Masha Gessen to Visit UCSD

Journalist, writer, and human rights activist Masha Gessen will be delivering a public lecture on November 24, 2014 on the topic of President Vladimir Putin and his relationship to the West. Gessen, who recently published Words Will Break Cement: The Passion of Pussy Riot (2014), has been an important advocate for human rights in Russia. The event will be open to the public, and is being co-sponsored by UCSD’s European Studies Program, Literature, Critical Gender Studies, the Humanities Center, Graduate Division, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. In addition to her public lecture, Ms. Gessen will be meeting with graduate students to discuss her most recent book. The public lecture will take place at 11 am in the Seuss Room at Geisel Library.

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of the REEES Program,

The eyes of the world have been on Eastern Europe this year, and those of us who study Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia have struggled to make sense of the cultural and geopolitical changes in the region. The year 2014 opened with tens of thousands of optimistic protesters -- many of them very young -- in Ukraine, voicing their desire for national self-determination. As the year draws to a close it is still unclear what the legacy of the Euro-Maidan movement and the conflicts in Eastern Ukraine will be. Students and community members have shown concern and an eagerness to make sense of these changes. In response, UCSD has hosted several panel discussions, with faculty across disciplines helping to explain current events. Upcoming discussions about Eastern Europe and Russia will include a lecture by the Russian-American journalist Masha Gessen in November, and a panel discussion in March with campus visitors Timothy Snyder, Marci Shore, Graham Timmins, and UCSD’s Natalia Roudakova. UCSD courses will also offer students a chance to better understand current events. This winter, Professor Natalia Roudakova will offer "European Media Systems", much of which will be devoted to the contemporary Russian and East European media. Prof. Amelia Glaser will offer a new course during 2015-2016 called "Russia Today", on contemporary Russian literature, film, television, and performance arts.

The REEES Program (formerly Russian and Soviet Studies) continues to offer an interdisciplinary major and minor that allows students to choose courses from across campus that focus on Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The program is highly individualized, and our students tend to develop strong bonds with each other and with their professors. Students are encouraged to study abroad, and to design independent study course with faculty members in a variety of departments. We are proud to watch our graduates thrive in graduate school, journalism, and nonprofit work, among other fields. The REEES program also unites faculty and graduate students in Political Science, Linguistics, Communication, History, Visual Arts, Cognitive Science, Sociology, and Literature. The Socialism in Contexts Working Humanities Center group has provided a space for REEES scholars to meet with other scholars of recently existing socialisms about their research. Over the past several years, UCSD has established a tradition of gathering faculty and graduate students in all of these disciplines for quarterly discussions of scholarship and artistic work. We have been proud to see our recent Ph.D. students leave us for careers of their own. Most recently, Dr. Julia Klimova (Ph.D Anthropology, 2014) successfully defended her dissertation titled "Russian Spiritual Soil and the Retrieval of Orthodox Christian Identity among post-Soviet Immigrants to the US." Dr. Maggie Levantovskaya (Ph.D Literature, 2013) is currently visiting Assistant Professor at U. Wisconsin Milwaukee in Russian and Jewish Studies; Dr. Yuliya Ladygina (Ph.D Literature, 2013) is visiting assistant professor in Russian Literature at Williams, and has completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. Dr. Elena Aronovna (Ph.D History 2013) has just accepted a tenure track position at UC Santa Barbara, after completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the Max Plank Institute. Dr. Milda Zilinskaite (Ph.D Literature 2014) is currently offering services for asylum seekers and migrants through an NGO in Germany.

Many thanks to the community members who have supported REEES programs at UCSD, to the faculty, who make the program possible, and to Sally Hargate, who coordinates the program. Finally, I want to thank Teresa Kuruc, a Literature Ph.D student, for her work on the program’s first newsletter.

Sincerely,
Amelia Glaser

Russian and Soviet Studies program becomes Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Last year the UCSD undergraduate major and minor formerly known as "Russian and Soviet Studies" was changed to "Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies" (REEES). The affiliated faculty voted unanimously for this change, as they felt that it reflects faculty’s focus on a dynamic, changing region, its history and cultures. Professor Amelia Glaser, who currently directs the program, noted that "Beyond updating the program title to reflect the post-Soviet reality, the name change will allow students to include a broader spectrum of courses in their major or minor. They can now include courses on a number of East European and Eurasian topics that didn’t fall under the rubric of Russian and Soviet. Students, when the change went into effect last year, asked us why it took so long.
REEEES Graduate Student Activities and Accomplishments

Ph.D students across disciplines, from Literature to Linguistics, have been involved in the REEEES program, and have found opportunities to interact with one another. One of UCSD’s incoming graduate students this fall, 2014, is Olga Lazitsky, an international journalist, media researcher, and a Ph.D. candidate at the UCSD Department of Communication. Based on her broad journalism experience working in the Far East of Russia, Siberia, Moscow, and Boston, she has proposed the concept of media endarkenment, a “process of media influence counter to enlightenment”. Olga has just begun a Ph.D program in UCSD’s Communication Department, where she will work with Professor Natalia Roudakova. Additionally, Josh Tremill and Teresa Kuruc, presented papers at the graduate student Slavic Colloquium, hosted by UCLA last April. Josh is a PhD student in the Literatures in English program. Among his research interests are 19th century Russian authors. Josh analyzed Tolstoy’s stance on “great men” in history through the lens of scenes in War and Peace and Franco Moretti’s theories of literary history. Teresa is a PhD student in the Comparative Literature program and focuses on Russian and Czech literature of the early 20th century. She discussed issues of revolution and propaganda through a reading of Viktor Shklovsky’s memoir, A Sentimental Journey. Finally, the “Socialism in Contexts” Working Group at the UCSD Humanities Center; now in its third year, is devoted to scholarship on current or recently existing state socialisms, and has gathered scholars working on Eastern Europe, East Asia, South America, and the Middle East. The group also brings outside scholars to present their work on campus. This year’s presenters will include Professor Natalia Roudakova, on satire in post-Soviet media; Natasa Garic-Humphrey (a Ph. D Candidate in Anthropology), who has returned from doing fieldwork in Bosnia; and Professor Emily Finer, who is on sabbatical from the University of St. Andrews (UK), and will discuss the reception of British and Irish authors in Soviet Russia.

REEEES Alumni Embark on Academic and Professional Endeavors

After graduating from UCSD in 2013, Mika Kennedy began a PhD program in English Languages and Literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She technically works on Asian/Pacific Islander and American indigenous literatures, but notes that “REEEES has provided me with vital theoretical and pedagogical training; Mikhail Bakhtin is big with the American ethnic literary critics these days! Other boons: Enough offhand knowledge of Russian folk songs to scaffold entire seminar papers about Modernism, modern war, and Katysusha rockets.” She recently presented a comparative paper on Nabokov’s Lolita and Henry David Hwang’s M. Butterfly at her first graduate conference. “Many thanks to REEEES for its unforeseen—yet perhaps comically pervasive—support and influence.” Mika writes, and adds, “And hey, if the PhD doesn’t pan out, the Russian Circus might.”


Khlebnikov’s “Incantation by Laughter” in Cyberslang

Karina Demirchyan, a 5th-year double major in Political Science and REEEES, interpreted Russian Futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov’s famous poem. According to Karina, “Trying to copy Khlebnikov’s style made me realize what an arduous task it is to use made up words to convey a certain message.” Karina has translated futurist poem into contemporary electronic acronyms.

O lol, u lollers
0 haha, u #hahahalics
Who rofl rollingly, who lollify lollishly
0, lol lollously
0, roflacity rofledom – lol lollers lollfully
0, icanteven can’t even ahaha a loler
HA ☺ ha :)
I’mdingly, haingly, lollingly oh
0 lol, u lollers
0 haha, u #hahahalics

Dmitry Bykov Speaks at UCSD

On Sunday, November 16, the San Diego Russian Club “European Staff Association” brought the celebrated Russian writer Dmitry Bykov to the UCSD campus. The popular poet, critic and journalist read his work to a sold out auditorium of over 200 Russian Speakers.
Nathan Englander’s “The Twenty-Seventh Man” Comes to The Old Globe With the Participation of UCSD

August 12, 1952 is remembered as the “night of the murdered poets.” The leading Soviet Yiddish writers, as well as several cultural figures, were killed in Moscow’s Lubyanka prison. American writer Nathan Englander first paid homage to this tragedy with his short story, “The Twenty-Seventh Man.” He has now written a critically-praised play based on the story. *Time Out NY* notes that the play is “as chilling and haunted as a ghost story.” “The Twenty-Seventh Man” will be performed at San Diego’s “Old Globe Theater” in February 14-March 15, 2015, under the direction of Barry Edelstein. Thanks to a collaboration between the Old Globe and UCSD’s Judaic Studies program, a Winter Quarter Freshman Seminar “A Guest Writer: Nathan Englander” will introduce students to the writer’s work, and will allow students to meet the author in a private session at UCSD, and will take them to the play.

Author Gary Shteyngart Speaks at UCSD, Meets with REEES Students

Novelist *Gary Shteyngart* visited UCSD in May 2014 for a public conversation with Professor Seth Lerer (Literature, Dean of Arts and Humanities). While on campus Shteyngart met with UCSD undergraduates in Visiting Professor Zlatina Sandalska’s “Humor in Russian Literature” course. The Division of Arts and Humanities sponsored the visit in partnership with the Mitchell family.

The San Diego Russian School Teaches Kids Their Heritage Language at UCSD

During a recent literature class on “Doctor Zhivago” at the San Diego Russian School one of our younger students asked: “Is Pasternak the same person who invented how to preserve milk so that it does not get sour?” We all laughed. But going back to this question I keep asking myself: “Why are we spending so much effort, and every Sundays trying to preserve Russian language and culture among the San Diego Russian speaking community?” Let me try to explain. Nurturing dual language identity in our students helps them develop a more comprehensive view of history and culture, and understand world processes as they unfold seemingly unrelated in different parts of the world. Besides the academic and cultural enrichment, it helps break family walls which appear when young kids switch to English talking with their parents and especially grandparents; for the latter Russian may be the only option to communicate. The Russian School was founded in 1998, when UCSD-affiliated young faculty, postdocs and graduate students, some of them recent arrivals from Russia, decided to create a Sunday club for their children, and teach them what they knew. Since then, the school grew and now welcomes grade school kids from all over San Diego County offering Sunday classes in Russian grammar, literature, history and arts. The school would not have survived without the support of the UCSD REEES program (thank you Mike, Bob and Natasha for your help with the classrooms!). In the last year, we’ve been extremely fortunate to have Amelia’s lecture on futurism, and mentoring from Rebecca’s students, and are looking forward to more fruitful collaboration with the program. San Diego Russian School is at [http://www.sdrussianschool.com](http://www.sdrussianschool.com)

Ukraine’s Euromaidan

As the world anxiously watched the protest movement that ousted Ukrainian president Yanukovych, UCSD faculty and visitors presented on the political and cultural situation in Ukraine. In April, 2013, the Humanities Center’s “Socialism in Context” working group hosted Prof. Taras Tymoschuk of the Shevchenko University in Kyiv and a Fulbright scholar at UC Santa Barbara; and Dr. Yaryna Tymoschuk, a literary historian from Kyiv, who spoke about the Kyiv uprisings. In March, IICAS hosted a panel on “Ukraine and Russia in Europe and the World,” which included UCSD Professors Peter Gouvevitch (IR/PS), Amelia Glaser (Literature), Phil Roeder (Political Science), and Miles Kahler (IR/PS).

In May, 2014 Professors Robert Edelman (History) and Amelia Glaser delivered a lecture on the topic of Ukraine at the Pat Ledden Memorial Luncheon. Conversations about the ongoing border tensions between Russia and Ukraine will continue during the current academic year. On March 13, 2015, European Studies and the LLP Programme of the European Union will be sponsoring a panel titled “Ukraine, Russia, and the World a Year After Euromaidan”. The panel will be made up of an international and cross-disciplinary group of scholars on current events in Eastern Europe, including Prof. Timothy Snyder (Yale U., History), Prof. Prof. Natalia Roudakova (UC San Diego, Communication), Prof. Graham Timmins (Birmingham, Political Science), and Prof. Marci Shore (Yale, History), and the chair will be Prof. Branislav Slantchev (UCSD, Political Science).
Faculty Research and Publication Highlights

**Professor Lera Boroditsky** (Cognitive Science) delivered a keynote address at the Slavic Cognitive Linguistics Association (SCLA) held at Harvard University in February. **Professor Steven Cassedy** (Russian and Comparative Literature) recently published the critically acclaimed book, Connected: How Trains, Genes, Pineapples, Piano Keys and a Few Disasters Transformed Americans at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century (Stanford University Press, 2013).

**Professor Robert Edelman** (History) is a leader of the Global History of Sport in the Cold War Project, a Cold War International History Project sponsored by the Wilson Center and National Endowment for the Humanities. The cross-disciplinary collaboration involves over 70 scholars from multiple disciplines and countries. It will culminate in presentations that are available through the Digital Archive of the Cold War International History Project, as well as in two scholarly volumes. **Professor Amelia Glaser** (Literature) has edited *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Competing Legacies of a Ukrainian Cossack*, which is forthcoming with Stanford University Press in 2015. **Professor Akos Rona-Tas** (Sociology) and Prof. Alya Guseva (BU) have published *Plastic Money: Constructing Markets for Credit Cards in Eight Postcommunist Countries* with Stanford University Press (2014).

**Professor Natalia Roudakova** (Communication) spent the 2013-14 academic year as a faculty fellow at Stanford University's Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, where she worked on a book about post-Soviet journalism.

Celebrating UCSD’s Russian Program

Last May, Russian instructor, Rebecca Wells, and her students greeted passers by on “The Hump” near the Student Center at UCSD with lively Russian music, Russian cuisine, and information about UCSD’s Russian program and study abroad opportunities. The event gathered a crowd of students, and many enrolled in Russian language courses this fall. Teresa Kuruc, a PhD candidate in Literature, is the current Russian language TA. **Rebecca Wells** has taught Russian at UCSD for the past 25 years. In 2010, she received a Saltman distinguished teaching award for her contributions to Russian studies and for her ability to instill in her students a love for the Russian language.

http://caesar.ucsd.edu/russian/