The Academy and the Fate of Academic Freedom in Putin’s Russia.

Igor Pilshchikov, Moscow State University and Tallinn University

Friday, April 24, 2:00 in UWM’s Greene Hall

“Get up, get up off your knees…”
“That’s more like it!”

About the lecture: Since the nineteenth century, academic and scholarly life in Russia has been centered around two mega-institutions: the Russian Academy of Sciences with its system of research institutes, on the one hand, and the university system run by the Ministry of Education, on the other. The Putin administration has introduced reforms to this traditional structure aimed at reducing the role of the Academy of Sciences and increasing the significance of universities. Their objective is to create a system of research and higher education similar to those prevalent in Western Europe and North America. These reforms, however, have had the practical result that government agencies now threaten academic autonomy and subordinate the reformed institutions to government decision-making. One of the paradoxes of Putin’s Russia is the combination of liberal globalist rhetoric and isolationist authoritarian rule. This talk will focus on how this paradox plays out in Russian academe today, with special attention to the muzzling of free academic speech.

About the speaker: Igor Pilshchikov is a lead researcher at the Institute for World Culture of Lomonosov Moscow State University and a senior researcher at Tallinn University. He is the author of Batiushkov and Italian Literature (2003, in Russian), Vocabulary and Phraseology of “Eugene Onegin” (with Igor Dobrodomov, 2008, in Russian), and has published over 100 scholarly articles on Russian literature, comparative literature, editorial theory, literary theory, verse theory, history of Russian poetic language, cultural semiotics, and digital humanities. Pilshchikov is the founding editor-in-chief of the Fundamental Digital Library of Russian Literature and Folklore (FEB-web.ru) and Russian Virtual Library (RVB.ru), former editor-in-chief of the bilingual journal of Russian and theoretical philology, Philologica, and co-editor of the biannual journal of prosody and poetics, Studia Metrica et Poetica.

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