

**Horizons of Knowledge
Lecture**

The Balkans: From the Beginnings to the End



Dr. Andrew Wachtel (Northwestern University)

**Monday, December 8
5:00 p.m.**

IMU Persimmon Room

The Balkans can be defined as that borderland geographical space in which four of the world's greatest civilizations overlapped in a sustained and meaningful way to produce a complex, dynamic, sometimes combustible, multi-layered local civilization. It is the space in which the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, of Byzantium, of Ottoman Turkey, and of Roman Catholic Europe met, clashed and sometimes combined. However, the Balkans did not become "The Balkans" until local traditions of hybridity came into contact with and were eventually overwhelmed by West European notions of the nation state. By the present time, through the elimination of the diversity that was typical for this region and the creation of mostly monoethnic nation states, the Balkans as a distinct civilizational concept exists only as a historical artifact and, sometimes, as an object of nostalgia.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Russian and East European Institute, the Department of History, and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.