

Russian Public Diplomacy Today: RT and Kontrpropaganda

– A Talk by Elizaveta Kuznetsova



Wednesday, April 8, 2020 | 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Pardee School of Global Studies | 121 Bay State Road

Discussants: Vesko Garčević, Igor Lukes, & Josh Shiffrin

It has become an established narrative in International Relations that Russia under President Putin operates with a Grand Strategy to undermine the Western and particularly US hegemony. Its primary arm of public diplomacy RT has been deemed an epitome of Russia's renewed international propaganda efforts with innovative persuasive techniques and widespread international influence. In her presentation, Elizaveta shows that such assumptions are often overstated and fall short of the empirical facts behind RT and its rise. By contrast, Elizaveta explores how RT manages a hybrid role within a decentralised structure. She highlights that the channel's methods of persuasion have emerged out of the Soviet kontrpropaganda tradition. Through extensive empirical analysis, interviews with the network's staff and archival work Elizaveta showcases the lack of direction or an overarching goal behind the operations of the network and its attempts to 'muddle through' the changing political environment and internal structural changes while at the same time exploiting the negative publicity that the various Western media outlets have been conveniently providing in the recent years.

Elizaveta Kuznetsova is a Research Fellow at the City University of London and Visiting Researcher at the Center for the Study of Europe.

