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Symposium Examines Life After Fall of Iron Curtain

Sept. 17, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University's International Studies Program will present a symposium Oct. 5-7 examining 25 years of human experience after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

“The Freedom to Speak, Create and Dream” will feature European guest speakers with personal experience relating to the end of the Eastern bloc, along with Illinois Wesleyan faculty providing interdisciplinary perspective on world effects.

HRH Prince Georg von Habsburg-Lothringen, son of Dr. Otto von Habsburg, the last Crown Prince of the Austrian Empire and an early advocate of a unified Europe, will open the symposium Oct. 5 at 1 p.m. His address is entitled “Remembering the Past and Envisioning the Future: A European Perspective on the Fall of the Iron Curtain.” The prince was president of the Hungarian Red Cross for six years and currently serves as ambassador-without-portfolio in the office of the president of Hungary. The prince is the grandson of Emperor and King Karl, the last monarch of the Habsburg dual monarchy of Austria and Hungary.

Other featured speakers will be Darina Malová, a professor at Comenius University in Slovakia and a previous Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at Illinois Wesleyan, and Peter I. Barta, editor of *The Fall of the Iron Curtain and the Culture of Europe* (Routledge 2013). They will participate in a panel discussion Oct. 5 at 2:30 p.m., and all three will present a session on “The European Crisis” on Oct. 6 at 12:10 p.m.

Malová's research focuses on politics in Slovakia and central Europe, European integration processes and theories of democracy. Barta's book examines new narratives about national, individual and European identities that have emerged in literature, theatre and other cultural media, and explores the new borders in the form of divisive nationalism that have reappeared since the disappearance of the Iron Curtain. Barta is currently a professor at Texas Tech University, and he is professor emeritus at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom.

Malova will also present a mini-workshop for students on human rights as seen from a multidisciplinary perspective on Oct. 6 at 4 p.m. The Liev Schreiber film “Everything is Illuminated” will be screened Oct. 6 at 7 p.m. in Beckman Auditorium, The Ames Library. Chair and Professor of German and Eastern European Studies Sonja Fritzsche will introduce the film.

Several Illinois Wesleyan faculty members will present a panel discussion on “The Fall of the Iron Curtain and its World Effect: Changes in Lived Experiences from Africa and Asia to Central America” on Oct. 7 at 4 p.m. von Habsburg-Lothringen will present closing remarks.



The symposium is made possible by an Illinois Wesleyan Mellon grant for “Re-Centering the Humanities.” The symposium is sponsored by the Russian and East European Studies team, the Western European Studies team and funds from the Isaac Funk Endowed Professorship at Illinois Wesleyan. The event inspired Illinois Wesleyan's 2014-15 intellectual theme "**Walls and Bridges.**"

For more information about the symposium, contact co-directors of the International Studies Program **Marina Balina** or **Scott Sheridan**.