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Sex and Superpower Rivalry:
Women’s Rights and Cold War Competition
at the United Nations, 1968-1989

During the Cold War, ideological competition between the capitalist West and the state socialist East fueled scientific and technological progress as the superpowers endeavored to outdo each other in the space race and the development of superior weapons of mass destruction. But superpower rivalries also impacted social progress as each Bloc vied for the hearts and minds of the citizens of the newly independent countries in the Global South. In this talk, Kristen R. Ghodsee will explore the impacts of Cold War rhetoric on the progress of women’s rights.

Kristen R. Ghodsee is professor of Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of seven books, and her articles and essays have appeared in publications such as the Jacobin, Dissent, Foreign Affairs, and the New York Times. She has held residential fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey; at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies in Germany; and at the Aleksanteri Institute of the University of Helsinki in Finland. In 2012, she was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Anthropology and Cultural Studies.