This talk will examine relations between Belarus and Russia in the post-Soviet period, surveying the uneven course of efforts to integrate the two states into a single union and the impact of Putin’s policies on those efforts. The apparent closeness of the two states is reflected in extensive rhetoric about the friendship of the two “brotherly peoples”; however, relations fall far short of a genuine partnership, and each side promotes its own interests, sometimes in conflict with those of its ostensible partner. Among other aspects of the topic, the talk will address the response of Belarus to the Russian military engagement with Georgia in 2008 and to Russia’s recent actions in Ukraine. While Belarus prefers to stay out of conflicts between neighboring states and has recognized the new Ukrainian government, Russia is obviously trying to gain Belarusian support for its policies in Ukraine, something that threatens Belarus with further isolation and deeper dependence on Russia.

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Persons with disabilities who wish to attend this event and would like to request assistance should contact the REEI office (812-855-7309 or reei@indiana.edu).