“Ringing out on a dark night’: The Voice of the People as the Voice of God in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Russia”

Gabriella Safran
Stanford University
February 14, 2018, 5:30-7:00
Building 50, Room 51A

Russian right- and left-wing populisms arose in the 1840s, among thinkers who drew attention to the voice of “the people” and to their own remarkable ability to hear, record, and amplify it. This paper considers Russia’s internationally influential populist discourse from a sound studies perspective, reflecting on the ways that the voices of lower-class people were situated in a soundscape containing bells, shots, silence, storms, and other aural phenomena that conveyed both secular and transcendent messages.

Gabriella Safran, a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Stanford, is also the Eva Chernov Lokey Professor in Jewish Studies. An expert on Russian and Yiddish literatures, she is working on two book projects: a sound studies analysis of mid-nineteenth-century Russian Populist discourse, focusing on scenes of interclass listening, and a trans-national prehistory of the Jewish joke.

Cultures, Minds and Medicines

The Cultures, Minds and Medicines workshop series meets four to five times each term on Wednesdays from 5:30-7 for dinner and talks about culture and healing. We hear from artists, scientists, ethnographers, literature scholars and more, with the goal of understanding not only what they say, but also what counts as data for them and how they understand their task in communicating to their primary audience. Talks take place in Anthropology, Building 50, room 51A (the conference room).

The workshop is associated with a certificate program for graduate students. Students must attend the biweekly workshops in Cultures, Minds and Medicines over the course of a year, and take at least one relevant course outside of their degree-granting program, as approved by the faculty certificate committee. In most cases, non-anthropologists should enroll in a graduate level anthropology course, and anthropologists should enroll in a course in medicine, psychology or some other discipline.

For students enrolled in the class each quarter, the requirement is to attend the workshops.

Winter 2018 Seminars:
Feb. 28: Sarah Iles Johnston (The Ohio State University)