Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

**Department of Linguistics
and Comparative Cultural Studies**



GUEST LECTURE

Alexander Etkind

More Wicked Than Barabbas: The Letter of the Zaporozhian Cossacks Between Worlds and Genres

Lunedì 16 novembre 2026 ore 15.45
Sala Conferenze, Palazzo Cosulich

Introduction by Prof **Evgeny Dobrenko** (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

Incontro in lingua inglese

Centered on Dmitrii Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony, this talk reconstructs the afterlife of a forged Cossack document as it moves across centuries and genres: from a seventeenth-century Polish forger to a nineteenth-century Ukrainian historian, to a leading Russian realist artist, to a leading French surrealist poet, and finally to a late-twentieth-century Soviet composer. Shaped by protest, erasure, and survival, this chain condenses the tragedies of anti-imperial wars, misreadings of transcultural transmission, and the fragile heroism of memory. The final passage was mediated by an almost vanished figure -- the Gulag survivor and translator Mikhail Kudinov (1922–1994), for whom political falsification became a vehicle of historical truth.

Prof **Alexander Etkind** (CEU Vienna) is a prominent cultural and intellectual historian and the author of *Eros of the Impossible. The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia* (Westview Press 1996); *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Polity Press 2011); *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford University Press 2013); *Roads not Taken. An Intellectual Biography of William C. Bullitt.* (Pittsburgh University Press 2017); and *Nature's Evil: A Cultural History of Natural Resources* (Polity Press 2021). Alexander coedited *Remembering Katyn* (Polity 2012), *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe* (Palgrave 2013) and *Cultural Forms of Protest in Russia* (Routledge 2017). His most recent book, Russia against Modernity, was released by Polity in 2023.