



Call for Papers

15th Biennial International Postgraduate Conference
12–14 February 2018 | London, UCL SSEES

UNCERTAINTY:

PERSPECTIVES FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

We live in uncertain times. Globally, the crisis of neo-liberalism has contributed to the rise of populism and exposed the brokenness of the contemporary economic system, relegating the concept of the so-called end of history to the dustbin of history. At the same time, new critical cultural discourses coming from both the left and the (extreme) right bring new challenges to established norms and political routines of the 'old' liberal-democratic order.

These global trends are particularly visible in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. A process of reinvention and reconfiguration continues in parts of the two regions. The label 'post-socialist' was often used after 1989/91 to indicate a period of transition towards Western-style liberal democracy and capitalism, reflecting the relatively broad consensus that these institutions were desirable and necessary. Over time they have lost their previous appeal. In many parts of the post-socialist world, the way forward, the interpretation of the past, and the understanding of the present all seem less certain.

We are, therefore, interested in uncertainty—attempts to prevent it, designs to embrace it, and efforts to overcome it. We want to stimulate discussions that identify and reflect upon forces of change. However, we do not wish to limit uncertainty to descriptions of the (historical) present. We also want to encourage conceptual debate on uncertainty—for example inconsistencies or questions within established concepts, interpretations and ideas—across disciplines.

Paper and panel discussion proposals could address, but are not limited to the following questions:

- How have arts and humanities in the two regions addressed uncertainty?
- How did state and society in Central Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union address uncertainty in the past?
- How are narratives of uncertainty present and/or absent in the post-socialist states?
- How have crises in the West affected a Central Eastern Europe once directed towards European integration? What comes after 'post-socialist'?
- If the global economy is, indeed, experiencing Secular Stagnation—a prolonged period in which satisfactory economic growth can only be achieved by unsustainable financial conditions—what impact might this have for the two regions?
- What do forces, such as Illiberal Democracy in Hungary and traditional conservatism in Poland, mean for societies and cross-border projects in the regions?



- How can we discuss uncertainty in the context of global movements of people (including intra-EU migration, East-West migration, refugees)?
- In the present circumstances, what role do influential external entities, for example the United States, China, and regional organisations like the G8 and the BRICS, have for Central Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union?

We look forward to submissions from across academic disciplines: historical, cultural, political, economic, social, linguistic, and inter-disciplinary and beyond.

This conference is an opportunity for postgraduate students and early career researchers to present their research to a broad audience and to network with others who study Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union from different perspectives.

The conference committee invites paper proposals and fully formed panels. To register, please fill out the online form at: <http://tinyurl.com/sseespgc2018>. Proposals should be no more than 300 words. **The call for papers application deadline is 24 November 2017.** The language of the conference is English. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes. **Successful applicants will be notified on or around 10 December 2017.**

UCL SSEES can provide non-UK based applicants with Invitation Letters for visas. Some travel expenses may be covered for applicants, but please seek alternate sources of funding beforehand. For more information on research at SSEES please visit: www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/research.

For any other questions, please email the organisers at sseespgc2018@gmail.com.