



Losing Pravda

What happens when journalism is made superfluous? Combining ethnography, media analysis, and moral and political theory, this book examines the unravelling of professional journalism in Russia during the 1990s and 2000s and its effects on society. It argues that contrary to widespread assumptions, late Soviet-era journalists shared a cultural contract with their audiences that ensured that their work was guided by a truth-telling ethic. Postcommunist economic and political upheaval led not so much to greater press freedom as to the deprofessionalization of journalism because journalists found themselves having to monetize their truth-seeking skills. This has culminated in a perception of journalists as political prostitutes, or members of the “second oldest profession”, as they are commonly termed in Russia. Roudakova argues that this cultural shift has fundamentally eroded the value of truth-seeking and truth-telling in Russian society. Beyond Russia, this book illustrates what could happen to a country’s public life when collective truths are regularly displaced by systematic falsehoods and fabrications.

NATALIA ROUDAKOVA is Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of California, San Diego. Educated in both the Soviet Union and the United States, she draws on her linguistic, political and social knowledge of the region. Her work combines cultural anthropology, political communication, political theory, moral philosophy, and the study of Russian history and contemporary society and culture.

Losing Pravda

Ethics and the Press in Post-Truth Russia

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For my parents, Anna Rudakova and Vladimir Rudakov

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