate meaning, he seeks to figure out what constitutes artistic language, and why it affects humans the way that it does. Shklovsky’s answer is that any work that estranges its consumer from their everyday perception of the world can be considered art. Once this is made clear, I will go on to compare the degree to which different literary devices accomplish “the technique of art.” Drawing on various texts, my tentative conclusion on this subject is that the greatest degree of estrangement is a result of plot construction. Outside of plot, other devices such as irony and imagery are only mildly estranging. Along with citing Shklovsky’s *Art as Technique and Construction of Stories and Novels*, other possible texts include Tolstoy’s *Kholstomer*, Olesha’s *Envy*, Shklovsky’s *Zoo*, and Dostoevsky’s *Demons*.

Kesenia R. Richardson

[kesenia@ucla.edu](mailto:kesenia@ucla.edu)

Major: Russian Studies, UCLA

**“Real Estate in Russia: A Look Into the Residential Market From Post-Soviet to Now”**

Since the end of serfdom by Tsar Alexander II in 1861, land reform has been an emotive issue. The lone concept of land ownership is fairly new in Russia. Historically, the general Russian population has never privately owned land: in Imperial Russia, land ownership was reserved for only royalty, nobility, and the overall wealthy elite, while in Soviet Russia, land belonged to the state. This paper will work to understand real estate in Russia today, both for residential citizens and foreign investors. To comprehend the residential real estate industry in Russia, it is important to work from the ground up. I mean this literally, because before 2001, land ownership was governed by a system of laws separate from those that cover buildings or personal property, and more often than not buildings are owned separately from the plot of land they sit on. This paper will look at the post-Soviet land ownership and housing reforms of the early 1990s, as understanding the foundations of the industry is crucial in appreciating the current conditions of the market. I will work to address mortgage practices and attitudes in Russia, as well as to delve into the sphere of real estate ownership for foreign investors, the effect of such investors, and investment opportunities in Russia as compared to other international markets.

Kirk Sharma

[kirk771990@ucla.edu](mailto:kirk771990@ucla.edu)

Major: History; Minor: Political Science, UCLA

**“Causes of the Great Purges”**

First, this paper argues that the mass operations of 1937-8 were not a break from former Soviet policy and that the purges in the party were a conscious effort by Stalin to weaken the regional party officials just prior to delegating them the considerable power of carrying out mass operations. Second, it argues that the local party authorities were the strongest and most adamant force in Soviet government advocating the use of mass operations, whereas Stalin was hesitant to use mass operations because of the inherent collateral damage and the power he needed to delegate to the local party authorities. Finally, I will posit that, while the mass operations were carried out in a somewhat disorderly fashion, this must largely be attributed to the fact that all mass operations are inherently messy, and that Stalin did have clear reasons and objectives for using the mass operations. This thesis was formed through the examination of two articles on mass operations. I also drew upon textbooks and podcasted Soviet history presentations to acquire the necessary background and chronology of events to formulate a third, more persuasive argument. The original paper is twelve-pages long, and it will be presented to the audience via PowerPoint presentation.

Michael Sindicich, [sindicich@ucla.edu](mailto:sindicich@ucla.edu); Majors: Psychology and Biology & Chemical Engineering, UCLA

Milandeep Singh, [mdsarora@gmail.com](mailto:mdsarora@gmail.com); Major: Chemical Engineering, UCLA

**“Finding an Identity”**

The independent state of Croatia has been through many transformations to get to where it is today. Our research will examine the changes the current nation of Croatia has undergone, including government, court systems, religion, military shifts, and major influences on the country. A big factor that shaped Croatia is wars, which will also be discussed, and represented in our presentation. Being a “puppet” to World War II had everlasting effects that changed the nation forever, and caused future turmoil for later generations. Along with these changes and struggles, our presentation will discuss important people who played roles in creating the independent state of Croatia, as well as those who hindered it. Our research and project idea was influenced by the absence of true nationality felt by Michael’s grandparents and parents. Various languages spoken often differ between elders and young, creating somewhat of a barrier, and the nationality of elder people living in Croatia may have shifted as many as three times throughout their lives. In April of 2009, Croatia was finally invited to join NATO, and in July of 2009 the country’s first female prime minister was elected. While Croatia is becoming a very strong and recognizable world power today, its future was not always so bright, and it has been through many struggles to find her identity as a country.

Daria A. Slepinkina

dslepenk@uci.edu

Major: International Studies; Minors: Russian & Spanish & French. UCI

**“A Portrait of a Woman: Exploring the Role of Women in I. Grekova’s Literature”**

Each of I. Grekova’s novels offers a unique observation of 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian society. With her descriptive prose and intriguing characters, I. Grekova is able to create stories that reflect the depth and struggles of every-day life in Russia. Although her work is virtually unknown in the United States, many of her novels are valuable in their accurate depiction of the role of women in the Soviet and pre-revolutionary eras. “Хозяйка Гостиницы” (*The Inn-Keeper*) and “Кафедра” (*The Department*) are two examples of such novels, which focus on women as they explore their identities in society. Rather than passing judgment on what the role of a woman should be, I. Grekova acts as an astute observer of various kinds of women of different ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and ideologies as they explore their potentials as mothers, wives, careerists, and lovers. *The Inn-Keeper* focuses on the struggles of an optimistic young woman named Verochka as she explores her identity and finds her place in society. *The Department* touches on similar themes of feminine friendship, motherhood, love, morality, and a woman’s place in society; however, this novel does so by exploring various female characters and their unique stories. I. Grekova successfully creates realistic environments and enriches them with living characters, allowing the reader to view their interactions and to experience a unique landscape of human experience. It is within this landscape that she paints a unique, yet truthful portrait that realistically captures the Russian woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Kate Stimac

[kestimac@gmail.com](mailto:kestimac@gmail.com)

Major: Political Science; Minor: Global Studies, UCLA

**“From Ganga to Balkan Beatbox: A History of the Music of Southeastern Europe”**

The music of the Southeastern Balkans is complex and distinct not only from the music of Western Europe, but the music of Eastern Europe as well. Where the music of Eastern Europe has been most heavily influenced by Slavic cultures, the various ethnic groups that have come to populate Southeastern Europe throughout history and the musical tradition of the Ottoman Empire have melded to become what we now understand to be Balkan music. The complex rhythm characteristic of Balkan music and the use of instruments specific to the region have translated into a sound that is usually unpopular with American listeners, particularly younger audiences. But more recently, acts like Balkan Beatbox and Beirut who incorporate musical tenants of the Balkans with those styles more familiar to Western palates (such as folk and electronica) have become extremely popular in the United States. New sub-genres of Balkan music such as Balkan-soul-funk and Balkan-punk, are introducing younger and younger generations to the unique music of the region. The merits of the Balkans’ rich musical history have also recently received greater recognition amongst academics, specifically ethnomusicologists such as Timothy Rice. My research will briefly chronicle the history of music in the region and then explain its influence on contemporary musicians here in the United States.

Sarah Tellier

[stellier29@gmail.com](mailto:stellier29@gmail.com)

Major: History, UCLA

**“The Man Behind the Curtain: Stalin, 1917”**

Many legends have been created around the figure of Stalin, but perhaps one of the most pervasive of these tales was his part in the Revolutions of 1917. During Stalin’s reign, his inflated role in the October Revolution appeared in history books, movies, and a variety of other media sources. In *Stalin in October*, historian Robert Slusser attempts to completely undo the Stalinist myth by promoting the idea that Stalin was unimportant to the Revolution. Slusser even states that other historians give Stalin too much credit for his involvement because they are “hung up” on his future role as an absolute dictator. This study challenges both of these extremes and tries to find a balanced interpretation. By analyzing a variety of secondary sources—including biographies by Leon Trotsky, Robert McNeal, Robert Service, and others—several different viewpoints on Stalin’s involvement in the Revolution emerge. By reconstructing his actions, we can see that although Stalin was not necessarily a prominent public figure, he was of internal importance to the functioning of the Party. By attempting to take a more comprehensive and balanced approach, this study hopes to further encourage the unbiased exploration of the role of Stalin in the Revolution and the beginnings of the Stalinist period.

Adelina Tomova  
adelinat@ucla.edu  
Majors: Comparative Literature & Russian Studies, UCLA  
**“The Russian Smile”**

Foreigners traveling in Russia are often struck by the “glum” expression on people’s faces and a marked abstinence from smiling in public. They tend to place the lack of Russian smile in contrast to the effusive American, or Western smile, and think themselves in a hostile land, finding confirmation for the stereotype of Russians as stoic and despondent people. In an increasingly globalized world, however, old stereotypes stand as hollow caricatures of much more complex truths. In this case, stereotypes may, however, contain hints of the truth. So what fragment of truth lies behind the stereotype of the gloomy Russian, or, for that matter, the insincere American? The attitude towards smiling and the social function of the smile in Russia are shaped by cultural, social and historical trends and developments including: a collectivistic mentality, a personal relationship with history, autocratic rule and terror, the Soviet Regime, Orthodox Christianity, economic and political instability, and a climate of extremes. This paper also questions the idea of an unsmiling countenance as proof of a penchant for pessimism and depression in Russian society.

Allen Wang, [ahw002@ucsd.edu](mailto:ahw002@ucsd.edu); Majors: Linguistics & Political Science; Minor: Russian Literature, UCSD  
Steve Thanh Pham, [s5pham@ucsd.edu](mailto:s5pham@ucsd.edu); Majors: Human Biology & Language Studies, UCSD  
**“Mass Music and Its Impact on Soviet Society”**

It is widely known that Soviet communist propaganda was expressed to the people via posters and educational institutions. However, it has been ambiguous as to whether or not support for Soviet communist ideals were also manifested through mass music, a more subtle and subconscious medium. This paper attempts to shed light on this subject. The first part of this paper provides an overview of mass music. Details such as the historical context and origins of mass music, as well as the defining musical characteristics will be covered. The second part of this paper will analyze the lyrics of some of the more popular mass music. The lyrics will be carefully examined for their figurative and literal meanings, as well as for their psychological impact on the masses. The focus will be on extracting the words from their musical compositions to prove the argument that mass music strongly influenced the Russian people of the Soviet Union to support the decisions of the Soviet communist government through the use of nationalistic and patriotic symbols. There will also be a mention of the influence of Soviet mass music on the communist ideologies of neighboring countries. Although the Soviet Union has been disintegrated, Soviet mass music is still being played today.

Ibrahim Zaganjor, [bimo31@ucla.edu](mailto:bimo31@ucla.edu); Majors: Psychology & Anthropology, UCLA

Milica Sapungin, [milica160@yahoo.com](mailto:milica160@yahoo.com); Major: Psychology; Minor: Central and Eastern European Studies, UCLA

### **“The Projection of Youth Opinion Towards Yugoslav Politics Through Music from 1960-1991”**

The creation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, formed in 1946 under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, was an attempt to build a socialist Balkan state through the erasure of ethnic identities and religious differences and creation of a unified Yugoslav identity. Unlike its eastern bloc counterparts, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was more open to western influences. Therefore, amongst the emerging socialist youth culture that started in the mid 1960's, new musical genres were determiners of public opinion regarding current political and nationalistic movements. The three genres that represent these movements and were most prominently consumed by the youth were Rock, Punk, and Turbo-Folk Music. Each genre came to have its own significance amongst the different youth populations that comprised the Yugoslavian state. Where Rock became a platform to speak out against the rising nationalistic desires to dissolve the unified Yugoslav state, the punk movement of the time embodied notions of anarchism and anti-socialist establishments. In contrast to both Rock and Punk, turbo-folk largely became popular with the rise of nationalistic ideologies in relation to the politics of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, after the disbandment of the states, these musical genres, bands, and composers began to comprise a new purpose for the members of this generation, a term currently known as “Yugo-nostalgia”: the longing to return to a peaceful and united Yugoslavian nation. Rather than each genre representing a difference of opinion, they collectively function as reminder of the past unity that was marred by the nationalistic wars of the early 1990's.