The current crisis in Ukraine is firmly rooted in the Orange Revolution and in associated Western beliefs that Ukraine could be wrested from no additional costs Russia and included in Western trade and security structures. The tragic outcome reflects more than the West’s shallow understanding of the dangers involved in pushing Russia into a value-based security order. Even more profoundly, it illustrates how poorly social science has grasped the preconditions for implementing profound institutional change via outside agency. Given the uniformly negative experience of a host of different "color revolutions," it may be time to rethink the Western agenda of fixing things.

Stefan Hedlund is Professor and Research Director at the Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden. He has published extensively on matters ranging from the Soviet system to post-Soviet transition and institutional dimensions behind state-market interactions in a modern economy. His most recent monographs are Putin’s Energy Agenda: The Contradictions of Russia’s Resource Wealth (Lynne Rienner, 2014) and Invisible Hands, Russian Experience and Social Science: Approaches to Understanding Systemic Failure (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Thursday, April 23, 2015
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Voesar Conference Room
1957 E St. NW, Suite 412
Please RSVP at http://go.gwu.edu/shedlund

This event is on the record.