

Summer school

## Re-writing the Empire: Eastern European Postimperial Memories in Transregional Perspective

Moise Palace Cres, 19 – 24 July 2025

Organizers:

Magdalena Marija Meašić, University of Rijeka

Thomas Fritz Maier, University of Basel

Program committee:

Dr. Slaven Crnić, University of Rijeka

Dr. Ivan Flis, University of Rijeka

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moise:  
palace

UNIRI

The summer school “Re-writing the Empire: Eastern European Postimperial Memories in Transregional Perspective” aims to contribute to the discussion of memory discourses and their potency in the context of Eastern Europe’s historical transitions in the 20th and 21st centuries. We focus in particular on the role that medial and cultural imaginaries of Eastern Europe’s (post-)imperial pasts, histories, and memories play in the construction of identities—be they political, cultural, or individual. Specifically, the summer school seeks to explore the nature of connections to the imperial past and the role of imperial relics—whether persons, values, practices, or objects—in shaping contemporary collective and personal narratives. We consider postimperial memory not as a phenomenon limited to the creation of relatively homogeneous national identities, but as one that unites Eastern Europe on a transregional and transcultural level.

The summer school, bringing together young scholars and experts in the field, will focus on in-depth discussion of previously submitted work-in-progress in small thematic workshop groups. In addition, the program includes three keynote lectures and a practical workshop.

We warmly welcome all participants to what promises to be a stimulating and collaborative environment for critical reflection and exchange. We look forward to engaging discussions and fruitful connections throughout the week!

## Program

### Day 1, 19.07.

Meeting in Zagreb at the tourist bus station near the Main Railway Station (Ulica Grgura Ninskog, south side of Trg Ante Starčevića; [Google Maps link](#)) at 12:45. Departing at 13:00.

Welcome dinner at 19:00 in the restaurant Capitano (address: Cons 11; [Google Maps Link](#))

### Day 2, 20.07.

9:15 – 9:30	Brief Welcome Note	
9:30 – 11:00	<b>Keynote Lecture</b>  Boris Noordenbos, University of Amsterdam  “The Anti-Imperialist Empire: Cultural Memory, Digital Diplomacy, and the Kremlin’s Self-Proclaimed Battle Against Western Hegemony”	
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Coffee Break</b>  Coffee and Refreshments at Café Tamaris 2 (address: Creskog statuta 31; <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a> )	
11:30 – 13:00	<b>Groupwork Panel 1</b>  Thomas Fritz Maier, Basel  “A new map for everything: peripheral cartographies and spaces of memory in contemporary Russian literature”  Moderator: Jeremy Walton  Participants: Vladislav, Sofija, Eva, Goran, Matea, Kevin	<b>Groupwork Panel 2</b>  Indira Anna Hajnács, Leipzig  “Resurging the “Eastern Roots”: The Intersection of Popular Music, Nationalism, and Identity in Hungary”  Moderator: Magdalena M. Meašić  Participants: Adi, Ekaterina, Hanna, Adna, Lizaveta, Gustav
13:00 – 15:00	<b>Lunch</b>	

	Restaurant Porta Bragadina (address: Šetalište 20. travnja 1; <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a> )	
15:00 – 16:30	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 3</b></p> <p>Adi Tufek, Rijeka</p> <p>“Let Me Explain: The Mnemonic Functions of Authorial Paratexts in Literature”</p> <p>Moderator: Boris Noordenbos</p> <p>Participants: Adna, Matea, Hanna, Vladislav, Sofija, Kevin</p>	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 4</b></p> <p>Lizaveta Lysenka, Bonn</p> <p>“Soviet, Imperial, Western or Belarusian: Entanglements of Meaning in Belarusian Pop Music before and after 1991”</p> <p>Moderator: Magdalena M. Meašić</p> <p>Participants: Ekaterina, Indira, Goran, Gustav, Thomas, Eva</p>
19:00	<p><b>Dinner</b></p> <p>Restaurant Porta Bragadina (address: Šetalište 20. travnja 1, Cres; <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a>)</p>	

### Day 3, 21.07.

9:30 – 11:00	<p><b>Keynote Lecture</b></p> <p>Jeremy Walton, University of Rijeka</p> <p>“A Ban, a burg, and a bell: On postimperial, interimperial persons, places, and things”</p>	
11:00 – 11:30	<p><b>Coffee Break</b></p> <p>Coffee and Refreshments at Café Tamaris 2 (<a href="#">Google Maps Link</a>)</p>	
11:30 – 13:00	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 5</b></p> <p>Matea Magdić, Rijeka</p>	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 6</b></p> <p>Sofija Todorović, Belgrade</p>

	<p>"Political Myths in Literature: Theories, Narratives, and Influence"</p> <p>Moderator: Boris Noordenbos</p> <p>Participants: Vladislav, Goran, Lizaveta, Adi, Ekaterina, Gustav</p>	<p>"The Paradox of the Early 20th Century Post-imperial Disintegration in Modernist South Slavic Prose"</p> <p>Moderator: Anna Hodel</p> <p>Participants: Eva, Thomas, Kevin, Indira, Hanna, Adna</p>
13:00 – 15:00	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p>Restaurant Porta Bragadina (<a href="#">Google Maps Link</a>)</p>	
15:00 – 16:30	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 7</b></p> <p>Ekaterina Ganskaya, Turin</p> <p>"Z-songs: Analysing the Rise of Pro-War Music in Russia after February 24"</p> <p>Moderator: Boris Noordenbos</p> <p>Participants: Indira, Adi, Hanna, Lizaveta, Matea, Gustav</p>	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 8</b></p> <p>Eva Hückmann, Potsdam</p> <p>"Identities in Jewish Testimonial Literature of Soviet Forced Migration in WWII"</p> <p>Moderator: Jeremy Walton</p> <p>Participants: Thomas, Vladislav, Sofija, Kevin, Adna, Goran</p>
19:00	<p><b>Dinner</b></p> <p>Restaurant Porta Bragadina (<a href="#">Google Maps Link</a>)</p>	

Day 4, 22.07.

9:30 – 11:00	<p><b>Keynote Lecture</b></p> <p>Anna Hodel, University of Basel</p> <p>“Postcolonial Postfeminist Performative Art in the Postsocialist Caucasus”</p>	
11:00 – 11:30	<p><b>Coffee Break</b></p> <p>Coffee and Refreshments at Café Tamaris 2 (<a href="#">Google Maps Link</a>)</p>	
11:30 – 13:00	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 9</b></p> <p>Vladislav Staf, New Sorbonne U</p> <p>“Siberia’ narratives: from katorga and political exile in the Russian Empire to the Gulag in the USSR”</p> <p>Moderator: Thomas Fritz Maier</p> <p>Participants: Goran, Gustav, Eva, Kevin, Adi, Ekaterina</p>	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 10</b></p> <p>Adna Ruhotina, Basel</p> <p>“Reading from at least two directions: Hybrid identities and narrative experiments in contemporary Swiss literature and film”</p> <p>Moderator: Slaven Crnić</p> <p>Participants: Matea, Lizaveta, Indira, Hanna, Sofija</p>
13:00 – 15:00	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p>Restaurant Porta Bragadina (<a href="#">Google Maps Link</a>)</p>	
15:00 – 16:30	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 11</b></p> <p>Goran Stanić, Rijeka</p> <p>“Colonial Catholicism in Bosnia and Herzegovina? The Case of Archbishop Josip Stadler”</p> <p>Moderator: Ivan Flis</p>	<p><b>Groupwork Panel 12</b></p> <p>Hanna Horn, Greifswald</p> <p>“Object-oriented narrativizations of self in digital life writing from Belarus. On examples of Tatsiana Zamirovskaya and Valzhyna Mort”</p> <p>Moderator: Anna Hodel</p>

	Participants: Lizaveta, Adna, Vladislav, Gustav, Kevin, Thomas	Participants: Indira, Adi, Ekaterina, Sofija, Eva, Matea
19:00	<b>Dinner</b>  Restaurant Porta Bragadina ( <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a> )	

### Day 5, 23.07.

9:30 – 11:00	<b>Workshop</b>  Ivan Flis and Slaven Crnić, University of Rijeka  "Navigating Academia in Contentious Times"	
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Coffee Break</b>  Coffee and Refreshments at Café Tamaris 2 ( <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a> )	
11:30 – 13:00	<b>Workshop (continuation)</b>  Ivan Flis and Slaven Crnić, University of Rijeka  "Navigating Academia in Contentious Times"	
13:00 – 15:00	<b>Lunch</b>  Restaurant Porta Bragadina ( <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a> )	
15:00 – 16:30	<b>Groupwork Panel 13</b>  Kevin Kenjar, Rijeka  "The Street Corner That Started the 20th Century"	<b>Groupwork Panel 14</b>  Gustav Lundberg & Magdalena M. Meašić, Rijeka & Södertörn  "Staging Mnemopolitical Theatre: Reinterpreting Kārlis Ulmanis in the Music Drama <i>Vadonis</i> (2009)"

	Moderator: Ivan Flis  Participants: Thomas, Vladislav, Sofija, Eva, Adi, Hanna	Moderator: Slaven Crnić  Participants: Lizaveta, Matea, Adna, Goran, Indira, Ekaterina
19:00	Summer School Closing  Dinner at Restaurant Capitano ( <a href="#">Google Maps Link</a> ) and Afterparty	

Day 6, 24.7.

Meeting in front of the Moise Palace by 7:15 at the latest and departing from the parking lot next to the INA gas station in the town center ([Google Maps link](#)) at 7:30.



## Abstracts of Key Note Lectures and Workshop

Boris Noordenbos, University of Amsterdam

### **"The Anti-Imperialist Empire: Cultural Memory, Digital Diplomacy, and the Kremlin's Self-Proclaimed Battle Against Western Hegemony"**

This paper investigates how the Russian regime leverages a global "digital diplomacy" strategy to justify its full-scale military invasion of Ukraine by framing it as part of a battle against Western "imperialism" and "colonialism." On multilingual social media platforms operated by Russian embassies and ministries, Russian officialdom tells a story that treads a thin line between socio-economic critique and conspiratorial insinuation. In this narrative, Russia is on the one hand a victim of Western "neo-imperialism" – characterized by Western-led interventionism, economic extractivism, and even furtive attempts at global population control. On the other hand, Russia is a self-proclaimed pioneer of a new, "multipolar" international order that will challenge Western hegemony in the new future. Drawing on a substantial dataset from Russian embassy accounts on Twitter/X, Telegram, and Facebook, this paper explores how this "strategic narrative" reactivates cultural memories of Soviet-era anti-imperialism to garner global support for Russia's neo-imperialist war against Ukraine.

The analysis reveals how Russian embassies have recently launched an expansive, coordinated network to disseminate this story globally. First, through quantitative and qualitative analysis, the paper traces how the narrative strategically weaponizes collective memories of Cold War-era anti-imperialist alliances, tailoring its messages to the affordances of specific online platforms while also targeting diverse audiences in both the Global South and the West. Second, it explores the paradoxical interplay between these "anti-imperialist" narratives and the neo-imperialist messianism and revanchism that have increasingly come to define the Putin era. By investigating the complex entanglements between (post)socialism and (post)imperialism, the paper raises critical questions about the political instrumentalization of post-imperial memory and anti-imperialist discourse, both in post-socialist contemporary Europe and beyond.

Jeremy Walton, University of Rijeka

**"A Ban, a burg, and a bell: On postimperial, interimperial persons, places, and things"**

The concept of postempire—the uncanny relationship between the present and multiple imperial pasts—entails a focus on the specific persons, places, and things that convey imperial legacies and inspire postimperial collective memories in the present. In this lecture, I first offer a general model for the study of postempire with an emphasis on postimperial uncanniness in interimperial sites. I then explore the potency of postimperial persons, postimperial places and postimperial things on the basis of three specific, evocative cases. My examples are each to ambivalent interimperial legacies of the Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov Empires. First, I consider the Croatian Ban Josip Jelačić as a postimperial, interimperial person—a loyal servant of Vienna during the Revolution of 1848 whose nationalization as an icon of Croatian nationalism belies the frontier context of the Habsburg-Ottoman *Militärgrenze* that shaped his life and legacy. Following this, I examine Istanbul's Polonezköy (Adampol) as a peculiar postimperial, interimperial place. Founded on the outskirts of Ottoman Istanbul in 1842 by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, the burg sheltered Polish émigrés who fled Romanov domains after both the November Uprising of 1830-1831 and, later, the January Uprising of 1863-1864. Today, it remains home to a dwindling Polish-Turkish community, who navigate dilemmas of postimperial identity, citizenship, and placemaking. Finally, I unravel the provocative history of Vienna's Pummerin, a giant bell housed in the north tower of Stephansdom, which "booms" once a year to ring in the new year. Despite its central location in both Vienna and Austria at large, the bell is a relic of interimperial warfare, ostensibly forged from Ottoman cannonballs abandoned after the second Siege of Vienna in 1683. In the case of the Ban, the burg, and the bell alike, interimperial pasts haunt the postimperial present in uncanny ways.

Anna Hodel, University of Basel

### **"Postcolonial Postfeminist Performative Art in the Postsocialist Caucasus"**

The interconnectedness and potential mutual potentiation of different "post"-conditions will be explored in this paper by examining contemporary feminist and queer performative artists from the post-Soviet countries of the Caucasus. The connection between post-imperial/post-colonial and post-socialist paradigms appears once again in a new light when considering the complex developments of feminist and queer movements, where both the socialist and the post-socialist positions are subject to not only diachronic but also synchronic imperialisms. This raises the following questions: How do contemporary artists from the Caucasus position themselves in this field? How do they draw on non-Western lines of feminism and reshape them, for example by taking up lines from the socialist past without automatically adopting Moscow imperialism? Can a specific post-socialist, post-colonial "postfeminism" be recognized in these works, a position that finds a way to deal with the intersectional coloniality of such knowledge and that can establish epistemic justice both artistically and socio-politically? The paper scrutinizes artist and activist groups such as the Yerevan Queering Collective or Project Fungus (Tbilisi), which highlight specific work on Eastern European imperial memory and shed light on the role of not only narrative but also performative art in this context by negotiating practices of disidentification, subversion and solidarity in multilateral and border-crossing performances.

Ivan Flis and Slaven Crnić, University of Rijeka

### **"Navigating Academia in Contentious Times"**

At a time of political polarization, illiberalism, and economic uncertainty, academics face increasingly complex challenges in maintaining intellectual integrity, fostering inclusive dialogue, and conducting meaningful research. From Viktor Orbán's expulsion of Central European University from Hungary to Donald Trump's crackdown on politically non-compliant higher education institutions, the last decade has witnessed an unprecedented wave of anti-intellectual policies that aimed at limiting or annulling altogether critical inquiry. On the one hand, the humanities and social sciences in particular have proven to be prime targets of the nascent illiberal state's attacks, with academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and critical theory increasingly subject to authoritarian encroachment. On the other hand, student-led protests against censorship and government control, such as the ongoing civil unrest in Serbia, demonstrate the vital political importance and unextinguished transformative potential of student political subjectivity.

Prompted by Kant's dictum that the "public use of one's reason must always be free," the workshop Navigating Academia in Contentious Times will explore the prospects of and challenges for individual and collective academic sustainability and well-being in the face of increasing external and internal pressures. In particular, through group work and discussion, the workshop will examine the ways in which contemporary academia approaches politically fraught objects of inquiry and navigates a growing number of its own problems in the context of neoliberal capitalism (precarity, student debt, and publishing marketplace).

## Technical information

### 1. TRAVELLING TO CRES

For those joining our shuttle bus on Friday, July 19, we'll meet in Zagreb at the tourist bus station near the Main Railway Station (Ulica Grgura Ninskog, south side of Trg Ante Starčevića — [Google Maps link](#)) at 12:45 and depart around 13:00.

We'll leave Cres on Wednesday, July 24 at 7:30, from the parking lot next to the INA gas station in the town center ([Google Maps link](#)). We'll walk there together after meeting in front of the Moise Palace by 7:15 at the latest.

In case you are organising your travel to Cres on your own, here are some helpful tips on how to reach Cres.

#### Airport connections

Try looking up flights connecting you to nearest airports, which you will find listed below by country and proximity, with important links included:

1. **Rijeka** International Airport (48 km, Croatia):  
LOCATION: Hamec 1, 51513, Omišalj, INFORMATION: <https://rijeka-airport.hr/>
2. **Pula** Airport (90 km, Croatia):  
LOCATION: Ližnjan, Valtursko polje 210, 52100, Pula, INFORMATION: <https://airport-pula.hr/en/>
3. **Zagreb** International Airport Franjo Tuđman (209 km, Croatia):  
LOCATION: Ul. Rudolfa Fizira 21, 10410, Velika Gorica, INFORMATION: <https://www.zagreb-airport.hr/en>
4. **Trieste** International Airport – Ronchi (166 km, Italy):  
LOCATION: Via Aquileia, 46, 34077 Ronchi dei Legionari GO, INFORMATION: <https://triesteairport.it/en/airport/>
5. **Venice** Marco Polo International Airport (277 km, Italy):  
LOCATION: Viale Galileo Galilei, 30, 30173 Venezia VE, INFORMATION: <https://www.veneziaairport.it/en/>
6. **Ljubljana** International Airport – Letališče Jožeta Pučnika (204 km, Slovenia):  
LOCATION: Zgornji Brnik 130a, 4210 Brnik, INFORMATION: <https://www.lju-airport.si/en/>

All the airport links listed above provide additional links and search engines for available **rent-a-car** agencies, **shuttle** bus and **taxi** services.

**Bus transport** to Cres island and Cres town within Croatia (from Zagreb or Rijeka main bus terminals) can be booked online using the **Arriva** bus company web page search: <https://www.arriva.com.hr/en-us/home> This bus usually drives to and from Cres town **once to twice a day**.

**Going by car**, Cres island is reachable from mainland roads, arriving from two directions connected to ferry ports:

- From the **west**, Istrian peninsula side, by **D100** local road and then using the ferry connection **Brestova** (Istra) – **Porozina** (Cres)
- From the **east**, by **E65/D102** highway from Zagreb to Krk Island bridge, and then taking the ferry connection **Valbiska** (Krk) – **Merag** (Cres)

**Ferry** schedules and online ticket bookings are available at the **Jadrolinija** company webpage: <https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/search-buy-ticket>

Booking ferry **tickets** in advance is recommended to avoid waiting time in the high tourist season – showing the **barcode** from your mobile phones (you will receive them on email) will be sufficient for ferry staff to let you through. To avoid long car queues, check the Google Maps **live traffic map layer** for queue progress (red line can sometimes display all the way up to the main road turn). In case you get stuck in the queue and **miss** the ferry you booked in advance, don't worry, they will simply let you take the **next available** ferry without problems, as this is a common daily situation at these local ferry ports.

Please use the links below to check ferry times and combine them with your car trip itineraries:

- going to Cres from Krk island (**Valbiska** - **Merag**):  
[https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/travel/valbiska\\_krk - merag\\_cres](https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/travel/valbiska_krk_-_merag_cres)  
SCHEDULE:  
<https://www.jadrolinija.hr/download/35bd65ba2ab19125099596b7dfeed53a>
- going from the Istrian side (**Brestova** - **Porozina**):  
[https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/travel/brestova - porozina\\_cres](https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/travel/brestova_-_porozina_cres)  
SCHEDULE:  
<https://www.jadrolinija.hr/download/84ed0f37e01d202029ea71b86f3e4c60>

Of course, there is also an option of **passenger ferry** connecting **Rijeka and Cres**. The tickets can be bought on the same website (make sure to click on the **Cres (Cres)** option in case you want to travel by passenger ferry, **not Merag (Cres)**):

- going from Rijeka to Cres by passenger ferry (Rijeka - Cres (Cres))  
[https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/travel/mali\\_losinj - ilovik - susak - unije -  
\\_martinscica - cres - rijeka](https://www.jadrolinija.hr/en/travel/mali_losinj_-_ilovik_-_susak_-_unije_-_martinscica_-_cres_-_rijeka)

SCHEDULE:

<https://www.jadrolinija.hr/download/352c7f9687cb45db5a9bd292261febe4>

## 2. ACCOMMODATION AND VENUE

Workshop venue will be in Moise Palace, as well as the accommodation in twin rooms.

\*Moise Palace: <https://uniri.hr/en/university-and-community/palace-moise/>

ADDRESS: Zagrad 6, 51557, Cres (NAVIGATION:  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/k7yMbkVTCmVFQJ3a6> )

PHONE: (+385) 95 5176019 – Ms. Andreja Malovoz (host)

E-MAIL: [palacamoise@uniri.hr](mailto:palacamoise@uniri.hr) ; [andreja.malovoz@uniri.hr](mailto:andreja.malovoz@uniri.hr)

## 3. MEALS AND COFFEE BREAKS

Lunch and dinner will be covered by organizers in restaurants nearby Moise Palace in downtown Cres.

The dinners on the 19.7.2025 and 23.7.2025 will be organized at 19.00 in the restaurant Capitano (address: Cons 11, [Google Maps Link](#)), 2 minutes walking distance from Moise Palace.

All the remaining lunches and dinners between 20.7. and 23.7. (lunches at 13.00 and dinners at 19.00) will be organised in the restaurant Porta Bragadina (Šetalište 20. travnja 1, [Google Maps Link](#)), 4 minutes walking distance from Moise Palace.

In case you want to grab a coffee in the morning or during our 30-minute break, coffee and refreshments will be available at the nearby coffee shop Café Tamaris 2 (Creskog statuta 31, [Google Maps Link](#)). While ordering (no alcohol!) make sure to highlight the fact that you are part of the summer school, then your beverage will be covered by us.

## 4. IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Ambulance **194**

Cres Police Station **192** and +385 (0)51 571 207

Cres Fire Station **193** and +385 (0)51 572 007

National Protection and Rescue Directorate **112**

Search and Rescue at Sea **195**

Cres Health Centre +385 (0)51 571 247

Dental clinic +385 (0)51 572 216

Pharmacy **+385 (0)51 571 243**

Roadside Assistance **+385 1 1987**

Cres Tourist Board +385 (0)51 571 535

<https://visitcres.croatia.hr/en-gb>

Taxi service +385 (0)98 947 5592

Port authority +385 (0)51 571 111