

# Modern Languages & Literatures Bellini Colloquium

## "Commemorating "Hot" Wars on Soviet Screens: Epic Film as a tool of Hard and Soft Power during the Cold War"

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Studies**

**Thursday, October 30, 3:30, Washington Hall 315**

During the Cold War the USSR and the US imagined their ideological confrontation as a race. On the global film market, the USSR tried to compete with Hollywood films by producing big budget pictures that would match Hollywood blockbusters in technology, entertainment appeal, and cultural authority. These Soviet "prestige productions" pursued several, at times, conflicting goals. While Soviet cultural producers wanted these prestige films to generate profit, their primary agenda was to integrate Soviet film industry into global film markets and to "sell" Soviet socialism as a viable alternative to market capitalism. During the Cold War Soviet studios invested the greatest amount of resources into two film projects: an adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and a WWII epic initially titled *Liberation of Europe*.

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of discourse, the talk examines the history of these epic films' production and distribution as the process of articulating a distinct cinematic genre, and this genre's importance in the present day Russian film production.

