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Ibroscheva to discuss gender roles in the media



SIUE photo

Elza Ibroscheva.

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Segue/Logan Cameron |

In this week's segment of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Greg Budzban, PhD and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), hosts Professor Elza Ibroscheva, PhD and chair of the SIUE Department of Mass Communications.

The two discuss Ibroscheva's recent prize-winning publication, "Pin-ups, Strippers and Centerfolds: Gendered Mediation and Post-Socialist Political Culture." Co-authored with the help of fellow Bulgarian native and professor at the University of Denver, Nadia Kaneva, the two scholars discuss the issues of media coverage, gender roles and sexuality as they relate to both American and European political systems.

Ibroscheva's publication is particularly both timely and relevant due to the current presidential political campaigns in the U.S. Her research provides insight into how gender is perceived within the public sphere. The focus of the publication, gendered mediation in the political culture of Eastern Europe, argues that media play a critical role in the framing of how women are viewed in

the field of politics in these societies. The topic discussed in this week's show comes as special for Ibroscheva as her research on this topic was recently announced: An honorable mention 2015 Heldt Prize in Slavic/Eastern European/Eurasian Women's Studies.

Throughout the discussion, Budzban and Ibroscheva provide several examples of situations where gender and sexuality have made themselves prominent within Central and Eastern European politics for both male and female candidates. Ibroscheva discusses the differences in the perception of female politicians in politics across cultures, and how these mediated perceptions in the the countries currently emerging from socialism can often work against the political success of female politicians who in turn struggle to find a balance or political stance that is taken seriously by the people.

Budzban further questions the impacts of media on politics by asking, "Is the sexualization of these female political candidates something that's part of their own agency, or is it something that the media imposes on them?" Ibroscheva's answer takes them through the complex relationship between the media portrayals of women politicians in Eastern Europe and the way in which these women themselves incorporate what Ibroscheva calls strategies of self-exposure in order to gain political traction

To further her studies on the topic, Ibroscheva is currently authoring another paper which focuses on the issues and social presence that are developing as a result of the use of social media in political campaigns. She will be studying Hillary Clinton, analyzing her Twitter feed and Flickr account to determine how she is using social media to frame the social issues she's embracing. Her goal is to analyze how evolving media tactics and strategies assist in political campaigning, and is eager to see if these tactics will eventually lead to electing the first woman president of the United States.

Specifically discussing Clinton, Ibroscheva pointed out that Clinton made a big splash when she took a selfie with Kim Kardashian at a fundraising event. Clinton gained political capital by engaging with such a highly visible individual's social media base, giving her the opportunity to be seen with purportedly the most photographed woman on earth.

So is Clinton doing it to get free publicity, or is she strategically positioning herself in the social media scene? What political benefits will be reaped? These are the questions Ibroscheva hopes to address in her new research.

Tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM every Sunday at 9 a.m. as weekly guests discuss the important issues and perspectives that emerge from the research and creative activities on SIUE's campus.