

## Back to the USSR? Reflections on post-Soviet Russia

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**Start date** 12 Apr 2019                      **End date** 14 Apr 2019

**Venue**                      Madingley Hall  
                                    Madingley  
                                    Cambridge

**Tutor**                      Dr Vera Tsareva-Brauner                      **Course code** 1819NRX058

**Director of Academic Centres**                      Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this course, please contact**                      Head of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus  
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**To book**                      See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Vera Tsareva-Brauner is an Affiliated Lecturer at the Department of Slavonic Studies, Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages where she teaches and examines a number of language tripos, including Translation from English into Russian and Russian through Audio-Visual. She is also an external examiner for Russian at UCL, City University London, University of Westminster and Eton.

Vera is also a Coordinator of Cambridge University Russian Language Programmes (CULP) where she teaches a variety of Russian language courses from Ab Initio to Advanced and Russian Through Film and Culture to Cambridge undergraduates, post-graduates and post-doctoral students.

Her research focuses on literary and cultural heritage of post-1917 Russian emigration in France. She is particularly interested in the aspect of memory in Russian and Soviet discourse. Vera is also an author, translator and editor.

Vera graduated from St Petersburg University with BA (Hons) and MA, and later did her post-graduate degree at Manchester University.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Memory and nostalgia in Russian/Soviet discourse.
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Longing for 'strong hand' and past power: reflections on USSR and post-Soviet Russia. Roots of today's Russia vs West confrontation.
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Soviet Economic Miracle – fact or fiction?
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Reflections on a 'Perfect Socialist Welfare State'.
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Soviet cultural heritage: what was lost?
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Cinema in the USSR.
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Discussion, Q&A Session.
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

## **Course syllabus**

### **Aims:**

- To learn about political, historical and cultural background to modern-day's nostalgia for 'all things Soviet'.
- To be able to analyse and reflect on the current position Russia occupies in the world.
- To find out more about what it was really like living in the USSR: facts and fiction.

### **Content:**

Almost 30 years after the collapse of the USSR, nostalgia for the Soviet era has never been stronger amongst different sections of society and diverse age groups in today's Russia. The course will illustrate these cultural and social trends, explore the ways in which the myths and realities of the 1917-1990 period are represented in contemporary Russia and reflect on the causes of this historical revisionism. The course will also give an opportunity to contrast Western perceptions of this phenomenon with Russians' own experience.

### **Presentation of the course:**

The course will combine the lecturer's presentations, short films, free discussions, a Q&A session.

### **As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- Develop a deeper understanding of the role of memory and nostalgia in Russian society – both in the past and today.
- Explore various elements of Soviet and post-Soviet history, politics and arts that are relevant to this discourse.
- Get a better, more objective, evidence-based understanding of Russia's place in the world today and its complex relationship with the West.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*

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### Publisher and date

Aslund, A, Brill, M. Russia After Communism, Carnegie, 2017.

Miziano, V. Progressive Nostalgia: Contemporary Art of the Former USSR, WAM, 2008.

Boym, S. Post-Soviet Cinematic Nostalgia: from 'Elite cinema' to soap opera, Detroit, 1995.

'Why do so many Russians miss the USSR?':

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/12/21/why-do-so-many-people-miss-the-soviet-union/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.051675c015e2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/12/21/why-do-so-many-people-miss-the-soviet-union/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.051675c015e2)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/19/world/europe/19russia.html>

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## Additional information

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### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

### Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 28 March 2019