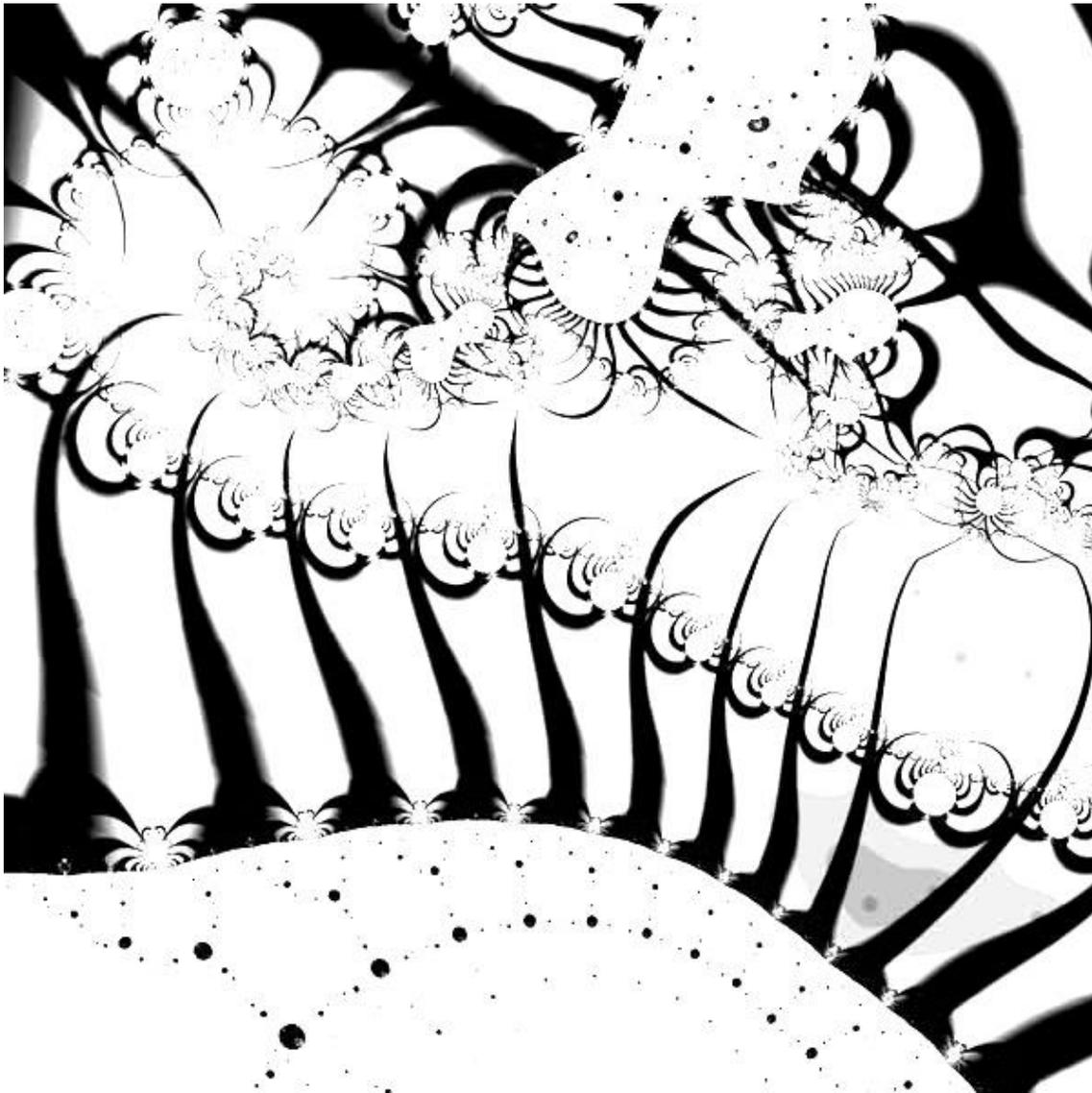


# **THE ETIOLOGY AND ECOLOGY OF POST-SOVIET COMMUNICATION**



**May 7-9, 2010  
1501 International Affairs Building  
Columbia University**

**The Harriman Institute**

**FRIDAY, MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**1.00 pm - 1.15 pm: Timothy Frye, Opening Remarks**

**1.15 pm - 3.00 pm: Panel I - Culture**

Moderator: Eugene Gorny

Catharine Nepomnyashchy: "Pilgrimage to Virtual Pushkin-scape"

Gernot Howanitz: "Viktor Pelevin's Literary Renditions of Social Networks in Russia"

Dennis Ioffe: "Marxist Politics in Modernist Avant-Garde Movements and Contemporary Anti-Globalism: the Imprint in the 'New Media'"

**3.00 pm - 3.30 pm: Coffee Break**

**3.30 pm - 5.30 pm: Panel II –Comparisons**

Moderator: Irina Reyfman

Robert Saunders: "(Red) Hot Wires: The Soviet Legacy and Its Impact on New Media Zones in Eurasia"

Roman Leibov: "Notes from the Underground: Commentaries about News at rus.delfi.ee"

Maria Repnikova: "The Interlink Between the New Modes of Communication and Critical Reporting in Russia and China"

Guobin Yang: "The Art of Online Activism in China"

**5.30 pm - 7.00 pm: Reception**

**7.00 pm: Understanding the Russian Blogosphere**

Eugene Gorny and Roman Leibov, two founding fathers of the Russian Internet, discuss the state of the blogosphere.

## **SATURDAY, MAY 8<sup>TH</sup>**

### **9.30 am – 11.00 am: Panel III – Networks I**

Moderator: Alan Timberlake

John Kelly: "Mapping the Russian Blogosphere - Russia in a Global Context"

Karina Alexanyan: "The Specifics of the Russian Blogosphere"

Bruce Etling: "Media Cloud and Comparative Online Discourse in Russia"

### **11.00 am – 11:15 am: Coffee Break**

### **11.15 am – 12.45 pm: Panel IV - Networks II**

Moderator: Ben Peters

Martin Calvert: "Identity, Strategic Essentialism and Informal Networks among Social Activist. Livejournal Bloggers in Nizhny Novgorod"

Renee Perelmutter: "Impoliteness and Community Building in the Russian Blogosphere"

Irina Shklovsky: "Social Ties for the Soul: How People in Russia Use Social Network Sites"

### **12:45 pm – 2.00 pm: Break**

### **2.00 pm – 3.30 pm: Panel V - Technology**

Moderator: Catharine Nepomnyashchy

Michael Gorham: "Virtual Russophoniia: Language Policy as Political Technology in the New Media Age"

Ben Peters: "The Soviet Internet from Cybernetics to Cyber Networks"

Dragan Kujundzic: "S InterNETsionalom: Technology and Russian Identity"

### **3.30 pm – 3.45 pm: Coffee Break**

### **3.45 pm – 5.45 pm: Panel VI – Journalism**

Moderator: Jonathan Sanders

- Andrew Levkin: "Four Periods of Internet Media in Russia"
- Marketa Hulpachova: "Belarus' Creative Opposition: How Dissidents Use New Media to Fight Europe's Last Dictator"
- Julia Sonnevend: "The Social Life of Forgotten Images: the Contested Images of the Hungarian Political Transition in Networked Public Spheres"
- Elena Vartanova: "Contemporary Research on Journalism and the Internet in Russia"

**5.45 pm - 7.00 pm: Reception**

**SUNDAY, MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>**

**9.30 am – 11.00 am: Panel VII - Politics I**

- Moderator: Florian Toepfl
- Matthew Schaaf: "Threats to Online Freedom in Russia"
- Galina Miazhevich: "New Media, Post-Communism and Civil Society"
- Volodymyr Lysenko, Kevin Desouza: "Political Cyberprotest in Contemporary Russia"

**11.00 am – 11.30 am: Coffee Break**

**11.30 am – 13.00 pm: Panel VIII - Politics II**

- Moderator: Guobin Yang
- Jonathan Sanders, Beth Knobel: "The Dymovskii Effect"
- Florian Toepfl: "Managing Public Outrage – Media Scandals on the Runet"
- Eugene Gorny: "Art, Music, Sex and Blog as Means of Political Struggle"

**1.00 pm - 1.30 pm: Conclusions – Alan Timberlake**

## SPEAKERS

**Karina Alexanyan** is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Communications at Columbia University with a focus on the Russian-language Internet, blogosphere and social networking landscape. She is also a researcher and analyst specializing in Russian online networks for the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University and Morningside-Analytics. Her publications include book chapters and articles on the Russian blogosphere and Russian social networking. In 2008, with the support of the Berkman Center and the Harriman Institute, Ms. Alexanyan organized the "Russia Online" Conference at Columbia University.

**Martin Calvert** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Central and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow. His research is focused on social activist Livejournal users from Nizhny Novgorod, examination of identity construction online and off, the role of identity in facilitating information transfer and user strategies for negotiating the online/offline divide.

**Kevin Desouza** is on the faculty of the Information School at the University of Washington. He is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the College of Engineering. He currently serves as the Director of the Institute for Innovation in Information Management (I3M) and is an affiliate faculty member of the Center for American Politics and Public Policy, both housed at the University of Washington. He founded the Institute for National Security Education and Research, an inter-disciplinary, university-wide initiative in 006 and served as its Director until 2008. He holds a visiting professorship at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana.

**Bruce Etling** directs the Internet and Democracy Project at Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society. His current research is focused on the Russian Internet and building multi-method approaches to investigate foreign language Internet spaces. With other Berkman colleagues he has also completed studies of the Iranian and Arabic blogospheres. Before joining Berkman, Bruce was a Democracy and Governance Officer in USAID's Foreign Service and served tours in Afghanistan, Russia and Cambodia. He has also conducted research with the Afghan Legal History Project at Harvard Law School and previously worked on independent media development programs in the Russia and Eurasia with the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX).

**Michael Gorham** is Associate Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Florida, and Associate Editor of *Russian Review* and *Russian Language Journal*. His publications include the book *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2003) and articles and book chapters on the intersection of language, literature, and politics in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. His current research explores related issues of language, politics, and national identity in late- and post-Soviet Russia. Gorham is also a core member of an international working group investigating "The Future of Russian: Language Culture in the Era of New Technology," based at the University of Bergen, Norway.

**Eugene Gorny** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Harriman Institute and author of *A Creative History of the Russian Internet: Studies in Internet Creativity* (2009).

**Gernot Howanitz** has been studying Slavonic Studies and Computer Science in Salzburg, Moscow and Prague since 2003. He received his BSc in Computer Science in 2007. Currently, Howanitz is finishing his MA (Russian Literature and Culture Theory) and MSc

(Computer Science). He has also been working as a software engineer for Sony Austria since 2007. His research interests include cross-media interactions and transformation processes (literature, film, video games), Internet culture and contemporary Russian, Czech and Polish literature.

**Marketa Hulpachova** is a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University's Journalism School. Ioffe, Dennis, defended his doctoral dissertation at the University of Amsterdam, where he currently serves as an affiliated researcher. He has edited and co-edited several book-length collections of articles devoted to various problems in Russian modernism and cultural history. He has published a number of scholarly essays on different topics in Russian cultural history, theory of language, religion, art-history, semiotics and contemporary literature and culture. He was the founding editor of the scholarly periodical "Amsterdam Journal of Cultural Narratology" (AJCN).

**John Kelly** is the founder and lead scientist of Morningside Analytics. His research blends Social Network Analysis, content analysis, and statistics to solve the problem of making complex online networks visible and understandable. Kelly is currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Journalism at Columbia University, and has studied communications at Stanford and at Oxford's Internet Institute. He is an Affiliate at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School.

**Beth Knobel** (Ph.D., Harvard University) had a 20 year-long career as a reporter before joining the faculty of Fordham University in 2007. From 1999 to the end of 2006, she was the Moscow Bureau Chief for CBS News. She is a recipient of an Emmy award for coverage of the 2002 Moscow theater siege, and Edward R. Murrow and Sigma Delta Chi awards for coverage of the 2004 Beslan school siege. She still works part-time for CBS News, and in August 2008 she covered the Russian-Georgian conflict for the network from Moscow. Dr. Knobel is currently co-writing a guidebook for young journalists with CBS News legend Mike Wallace. Her research at Fordham centers on the effect of the media on politics and policymaking. She is currently studying how US television networks cover foreign news, and how independent and state-run media work in Russia.

**Dragan Kujundžić** is Professor of Germanic and Slavic studies, film and media studies, and Jewish studies at the University of Florida. He has published numerous articles in these and related fields. His editorial work includes guest editor of "Khoraographies for Jacques Derrida on July 15, 2000," special issue, *Tympanum* 4 (2000); editor of *Provocations to Reading: Essays for a Democracy to Come* (2005); guest editor of "J," special issue, *Critical Inquiry*, 31, no. 3 (2005); and guest editor of "The Ister: The Danube, Heidegger, 'the jews,' and the Destiny of Europe," special issue, *Art Margins*, Fall 2007; and two volumes of Bakhtinsky sbornik published in Moscow (1990; 1993). He is the author of *The Returns of History: Russian Nietzscheans after Modernity* (1997); in Russian, *Vospalennyi iazyk* [Language/tongue in heat] (2003), and, most recently, "Who or What-- Jacques Derrida," special issue of *Discourse*, 2009. He is currently working on a collection of essays titled *vEmpire*, addressing geopolitics, media, archivization, and cinema.

**Roman Leibov** is Associate Professor of Russian Poetics at the University of Tartu. His research interests include: rhetoric and ideology, Tyutchev's lyrics, the Russian literary canon, the internet and the humanities.

**Andrew Levkin** studied in the mathematics department of Moscow University. For the last 20 years Levkin has been working as an editor on a number of Latvian and Russian newspapers, journals and online-media. Since 1998 he has developed various internet projects (Polit.ru, Russ.ru/politics, SMI.ru, and others). He is a prose writer and translator

from English and Latvian into Russian. Levkin published ten books of prose in Russia and is Andrey Belyi's prize winner (2001).

**Volodymyr Lysenko** is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Information School of the University of Washington in Seattle. His research interests are in the area of Internet-based ICTs and socio-political change. He holds a degree in Physics from Kyiv Shevchenko University and an M.S. in Library and Information Science from Syracuse University.

**Galina Miazhevich** has a PhD in Development Studies from Manchester University. Currently, she is the Gorbachev Media Research Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford, and an associate of the Rothermere American Institute. She is working on a project examining the relationship between grassroots xenophobia and state media in the Belarusian nation-building project. Her interest in emergent forms of post-communist identity is positioned at the junction of social psychology, development, gender and media studies.

**Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy** is Ann Whitney Olin Professor and Chair of the Slavic Department at Barnard College and former Director of the Harriman Institute. Her books include *Abram Tertz and the Poetics of Crime* (Yale 1995), *Strolls with Pushkin* (Yale 1993), *Under the Sky of My Africa: Alexander Pushkin and Blackness* (Northwestern 2006) and *Mapping the Feminine: Russian Women and Cultural Difference* (Slavica 2008). She has published extensively on Soviet and post-Soviet literature and popular culture, Pushkin, Russian ballet, and the future of regional studies. She is currently working on a book on Nabokov and His Enemies: The Terms of Engagement.

**Renee Perelmutter** is Assistant Professor of Slavic and Jewish Studies at the University of Kansas. She holds a Ph.D in Slavic Linguistics from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research interests include Slavic morphosyntax and pragmatics. Her articles have appeared in *Russian Linguistics*, *Slavic and Eastern European Journal*, and *The Journal of Historical Pragmatics*.

**Benjamin Peters** is a doctoral candidate in Communication at the Columbia University School of Journalism. His dissertation, "From Cybernetics to Cyber Networks: Norbert Wiener, the Soviet Internet, and the Cold War Dawn of Information Universalism," offers a history and analysis of an overlooked tradition of digital media research backlit by Cold War contexts. In addition to his Soviet area specialty, he publishes in the intersection of new media history, global communication studies, and critical information studies. Occasional working notes can be found here: <http://benpeters.blogspot.com/>.

**Maria Repnikova** is a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, working on a PhD at the Department of Politics and International Relations, with a focus on the press in China and Russia. She received her Master's in Comparative Government from Oxford and holds a Bachelor's degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. She has also spent a year on a Fulbright fellowship researching Chinese migration to Russia. Her current research interests are China-Russia comparative issues of media politics, as well as China's media assistance to Africa, and the overall theoretical research on non-democratic regimes. **Reyfan, Irina**, is Professor of Russian Literature at Columbia University. She teaches and researches Russian literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Pushkin, Tolstoy, Leskov) and, more broadly, cultural history of Russia and the semiotics of culture. Her books include *Vasilii Trediakovsky: The Fool of the 'New' Russian Literature*, *Ritualized Violence Russian Style: The Duel in Russian Culture and Literature*, *Mapping the Feminine: Russian Women and Cultural Difference*, and *Ranks and Writing* (in progress).

**Jonathan Sanders** is a veteran international reporter and long-time CBS News Moscow Correspondent who teaches in the Communications and Media Department at Fordham University. Sanders covered five wars in the Caucasus, urban insurrection in Vilnius, Riga, Moscow, Grozny, Warsaw and Paris. His reporting on the Beslan school siege, although effectively banned in Russia, won him the MediaSoiuz "Golden Verb" award for outstanding foreign reporting in 2005. Combining practical experience and academic training (he holds a Ph.D. in history from Columbia University and was a Fulbright scholar), Sanders has served as Ferris Professor of Journalism of Princeton University. One of the world's leading scholars of Russian & Soviet visual culture, primarily photography and television, he is the author of two books, *Russia 1917: The Unpublished Revolution* (New York: Abbeville Press 1989) and [with Heidi Hollinger, an introduction by Mikhail Gorbachev], *The Russians Emerge* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2002) as well as numerous articles.

**Robert A. Saunders** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Economics and Politics at the State University of New York--Farmingdale. He is the author of *The Many Faces of Sacha Baron Cohen: Politics, Parody, and the Battle over Borat* (2008) and *The Historical Dictionary of the Russian Federation* (2010). He is one of the founding editors of *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian, and Central European New Media* (formerly known as *The Russian Cyberspace Journal*).

**Matthew Schaaf** is a student in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. His research focuses on the interaction between the development of the rule of law and civil and political rights. Before coming to Columbia, he was NGO Liaison at Human Rights Watch in Moscow.

**Irina Shklovski** is Assistant Professor at the IT University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on how people use information and communication technologies to maintain social relationships, address issues of privacy and identity in the digital world and navigate and interact in urban spaces. Currently, she is working on a research project that investigates how people in Russia and Kazakhstan use social media to maintain their long distance social connections and to develop new transnational forms of belonging.

**Julia Sonnevend** is a Ph.D. student in Communications at Columbia University, a Visiting Fellow at the Information Society Project at Yale Law School and a Pre-Doctoral Fellow at the Yale Center for Cultural Sociology. Sonnevend studies the intersections between communications, art history, visual sociology and legal theory. Her research interests include icons and societies, visual culture theories and aesthetics, theories of space, architecture and design, cultural trauma, visual representations of justice, education and social media, and post-communist identities. She received her Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School, her Juris Doctorate and her Master of Arts degrees in German Studies and Aesthetics from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

**Alan Timberlake** is Professor and Chair of Slavic Languages & Literatures at Columbia, long interested in linguistics, chronicles of Rus, and, recently, the nature of discourse on the internet.

**Florian Toepfl** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Harriman Institute. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Passau in Southern Germany in 2009. Before arriving in New York, he worked as a lecturer in political science at the LMU University in Munich for six months. In his PhD thesis, He has investigated the transformation of Post-Soviet media systems in the years after 1985. Along with his academic studies, Florian completed a two-year journalistic education program and has worked ever since as an occasional contributor for one of the leading German magazines.

**Elena Vartanova** is Dean of the Faculty of Journalism and Professor and Chair in Media Theory and Media Economics at Moscow State University. She wrote her PhD-thesis on the Finnish Newspaper System (1982) and her doctoral dissertation on Information Society Concepts and their Impact on Media Practice in EU and Nordic Countries (1999). Her research interests include media systems in Nordic countries, information society, the post-Soviet transformation of Russian media, and media economics. Vartanova has authored five books and edited eight books on Nordic media systems, Information society, and media economics. She has published more than 100 articles in Russian academic journals. Her articles have been published by The European Journal of Communication Vartanova is editor-in-chief of the Faculty research journal Mediaalmanac, the bulletin MediaTrends and editor-in-chief of the on-line research magazine Mediascope..

**Guobin Yang** is an associate professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures at Barnard College. He is the author of The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online (Columbia University Press, 2009).

This conference is sponsored by

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## HARRIMAN CORE PROJECT

During academic year 2009-10 the Harriman Institute has sponsored a core project investigating New Modes of Communication in the Post-Soviet World. This conference marks the culmination of that project.

The project takes as its focus electronic modes of communication, above all, the internet in all its genres, with secondary attention to traditional media. While its central attention is focused on Russia, the project is open to the discussion of modes of communication throughout the geographical area defined by the Soviet Union, from Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia. The time frame of the project encompasses the past two decades during which the collapse of the Soviet system and the rapid growth in technology and use of the new media have radically transformed the post-Soviet information and cultural landscape.

The internet and related developments of technology present various interesting, sometimes paradoxical, questions for analysis, including the nature of blog networks and networks of special interests; censorship, official and group generated; the use of the internet for the promotion of cultural and political agendas; the role of women; the internet as a force of political activism; the register and form of language used. In addressing these and related questions, the project is particularly interested in crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries to examine and develop effective methodologies for studying the complex phenomena shaping the context, use, and influence of the internet.

Throughout the year the project has sponsored a range of activities, including a working group which has met several times a semester and is comprised primarily of local participants (but with some invited guest speakers) and a series of presentations by cultural figures of note who have been active in the Russian internet, and, more specifically, the Russian and Eurasian internet as a distinct phenomenon, to demonstrate how individuals and generations respond to the internet. There have also been showings of selections from the tapes of Soviet TV made at the Harriman Institute by the TV Project during the 1980s into the 1990s.

Central to the activities of the project are two post-doctoral fellows, Eugene Gorny (Ph.D. University of London), who—in addition to his own active participation in Russian internet life—has written on the construction of self on the internet, and Florian Toepfl (Ph.D., University of Passau), who has investigated the relationship between print and electronic journalism in Russia and the Czech Republic.

The project is organized by Alan Timberlake, whose interest in linguistics extends into how language is used and the behavior of speakers, and Catharine Nepomnyashchy, who has a long-term interest in the interaction of culture with politics and institutions.