



**The University of Texas at Austin**  
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

**Eurasia Policy Forum:  
Contemporary Political Myth and Reality in Eurasia**

**February 12-13, 2026**

*Call for Proposals*

Submissions are now open for the international conference on *Contemporary Political Myth and Reality in Eurasia*. The conference will be held on February 12-13, 2026, at the University of Texas at Austin in Austin, Texas, United States. The conference is hosted by the University's [Center for European Studies](#); [Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies](#); [Center for Women's and Gender Studies](#); [Clements Center for National Security](#); [Department of Government](#); [Department of Religious Studies](#); [Program in Comparative Literature](#); [Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice](#); and [Strauss Center for International Security and Law](#).

Eurasian states face mounting challenges amid growing polarization, gaps between social needs and political responses, and disinformation blurring myth and reality. Eurasian countries face additional pressures from a legacy of authoritarian rule, active conflict and irredentism, and political mobilization of social divisions across the region. Yet Eurasian countries also have unique strengths in navigating these challenges, with strong national identities, robust civic engagement, bursts of democratic progress, and deep cultural traditions.

This conference explores the challenges and opportunities Eurasia faces through the lens of emerging and transforming myths and realities in the region. Academic disciplines have each made progress in understanding the complex dynamics in their area of social, political, legal, or cultural study, yet these lessons are often considered in isolation. Meanwhile, states—and students training to work in those states—must grapple with the intersection of challenges across all of these areas. This conference tackles this by bridging disciplines, academic and policy spheres, and policy and cultural studies to critically examine these pressing issues in Eurasia. Panels will be designed to foster discussion among experts from cultural studies, history, law, linguistics, policymaking, political science, sociology, and other fields.

We welcome proposals on a range of topics related to current political myth and reality in Eurasia, including but not limited to:

**Aspirations, Achievements, and Setbacks in State-Building**

- Nations in progress: creating, recreating, and revitalizing the nation and mobilizing its citizens
- Imperial legacies and ambitions: rhetoric, political agendas, and nostalgia for past glory
- State positions in the world: self-perception, international perception, and political maneuvering
- Democratic consolidation: constitutional design, rights protection, and the legal reorientation from protecting the state to protecting the people
- Democratic backsliding: election manipulation, executive aggrandizement, and the erosion of rights and institutional checks
- Contested spaces: from Transnistria to Donbas, the Arctic to Abkhazia, and spaces in between

### **Myth and Reality Experienced by Individuals and Networks**

- Minorities in nationalizing states: state orientations toward minority groups, migrant and refugee integration, and competing realities of groups in states undergoing political change
- Majority and minority identities: identity creation and maintenance, social cohesion and polarization, language, education, and citizenship
- Participation and abstention: constituent roles in political movements, the national economy, the military service, religious organizations, and other voluntary and compulsory spaces
- Individual relationships to the community and the state: age, class, education, gender, sexual identities, socio-economic status, and other identity traits
- Invented traditions: state invention and propagation of myths through traditions and rituals

### **Memory and Identity**

- National heroes and national identity: narratives of heroism, sacrifice, power, and political and cultural capital
- Nostalgia and glorification of the past: community preservation of historical memory
- Narratives of belonging, abandonment, and ostracism in the community and the state
- Cultural artifacts and their role in promoting national narratives through food, sports, art, music, religion, and other aspects of society
- Violence, victimhood, crisis, trauma, survival, and perseverance
- Gender and sexuality in politics, society, religion, media, and culture

### **Misinformation and Disinformation**

- Misinformation and disinformation: origins, dissemination, and target audiences
- Conspiracy theories as myth and alternative reality: lived experiences, communities, and actors
- Changing political norms: metapolitical activity by fringe groups
- Contested identities: competing myths, sources of truth, intersectionality, and incongruent narratives around national identities
- Propaganda in peace and war

### **Making of Myth and Reality in Varied Spaces**

- Media roles in the construction and promotion of political myth and reality
- Social media: myth and reality in engagement, conversion, and community-building
- Religion and politics: morality and narratives of truth in mobilization and policymaking
- Youth and politics: movements, recruitment, indoctrination, and political participation
- Science, technology, and mythmaking: scientific progress, depersonalization, exploitation, and environmental impact

We invite proposals for fully-formed panels and individual papers on these or similar topics from scholars, policymakers, practitioners, jurists, and others working in varied disciplines and regions of the world. Fully-formed panels must include a panel chair and 3-4 paper presenters; the panel chair may be one of the paper presenters but is not required to be. Individual papers will be organized into thematically similar panels and could potentially be added to fully-formed panels that are not at the maximum participation limit.

To participate, submit your [panel proposal](#) or [paper proposal](#) by **October 15, 2025**. Successful applicants will be notified by **November 15, 2025**, and must confirm their participation by **November 30, 2025**. Each confirmed participant will receive a hotel room for two nights and up to \$500 in other documented travel costs reimbursed after the event.

The working language of the conference will be English. For questions or more information, please contact us at [eurasiapolicyforum@gmail.com](mailto:eurasiapolicyforum@gmail.com). We look forward to welcoming you to the University of Texas at Austin!

Organizing Committee:

Marina Alexandrova, Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Eliza Fisher, Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Ashley Moran, Center for Law and Democracy; Government Department

Alexandra Sukalo, Clements Center for National Security; Strauss Center for International Security and Law

