

HISTORY OF HUMANITIES SERIES

OPEN WORLD RESEARCH INITIATIVE

SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

Dr Dušan Radunović

MLAC, Durham University

**Bakhtin and the Institutionalization of Knowledge
in the Russian Humanities**

Tuesday, 28th November 2017, 4.00pm, ER1, A29

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Cross-Language Dynamics programme of research**



The paper considers how Mikhail Bakhtin's early ideas were affected by the processes of institutionalization and professionalization of research in the Russian humanities during the 1910s and 1920s. The customary view of Bakhtin's formative intellectual years (1919-1927) stipulates that the corpus of his chief conceptual advances in that period, such as *answerability*, *authorship* and *form*, took shape independently from the dominant currents of early-Soviet literary and art scholarship: Russian formalism, the Moscow school of phenomenological aesthetics and/or Marxism-inspired sociological poetics. By taking Bakhtin's 1924 discussion of form as a case study, this paper demonstrates that despite his isolated status in the early-Soviet academic network, all key aspects of his scholarly pursuits were either decisively influenced by the official network of knowledge production or emulated its collaborative mode of work. This testifies to the pervading impact of the transformation of research in the humanities from individual effort to professional practice even in semi-official groupings and circles, which took place between the late imperial and early Soviet periods.

■ **Contact:** andy.byford@durham.ac.uk