



the  
**slavic scene**

volume 35, spring 2022



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## letter from the chair



### Dear friends,

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 and the ongoing war was a deep shock for our department, as, I am sure, for many of you as well. We are watching with horror as thousands of people, including women and children, are being killed and wounded, millions of people are having to leave their homes, and this beautiful country is being destroyed by brutal force. While the end of the tragedy is not yet in sight, it is clear that this war will profoundly impact Eastern Europe and will have long-lasting repercussions for the entire world. How will we teach our classes, which books and films will we discuss with our students, what kind of questions will we address in our research, these and other issues will be discussed in our department and among our colleagues in the field of Slavic Studies.

Another important challenge for us is to help our colleagues who have been affected by the war, and more practically, to support

those who have been displaced and are not able to continue their research and teaching. In March and April, we invited several displaced colleagues to give remote lectures and presentations, and we are planning to expand this activity in the coming academic year. Professor Nataliya Gorodnia from Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University will be teaching remotely from Germany a mini-course on Ukrainian Culture and Society through the Prism of the Russia-Ukraine War. We are working on raising funds for supporting visiting scholars from the war-affected area. For the past two years, we have been offering the Cultures of Ukraine mini-course every semester, as well as three levels of the Ukrainian language, and we are planning to expand our Ukrainian program next year. LSA has approved a Graduate Student Instructor position to teach the first-year Ukrainian language course, which will help us train the next generation of teachers of Ukrainian language and culture.

We were able to return to in-person teaching in August 2021, and, to the great relief and satisfaction of our students and teachers, we were able to keep this format during the whole academic year. The culmination of the year was our graduation ceremony which was conducted in person for the first time in two years. This year we awarded 9 majors and 19 minors in four Slavic languages and literatures academic degrees.

Our event programming this year combined in-person and remote formats. After nearly two years of postponement due to COVID-19,

we conducted, in hybrid format, the academic conference on the prominent Russian author Viktor Pelevin, celebrating the publication of Professor Khagi's monograph *Pelevin and Unfreedom: Poetics, Politics, Metaphysics* and collective volume *Companion to Viktor Pelevin*. As our contribution to the University-wide Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium, we invited Yevgeniy Fiks, a New York-based Russian-American artist and art scholar to present his project *Wayland Rudd Collection: Exploring Racial Imaginaries in Soviet Visual Culture*. This online event attracted a large and diverse audience.

We congratulate McKenna Marko and Jason Wagner on the successful defense of their dissertations, and we wish Ania Aizman, who has spent four years with our department as a Michigan Society Fellow, all success in her new tenure-track position at the University of Chicago.

All our hopes for the summer are for peace in Ukraine.

Sincerely,  
Mikhail Krutikov  
Professor and Chair, Department of  
Slavic Languages & Literatures



# ■ highlights

## Victor Pelevin: Post-Soviet, Postmodern, Global

Sofya Khagi, Professor



Conference Flyer

On October 15-17, 2021, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures hosted the first-ever conference on Victor Pelevin, entitled "Victor Pelevin: Post-Soviet, Postmodern, Global." I organized this event following the publication of my monograph, *Pelevin and Unfreedom: Poetics, Politics, Metaphysics* (Northwestern University Press, 2021), and shortly before the launch of a collected volume under my editorship, *Companion to Victor Pelevin* (Academic Studies Press, 2022). The conference brought together prominent scholars of Russian literature from the United States, Europe, and Israel, who delivered thought-provoking papers on this significant and highly popular contemporary Russian writer. Debates around Pelevin's prolific output have been heated in Russian cultural circles. Despite his gleeful play, he is a challenging author because of all the tricks he deploys in his texts, the complexity of his narratives, and the elusiveness of their meaning. The conference aimed

to illumine the nuances and ambiguities of his oeuvre. Conference participants looked at Pelevin's oeuvre from his groundbreaking writings of the 1990s to the present, articulating the continuities and transformations of his work and fleshing out its importance. We discussed the ways we can enrich our readings of Pelevin classics written in the heyday of postmodernism and during the turbulent period after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the current state of Peleviniana, and what one might look for in the future. We examined not only his place in contemporary Russia but also the ways his work opens up to a wider problem of contemporary global politics and culture. Among other approaches, conference presenters engaged Pelevin in dialogue with science fiction, gender criticism, posthumanism, alternative history, right-wing political discourses East and West, conspiracy theories, and philosophical prose in world literature. The objective was to illuminate Pelevin's contributions to ongoing cultural and political debates within and outside post-Soviet space. The event was comprised of seven panels: "Early Science Fiction and Gender," "Reception," "Political Contexts," "Conspiracies and Ideological Games," "Companion to Victor Pelevin," "Literature and Philosophy," and "Pelevin and Unfreedom: Poetics, Politics, Metaphysics." Two of the panels spotlighted scholarly studies of Pelevin. *Companion to Victor Pelevin*, written by a team of young scholars, provided a resource to scholars, teachers, and students, outlining the main debates and central issues in Pelevin's oeuvre. The second book panel, moderated by Mikhail Krutikov and featuring presentations by Michael Makin and myself, discussed *Pelevin and Unfreedom: Poetics, Politics, Metaphysics*, the only comprehensive scholarly monograph devoted to Pelevin's work to date. A number of present and past graduate students from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Comparative Literature, and History presented their work and moderated the panels. These included Azhar Dyussekenova, Chris Fort, Grace Mahoney, Michael Martin, Alex McConnell, and Dylan Ogden. We intend to follow with a collected volume and aim to initiate productive inquiry into Pelevin's oeuvre that will extend beyond this event.

## MLK Event — The Wayland Rudd Collection

Patricia Kalosa, Executive Assistant

In February, as part of the university's annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium, the department hosted the New York-based, post-Soviet artist, Yevgeniy Fiks. As a post-Soviet artist, his works build on research into Cold War narratives to explore the dialectic between Communism and "the West," addressing the Red and Lavender Scares during the McCarthy era, Communism in Modern Art, and African, African American, and Jewish diasporas in the Soviet Union.

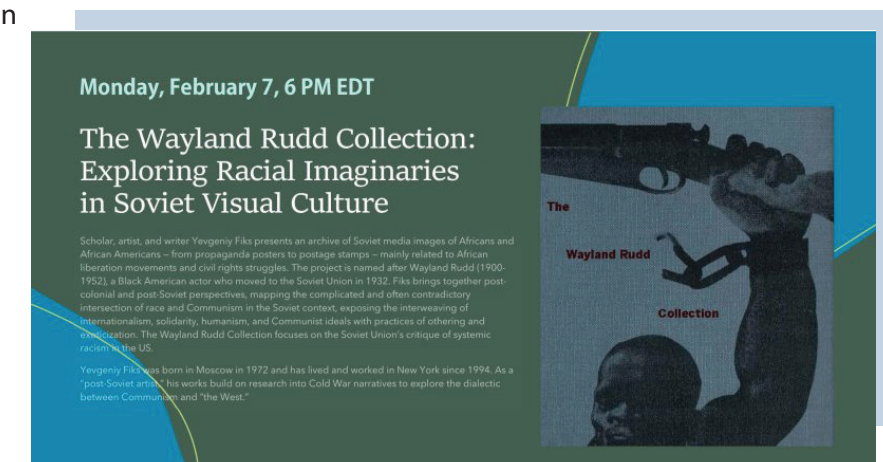
His work is inspired by the collapse of the Soviet bloc, leading to the realization of the necessity to reexamine the Soviet experience in the context of the history of the Left, including that of the international Communist movement. His work is also, in part, a reaction to the collective amnesia within the post-Soviet space over the last decade, on the one hand, and the repression of the histories of the American Left in the U.S., on the other. In addition to *The Wayland Rudd Collection: Exploring Racial Imaginaries in Soviet Visual Culture*, other books include *Lenin For Your Library?*, *Communist Guide to New York City*, *Moscow*, *Soviet Moscow's Yiddish-Gay Dictionary*, and *Monument to Cold War Victory*.

During his talk, Yevgeniy showed several photographs from his work *Communist Guide to New York City*, a collection of dozens of photographs of buildings, public places, and sites in New York City, that are connected to the history of the Communist Party USA, including sites where Communist-organized strikes and demonstrations took place, and courthouses where American Communist leaders were tried. Yevgeniy grew up and was educated in the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and his work is about coming to terms with the Soviet experience. Having lived in New York since 1994, he's fascinated by the history of the American Communist movement and the way it manifests itself in the present-day United States.

Yevgeniy also focused on his new book, *The Wayland Rudd Collection: Exploring Racial Imaginaries in Soviet Visual Culture* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2021). Yevgeniy presented his archive of Soviet media images of Africans and African Americans, from propaganda posters to postage stamps, mainly related to African liberation movements and civil rights struggles. The project is named after Wayland Rudd (1900-1952), a Black American actor who moved to the Soviet Union in 1932 and appeared in many Soviet films and theatrical performances. Bringing together post-colonial and post-Soviet perspectives, Yevgeniy spoke about the complicated and often contradictory intersection of race and Communism in the Soviet context, exposing the interweaving of internationalism, solidarity, humanism, and Communist ideals with practices of othering and exoticization.

Yevgeniy's book includes meditations, reflections, and research-based essays by scholars, poets, and artists that address the complicated intersection of race and Communist internationalism, focusing on the Soviet Union's critique of systemic racism in the U.S. It was an engaging and interesting hour-long seminar.

Yevgeniy's work has been shown at the Biennale of Sydney, Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, and Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art and has received reviews in *The New York Times*, *ARTFORUM*, and other periodicals.



Yevgeniy Fiks Event Flyer



# faculty focus

## Welcome Vedran Catovic!

Jennifer Lucas, Assistant Manager



The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures hired Vedran Catovic as a Lecturer I for the 2022-23 academic year. Vedran received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Michigan in 2021. His dissertation was titled *Narrative Satire in Context: The Journey and Wisdom in West and East Europe*.

He joins us with a wide range of teaching undergraduate courses at U-M, from first-year college writing to advanced-level language and cultural studies. He has been studying and teaching comparative literature for 18 years, which allows him to bring a generalist perspective and contribute to the Slavic field as a transcultural and transnational scholar. Vedran is a native speaker of Bosnian but has a long study of the Russian language, which allows him to teach and conduct research on Russian literature, history, and culture. In the next year, he'll teach courses on Russian literature and arts & culture in Central Europe.

He is excited to continue his teaching endeavors and combine his scholarly interest in literature in the globalized, transnational and multicultural context with his passion for educating curious young minds.

## In Memoriam:

### Dr. Zdenka Brodská

Jindrich Toman, Professor

Sad news reached us several months ago—Dr. Zdenka Brodská, our former lecturer in Czech, passed away after a long illness. She was an active and much-loved member of our department since the early 1990s. Together with her husband, Karel Čulík, who became faculty in the Department of Computer Science at Wayne State, they came from Czechoslovakia to join the cultural activities of the American Czech community. Among her initial major accomplishments was her editorial work for the Czech American cultural quarterly *Proměny/Variations* on which she collaborated with our faculty member, Professor Ladislav Matějka. After joining our department, she taught numerous courses in Czech, giving the Czech program in the department a distinct prestige and importance. She was also a prominent translator of Czech. Among other Czech works, she translated together with Kelly Miller a collection of poetic texts by the Czech poet Bohuslav Reynek (Michigan Slavic Publications, 2001). Over the years, she taught dozens of students, both graduate and undergraduate. When she retired in 2005 after sixteen years of service, she was presented with an entire folder of letters from her students, who valued her both as a model and a unique personality. She will be remembered fondly.

## And the 2021 Individual Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education goes to Professor Herbert Eagle!

Patricia Kalosa, Executive Assistant

The Individual Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education recognizes faculty members who are exceptionally dedicated to the educational experiences of undergraduates, and who demonstrate this dedication through achievements and innovations in their own and others' classrooms or academic programs.

This award, bestowed by U-M's College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA), is a recognition of Professor Eagle's incredible dedication to undergraduate education over the several decades of teaching at U-M, and especially during the most recent, very challenging years when Professor Eagle successfully redesigned his classes for various hybrid formats and has substantially increased enrollment.

Professor Eagle teaches courses on Russian and Ukrainian film, Polish cinema, Czech New Wave cinema, and ethnicity and gender in East-Central European film, as well as seminars on film theory. He has also taught courses on American film genres and has written about the connections between these and the genres which developed during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Professor Eagle was Director of the Program in Film and Video Studies, now Film, Television, and Media (FTVM), from 1981 - 1988 and Director of the Residential College from 1988 - 1996. He also served as chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures from 2006 - 2014 and interim chair from 2019 - 2020.

As Professor Eagle's award letter stated: "Your nomination ... describes your thoughtful service to many thousands of students over decades of work at U-M, your meticulous and highly organized approach to teaching, the engaging discussions you encourage and enable students to have, your individual work with students to improve their writing (especially through ULWR courses), and your attentive mentoring. You have developed an enormous and continuously innovative teaching portfolio, both before and during the pandemic, engaging in outstanding service to your department and LSA. Former students speak of you as 'kind,' 'enthusiastic,' and 'caring,' and your courses as 'an absolute delight'; a comfortable environment that encourages students to share their ideas. Students also speak of your extremely clear explanations of cultural nuances that allow students to not only understand films made in contexts that are foreign to them but engage in deep discussion about these films. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition for your work with our undergraduates and your deep investment in their learning."

Congratulations Professor Eagle on this extraordinary award!

### Dr. Vera Andrushkiw

Svitlana Rogovyk, Lecturer

Dr. Vera Andrushkiw passed away on March 18, 2022. She was a civic activist, pedagogue, and active member of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America. She headed the Detroit Committee for the Defense of the Persecuted in Ukraine (1972-1976), was the director of Ukrainian studies summer schools at Harvard University (1997-1999), taught at Wayne State University (Detroit) and the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) (1985-1999), and since 1999 was the Director of the Partnership of Communities Program of the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation in Washington.

It is a heartbreaking loss to Vera's family and the Michigan Ukrainian community. She was a great inspiration for many people in the USA and Ukraine because of her intelligence and love for Ukraine. She will always stay in our hearts.

# staying connected

## Rachael Merritt named 2022 Rhodes Scholar

"U-M Senior Rachael Merritt Named 2022 Rhodes Scholar." *Michigan Daily*, November 30, 2021, [www.michigandaily.com/news/academics/u-m-senior-rachael-merritt-named-2022-rhodes-scholar](http://www.michigandaily.com/news/academics/u-m-senior-rachael-merritt-named-2022-rhodes-scholar).



*"I'm specifically interested in authoritarian practices in digital spaces and how those really don't have borders anymore," Merritt said. "There's a real need to come up with new metrics and strategies to govern the internet internationally..."*

LSA senior Rachael Merritt was recently awarded the Rhodes Scholarship, becoming the University of Michigan's 30th recipient of the oldest and most prestigious international scholarship. Merritt, alongside 31 other American Rhodes Scholars, will study at the University of Oxford with all expenses funded by the scholarship program for the next two to three years.

At Oxford, Merritt plans to obtain master's degrees in Russian and Eastern European studies and Social Science of the Internet. In an interview with *The Michigan Daily*, Merritt said she is most interested in the intersection between the two topics, namely cybersecurity within the scope of Russia and Eastern Europe.

"I'm specifically interested in authoritarian practices in digital spaces and how those really don't have borders anymore," Merritt said. "There's a real need to come up with new metrics and strategies to govern the internet internationally and hold countries like Russia or different countries in Eastern Europe accountable to."

Merritt is currently double majoring in Russian and international studies.\* During her time at the University, Merritt said she visited Russia twice and worked with

various Russian activists and journalists, including Editor-in-Chief of *The New Times* Yevgenia Albats, who is a distinguished lecturer in the University of Michigan's Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies program.

"Yevgenia Albats came to Michigan, which was my intro into the world of investigative journalism in Russia," Merritt said. "Since then, I've made a lot more connections with different journalists, and my interest in understanding media spaces online has been increasing."

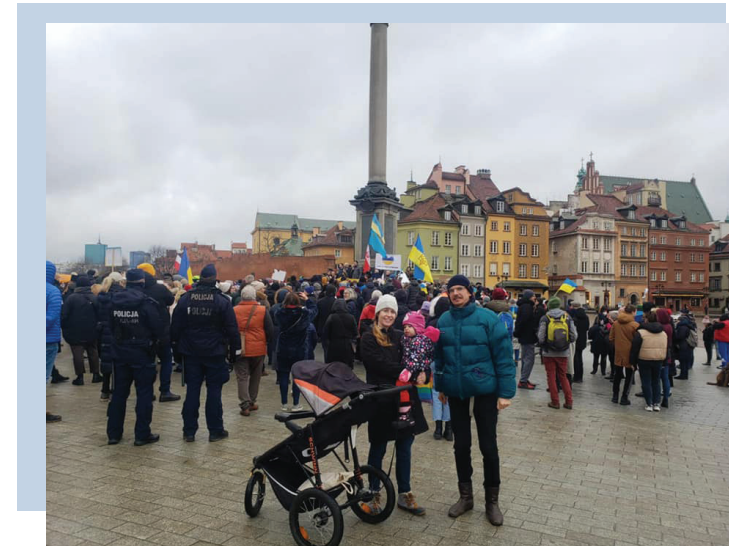
After completing her studies at Oxford, Merritt said she hopes to first work with internet regulations at a non-governmental organization before moving into a more policy-based field.

"Eventually, I want to enter into a more policy perspective on international approaches towards the internet or towards Russia and Eastern Europe," Merritt said. "But to start off, I want to be in a small team that's more connected to people on the ground and learn more about what journalists are doing in different parts of the world."

\*Rachael graduated on April 30, 2022

## Current affiliation: Director of IIE-Fulbright Ukraine

Jessica Zychowicz (PhD, U-M Slavic 2015), [jzychowicz@iie.org](mailto:jzychowicz@iie.org)



*Martial law was instituted in Ukraine a week after the bombing started on February 24, 2022, which means men 18-60 of age of Ukrainian citizenship cannot leave the country.*

I landed in Kyiv on May 10, 2021, to start as Director of Fulbright Ukraine. It happened to be Victory Day, which coincided with Mother's Day; I took this as an auspicious sign and I still do.

In October 2021, I worked with the local staff to plan a celebration to mark the 75th Anniversary of Fulbright worldwide. We managed to skillfully navigate the pandemic to have an in-person event featuring live jazz music composed for the event and performed for the first time by a quartet led by one of the Ukrainian Fulbright Alumni, Yakiv Tsvietinsky. We held the event at "Schakoladniy Budynok," a 19th c. structure built by Kyiv's Jewish labor union that was never bombed in WWII. I opened the evening with a short excerpt from the diary of John Steinbeck's travels through the Kyiv region in 1947, just after the war, at the same time Fulbright was founded, and who would later become a Fulbright scholar in the 1960s. In his journal from 1947, he wrote: "Ukrainians are not a sad people, they are filled with laughter, and despite all the ruins of the war there is rebuilding." We published a booklet featuring photos from the history of our office, and letters from all five directors that have contributed to the story of its history, as well as letters of support from Member of Congress Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Committee for Ukraine; and from then Chargé d'Affaires to the Kyiv Embassy, Kristina Kvien.

This past December, I convened and led panels of experts conducting a total of 100 individual interviews across our student and scholar programs. The level of talent exhibited in the application pool was impressive, all of these semi-final applicants passed through our external peer-review process. You can see that our final "acceptance rate" is extremely competitive. Our panelists are always challenged in how to make final decisions as we compare such stellar individuals at the final stage. Our candidates come from all spheres, and some have prior experience at high levels in Ukraine's institutions and government--including invaluable expertise in cybersecurity, or legal and constitutional expertise. Given Ukraine's recent post-revolutionary paradigm, ongoing war (since 2014), and proximity to Russian disinformation, the emergence of different types of expertise in this context has global value.

Moreover, Fulbright is about individuals. And many of these individuals are not afraid to speak openly about what they want to change, as well as the defense of their country and the definition of the future they want to build for themselves, in dialogue with other countries. There are also respected community leaders who apply, for example, Ukraine's numerous veterans of what once was referred to as the Donbas war. What this diversity of candidates and their overall strength indicates about Ukraine is the very high cultural and social significance that education has in Ukraine.



## ■ staying connected...continued

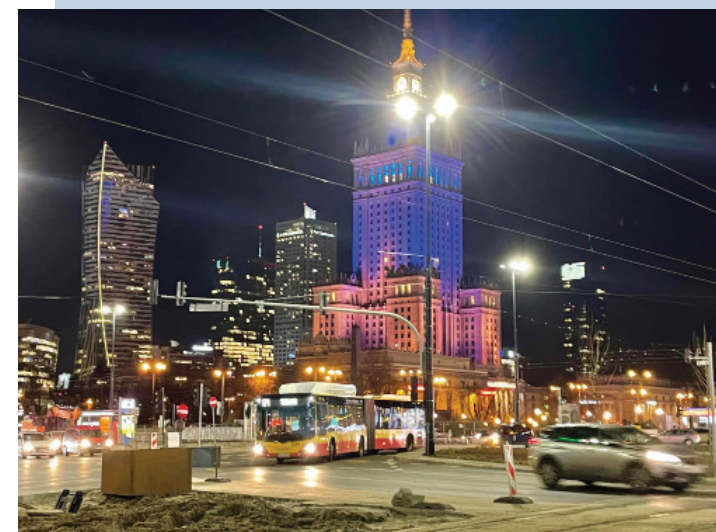
On May 23, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with the presidents of members of the Association of American Universities. When asked what institutions could do to help in terms of the war, he stressed that universities abroad should “set up programs in which they provide expertise, not just cash” (Inside Higher Ed). This further evidences education as a core value and the desire to cultivate and return international skills and talent to Ukraine. I also read this comment as part of a broader way of *unthinking the war* by articulating what can be built that is immaterial and sustainable. “Swords into ploughshares” was the phrase at the origin of Fulbright in 1946.

We vacated Kyiv on January 27, 2022, after receiving the official “Authorized Departure” cable from Washington to the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. I had three days to get everyone out of the country. There were 15 U.S. Fulbrighters in different cities across Ukraine. What unfolded took place seamlessly, thanks to the culmination of several



*“I am a woman, I have no country . . .  
For a long time some people believed  
that if the horror of war could be made  
vivid enough, most people would  
finally take in the outrageousness, the  
insanity of war.”  
— Regarding the Pain of Others, 2003*

weeks of contingency planning I had been doing in consultation with the Embassy and counterparts in D.C. All of us were monitoring the situation very closely, no one was sleeping at night. In the weeks leading up to the departure, I had held three separate virtual Town Halls with the 15 U.S. Fulbrighters. I briefed them on the contingency plans, as well as updated all communications between our program staff as I assisted with plans for their safety. I moved the 15 U.S. Fulbrighters to Warsaw instead of sending them home and ending their grants early. The Fulbright Poland program agreed to this plan, as they are a commission country and totally separate from our office. While in Warsaw I took full responsibility for those I had relocated, including regular meetings virtual and in-person. Many of them continued to teach virtually to their host institutions in Ukraine, but others could not logistically do so and chose to volunteer full time with their peers in various initiatives in the city to respond to the influx of 3.6 million refugees over a period of seventy days. Our U.S. Fulbrighters were first responders, translating and doing other tasks at the Warsaw Central train station and at the border before any other international organizations or volunteers arrived.



Fulbright is a frontrunner and it is a privilege to serve as the Director of Fulbright Ukraine at this critical moment in history. As the director, I have experienced profound glimpses into the innovators in Ukraine who cross all sectors, disciplines, and social strata. These glimpses have been unexpected and sometimes painfully difficult to translate or explain in depth their meaning. Fulbright in Ukraine is a community that I've witnessed pull together on both sides of the ocean to save lives over the past months.

Nonetheless, we all worry about the preservation of museums and cultural artifacts inside Ukraine. There are efforts underway at several universities in the U.S. on emergency data transfer and preservation. But further action and response inside Ukraine's educational and museum communities on the ground are only beginning. In my capacity as an Alumna of the U.S. Scholar Fulbright Program, I am an active member of the U.S. Alumni Association and encourage my fellow alumni to check out all advocacy channels for Ukraine. Shevchenko Scientific Society (NTSh-A) and Harvard Ukraine Research Institute (HURI) are good hubs for links and resources for those who need help and those who want to help.

In the shadow of war, my book, which I started at the University of Michigan during my doctoral work and was published in 2020 during the pandemic, will appear in Polish and Ukrainian this year. *Superfluous Women: Art, Feminism, and Revolution in Twenty-First Century Ukraine* has this year won the MLA: Modern Languages Association Prize for Slavic Studies; the AAUS: American Association for Ukrainian Studies; and Omeljan Pritsak Harvard Prize for Ukrainian Studies. My publisher, University of Toronto Press, includes it in this list of 10 books for understanding Ukraine: <https://utorontopress.com/blog/2022/02/17/books-for-understanding-ukraine/>. What I like about this list is that all of the authors are from Ukraine or have spent a considerable amount of time in Ukraine, actually getting to know it as a place. It is not a blank slate or a geopolitical game which mainstream reporting and media photos have largely conveyed over the past seven years of the war, but a space populated by people, by individuals.

*“How in your opinion  
are we to prevent  
war?”*

*“Why War?”  
—Virginia Woolf,  
Three Guineas,  
June 1938*



# in the classroom

## Speaking of Language: Ukrainian in the context of War

Svitlana Rogovyk, Lecturer and Language Program Coordinator



Field Trip to the Ukrainian Museum, Detroit, MI

There are 12-15 students learning Ukrainian language each academic year at the University of Michigan. For more than fifty years the demography of the students learning Ukrainian at U-M has not changed: half of them are of Ukrainian heritage and the other half are interested in international relationships and research on Ukraine. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, as an independent state, has occupied an important strategic position with respect to the security and stability of all of Europe. This theme has always been emphasized in our content courses: Cultures of Ukraine, Ukrainian Poetry, and in our Ukrainian language program. Our language courses incorporate a strong cultural component as well because, in my opinion, one cannot teach language without teaching its culture.

As Putin's brutal war continues in Ukraine, exposure to videos, photos, and articles from the scenes of combat has increased tremendously; so has students' desire to be able to understand and interpret them. Additionally, our language students are interested in learning the proper pronunciation of difficult geographical names in Ukrainian. They are curious about the etymological roots of the newly developed war lexicon and are interested in

understanding Ukrainian swear words, a weapon of resistance for Ukrainians, which has recently developed.

During our day-long Pysanka workshop in March, many students of Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, and Czech joined the gathering. The conversation was no longer about Pysanka and Easter traditions – it was more about showing concern and solidarity, trying to understand the media coverage students heard and saw about the war. The highlight of this event was a surprise visit from our first- and second-year Russian language students who came to the workshop and sang the Ukrainian anthem in Ukrainian.

During many discussions and conversations with U-M students in the last few months, I have realized that the rhetoric has changed in answering the commonly asked question, "Why study Ukrainian language?". Our students want to learn and speak Ukrainian because they honor the culture, freedom, and the extraordinary courage of the Ukrainian people. The same people who have stood up to fight their own defenses in the face of the indescribable and unprovoked brutality of Putin's war.



Ukrainian language students at the Ukrainian Museum, Detroit, MI

# graduate focus

## Congratulations

Congratulations to our Ph.D. Graduate Students!



McKenna Marko successfully defended her dissertation, *Spatial Mediations of Holocaust Memory in Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Art*, in May 2022. She plans to live in Budapest to continue her research.



Jason Wagner successfully defended his dissertation in July 2022, titled *Yiddish Ruthenias: Home Landscapes in the Modernist Poetry of Moyshe Kulbak and Dovid Hofshsteyn in the Age of Revolutions and National Revivals in Eastern Europe*. Jason was offered a post-doc teaching position at the University of Florida.

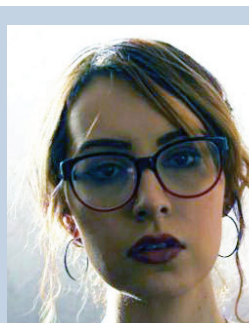
## Welcome

Welcome to our new graduate students — Fall 2021!



### Samantha Farmer

Samantha holds a B.A. in History and Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, as well as an M.A. in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies from the University of Texas at Austin, where they also were a host and producer of the podcast *The Slavic Connexion*. Their disciplinary and research interests include performance studies, comparative Yugoslav, East European, and American film and literature, cultural studies, literary translation, queer and feminist theories, sociology of literature, critical pedagogy, and theories of place and memory; they are also pursuing a graduate certificate in LGBTQ Studies in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. Their translations can be found in *TROIKA*, *Asymptote* (Winter 2022), and *Zenithism (1921-1927): A Yugoslav Avant-Garde Anthology* (forthcoming 2022 from Academic Studies Press). Samantha considers collective work an underutilized element of scholarship (and the world at large) and welcomes various forms of collaboration.



### Emma Lerman

Emma received her B.A. from Hampshire College in 2016, where she majored in Russian language and literature and minored in theatre. She went on to receive her M.A. in Slavic Studies from Brown University in 2017. In 2021, Emma received her M.A. in International and Regional Studies with a specialization in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia from the University of Michigan. Her current research interests involve traumatic language/verse in literature, 20th-century Russian and Ukrainian poetry, memory studies, and translation.



# undergraduate focus

## Congratulations to our Graduates

After two years of Zoom-only graduation ceremonies, we welcomed our graduates to a remarkable, in-person, standing-room-only, celebration! The group shared laughs, congratulations, and refreshments in the Michigan Room at the Michigan League.



**Russian Majors:**  
Laurel Baker,  
Alice Becker\*\*,  
Nathaniel Bogardus,  
Alan Hedrick,  
Emmaleigh Krause,  
Victoria Markle\*\*,  
Rachael Merritt

**Polish Majors:**  
Paulina Buchta,  
Not pictured:  
Joseph Blattert\*\*



**Polish Minors:**  
Margaret Dominic,  
Sarah Gondek,  
Ewelina Papiez,  
Kami Ziolkowski



**Russian Minors:**  
Margaret Beste,  
Alexander Levashkevich,  
Ross London,  
Alexander Stubbs

## Slavic Department Undergraduate Awards 2022



### BEST PAPER IN A STUDENT'S NATIVE LANGUAGE

Emma Singleton,  
(Herbert Eagle, Slavic 312)

"Gender Consciousness: Rebellion and Conformity as a Reflections of Communist Patriarchal Ideology, Culture, and Reality in Eastern Europe"

### BEST WRITTEN WORK IN A LANGUAGE STUDIED IN THE SLAVIC DEPARTMENT

Laurel Baker, (Alina Makin, RC Lang 323)

"Definition of the Russian voice: Synthetic and comparative analysis of identity and transcontinental singing in the Altai folk song 'Kai kozhong' and the Russian folk song 'Pod rakitoyu'"

### BEST SPECIAL PROJECT

Natalie Oliven, (Elena Fort, Russian 102)

Video assignment / phone call  
— "A Call from Mother"



**Czech Minor:**  
Madylin Eberstein

**Bosnian / Croatian / Serbian Minors:**  
William Lee  
Not pictured:  
Bridget Grabowski



**Annual Award for Excellence in Russian & Ukrainian Languages:**  
Molly Duplaga



**Best Paper in a Student's Native Language:**  
Emma Singleton



**Excellence in Polish Language Studies Award:**  
Michele Jennings



**Best written work in a language studied in the Slavic Department:**  
Laurel Baker



**Excellence in Russian Language Studies Award:**  
Margaret Beste





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