

## 'West Coast Seminars'

on

**Economic and Social Change in Russia and Eastern Europe  
(Glasgow, West of Scotland [Paisley campus] and Strathclyde Universities)**

**Seventeenth Annual Series 2010-2011**

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**Monday 18 October 2010, 5.30 pm**

University of Glasgow, Room 507 Boyd Orr Building

**Annual Terry Wade Memorial Lecture**

**Professor Rosalind Marsh**

Department of European Studies and Modern Languages, University of Bath

***"The rise of Russian political fiction in the post-Soviet period"***

Tea and Coffee from 17.00

All Welcome

### **Abstract**

Many western commentators claim that literature and politics have moved irrevocably apart into two separate spheres in the post-Soviet period. However, I have argued in my recent book (*Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia*, 2007) that the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium have witnessed the emergence of what I would term 'the new political fiction,' or 'the new political novel,' encompassing writers of many different political viewpoints – from Aleksandr Prokhanov's national-patriotic and anarcho-communist attacks on governmental mechanisms of oppression to Aleksandr Tsvetkov's hostility to global capitalist production and the power of the mass media. This suggests that literature has once again become politicized in Russia, perhaps because writers living in the 'managed democracy' led by Putin and Medvedev since 2000 feel they are as remote from the levers of power as they were in the Soviet period.

My lecture is a preliminary attempt to investigate whether literature, which still represents a range of socio-political, moral and philosophical viewpoints, can now be regarded as one of the few (relatively) free media of expression that remain in Russia, along with the Internet, in contrast with the heavily controlled press and electronic media, and the financially and ideologically controlled cinema.