



## Workshop Program

### Alternative Beliefs under and after State Socialism

October 8, 2022, 12-5pm

Garrison Hall 1.102

Despite state-driven efforts to instill a “scientific worldview” through the public communication of science, people living in state socialist societies were just as fascinated with esoteric practices and beliefs as people in societies west of the Iron Curtain. As a result, many traditional and new esoteric practices survived through (usually in reinvented or hybridized forms) or appeared during socialism and blossomed after its collapse. This exploratory workshop brings together scholars studying esoterism, alternative religiosity, parascience, and related phenomena in the socialist and post-socialist context to discuss their resilience and social and cultural effects in the former socialist bloc.

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12–1.30 pm

*Panel 1. The construction of knowledge*

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**Dmitry Blyshko** (University of Houston), The Rise and Fall of Scientific Archaeology: The Changing Mission and Goals of the Soviet and Russian Archaeological Community, 1920–2020.

**Mary Neuburger** (UT Austin), The Precarity of Truth: Baba Vanga, Parapsychology, and the Construction of Knowledge in the Cold War.

**Stanislav Panin** (Rice University), From Technology to Parapsychology: The Case of Evgeny and Boris Zolotov.

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2–3.30 pm

*Panel 2. The social performance of knowledge*

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**Marina Alexandrova** (UT Austin), Between Blavatsky and the Roerichs: Post-Soviet Theosophical Circles and the Question of Authenticity.

**Emma Friedlander** (Harvard University), The Soviet New Age from Below: Class and Gender in Late Soviet Alternative Spirituality.

**Yvonne Howell** (University of Richmond), «Красота культуры на духовном уровне»: How a Soviet-Ukrainian teenager became the first yoga master in Kyiv, and went on to become the globally-recognized founder of ‘Universal Yoga.’

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4–5 pm

*Panel 3. Poaching on science*

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**Alexey Golubev** (University of Houston), The Narratology of Alternative Epistemes: Sergei Lazarev’s Grant Theft of the Soviet Popular Science Genre.

**Nikon Kovalev** (UT Austin), Evgeny Golovin: Alchemy in the Soviet Union.