



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

Russian & Slavic Studies

RSSS Guest Lecture Series - Spring 2022

Sponsored by the Department of Russian and Slavic Studies

**Tuesday,
February, 15
5:30 PM (MST)**

Zoom link:

[https://arizona.zoom.us/
j/83730299030](https://arizona.zoom.us/j/83730299030)

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Belarus: From the First Democratic Election of 1994 to the Crisis of 2020 and its Ramifications

The Republic of Belarus became an independent state in August 1991. In 1994, Belarusian citizens elected their first (and so far, only) president, Lukashenko. Within a short period of time, the first democratically elected Belarusian president turned into an authoritarian ruler and brought under his control all three branches of government. This presentation analyzes how Lukashenko, who initially came to power by way of a democratic election, turned into a virtual dictator. It shows that when the state has enough resources to sustain itself, when political and military elites are consolidated around the strongman, and civil society is weak and suppressed or, in case of Belarus, almost non-existent, ordinary people have very little at their disposal to counter the state. The presentation concludes by considering the possible implications of the current situation for the future of Belarus.



Yuliya Brel-Fournier

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Dr. Brel-Fournier is an Assistant Policy Scientist at the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research at the University of Delaware. She holds master's and PhD degrees in Urban Affairs and Public Policy from the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware, and a master's degree in linguistics from Minsk State Linguistic University in Belarus. Her research interests concentrate on the problems of transition from authoritarianism to democracy in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries and the former Soviet republics, modern dictatorships, democratic governance, and the role of civil society in the process of transition to democracy and its subsequent consolidation.