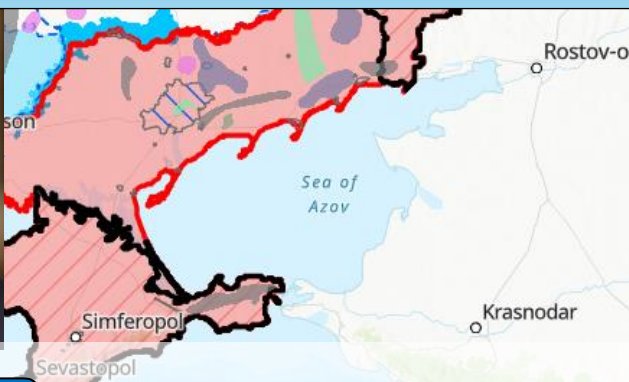
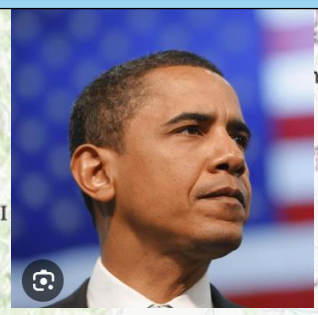


Sophia Institute of International Relations and the Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University Present:

FROM 'GREAT EXPECTATIONS' TO 'COLD WAR REDUX'? RUSSIA AND THE WEST - EN ROUTE TO THE UKRAINE WAR



RUDRA SIL, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 17:30-19:00 (in person only)
SIIR Conference Room (1F, Building #13, Sophia University)



Rudra Sil is Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. His interests encompass Russian studies, comparative labor politics, and the philosophy of social science. He has previously authored, coauthored, or coedited eight books, including *Managing 'Modernity'* (2002), *World Order After Leninism* (2006), *Beyond Paradigms* (2010), and *Advancing Comparative Area Studies* (2025).

The prevailing narrative in the West and Japan about the origins of the Russia-Ukraine war views it as the result of an aggressive, imperialistic policy initiated by Putin, who seeks to rebuild the USSR. Rejecting this narrative, Professor Rudra Sil offers a sober look at the longer-term evolution of Russia's relations with the West since the break-up of the USSR. The talk highlights key events in the past 35 years that produced mistrust and downward spiral in mutual relations. This does not mean that the invasion of Ukraine was justified or the best option for Russia. But it does suggest that the path leading to the war involved many missteps as well as missed 'exit ramps.' Looking ahead, this perspective implies that a negotiated end to the war is possible and desirable - and not a product of some Trump-Putin "bromance" or a case of appeasement reminiscent of the lead-up to World War II. This presentation draws upon Professor Sil's book (in progress), *The Fate of a Former Superpower: Russia's Troubled Search for Relevance in a Post-Cold War World*.



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