

Global Easts

GLOBAL EASTS

FIELDWORK DRIVEN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

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What Are the Global Easts?

The term Global Easts refers to countries and societies that do not fit neatly into the familiar binary of the Global North and the Global South. Since the Cold War, this binary has shaped how global difference is imagined, yet it obscures regions that occupy an in-between, interstitial, and ambivalent position. Marked by a dual positionality—simultaneously marginalized and privileged, peripheral and central—the Global Easts carry the legacies of multiple empires while often aspiring to Western models and producing their own visions of modernity. Their histories show that understanding the modern world requires engaging with societies that stand outside the spotlight of Euro-American narratives.

Global Easts Centre



The Global Easts Centre is a pioneering hub for research and teaching on societies situated between the Global North and the Global South, with a particular focus on **Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia**. Placing fieldwork-driven anthropology at its core, the Centre integrates empirical research with innovative theoretical reflection.

Our approach is distinctive: grounded in fieldwork, multilingual, and committed to understanding the ambivalent positionality of the Global Easts - regions where **diverse traditions, religions, languages, and identities intersect**. The Centre expands long-standing initiatives such as onsite workshops, online seminars, international summer schools, and research fellowships, creating a dynamic platform for global scholarly exchange.

MA in Global Easts Studies
Coming soon

The MA in Global Easts Studies is an **interdisciplinary, research-driven program** that blends social theory/anthropology, geopolitics and history with hands-on ethnographic fieldwork. Students work with key **analytical frameworks** while developing **practical skills through field research** conducted in diverse “East” societies. All courses are taught in **English**, supported by training in selected Global Easts languages to prepare students for on-site research.

The program fosters critical thinking and equips students to address complex questions arising in societies situated between the Global North and the Global South. Alongside core courses on political, social, economic, and cultural transformations in the Global Easts, students can choose from a wide range of anthropological electives that build both **regional specialization and methodological expertise**.

Genealogy of Easts Research

Timeline of Easts Research at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology:

- since 1935 – research in **Poland**
- 1968–1974 – first fieldwork in **Mongolia**
- 1989–2019 – field research (students and staff) in **Lithuania, Belarus, Latvia, Russia** (Kaluga, Kaliningrad Oblast), **Estonia, Ukraine, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia**, and **Georgia**
- 1991–2002 – long-term fieldwork in **Lithuania**
- since 1997 – long-term fieldwork in **Ukraine**
- 1993–2020 – long-term fieldwork in **Belarus**
- 1993–2018 – long-term fieldwork in **Siberia**: Altai, Tuva, Khakassia, Yakutia
- 2004–2021 – fieldwork in the **North Caucasus**: Dagestan, Chechnya
- 2011–2018 – renewed fieldwork in **Mongolia** and **Central Asia**
- 2025 – ongoing research in **Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldova**, and **Central Asia**

Current Easts Research Projects

Memories of Soviet Repressions in Post-Multi-Colonial Post-Soviet Spaces

Principal Investigator: Zuzanna Bogumi?

Project duration: 2020-2024 (PAN) 2024-2027 (UW)

Funding: National Science Centre (NCN), OPUS 20 (Grant No. 2020/39/B/HS6/02809)

[Project Website](#) [2]



The project aims to examine how Soviet repressions are remembered in post-multi-colonial, post-Soviet spaces and in countries that were formerly dependent on the Soviet Union. It assumes that these regions are characterized by the coexistence of diverse cultural, religious, discursive, and aesthetic patterns of memory, where different memory policies are enacted and various religious denominations shape collective memories. Therefore, the project's hypothesis suggests that the memory of Soviet repressions is not monolithic or homogeneous, but rather consists of multiple facets, dimensions, and textures. The project seeks to describe this heterogeneous nature of memories of Soviet repressions and determine what the heritage of these repressions in post-Soviet spaces is.

Analysis of Memorial Museums of Soviet Repressions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Principal Investigator: **Margaret Comer**

Project duration: 2025

Funding: IDUB University of Warsaw, Q Centre Grant (No. 12/2025)



This funding was awarded to support fieldwork in preparation of a grant application (48 months' duration) for the National Science Centre (NCN)'s OPUS 30 call for applications. After completing more than a month of fieldwork in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, I needed to conduct additional fieldwork in Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Poland, in order to prove the feasibility and decide the research questions and parameters of the future OPUS grant. This fieldwork substantially and critically broadened the horizons of current research on heritage and memory of Soviet repressions, leading the field away from overly broad models of "post-Soviet" memorialization and theories of "dark heritage" that hinge on a narrow perspective of trauma, traumatic memory, and working through the difficult past. Some of the symbols, imagery, and language used in Kazakh and Kyrgyz memorial museums would be highly controversial (in some cases, illegal) to display in Poland and the Baltic states, so we aimed to discern the exact tessellations and fault lines between and among these sites. The co-investigator and/or I visited 28 sites in the Baltic states and Poland, using a combination of

participant-ethnographic techniques and critical discourse analysis suitable for museum studies. As feasible, we also conducted semi-structured interviews with museum curators and other management stakeholders.

Living in the shadows of Empire: Affective Politics and Russian Infra-Imperialism in the Borderlands

Principal Investigator: [Iwona Kaliszewska](#) [3]

Project duration: 2025

Funding: IDUB University of Warsaw, Q Centre Grant (No. 11/2025)



The project examines how Russia maintains influence in borderland regions through emotions, memory, senses of belonging, and alternative social communities. It introduces the concept of affective infra-imperialism to describe informal forms of imperial power operating beyond official state structures. Based on ethnographic research conducted in the borderlands of Lithuania and Moldova, the project develops new tools for studying Russian soft power and the emotional dimensions of geopolitics.

Ukraine's War Plant Landscapes. Resilience, Resourcefulness, Solastalgia and Nation Building Discourses

Principal Investigator: **Iwa Kołodziejaska**

Project duration: 2025-2028

Funding: National Science Centre (NCN), OPUS 27 (Grant No. 2024/53/B/HS3/03571)



The project investigates human–plant relations in the context of the war in Ukraine, examining how environmental destruction shapes experiences of loss, social resilience, and survival strategies. Particular attention is paid to solastalgia, everyday practices involving plants, and the role of nature in nation-building discourses. Drawing on ethnographic research, the project explores how war transforms relationships between people, landscapes, and other-than-human participants in social life.

Global Easts Seminars



Aliaksei Kazharski and Andrey Makarychev | 9

June, 2026

"Eastern Europe" and War. A New Kindapping?

What have been the effects of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)? How have countries in the region positioned themselves vis-à-vis the war, and how are they (re)defining their regional identities and geopolitical belonging?

These are the questions explored by the contributors to this volume, whose chapters examine how these transformations are being understood, debated, and contested across the region. During the seminar, the editors, Aliaksei Kazharski and Andrey Makarychev, will reflect on how local post-2022 discourses and perspectives capture the region in all its complexity and diversity.

Global Easts Events

Georgia in Turbulent Times | Apr 24, 2026

The international conference "*Georgia in Turbulent Times: Political Developments and the Future of Knowledge Production*" was organized by the Global Easts Centre and Studies at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. The event, held in a hybrid format, brought together invited international guests and a large audience, participating both in person and online.

Na skróty

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The conference focused on the current political situation in Georgia and reflected on the condition of academic research in a country facing increasing pressures and restrictions, particularly in the field of anthropology and, more broadly, the social sciences. Presentations and discussions addressed, among other topics, social protests, legislative changes affecting university autonomy, and tensions surrounding international academic collaboration.

Participants agreed that the developments unfolding in Georgia extend beyond the national context. Situated at the intersection of European and Russian spheres of influence, the country constitutes an important laboratory of regional and global transformations, particularly in the context of the so-called Global Easts.





Beyond Eurocentric Memory Models Workshop | Dec 10, 2025

An international workshop entitled “Beyond Eurocentric Memory Models: Political Repression and Remembrance in Mongolia” brought together scholars from Mongolia, Poland, and the United States to engage in an in-depth discussion on the history, meanings, and long-term impact of memories of political repression in Mongolia, with particular attention to the religious and Buddhist dimensions of these memory processes. The event was held both onsite and online.

[Workshop Program and Book of Abstracts](#) [4]

The workshop was organized with the financial support of the Warsaw Centre for Global History, the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw, and the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. It was held within the frameworks of the Marian Małowski Seminar and the Postcolonial Perspectives – Postdependence Entanglements Seminar Series.





Team and Contact

Coordinators:

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ZUZANNA BOGUMIŁ is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Warsaw. She specializes in memory studies, museum studies and anthropology of religion, as well as secular and orthodox memories of Soviet repressions in Russia. Her publications include: *Gulag Memories: The Rediscovery and Commemoration of Russia's Repressive Past* (2018), *More than Alive: The Dead, Orthodoxy and Remembrance in Post-Soviet Russia* (with Tatiana Voronina, 2023), *Memory and Religion from a Postsecular Perspective* (with Yuliya Yurchuk, 2022), *Towards Postsecular Memory Studies* (with Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska, forthcoming).

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IWONA KALISZEWSKA is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Warsaw. Her research focuses on intersections among Islam, state and anti-state violence, and, more recently on war and humanitarian crisis. Iwona has been conducting research projects in Dagestan and Chechnya since 2004 and, lately in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands. Her most recent book, *For Putin and for Sharia. Dagestani Muslims and the Islamic State*, has recently been published by Cornell University Press.

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Researchers:



MARGARET COMER is Research Assistant on the NCN-funded project "Memories of Soviet Repressions in Post-Multi-Colonial Post-Soviet Spaces" (grant no. 501-D131-66-0006664), Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. Her research focuses on the heritage of mass repression, Soviet and post-Soviet memorialization and heritagization, Holocaust memorialization and heritagization, grievability and memory, and contested memory. Her publications include "Portraying Perpetration, Victimhood, and Implication at Sites of Soviet Repression in Moscow," *Slavic and East European Journal* (2023) 67, no. 3: 303-323 (part of a special forum coedited by herself and Eneken Laanes); and "Lubyanka: Dissonant Memories of Violence in the Heart of Moscow," *Memory Studies* (2023) 16, no. 3: 561-575.

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IWA KOŁODZIEJSKA, PhD, is a cultural anthropologist and biologist. She is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. In 2024, she was awarded a research grant from the National Science Centre, Poland, for the project *Ukraine's War Plant Landscapes: Resilience, Resourcefulness, Solastalgia, and Nation-Building Discourses*. Her research focuses on more-than-human anthropology, particularly human-plant relations, knowledge production, and medical anthropology, with a special interest in self-medication across diverse medical landscapes. She has conducted fieldwork in Ukraine, Dagestan, Romania, and Poland. Since 2014, she has collaborated with artists on artistic research projects and exhibitions, primarily at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.

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Adres URL źródła: <https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/global-easts>

Odniesienia

- [1] https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/sites/default/files/global_east_broszura_final_12_06_26.pdf
- [2] <https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/Soviet-Memories>
- [3] <https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/instytut/ludzie/pracownicy/iwona-kaliszewska>
- [4] <https://etnologia.uw.edu.pl/beyond-eurocentric>