This public lecture series presents a book manuscript titled *Communication and Enchantment*. Dreams of perfect communication have been painted in the colors of communion, love, and collective effervescence—and also in the nightmare shades of mind control, hypnotism, and crowd frenzy. Aspirations and anxieties about such ideals have come to enchant us, to move us. Not matters alone of individual capacities or interactional responses, they have also materialized over time and at a distance, along tangled circuits. The Cold War, for instance, cultivated fascination with the workings and the failures of communication, mediation, and contact. Opposed sides accused others of jamming and propaganda, competed to claim expression and creativity, and mirrored fantasies of telepathic connection or interstellar contact. By working through examples (from field sites including the Russian State Theatrical Academy, film shoots, and a reality show titled *Battle of the Psychics*) we will track how Cold War preoccupations may yet mark struggles to frame events, infuse theoretical models of communication, and generate practical technologies for intuition.

The Rappaport Lectures will be at 3:00 p.m. in the Rackham Assembly Hall, 4th Floor Rackham

“Technologies for Intuition”
Friday, January 22nd

Not everyone masters technologies for intuition. This talk begins with the making of techniques to intuit whether “we have made contact,” with people learning to probe for qualities of communication and its media, for sensations of social connection. To focus on contact and media is to activate the “phatic function,” and I call those who specialize in this “phatic experts.” Their modes of tuning and testing contact leak between fields of activity, from the dramatic to the governmental to the scientific (and between states, witness Americans reading Stanislavsky, Russians reading Carnegie). Literary critics accuse telepaths of acting, actors draw from paranormal research, police profilers look to theater for clues. There is no single ontology of perspective or ideology of communication to be revealed here: instead, this talk theorizes
divisions of meta-communicative labors and contests over phatic authority, and we ask what is at stake, for whom, in dividing and debating technologies for intuition?

“Enchanting Static”  
Friday, February 19th

Phatic infrastructures form where hallways, streets, wires intersect human networks. Like channels, they hinder certain communications while affording others. They mediate how people come to know—and not to know—about the lives of others. In their varied material and social configurations, they afford contrasts among means to see and then to unsee, for instance, material rupture or social injustice. This talk addresses the uses to which such contrasts are put. It does so by critically addressing accounts of socialist states (and of Russia before and after the USSR) through tropes of deliberately blocked contact, such as masking and deception, proposing instead to contrast and connect tangles of phatic infrastructures. The United States and the USSR alike built walls, jammed frequencies, and spun advertising or propaganda. They both cut phatic channels and made static through similar institutions, but they did so differently. Specific differences, gone unacknowledged, came to enchant respective myths of American freedom and Soviet equality. Meanwhile, what happens when people try to make sense of their own and others’ efforts to read the static?

“Bureaucratic Mesmerism”  
Friday, March 11th

This lecture begins with a sense of enchantment associated with moments when people face demands to show tickets, papers, credentials, to prove legitimacy. Rather than focusing on exclusions, as other work has done so well, it follows people who exploit and extend bureaucratic situations to create glamour, to focus attention and capture interest. Next, it compares such situations to stagings of phatic energy—demonstrations of paranormal telepathy, or of theatrical empathy. Both unfold in spaces that previous theorists have tried to define as “liminal”; this talk instead shows how people labor to reduce multiple and embedded relations to ever more local points and synapses. The aim is to theorize how individualist and dyadic ideologies of communication are produced—and how they are, less often (at least in the US and in Russia), undermined. These strains of mesmerism have as much to do with making bureaucracies as they do with making art.

“Breaking Spells”  
Friday, April 15th

There are people who police divisions between art vs. life, the enchanted vs. routine—among what are called interactional frames. To break frames or to contest them—stepping out of character, deconstructing the rules—can challenge claims not only about what constitutes reality and fantasy, but also about social hierarchies (who can claim the podium, or drop the curtain?). Yet, such breaks can also perform and animate authority. This talk investigates events of frame rupture that are complicated by hierarchies among Moscow teachers and acting students, Urals prisoners and guards, Russian TV psychics and their American, European or local skeptics—among experts and those who find themselves reduced to bumpkins or pawns, treated as if they do not know, or have yet to learn to distinguish frames, to discern “what is going on here?” In exploring the politics of breaking frame, we ask how aesthetics of estrangement intersect the politics of communicative contact.
Alaina Lemon is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology, and serves as Director of the Interdepartmental Doctorate Program in Anthropology and History at the University of Michigan. She received the PhD in Anthropology in 1996 from the University of Chicago, and has conducted archival and ethnographic fieldwork in Russia since 1988. Her research asks how aesthetic and communicative techniques relate to political and social struggles. She has conducted research in Romani villages and in Russian theaters, backstage and in directing schools, on film sets, and with journalists and press analysts, as well as in kitchens and in front of television sets, or on the Moscow Metro. Her first book, *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Post-Socialism* (Duke, 2000) received in 2001 the AAASS Wayne S. Vucinich Book Award, and the AAASS Heldt Book prize. Recent publications include “MetroDogs: the Heart in the Machine,” (2015); “Touching the Gap: Social Qualia and Cold War Contact,” (2013); and “The Emotional Lives of Moscow Things,” (2009). A forthcoming book, *Technologies of Intuition* tracks ways that Cold War anxieties about mental influence and excessive contact continue to alternate with utopian dreams of communion.

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The Roy A. Rappaport Lectures are a series of open public lectures on a work in progress, concurrent with a special course for advanced students to work closely with a faculty member in the Department of Anthropology on a topic in which the instructor has an intensive current interest. As the description written by Professor Roy “Skip” Rappaport in 1976 states, “…it offers the opportunity for other students and faculty to hear a colleague in an extended discussion of their own work.”