

Spring 2023 Lecture Series Archive

“Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine: Hybrid War, Cold War, or the Start of World War III?”

Mitchell Orenstein, Professor of Russian and East European Studies, University of Pennsylvania

Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 3:30-4:30PM

Dr. Orenstein is Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He is also the author of prize-winning books on political economy and international affairs, including *From Triumph to Crisis: Neoliberal Economic Reform in Postcommunist Countries* (2018), *Privatizing Pensions: The Transnational Campaign for Social Security Reform* (2008), and *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle* (World Bank 2004). His 2019 book, *The Lands in Between: Russia vs. the West and the New Politics of Hybrid War*, showed that Russia was locked in a tug-of-war with the West over influence in the lands in between Russia and the European Union. It explored the many facets of this hybrid war and argued that it would not end while Vladimir Putin is in power in Russia. Dr. Orenstein is currently working on a revised paperback edition that will encompass the lessons of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 started a new era in European security, but what kind? Some analysts suggest this is the start of a new Cold War or the outbreak of World War III. Dr. Orenstein will argue that, despite the full-blown military conflict in Ukraine, this remains a hybrid war, one whose primary means are non-military, including economic sanctions, energy blackmail, and disinformation. We should conceive of this war as not only one between Ukraine and Russia, but many combatant states, including the entire European Union, the United States, and other allies. In order to prevent conventional and nuclear escalation, these combatants prefer to fight using non-military means, such as sanctions and sabotage. We must therefore continue to try to understand the new rules of hybrid warfare, the defining form of conflict of our time.

- [Video of Mitchell Orenstein’s Lecture](#)

“The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American commitment to Vietnam”

Marc Selverstone, Associate Professor of Presidential Studies, Miller Center at the University of Virginia

Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 4:30-5:30PM

Marc J. Selverstone is associate professor in presidential studies and chair of the Presidential Recordings Program at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center. He is the author of *The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American Commitment to Vietnam* (Harvard, 2022) and *Constructing the*

Monolith: The United States, Great Britain, and International Communism, 1945-1950 (Harvard, 2009), which won the Stuart L. Bernath Book Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. He is also the editor of *A Companion to John F. Kennedy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014) and general editor of *The Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* (Virginia, 2010–).

In October 1963, the administration of President John F. Kennedy announced that it would withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam by 1965. Since Kennedy did not live to realize an American withdrawal, debate over JFK's true intentions in Vietnam has raged ever since. Drawing on a range of sources, including Kennedy's secret White House tapes, Marc Selverstone argues that the policy was largely a political device that allowed Kennedy to preserve a continuing but limited commitment to Vietnam. That policy, moreover, was devised by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara with virtually no input from the President. Selverstone will highlight those findings and others presented in his recently published *The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American Commitment to Vietnam* (Harvard University Press, 2022).

- [Video of Marc J. Selverstone's Lecture](#)

"Muppets in Moscow: The Unexpected Crazy True Story of Making Sesame Street in Russia"

Natasha Lance Rogoff, Filmmaker, Journalist, Executive Producer of Sesame Street in Russia

Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 4:30-5:30PM

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the timing appeared perfect to bring Sesame Street to millions of children living in the former Soviet Union. With the Muppets envisioned as ideal ambassadors of Western idealistic values, no one anticipated just how challenging and dangerous this would prove to be. In *Muppets in Moscow*, Natasha Lance Rogoff brings the story to life.

Lance Rogoff, a young American television producer fluent in Russian, was chosen to lead a crew of hundreds of American and Russian artists, producers, educators, writers, and puppeteers to create the Russian adaptation. During the production, against the backdrop of bombings and the assassination of her Russian broadcast partners, Lance Rogoff and the team remained determined to bring laughter, learning, and a new way of seeing the world to children in Russia. In her book, she illuminates how cultural clashes colored nearly every aspect of the production, from the show's educational framework to scriptwriting to the new Russian Muppets themselves, often pitting Sesame Street's Western values against nearly four centuries of Russian thought. In spite of the challenges, the show would go on to become a major hit, airing for over a decade.

Muppets in Moscow explores post-Soviet societal tensions that continue to thwart the Russian people's efforts to create a better future for their country. More than just a story of a children's show, it provides a valuable perspective of Russia's people, their culture, and their complicated relationship with the West that remains more relevant than ever today.

- [Video of Natasha Lance Rogoff's Conversation with CENFAD Director Alan McPherson](#)

“Securing Borders: The Champlain Valley to Coos Country, 1778-1779”

Holly Mayer, Professor Emerita of History, Duquesne University

Tuesday, April 225, 2023, 5:00-6:00PM

Holly Mayer earned a Ph.D. in History at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, served in the United States Army Reserve, and taught as the 2021-2022 Charles Boal Ewing Chair in Military History at the United States Military Academy, West Point, and in 2016-2017 as the Harold K. Johnson Chair of Military History at the U.S. Army War College. Dr. Mayer’s interests in the social, cultural, and military histories of late eighteenth-century North America inform her monographs, *Congress’s Own: A Canadian Regiment, the Continental Army, and American Union* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2021) and *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution* (University of South Carolina Press, 1996), along with various journal and anthology essays.

Dr. Mayer's talk will track the Continental Army’s 2nd Canadian Regiment, Congress’s Own, in order to explore how General George Washington addressed borderland elements amid domestic pressures and foreign affairs in his 1778-1779 strategic plans. The Continental Congress had authorized the 2nd Canadian Regiment, commanded by Colonel Moses Hazen, in early 1776 when the emerging union espoused a political aim of including Canada (Quebec Province). Opportunities arose in 1778 and 1779 when the Continental Army, energized by the alliance with France, undertook complex logistical, joint, and operational actions in the northern borderlands. During her talk, Dr. Mayer will investigate how the 2nd Canadian Regiment's excursion, like other peripheral operations elsewhere, contributed to American nation building by showing the flag—namely the force—to the peoples of the region, expanding the areas that the enemy had to cover, and providing another chance to explore an alternate strategic objective even as the commander in chief concentrated on securing the thirteen states that declared independence.

- [Video of Holly Mayer’s Lecture](#)

The following lectures were hosted by CENFAD but not recorded due to the Temple University Graduate Student Association Strike.

- Monday, February 13, 2023, 4:30-5:30PM: *“The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India”*
 - **David C. Engerman, Leitner International Interdisciplinary Professor, Yale University**
- Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 4:30-5:30PM: *“Path Diplomacy and Infrastructural Power in Eighteenth-Century North America”*
 - **Alec Zuercher Reichardt, Assistant Professor of History, University of Missouri**
- Thursday, March 2, 2023, 3:30-4:30PM: *“The War in Ukraine One Year In”*
 - **Alexander Vindman, Senior Fellow, SAIS Johns Hopkins, Hauser Leader, Harvard Kennedy School**