



Russian,  
East European  
and Eurasian Studies  
@ Penn

## Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia: Past, Present and Future A Lecture Series for the 2007–2008 Academic Year

Stephen Kotkin, Professor of History, Princeton University;  
Director of the Program in Russian and Eurasian Studies

### **“Imperial Jumble: Buddhists, Muslims, Adherents to the old Rite, Orthodox, and Scientists”**

Wednesday, October 24, 2007, 5 p.m., Logan Hall, Room 402

A history of the Mississippi valley might include the rise and fall of Indian confederations, the coming of the French, the coming of the British, the founding of America, the invention of the heartland, Mark Twain. Imagine something analogous, but on the other side of the globe—the Ob River valley. Conquered by a son of Chinggis Khan in the early 13th century, the Ob valley saw the invention of Turcology, as well as the Uralic-Altai linguistic family hypothesis, and a nearly implemented plan to blow up the river, using atomic weapons, to reverse its flow into parched Inner Asia.

Michael Holquist, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature, Yale; President, MLA

### **“Back to the Future: Re-Visiting the Conflict of the Faculties”**

Tuesday, October 30, 2007, 5 p.m., Logan Hall, Room 402

Prof. Holquist is currently working on the relation between Kantian epistemology and Wilhelm von Humboldt’s ideas about language. It is not by chance that both Kant and von Humboldt were also obsessed with radical university reform. Professor Holquist will put some of their ideas into dialog with contemporary trends in higher education here and in the European Union, drawing on recent studies sponsored by the Modern language Association.

Beth Mitchneck, Associate Professor of Geography & Regional Development, University of Arizona;  
Associate Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

### **“Forced Migrants in the Caucasus: Social Networks and Livelihoods”**

Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 5 p.m., Logan Hall, Room 402

Forced migrants from Abkhazia have been living in displacement in Georgia for up to 15 years. Despite this considerable length of time, the Georgian government has only recently backed away from a strict policy of non-integration of internally displaced persons. Basing her discussion on an ongoing and extensive collaborative research project, Prof. Mitchneck will explore the ways that both internally displaced persons and the general population have developed and used social networks as part of livelihood strategies. Her analysis will examine the extent to which networks and strategies vary by migrant status and the extent to which members of governmental and non-governmental agencies are implicated in these networks and strategies.

Bruce Grant, Associate Professor of Anthropology, New York University

### **“Cultural Histories of Kidnapping in Russia and the Caucasus”**

Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 5 p.m., Logan Hall, Room 402

In what ways has the Caucasus region come to be axiomatic of violence? In this talk, Grant juxtaposes longstanding Russian literary accounts of kidnapping – beginning with Pushkin’s “Prisoner of the Caucasus” in 1822 – with ethnological readings of the exchange of bodies in the Caucasus proper – through bride kidnapping, and the work of mountain brigands – to consider competing sovereignties across a world area long famous for its pluralisms.

Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania is an interdisciplinary faculty working group, funded by the School of Arts and Sciences, uniting scholars working on aspects of the complex and varied region that stretches from Central Europe to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic to the Caucasus. Our shared mission is to shape research programs and institutions here at Penn both to reflect the historical and contemporary commonalities of this enormous region, yet also to recognize its growing diversity and internal fragmentation, given the accession of much of Eastern Europe to an expanded EU and the gradual erosion of the region’s geopolitical unity (formerly driven by ascendant Soviet power) at its southern and eastern borders.

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