

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

2015
STUDENT ABSTRACTS

Colton Hennick
chennick@pdx.edu
Portland State University
"Georgian-Accented Russian"

Given the current political tensions between the United States and Russia, students of Russian on federally funded programs such as the Critical Language Scholarship and Boren scholarship have been sent to post-Soviet republics to study instead of Russia. One such country is Georgia, where the CLS program was held for the summer of 2014. According to the survey conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center, "the percentage of the respondents in Georgia with high Russian proficiency is consistently around 70%." Given the high percentage of proficient Russian speakers in Georgia, it is important to understand whether their Russian differs from Contemporary Standard Russian as this is the kind of Russian students might encounter while studying in places like Georgia. Focusing on the accented speech of a number of native Georgian speakers, I will examine the features that separate Georgian-accented Russian from Contemporary Standard Russian including: the placement of stress, softening of hard consonants, and lack of vowel reduction. I will also discuss the ways in which the same speaker exhibits variable accent patterns depending on the context of the conversation.

Yekaterina Belikov
ybelikov@gmail.com
Majors: Global Studies, Russian Studies, UCLA
"The Impact of Technology on the Russian Mail Order Bride Industry"

This paper argues that the rapid growth and success of the Russian mail order bride (MOB) industry since the 1990s is dependent on the concurrent timing of the fall of the Soviet Union and the proliferation of computers and the internet. This paper will analyze how the Russian MOB industry has responded to changes in technology, beginning with an examination of the history of the MOB industry, detailing the effects of technology on matchmaking agency websites and money transfer systems. Drawing from content analysis of current online MOB profiles, websites, and agency information, along with personal interviews and a review of statistics and available literature, this paper examines how both MOB and the MOB industry

have responded to changes in the MOB market that have been brought on by technological innovations. This paper concludes with a prediction of the future growth trajectory of the Russian MOB industry based on expected impacts of the most recent technological innovations in the industry and changes in market forces. This examination will provide evidentiary support as to why the Russian MOB industry has grown at a faster rate than the MOB industry of other regions.

Gayane Ghandilyan

gh.gayane@yahoo.com

Majors: English and Russian Language/Literature, UCLA

“Pushkin and Lermontov Hidden Under Nabokov’s Umbrella of Translation”

Among the numerous works of Russian Romanticism, Alexander Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* and Mikhail Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time* are immensely influential texts that have been translated numerous times, stirring up controversy among critics. Arguably the most controversial translator has been Vladimir Nabokov, whose versions reflect the peak of his radical methodology: “literal” translation, or in other words, the exact rendition of meaning at all stylistic cost. This paper argues against Nabokov’s theory and shows the ways in which his theory and translations contradict one another. He sets a set of rules for himself as a translator, yet breaks them in practice. Nabokov’s way of inserting himself into the translations; as he does through commentaries and prefaces, leaves Pushkin and Lermontov in the shadows and highlights his own views. Specifically the way he turns the verse of *EO* into “roadside prose”, and the way he parallels the structure of *Hero* to one of Lermontov’s poems, demonstrates the idea that Nabokov is more concerned with sharing his own reading and understanding of the texts, than he is with creating what he considers a pure translation. Moreover, through his explicit bias in regards to the authors’ talents or the lack thereof, which is evident in his footnotes and introductions, Nabokov contradicts his theory by attempting to raise himself above the authors. Nabokov’s methods undermine his claim that a “true” translation is “faithful” to the original and free of infused stylistic elements by the translator. Ultimately, Nabokov’s contradictory method weakens the link between the two texts, as seen in their original, thereby undermining the intertextuality that is quite apparent to a Russian-speaking audience.

Amanda Marshall

amarshall@ucla.edu

UCLA

“Low Speech Style in Public Political Discourse in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine”:

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, low level speech has been utilized by Eastern European politicians in public discourse. Both the president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and ex-president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, have used this speech style during their political careers. Putin’s use of low level speech has contributed positively to his public image, painting

him as a hard-liner against corruption and terrorism. On the other hand, Yanukovich's use of low level speech strengthened the connection between Yanukovich and a corrupt and unjust regime, tying him to criminality. This paper analyzes the respective circumstances that allowed for Putin's utilization of a low speech style to have a positive effect on his political career while Yanukovich's use of this same speech style had a negative affect on his own. These circumstances include Russia and Ukraine's unique history, linguistic background, political environment at the onset of Putin and Yanukovich's careers, and additionally the two personal narratives of both politicians.

Clarissa Rodriguez
claris-rod@hotmail.com
UCLA

“How Stigma Disables Russian Society”

Nearly 13 million individuals with disabilities are registered in Russia today – about 9.2% of the population. Even so, the Russian disabled community is often unrecognized and hidden away as a result of stigma, which leads to various forms of prejudice and discrimination against its members. Meanwhile, some disabled individuals experience more stigma than others depending on an individual's degree of disability and likely contribution to society. This distinction is rooted in Russia's categorization of disability which relies on a medical model approach (disability is a disease that needs a cure) as opposed to a social model (disability is an identity that empowers individuals). This paper will describe the current system for classification of disability and will prove that Russia's medical-based approach to disability fuels the stigma towards members of the disabled community in Russian society.

Melanie Dalby
amelgamate@gmail.com
Majors: Political Science and Russian Studies, UCLA

“Responsibility to Protect and Russian Foreign Policy: the Dichotomy”

Since 2011, a stalemate in the United Nations Security Council revealed irreconcilable policy divides between the U.S. and Russia on the topic of international intervention. The root of the divide lies with a vague international law precedent regarding state sovereignty and international autonomy versus protection of humanitarian rights. An idea has developed in the international community that state sovereignty does not override mass crimes against humanity, thus giving the international community an implicit “responsibility to protect” (R2P) citizens- particularly regarding military intervention. Not surprisingly, Russia and the U.S. have clashed over when R2P legitimizes intervention- in particular, during the conflicts in Kosovo (1999), Georgia (2008), Libya (2011), Syria (2011), and Ukraine (2014). Russia's approach is contradictory: when Russia protests R2P as a justification for intervention, as with Kosovo, Libya, and Syria, it is on the basis that international forces should not be allowed to overstep political sovereignty

with military maneuvers. This allows Russia to defend themselves against unwanted intervention, especially from the U.S. However, when Russia utilizes this responsibility, as with Georgia and Ukraine, it is because Russia's own brand of intervention has an underlying geopolitical benefit. The lack of a clear legal framework on intervention causes strife between Russia and the U.S. and prevents a proactive international community that truly aims to protect humanitarian rights.

Annie Sundelson

anniesundelson@yahoo.com

Major: Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

“Putin's Dirty Little Secret: HIV/AIDS in the Russia Federation”

The number of people infected with HIV/AIDS in Russia is shocking. While the governments of many countries, including those of South Africa and India, have managed to get their HIV/AIDS epidemics under control, Russia's continues to be one of the world's only HIV/AIDS epidemics that is still growing. Despite this fact, Putin and his administration have done surprisingly little to combat the spread of the disease. HIV/AIDS is a highly stigmatized disease in Russia, making it particularly difficult to contain: it is associated with homosexuality, drug use, prostitution, and crime. Although many consider stigma to be an unfortunate but unavoidable byproduct of culture, this paper will argue that the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, particularly the stigma that associates HIV/AIDS with homosexuality, serves a political purpose to Putin, as it allows him to garner domestic popularity by protecting his citizens from the diseased and dangerous homosexual community. Unfortunately, if Putin continues to encourage the spread of the virus, Russia will soon be responsible for a creating an HIV/AIDS pandemic (a large-scale epidemic capable of crossing international borders).

William Holden

wholden@pdx.edu

Major: History, Portland State University

“Russia is a European State: Gender and Publicity in Early Imperial Russia”

Historians of the Russian Empire often question the extent to which a public sphere existed in Tsarist Russia. This project explores Russian literary works from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as memoirs and travelogues, in order to better understand the ways in which Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere can be useful for understanding publicity in the Russian Empire. It traces changes in two interconnected areas of public discussion, one regarding discourses of monarchical legitimacy, and the other, gender and domesticity. By focusing on gender, this project argues that historians' focus on the economic factors described by Habermas as the basis of the formation of the public sphere is insufficient for understanding the structure of public debate during this period. It also argues that evolving notions of sex and gender in the Russian Empire paralleled those in western Europe, and testified to the presence of

a public sphere that addressed issues specific to the concerns of eighteenth-century Russian elite society.

Frankie Aguayo
nitro2006@g.ucla.edu
UCLA

“Feeding the Masses: An Examination of Food and National Identity”

National identity is a very abstract concept to both explain and understand. It is inherently abstract because no single thing creates it, and at the same time is constantly evolving. In fact, it becomes clear that a people’s sense of national identity is a culmination of many things. Things such as language, geography, religion, politics, and history are some of the few countless factors that go into creating a national identity. Unsurprisingly, food practices become an excellent tool in examining a people’s sense of national identity. In all parts of the world, the practices involving food are affected by the exact same factors that comprise a nation’s national identity.

In modern day Russia and the regions of former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina), the interpretation of national identity has undergone many stresses over the period from the early 1900’s to present day. Ultimately these stresses have led to two very different outcomes. In the instance of former Yugoslavia, separate national identities were able to continue development and emerge into the three present nations: Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. And on the other hand, what was once a strong Russian national identity has become significantly weekend. Food practices become a reliable tool in measuring the sense of national identities for both regions. Just as Russia’s national identity has come to waver, so too has its trueness to its food identity, whereas the regions of former Yugoslavia have seen very little loss to its food identity. In the end, the historical events since the dawn of the 20th century serve to answer the means of change in national identity for both regions.

Karlen Nurijanyan
karlnuri@att.net

Majors: Russian Language and Literature & European Studies, UCLA

“Saving Russian Science: How International Organizations Preserved Russian Science and Prevented Brain Drain”

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia’s political and economic hardships generated a significant outflow of émigrés forcing members of the intelligentsia, including scientists, teachers, researchers and others professionals to leave Russia. Nevertheless, this did not necessarily apply to all scientists; in fact, the conventional belief is that, in this atmosphere, scientific funding simply evaporated causing all scientists to look for new opportunities in Western countries, hence making Russia suffer an extensive brain drain. However, this paper argues against such thinking in showing that Russia actually received a significant amount of funds from two major organizations: the International Science Foundation (ISF) and the

International Science Technology Center (ISTC). These foundations enabled Russia to prevent most of the brain drain from occurring and indeed preserved Russian science. Believing that massive brain drain would destroy Russian schools of science, the ISF invested approximately \$110 (MUSD) from 1991 to 1996 to finance Russia's fundamental sciences (biology, anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry) and support around 40,000 scientists. The support of ISF allowed for major contributions by Russian scientists to the international research community. Funded by the European Union and United States, the ISTC commenced its operations in March of 1994 due to concerns of nuclear proliferation. The Western fear was that Russian Scientists could offer their services to rogue nations. Until 2011, over 75,000 Russian nuclear scientists received approximately \$430 (MUSD) to divert their expertise away from the creation of weapons of mass destruction and other nuclear weapons. The ISTC provided funding to ensure Russian scientific research focused on peaceful activities, such as solving national and global technological problems and supporting the transition to market-based economies. Therefore, contrary to traditional thinking, these measures taken by international organizations allowed Russia to prevent a principal proportion of its brain drain and successfully preserve Russian scientific knowledge by providing all necessary funding for continuous scientific research.

Olivia Miller

oliviabeth1020@gmail.com

Majors: Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Environmental Sciences & Russian Studies, UCLA

“The Legacy of Soviet Environmental Destruction and the Outlook for Improvement and Implications for Public Health in Russia Today”

If pollution had no health consequences there would, theoretically, be no need for environmental policy. The formation of environmental pollution regulation policy, therefore, typically stems from the need to maintain a population's health. Given general awareness throughout the world of the urgent dangers of pollution to public health, many countries have taken initiative to improve their environmental conditions. The environmental situation in Russia, however, has only continued to worsen throughout history and into the present day. The pollution problem was exacerbated by both socio-political issues, specifically security concerns during the nuclear arms race of the Cold War, as well as economic problems leading up to the fall of the Soviet Union and continuing to the present day. Russia's history of environmental misuse and inappropriate or insufficient responses to environmental catastrophes have revealed the consequences of longstanding disregard for public health. This paper examines the Russian response, or lack thereof, to environmental issues in order to show that the existence of policy and regulatory agencies is not, and historically has not, been determined by public health issues in Russia. The government has exhibited a complete disregard for public health concerns insofar as they do not result in a direct decrease in productivity of the nation. Emphasis has been, not on keeping the public fully healthy, but merely healthy enough to sustain productivity. An attitude of disregard for the well-being of its people and prioritization of political and economic issues has resulted in an astonishing level of environmental degradation in Russia today that has devastating public health consequences and a grim outlook for improvement.

Alexi Fehlman

afehlman@uci.edu

Major: Philosophy; Minor: Russian Studies, UCI

“Dima Yakovlev Law: Understanding the Russian Perspective”

The topic that I wish to discuss in the essay is the Dima Yakovlev Law. This law was implemented in 2012 by the Russian Federation to restrict United States citizens from adopting Russian born children. The law was named after Dima Yakovlev who, three months after being adopted from Russia by an American family, was left in the hot car and died. Russian government officials have stated that the adoption ban is the result of the human rights violations of United States citizens, and its implementation is designed to protect Russian children from such abuses. Many critics argue against Russian government officials by stating that this law is the direct result of the United States Magnitsky Bill—which was named after a Russian lawyer who was arrested, tortured, and died after exposing corruption in the Russian government. The intention of this essay is to outline the roots of Russian opinion concerning the 2012 Russian adoption ban, as well as to show what this opinion is. A great majority of the Russian citizens support President Vladimir Putin, under whose authority the law was implemented. There have also been a number of Russian protests, and gathered signatures by the citizens to overturn this law. What I hope to gain from this research is to understand whether or not the majority of Russian citizens view this law as a justified response to human rights violations, or whether it is widely understood that this law is a response to the U.S. Magnitsky Bill—that put sanctions on Russian government.

Peter Garcia

pedrogl@uci.edu

Major: History, UCI

“The Double Headed Eagle: Alexander II as a Conservative and Liberal Reformer”

Alexander II took the throne after Nicholas I's unexpected death. Not only did Alexander inherit the throne, he inherited a failing state that was losing a one-sided war. Seeing that Russia could no longer progress as a European power, let alone a power, in its current state, Alexander sought to fix the state with a round of reforms. The reforms were liberal to an extent, such as the numerous judicial reforms that were enacted, but Alexander was weary about how the public would see these reforms. Alexander had to tread lightly around the nobility, his main supporters, to not give the impression that their powers were in danger. At the same time, he had to please the vast peasant and serf populations that were living in terrible conditions, giving them reason to revolt against the autocracy. Alexander himself was a conservative figure, and he refused to legislate anything that hinted at democratization and made it clear that he still has the final word in government. This resulted in a delicate balancing act that Alexander had to successfully perform, but did not. I will argue that his reforms, save for the judicial reforms, were unsuccessful as a result of balancing two opposite beliefs and that these incomplete and failed

reforms paved way for revolutionaries against the autocracy to revolt and eventually, assassinate the Tsar Liberator.

Justin Williams

jwill2993@gmail.com

Major: International Studies; Minor: Russian Studies, UCI

"Ukraine on the Edge of *Russkiy Mir*: The Rise of Russian Nationalism and its Effect on Russian Foreign Policy"

There are clearly many factors that have contributed to the current crisis in Ukraine. Upon closer examination, these factors reveal a common vein running through many of them: the concept of *Russkiy Mir* (Russian World). Originally an independently-growing attempt to create a new Russian national identity, it was coopted and made official state policy in 2007 by Vladimir Putin. It is inherently an ethnocentric concept based on Russian culture, values, religion and history as opposed to previous forms of Russian national identity. On the surface, it is a strategy to use soft power to peacefully promote Russian culture abroad. However, in subsequent years, this new Russian nationalism has increased in influence, has become a guiding force behind foreign policy in the post-Soviet space, and is making a transition from soft to hard power. The implications for European and Asian security are great, as the "Russian World" is not limited to the territorial borders of the Russian Federation which is unmistakably demonstrated by the Ukrainian conflict. This paper examines the intertwined rise of Putin and *Russkiy Mir* and the effect of this new Russian nationalism on Russian foreign policy, especially in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

Marisa Irwin

mirwin2@wisc.edu

Majors: Russian Language and Civilization, Germany & History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"High School History Textbook Narratives as Political Tools in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia"

History narratives are presented to high school students with one authoritative interpretation; history is a succession of facts marching straight to a settled outcome. Yet, the textbooks are far from unbiased, and can present a view of history that validates the current political system. There has been little research done on history textbooks in Russia, despite the fact that history narratives have played an increasing role in politics—i.e. political discourses and "approved" books for schools. My project addresses the issue of how history narratives in Russia have changed to reflect the values of each regime. These values can be discovered by analyzing the differences between the historical narratives. In order to investigate whether a history narrative has shifted, I will focus on how high school history textbooks presented the period leading up to World War II. I will juxtapose История СССР, which was published in 1952; История России.

XX век by А.А Данилов, which was published in 1995; and История России. 1900-1945 гг, which was written by Данилов and published in 2009. Each time period had a different type of political system in power, and therefore supported the presentation of different history narratives in regards to WWII. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining history narratives of the period leading up to WWII from three distinct periods of Russia's development, sheds new light on the importance of historical narratives in Russia for validating the ruling political system and emphasizing their values in society.

Jordan Beasley
joradan01@gmail.com
UCLA

“Privatization as a Route for Corruption and Inefficiency in the Oil and Natural Gas Sphere of the Russian Federation: A Transition from the Soviet Union, a State-Controlled Oil and Natural Gas Superpower”

Numerous examples of economic restructuring suggest that the process of privatization is substantially beneficial to the given society when compared to a monopolistic structure. Privatization creates an inter-competing society that self-regulates and more aptly takes suggestions from consumers involved in the product market. However, the transition from the state regulated Soviet Union into the Russian Federation's attempt at delegating power to private industries in the oil and natural gas sphere gives ample evidence that privatization if not structured correctly can crash the industry. With low government regulation and not enough competition, the first decade of the Russian Federation shows how the newly founded privatization of the oil and natural gas industry merely translocated power from the Soviet government into the company Gazprom without introducing other competent corporations. In the 21st century, the Putin Administration increased state control of Gazprom, bringing the oil and natural industry back up to near Soviet production levels, further proving that state control is essential in regulating privatization.

Anthony Castaneda
adc2@pdx.edu

Majors: Political Science & Russian Language, Portland State University

“The Post-Soviet Generational Cohort: Measuring Support for Political Rights”

As Russia prepared to democratize, political studies in the early 1990s suggested that the main obstacle to democracy was nostalgia for the Soviet Union. Despite almost a decade of economic and political turmoil, various generational cohorts who lived through the transition period still expressed support for democracy and capitalism. Previously surveyed Russian populations are unique in that they lived under two socioeconomic and political systems. The passing of time now allows researchers to consider the post-Soviet generational cohort (those born in 1985 and after). This article focuses on the post-Soviet generational cohort that has been living under the

new socioeconomic and political system and whose formative years would not have been affected by the transition period. The post-Soviet cohort is expected to differ from others with respect to attitudes towards political rights and democratic practices. The article examines why some individuals within the post-Soviet cohort express strong support for political rights, whereas others do not. Furthermore, considering various political and social events, the article suggests that specific events have largely affected attitudes towards political rights, and those effects explain why there is variation in support for democracy.

Daniela Bradvica

dbradvica@ucla.edu

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

“The Impact of National Identity on Bosnia and Herzegovina's Inevitable Fragmentation”

Throughout history, national identity has been a powerful tool through which people identify themselves and relate to others. Anthony Smith and Eric Hobsbawm hold two of the major theories regarding national identity. While Smith states that national identity is a pre-modern phenomenon that people are born with, Hobsbawm maintains that it is a modern concept and a conscious choice made by an individual. Aspects from each of these theories can be used to justify the existence of three national identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH): Bosniak, Croat, and Serb. Members of all three national groups lived together in Yugoslavia, which dismantled and subsequently erupted into a bloody civil war in the early 1990s. The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), which was signed in 1995, ended the war. In addition, the DPA created modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, dividing the nation into two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Federation), which is ethnically Bosniak and Croat, and Republika Srpska (RS), which is ethnically Serb. There are six proposed arguments for Yugoslavia's downfall: economic, nationalism, cultural, international politics, role of personality, and fall of empires. Elements of each of these arguments persist in BiH because of the desire to protect the national identities of these three ethnic groups. These elements are most evident in the ethnically divided government, tension between the Federation and RS, and limited cooperation between the Bosniaks and Croats of the Federation. This leads to the conclusion that BiH will eventually fragment just as Yugoslavia did.

Rafaela Bradvica

rbradvica@ucla.edu

Major: Neuroscience; Minor: Central and East European Studies

“Breaking Down the Verdict: the International Court of Justice's 16-Year Decision on Croatia vs. Serbia”

On February 3, 2015, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) released its decision on an application filed by the Republic of Croatia on July 2, 1999 against the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia for crimes of genocide committed during the Croatian war of secession from Yugoslavia in 1991-1995. With the dissolution of Yugoslavia into first Serbia and Montenegro in 2003, and then into separate countries in 2006, the Republic of Serbia became the successor to the lawsuit. Serbia filed a counter-lawsuit in 2010 claiming genocide occurred during World War II by the Independent State of Croatia and Ustaše. The ICJ took sixteen years to make a decision, which can be attributed to the large amount of research, testimonies, and deliberation as to whether or not these two countries committed genocide in the Yugoslav Wars of 1991-1995 and during the World War II persecution of Serbians. The two countries cited the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, a convention that was adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and effective as of 1951, which defines genocide as acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” The ICJ decided that neither Croatia nor Serbia was guilty of genocide and both cases were dismissed.

Bianca Malkoc

bnmalkoc@gmail.com

Majors: Honors Program, Political Science, Religious Studies, World Arts & Cultures, UCLA
“The Abandoned Monuments of Former-Yugoslavia as an Image of a Fallen Communist Agenda”

The purpose of this study is to explore the political and religious dimensions in which certain Islamic sources have been silenced due to the conservative movements occurring within the United States. My hypothesis is that extremist movements against the West have been propagated through the pursuance of anti-modern practices to garner support against the “other” by perpetuating false ideas of representation that permeate Islamic ideologies. It is hypothesized that the lack of strong communication between Bosnian immigrant diasporas within majority Desi/Arab mosques in Western states is one of the causes of the involvement of Bosnian immigrant children with ISIS as “jihadi brides” or “fighters”. This research examines two specific cases of Bosnian immigrant teenage girls who, upon interaction with alternatively conservative ideologies of Islam, left Austria to Syria as brides for ISIS members. Through the examination of identity conflict theories within Bosnian diasporas as well as through the survey of Bosnian American associations within Austria and the United States, this research demonstrates that identity issues related to religion, culture, and ethnicity have had a correlation with families whose children became involved with ISIS. The study will suggest ways in which followers of conservative movements tend to struggle with their social identity within American societies and how such movements force generations to “choose a side” between escalating religious representations.

Aleksija Vujicic

aleksjavujicic@hotmail.com

Major: Global Studies; Minors: French & Spanish, UCLA

“The Belgrade Waterfront Project: Facelift or Folly”

Charles Jeanneret, a famous Swiss architect, characterized Belgrade as being ‘the ugliest city on the most beautiful spot in the world’. This is arguable, as the city lies on two beautiful rivers, the Sava and the Danube, and yet is highly undeveloped. This is all set to change with the introduction of the Belgrade Waterfront Project. This is a complete reconstruction of the riverfront of the city of Belgrade, funded by property developers from the United Arab Emirates. The plan is to design a major global city similar to that of Dubai, with close to four billion dollars being invested into the project, matched by three hundred million dollars invested by the Serbian Government. The project includes high-rise homes, offices, and tree-lined parks surrounding the largest Balkan indoor shopping mall and a two hundred meter tall skyscraper- in total covering two million square meters. There has been a substantial public reaction to this project, with many local architects and residents left discontent. These individuals believe that the project includes little understanding for the people and culture of Belgrade. This paper will examine the breadth and depth of these concerns, while determining whether or not they are well-founded. It will conclude that with further revision and incorporation of local communities in the planning of the project, the end result will not only appropriately incorporate the historical and cultural sectors of the city, but bring economic prosperity to the area.

Hristiana Petkova
hpetkova@ucla.edu
UCLA

“A Case in Counter-Productive Foreign Policy: Russia’s Risky Conduct in Ukraine and Crimea”

Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March of 2014 was an unprecedented and aggressive move which seemed to carry little tangible benefit for Russia. President Putin has been known for pragmatic and economically sound foreign policy decisions, and though Russia has often disagreed with the international consensus on a conflict, its violation of Ukrainian state sovereignty seemed out of character, especially for a seemingly moderate politician like Putin. This paper explores possible explanations for Putin’s departure from moderate foreign policy goals, and his recent expansionist decisions. Of the theories examined, I conclude that social-identity theory is most likely to explain Russia’s behavior. However, there are different interpretations of social identity theory. Deborah Larson and Alex Shevchenko interpret Russian social identity as unilateral, vengeful, and status seeking. Richard Anderson, meanwhile, maintains that there is no unilateral Russian social identity, and policy is instead determined by different social-identity groups within Russia. I identify two major opposing social identity groups in Russia, the Communists and Putin’s United Russia, and argue that rather than Putin merely deciding what policy to follow and executing it, action in Ukraine is determined by compromise between these identity groups.

Mariana Irby
mirby@brynmawr.edu
Bryn Mawr College

“Narratives of Language Use & Cultural Identity in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan”

After the 1991 collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the fifteen republics formerly united by one political system now embarked on independent nation-building trajectories. Once unified by the same official language, Russian, these nascent republics with distinct ethnic and sociolinguistic landscapes made different decisions regarding the status Russian and its use in various spheres of life. Furthermore, these governments employed reforms on the use and status of other titular and non-titular languages and writing systems. Uzbekistan, the most populous of the Central Asian republics, made the decision to not only remove Russian as an official language, but also transitioned from the Cyrillic to Latin writing system for its titular language, Uzbek. In addition, major demographic and social changes have taken place in the country, including a drastic decrease in the ethnic Russian population due to large migratory flows out of Uzbekistan (Peyrouse 2008) and a rediscovery of Muslim identity and rise in Islamic fundamentalism (Crosston 2006). I explore these matters through interviews I conducted with three natives of Tashkent, Uzbekistan of different ethnic backgrounds, all raised and educated in the Post-Soviet state. These case studies aim to explore how, nearly a quarter-century following independence, those raised in the Republic of Uzbekistan perceive their multilingual and multiethnic country and culture, and whether ethnic Uzbeks and Russians share similar notions of national identity. From here, I draw conclusions regarding the impact of Uzbekistan's post-Soviet language policies on the future of Russian, the current de facto lingua franca of Central Asia. Ultimately, the data collected in this study provides evidence of a new, emerging language ideology among Tashkent's educated youth, which both conforms with and challenges Soviet-era language norms in Uzbekistan.

Kathy Pham
kathy.k.pham@gmail.com
UCLA

“The Underclass, Central Asian Migrant Workers in Moscow”

As members of the underclass, ethnic Central Asians work the least desirable jobs in Moscow. The migrant workers earn extraordinarily low wages in Russian labor and service industries. Furthermore, they resign themselves to cramped living quarters, pay exorbitant fees for work-permits, and encounter racial-religious discrimination in their host country. Paradoxically, Central Asians are one of the most vulnerable people to exploitation, but also, potentially, the most dangerous as a disenfranchised group. Recent news articles in 2015 report that marginalized migrant workers in Russia and their families back at home are being recruited by radical groups, such as ISIS, which promise to offer a sense of community and monetary compensation. Thus, we need to establish a better understanding of the hostile environment in which Central Asian migrants live. This three-prong investigation first focuses on the economic

push-pull factors for migration out of Central Asia and into Russia. Then, popular opinion on migrant workers is broken down by the translation of comments from two Moscow officials and netizens over ethnic tensions and the resulting October 2013 race riots. Lastly, I highlight xenophobic amendments to Russian visa and work permit policies to emphasize the growing challenges these migrant workers face abroad. Overall, this study is meant to encourage greater academic exploration in the post-Soviet Central Asian region and peoples, or at the very least, inform the audience on a case-study in global migration.

Dante Matero

materodante@gmail.com

UCLA

"What Dostoevsky Talks About When He Talks About Love: Gender and Sexuality"

A contemporary reading of Fyodor Dostoevsky's works allows readers great insight into the way society and religion's views on gender and sexuality affect his writing. Certainly, his viewpoint would be labeled conservative by modern Western society, yet his works delve into topics that were frowned upon and even stigmatized in his time. Through analysis of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and *A Raw Youth*, the author's personal writings, and Susanne Fusso's *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoevsky*, new light will be shed on the author's stance on the female role in society, LGBT issues, sexual "deviance," and more.

Ryan Wauson

ryanwauson@g.ucla.edu

UCLA

"Leon Trotsky and Mikhail Khodorkovsky: Adaptive Ideology and the Struggle for Power"

Trotsky and Khodorkovsky are individually two very different figures in Russian politics. Trotsky was a revolutionary and founder of the Soviet Union; Khodorkovsky, an entrepreneur and oligarch who became the richest man in Russia by the beginning of the new millennium. However, one common theme does run through their stories: opposition. When a power vacuum was created following Lenin's incapacitation after a series of strokes and Yeltsin's departure from the presidency, Trotsky and Khodorkovsky were widely considered the most powerful men in the country. This supremacy was challenged with the arrival of two unexpected challengers: Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Putin. To better contest these new opponents, both Trotsky and Khodorkovsky publicly changed their image and ideology. Trotsky, the party's disciplinarian against those who spoke out against the state and the proponent of the creation of a massive bureaucracy, suddenly began to decry the country's bureaucratization while calling for greater inner-party democracy and the loosening of party discipline. Khodorkovsky, who had come to wealth and power through the Yeltsin administration's corruption and the far-from-equitable privatization of the Russian economy, now argued for a more open, liberal government. In the end, Trotsky and Khodorkovsky lost their specific struggles, becoming disenfranchised from

their power bases and leaving the country with no substantive domestic opposition. By studying their narratives together, it becomes possible to understand how, even when led by some of the country's most powerful men, any attempt to create a consistent opposition in Russia is doomed to failure.

Mary Clark

UCLA

“Turkish Women, Film, and Repetition”

The story *One of Those Little Girls Who Grew up On Domestic Films* by Buket Uzuner follows several women in Turkey, both young and old, navigating the expectations their culture and media create for them. Uzuner's story relies heavily on repetition both structurally and thematically. Repetition leads to definition. Women and women's role are defined through the repetition of particular acts—dressing just define themselves in opposition to men but also towards a idealized image of woman from stories and the screen (photographs, books, television, film). Author Leslie Dick writes about gender identity as a complex series of cultural and personal constructions. Dick's article uses film as an example of how this works, so I chose to analyze the story *One of Those Little Girls Who Grew up On Domestic Films*, by Buket Uzuner in relationship to Dick's article, because films speak so clearly to the ideas of representation and repetition. I also discuss an article by Deniz Kandiyoti, which emphasizes the roles that class and education play in shaping a women's understanding of what it means to be a woman. My paper brings together Dick's, Kandiyoti's, and Uzuner's work to emphasize the role that repetition plays in shaping tradition, culture, and identity. Each works brings a unique perspective to this idea, including Dick's theoretical approach, Kandiyoti's sociological text, and Uzuner's fictional work. Each work also differs in its specificity to Slavic women, thus my aim is emphasize the specific cultural processes at work in Uzuner's text, while also linking it to a more general theory.

Ann Nielsen

UCSB

“The Nationalities Policy in the Early Days of the USSR”

Even though Russians constituted the majority of the incredibly diverse ethnological composition of the Soviet Union, the over 100 different nationalities were given self-determination and equal treatment within the Soviet Union. The framework of the self-determination policy of the USSR was made in 1913, years before the October Revolution, as Josef Stalin published his essay “*Marxism and the National Question*”. After the Revolution, Stalin was appointed Commissar of Nationalities. According to the Stalinist view of the nation, equal rights were essential to eliminating nationalism, and the depoliticization of nationalism through equal rights would automatically lead to the unification of all nations within the Soviet Union. The point of reference for the Soviet citizen would not be the nation or the ethnic group,

but the common collective identity which would be achieved by granting autonomy to the region and including them into the framework of the party in order to end national oppression and avoid the formation of nationalist opposition. One striking feature of the affirmative action towards the nationalities was its rejection of even voluntary assimilation, because it was regarded as a sign of Russian chauvinism. Instead, protective policies should be enforced in order to safeguard the development of national culture. "*National in form, Socialist in content*" was the guiding principle behind this policy. During the 1930s, Stalin's Realpolitik had abandoned many of the principles which had defined the nationalities policy of the 1920s. Nevertheless, the principle of separating the ethnic unit from party and government association remained unchanged.