

Exploring Eastern Europe/Russia – Middle Eastern relations, late 19th to late 20th centuries

There are two compelling intellectual reasons for this project. First, histories of Eastern Europe/Russia – Middle East relations (EERMER) are a relative lacuna in the scholarship on both regions; most extant work is centered on Russia/USSR, and/or the Cold War, and/or state actors; and few scholars of various subfields are in conversation. Second, EERMER from the late 19th to the late 20th centuries is a wonderful laboratory to explore broad conceptual issues – for instance about periodization and space – in the field of modern (societal) transnational and (state) international history. Questions include: how did relations (not) change in the slow transition from imperial to post-imperial and Cold War periods; how did the fact that Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Middle East are in some ways ‘neighbors’ affect the nature of their transnational relations; could they be defined as a double periphery; are there new ways of studying their contact and overlap zone(s), etc. There are also three compelling organizational reasons, related to PU's and UNIGE's desire to internationalize, for this project. This project will benefit the two universities: (a) in extending PU-UNIGE collaborations to the humanities (b) in helping to build and link up extant knowledge among faculty members at both universities, and (c) in serving graduate students interested in the project's theme: by having them attend workshop both at their own university and across the Atlantic.

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