



Associate professor Nadia Kaneva introduces a visiting scholar at a May 2015 lecture

Beyond the classroom, around the world: Professor incorporates international research into curriculum

By IIC graduate student Kaley Anderson

Students have the unique opportunity to learn from professors who conduct research around the world. MFJS and IIC professors work and gain experience in countries from Germany to Costa Rica, and from Kenya to Romania. Professor Nadia Kaneva is one MFJS/IIC professor who brings her international research into the classroom.

Kaneva's research focuses on nation branding and public diplomacy. She is interested in how countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have tried to reinvent their international image and their national identities since the end of the Cold War. Her broader research critically examines nation branding on a global scale, branding as a cultural phenomenon and the influence of post-socialist media on gender and identity.

When Kaneva came to DU in 2007, she had the opportunity to create a new graduate course, Brands and Identities, which she designed based on her research interests. This class explores how branding is present not only in the things that we buy, but also in how we think about gender, how we present ourselves as professionals and even how we elect presidents. As part of the course, students also learn about nation branding, and Kaneva incorporates some of her ongoing research into the curriculum.

Second-year IIC student Chelsea Montes de Oca said, "After taking Brands and Identities I feel much more aware of how myself and society at large is impacted by branding. I now see branding in almost every aspect of my daily life."

This fall, Kaneva taught a special topics class called Post-Socialist Media and Culture. The course surveyed the wide range of political and cultural transformations in the post-socialist world, with an emphasis on how media affects social change. In one of the class modules, students explore media representations of women and feminist social

movements in post-socialist countries, a topic that directly relates to Kaneva's most recent book, [*Mediating Post-Socialist Femininities*](#), which was published in 2015.

Kaneva is an internationally recognized scholar in her field, and her other books include [*Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe*](#) (2011) and [*Fundamentalisms and the Media*](#) (2009). She has published numerous articles and book chapters based on her research. Her latest article, "Pin-ups, strippers and centerfolds: Gendered mediation and post-socialist political culture." analyzed why some female politicians in Eastern Europe choose to pose for popular media publications in highly sexualized and sensational ways. The article was published in the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* and won an honorable mention in the Best Article category of the [*2015 Heldt Prize*](#) awarded by the Association for Women in Slavic Studies.

Kaneva is also a sought-after speaker and was invited to discuss post-Soviet public diplomacy with active diplomats at a seminar hosted by the University of Southern California in July 2015. In 2014-15, she also delivered invited talks on nation branding at the University of Stockholm and at Södertörn University in Sweden, as well as at the University of Graz in Austria.

Kaneva continues to enjoy learning, especially from her students. She is currently collaborating with second-year IIC student Austin Klemmer on a journal article that analyzes how political candidates are branded in presidential elections. This project came out of Klemmer's final paper in Kaneva's Brands and Identities course in Spring 2015.

Kaneva says, "One of the best things about teaching is that I learn so much from the students and the projects they do. Every time I teach Brands and Identities, each student picks a different paper topic on anything to do with branding. I always learn new and interesting things from reading their papers."