Bottom-up Secularism in the Top-down States of Eurasia

with

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The resurgence of religion in the post-Soviet space has been accompanied by heightened appeals for secularism as a social and political order. Most research on secularism in Eurasian contexts -- and indeed, in general -- has focused on the top-down institutional construction of the secular order. Furthermore, scholarship on post-Soviet societies often tends to present social construction as a largely top-down process, this being a legacy of the Soviet context where a state with high ambitions for penetrating and transforming society was at the center of most analyses of social process. John Schoeberlein will explore the ways in which bottom-up processes shape the formation of secularism in post-communist states. Drawing on an ethnographic perspective from field research in Central Asia and the Caucasus, he will make an argument that what might be called "secular sensibilities" of people who inhabit all levels of the social process are a crucial factor in shaping the ways that religion has assumed a new role in social and political processes.

Thursday, March 20, 2014
12:30pm - 2:00pm
Alumni House
1918 F Street NW, Washington DC
Please RSVP at http://go.gwu.edu/schoeberlein
Lunch to be served.