

FACULTY PRESENTATIONS
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31
11:00 A.M – 12:00 P.M.

“Democracy, Russian-Style: Grassroots Politics after Communism.”
Laura A. Henry, Assistant Professor of Government

In 1991, the Soviet Union’s Communist Party-dominated regime collapsed and the USSR disintegrated into fifteen independent states. Scholars and pundits heralded the end of totalitarianism and predicted a new era of democratic politics in Russia. Almost twenty years after “the West won the Cold War,” however, Russia appears to be sliding into authoritarianism. How do average Russians experience these political changes? Do they demand democratic politics? What political issues inspire Russians to organize and protest state actions? What does their behavior tell us about the future trajectory of Russian politics? This talk examines recent citizen activism in Russia to address these questions.

Laura A. Henry is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government and Legal Studies. Her research focuses on postcommunist civil societies and the changing relationship between citizens and the state in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. She holds a B.A. in political science and history from Wellesley College and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Location: Room 315, Searles Science Building.

“Approaching the Big Picture Problem: Photographs from the Big Easy and Beyond.”
Michael J. Kolster, Associate Professor of Art

Looking around has its rewards. Indeed, we define ourselves by how we respond to the vast array of constantly changing circumstances that comprise our lives. At any given point can we be sure that we are seeing clearly the world around us? We all rely on previous experience to process and categorize new encounters with the world, yet how can we keep yesterday’s assumptions from obscuring new ways of seeing the here and now?

This talk will present two long-term photographic projects that explore how we perceive change and form memories over time. One group of photographs examines the rebuilding of New Orleans since its flooding in 2005 and the other catalogues more than 2700 photographs I have taken over as many days.

Michael Kolster is an Associate Professor of Art and teaches photography. His photographs are in the permanent collection of the George Eastman House and will appear in the upcoming issue of *Consilience - The Journal of Sustainable Development* published through Columbia University. He holds a B.A. in American Studies from Williams College and a MFA in photography from the Massachusetts College of Art.

Location: Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center.
