

The Slavic Scene

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
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www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic

An image from *Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture*, an MSP Publication

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Letter From the Chair

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of curricular expansion and innovation for our department. In response to increased student interest, we are now offering both first and second year Ukrainian and first and second year Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian every year (previously, the first and second year courses were taught in alternating years). This is a significant development, because it allows students to begin study of these languages in every year. It reflects our commitment to teaching a robust range of Slavic languages, literatures and cultures (including also Czech, Polish and Russian), in which we offer undergraduate minors (and, of course, majors as well in Russian and Polish) and in which we encourage graduate study. This year alone we expect four graduate students to complete their Ph.D.'s with dissertation research on topics in Russian, Polish, Czech, and Ukrainian literature and culture. Last year graduate students completed dissertations on contemporary Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian literature, Russian literature (on Nabokov), and Ukrainian feminist art and political activism.



In addition to expanding language offerings, we have recently introduced, or will be teaching next semester, several new courses. These include Professor Michael Makin's course on the art, culture and literature of old Russia; Professor Olga Maiorova's on empire in 19th century Russian prose; Professor Sofya Khagi's on Baltic literatures and cultures; Professor Tatjana Aleksic's on vampires in Slavic cultures and globally; Professor Andrew Herscher's on technologies of memory in the former Yugoslavia; and Professor Benjamin Paloff's on Polish drama, as well as a series of minicourses on Ukrainian culture taught by Professor Mikhail Krutikov and by Lecturers Svitlana Rogovyk and Eugene Bondarenko. Lecturer Alina Makin has also introduced a very popular minicourse on Russian language, people and culture in the U.S. which also serves as an entry point to her service-learning course in which students help the local Russophone population. Our rich repertoire of minicourses and first-year seminars now also includes Professor Jindrich Toman's course on Prague, Professor Michael Makin's on sport in Russia, Lecturer Ewa Pasek's on Roma in Eastern Europe, and Lecturer Piotr Westwalewicz's on avant-garde art and on rock culture in Poland. Thus, we continue to expand the cultural and disciplinary range of our offerings.

We have been busy with research and writing as well. Benjamin Paloff's *Lost in the Shadow of the Word: Space, Time, and Freedom in Interwar Eastern Europe* will be forthcoming from Northwestern University Press next year, and over the next year or two we anticipate new books from Olga Maiorova (on the Russian Empire's cultural appropriation of Central Asia), Jindrich Toman (on Jews in Czech culture) and Sofya Khagi (on Victor Pelevin's poetics, politics and metaphysics). Also coming out soon will be two edited volumes: Mikhail Krutikov and two co-editors on children and Yiddish literature, and Tatjana Aleksic and our former graduate student Aleksandar Boskovic (now teaching at Columbia) on independent media during the former Yugoslavia's wars of the 1990s. Our lecturers are continually advancing their skills in language pedagogy and assessment: Svitlana Rogovik and Nina Shkolnik recently achieved full certification as ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) oral proficiency testers for Russian, and Ewa Pasek achieved the same certification for Polish. Ewa is also very active in expanding and improving instruction of the language as acting president of the North American Association of Teachers of Polish. Marija Rosic has been sharing her work on the simultaneous teaching of the Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian variants of the language with colleagues at national and international conferences.

Since this is my last semester as department chair, I want to close by expressing my sincerest personal gratitude to all of you for the many ways you have helped us sustain and develop rich programs in all of our languages and literatures over the past nine years.

Have a wonderful and healthy year,


Herbert (Herb) Eagle hjeagle@umich.edu

The Slavic Scene

Congratulations Graduates



Ukrainian students, Polish Majors and Minors, Russian Majors and Minors, & Prof. Benjamin Paloff and Jessica Zychowicz, PhD

2015 Slavic Graduates

Michael Aronov*

Minor in Russian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Megan Boczar

Minor in Polish
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Heather Dorbeck*

Minor in Russian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Zoya Erdevig

Minor in Ukrainian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Isabelle Stamler- Goody*

Russian Major

Katheryn Johnson

Russian Major

Melissa Kucemba

Polish Major

Timothy Lilienthal

Russian Major

Michelle Matusinski

Polish Major

Jude Palmer

Minor in Russian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Karolina Papiez

Polish Major

Katarzyna Pazik**

Minor in Polish
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Orest Ryvak*

Minor in Ukrainian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Medea Shanidze

Minor in Russian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Craig Send

Minor in Russian
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Elliot Slowiczek

Polish Major

Dennis Smythe

Minor in Polish
Language, Literature, &
Culture

Alexandra Talovich

Polish Major

Stacy Tomczyk**

Minor in Culture &
Literature of Eastern
Europe

Samantha Voutyras

Russian Major

Stasha Yancho

Russian Major



Slavic 2015 Award Winners

Excellence in Polish Studies: Theresa Dowker
and Lauren Pryszcz

Excellence in BCS Studies: Ava Tavrazich

Excellence in Ukrainian Studies: Katerina
Chekhovskiy



Ava Tavrazich and Marija Rosic

*Denotes December 2014 Graduate

**Denotes August 2015 Graduate

PhD, Slavic Languages and Literatures



Mariya Lomakina

Fall 2014
Dissertation:

*Vladimir Nabokov and
Women Writers*



Jessica Zychowicz

Summer 2015
Dissertation:

*Superfluous Women:
Gender, Art, and
Activism after
Ukraine's Orange
Revolution*

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Graduate Student Focus



**Congratulations
to Chris Fort and
Alena Aniskiewicz
on becoming PhD
candidates in Fall
2015!**



U-M Graduate Students Awarded Fellowships for Humanities Without Walls Pre-Doctoral Workshop

The Institute for the Humanities is pleased to announce that two graduate students from the University of Michigan attended a predoctoral workshop this past summer for career preparation inside and outside the academy as part of the Humanities Without Walls (HWW) initiative.

Meghan Forbes (Slavic Languages and Literatures) and Hannah McMurray (Germanic Languages and Literatures) joined graduate student colleagues from the other member universities of the HWW consortium: the 13 schools of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) plus the University of Notre Dame and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The full list of fellows is available on the HWW website.

Funded by the Mellon Foundation, HWW brings together 15 university partners to promote interinstitutional research partnerships (see the Global Midwest Research Challenge) as well as graduate student career preparation. Graduate student participants in this past summer's three week workshop in Chicago engaged in intensive discussions with organizers of public humanities projects, leaders of university presses and learned societies, experts in the various domains of the digital humanities, representatives of governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and holders of important nonfaculty positions in colleges and universities.

-Excerpted with permission from The Institute for the Humanities; original article by Patrick Tonks.

Graduate Student Updates

Paulina Duda received a Rackham Summer Grant, enabling her to complete a chapter of her dissertation. She did archival research at the Bibliothèque Polonaise à Paris and the Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Paris, investigating the role of a Romantic artist in nation-building processes. Additionally, she continues to write film reviews for the East European Film Bulletin. This upcoming fall, she looks forward to teaching first-year Polish and presenting a paper at the Midwest Popular Culture Association.

Bradley Goerne was the co-coordinator of the Avant-Garde Interest Group in 2014-2015, and received a FLAS for summer 2015 to study third-year Czech at Masaryk University's Department of Czech for Foreigners in Brno.

Jodi Greig received a Rackham International Research Award for her research project "Staging Transgender Lives: Piotr Włast and Ewa Hołuszko in Polish Theater" in Poland, as well as the Susan Lipshutz Award from Rackham, which recognizes and supports promising women scholars.

Meghan Forbes completed her year-long Fulbright Fellowship to Berlin on July 15th, 2015. She traveled to Chicago this summer as part of the first Mellon-

(continued on next page)

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Meet Our Newest Graduate Students



Aleks Marciniak

Aleks Marciniak graduated from The George Washington University in 2012 with a B.A. in Russian Language and Literature. As an undergraduate, she had the opportunities to study abroad in Moscow and intern in Warsaw, Poland. Following graduation, she studied in St. Petersburg, Russia for one year as a participant on the Russian Overseas Flagship Program. At the University of Michigan, Aleks plans to explore Polish-Russian relations through literary, historical, and cultural contexts. She is also eager to research the cultural and linguistic nuances of eastern Poland. A creature of habit, Aleks eats two breakfasts a day and calls her grandmother once a week.



Grace Mahoney

Grace Mahoney is originally from Idaho and has also lived in Seattle where she did her undergrad and worked after graduation. She comes to Michigan having spent a year in Ukraine on a Fulbright student research grant. Her research interests include Ukrainian and Russian literature, memory, women's voices, art and history.

sponsored Humanities Without Walls Predoctoral Fellowship. She also became a contributor to the Michigan Quarterly Review's blog earlier in the summer.

Chris Fort was awarded a Fulbright to Uzbekistan for 2015-2016. He also received a Rackham International Research Award in 2015 for "Research on Parricide in 20th Century Uzbek Literature and Language Study."

Grace Mahoney received a 2015 Davis Graduate Student Travel Grant for the ASEEEES conference this fall, and also received a FLAS for Ukrainian for the 2015-16 academic year.

Jana Mazurkiewicz staged her play "Wooden Wars" on campus in late May. Additionally, her book "Śmierć czy zmartwychwstanie. Współczesny teatr jidysz w Europie na tle historycznym" ("Death or Resurrection: Contemporary Yiddish Theater in Europe and its Historical Background") was published. She received a Copernicus award through the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies for her summer research in Poland, where she spent time in the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw researching Yiddish Theater in Poland after World War II.

Reflections on PhD Progress & Upcoming Post Doc at University of Toronto

by Jessica Zychowicz

This past Spring on April 22, which happens to be Earth Day, I successfully defended my dissertation, entitled *Superfluous Women: Gender, Art, and Activism After Ukraine's Orange Revolution*. Although I had chosen the date of my defense based solely on the scheduling needs of my committee, the connection to my project seemed apropos of the topic, considering the origins of Earth Day among globally-minded student activists at the U-M. On September 1st I started my position as the Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at Univ. of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs' Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine. As a Fellow, I will be working on revising my

dissertation into a book and will teach one graduate seminar on gender and society in Eastern Europe. My design for the course draws heavily upon my own research, based in a comparative approach to the question of nation and culture, which I have our U-M Slavic Department to thank for due to the integration of multiple Slavic cultures into the Ph.D. program, as well as my cognate in History, CREES, and the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

One benefit to studying gender is the rigorous interdisciplinarity with which it requires scholars to approach questions pertaining

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Undergraduate Focus

Summer 2014 Internship in the Czech Republic

By Lizzie Vana

Terracotta roofs, compact cars, and unbelievable memories. These are just a few of the wonderful ingredients of my Czech experience that was my last summer in Ostrava, Czech Republic. I decided to minor in Czech Language, Literature, and Culture my first year of college, and I've never looked back. The culture and language are what made me so entranced by the country.

I started my experience abroad in a hostel with ten other students, all of whom are from different countries. I was the only American, and looking back, that was the most important part of my travels. Not only was I immersed in the culture I chose, but I was also taught how to cook Thai peanut noodles, how to play rugby from a Filipino, and how to savor authentic French cheese during a meal, taught by a Frenchman. After two weeks, I was placed with a host family.

Lizzie with other interns atop Ostrava City Hall.



Lizzie (bottom left) enjoying dinner with her host family.

I travelled to the Czech Republic to be surrounded by a culture I thought I liked. I returned to the States with tons of incredible new friends, interesting knowledge of eleven different countries in addition to the Czech Republic, and most importantly, confidence in knowing that I don't just like Czech language and culture; I love it.

Lizzie was awarded a monetary scholarship from the Slavic Department to help defray the costs of participating in this program.

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In the Classroom

Lights! Camera! Polish Action!

By Ewa M. Pasek

I have been teaching third year Polish in the Slavic Department for many years. The Polish 321 course is one of the most enjoyable classes I teach, most of the students who enroll in it form a small but intellectually powerful cohort of minors and majors in Polish Studies.

In the Fall 2014 semester, I had a wonderful opportunity to incorporate a unique cultural event into the course curriculum: *Martin Scorsese Presents: Masterpieces of Polish Cinema*. Ann Arbor's Michigan Theatre was one of the 30 cinemas in the U.S. and Canada that hosted a series of 21 Polish films curated by acclaimed movie director Martin Scorsese. The series featured brand-new digital restorations of classic works made between 1957 and 1987 by some of Poland's most famous filmmakers. In his introduction to the series, Martin Scorsese emphasized the impact Polish cinematography had on him when he was a young student at NYU: "I learned not just how films are made but why." It was a powerful message that strongly confirmed the importance of the culture the students in the Polish language program chose as the core of their academic focus.

The Slavic Department sponsored two free tickets for each enrolled student, and additional tickets were provided by the Copernicus Program in Polish Studies. Each student chose one film that reflected his/her academic, artistic, or personal interests, and prepared a 15-minute presentation in Polish about the selected film. The presenters provided a brief synopsis, reflected on the universal message the film conveyed, and discussed the culture specific elements they considered difficult to understand for the American audience.

In their presentations, the students discussed the moral dilemma of choosing between two opposite ideologies and consequences of such choice (*Ashes and Diamonds*), human perception of time-passing, and inevitability and irreversibility of death (*The Hour-glass Sanatorium*), the trauma of war and inability to return to old life routines and moral values (*Jump*), and the controversies around the death penalty (*Short Film about Killing*). They also discussed the symbolism and culture specific references to WWII and post-war political reality in Poland that could not be understood without a historical and cultural background.

Incorporating Polish masterpiece classics had multiple benefits. The students not only practiced their language skills. They realized much of their rich knowledge of Polish culture and history came from courses at U-M. They also had a rare opportunity to participate in a big Polish-culture related event that gathered

a huge and versatile audience from beyond academia, proving that Polish artistic and political life is not only a narrow field of academic discourse.

Students' film choices:

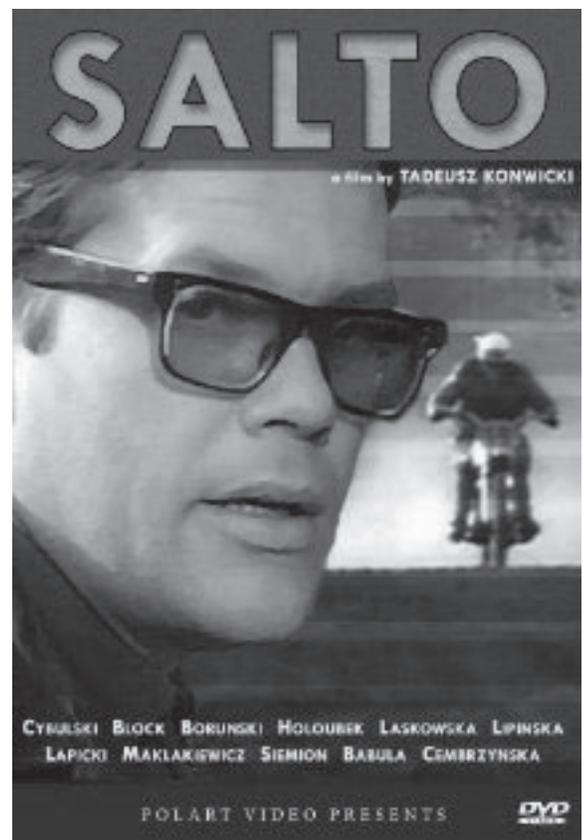
Michał Dembicki: *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958) *Popiół i diament*, Andrzej Wajda

Megan Boczar: *Jump* (1965) *Salto*, Tadeusz Konwicki

Alexandra Talovich: *The Hour-glass Sanatorium* (1973) *Sanatorium pod Klepsydrą*, Wojciech Has

David Cichocki: *Short film about Killing* (1987) *Krótki film o zabijaniu*, Krzysztof Kieślowski

Movie cover for the film *Salto* (1965).



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Faculty Focus

A Year in Review

by Sofya Khagi



The 2015 Michigan Humanities Award, which I was honored to receive for my current book project, *Mbytes of Unfreedom: Victor Pelevin's Poetics, Politics, Metaphysics*, has allowed me to dedicate myself to research and writing for the entire calendar year.

Mbytes of Unfreedom is the first monograph-length study of arguably the most important writer in post-Soviet Russia. I became fascinated by Pelevin

in the mid-1990s, when his now-classic novel *Chapaev and Emptiness* came out. My scholarly work on this writer commenced about a decade later. Pelevin has become a spokesman for the generation that came of age in the 1990s under duress from a disintegrating empire. He has been compared to the classics of socio-metaphysical fantasy like Gogol, Kafka, and Borges, and celebrated for the past two decades as the most “zeitgeisty” of contemporary writers. For millions of readers Pelevin has captured Brave New Russia with unprecedented acuity—and, for some, has in part succumbed to these corrupt realities himself. The motive behind my study of this highly influential, highly contested writer is to present Pelevin as a serious artist and thinker whose thought—including Dostoevsky-like obsessive reflections on (un)freedom—unfolds organically through his oeuvre. In my reading, while Pelevin develops his narratives along a stable set of key motifs such as hypercommodification, dehumanization, social reduction, illusions, and the lies of language and critical theory, he builds upon his preceding works and introduces new insights in his later books. As I argue, the divergent levels of his texts—their poetics, politics, metaphysics, ontology—are highly coordinated to produce a paradoxical but thorough and ultimately unforgiving diagnosis of the contemporary condition.

Besides this larger project, there have been many exciting things in the works, and more to come. A special issue of *Science Fiction Film and Television* “Filming the Strugatskiis” came out, featuring essays by my good colleagues and friends, which included my own contribution on Fyodor Bondarchuk’s *The Inhabited Island*. It was great to contribute an essay on Garros-Evdokimov and Alexander Ilichevsky for *The Human Reimagined: Posthumanism in Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia*, the first collection of articles dedicated to the topic of posthumanism in the Russian context. I also enjoyed reviewing (for *Slavic and East European Journal*) two fine collections:

50 Writers: An Anthology of 20th Century Russian Short Stories by Valentina Brougher, Frank Miller, and Mark Lipovetsky; and *Fyodor Tyutchev: Selected Poems* by John Dewey. I’ve had an opportunity to present a paper on the panel “Russian and Polish Dystopian Film” at the 2015 BASEES conference in Cambridge, UK. Next, I am looking forward to taking part in the “Teaching Russian and East European Science Fiction” roundtable at the 2015 ASEES in Philadelphia as well as acting as discussant at a panel dedicated to Pelevin at that same convention. I am also planning to present at the Nordic Slavists Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden (Summer 2016) and at “Scientific Utopias in Soviet Union: Fiction, science and power (1917-1991)” conference in Paris, France (Fall 2016).

When I resume teaching in the Winter of 2016, I will offer Russian 499, “What is Art?” and a new course, Slavic 261, “Introduction to Baltic Cultures.” I am looking forward to teaching my regular advanced seminar in Russian, a class that typically attracts a group of warm and dedicated students. I am also very excited about Slavic 261 because, due to historical-political reasons, the cultures of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have not been studied for a long time, and are almost never taught in American academia. My interdisciplinary course will provide a broad overview of the histories, societies, and cultures of the Baltics from the pagan age to contemporary times. Baltic cultures have unique multicultural and multi-ethnic dimensions, and have made significant contributions to literature, fine arts, music, architecture, sciences, and politics. I hope my students will learn a lot, and will learn to love, these little-known but beautiful lands and people.

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Benjamin Paloff Awarded 2015 NEA Literary Translation Fellowship

Professor Benjamin Paloff was amongst a select group of projects awarded the 2015 Literary Translation Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. The NEA awarded a total of \$275,000 to 20 translators' grant proposals, in efforts to bring the work of writers from around the globe to a larger audience. Prof. Paloff's grant will support the translation from the Polish of Dorota Maslowska's novel, *Honey, I Killed the Cats*. Maslowska (b. 1983) is an award-winning, internationally bestselling young author who is among the most respected writers of her generation searching for a new self-definition in post-Communist space. *Honey, I Killed the Cats* is her third novel. Prof. Paloff also translated her first novel, *Snow White, Russian Red*. Congratulations!



Alina Poghosyan: Manoogian Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow



When I was to come to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor I was meeting with my friends to say goodbye. One of them – Hambik – was also about to leave Armenia. He is a Syrian man with Armenian origin. He had fled from Syria and intended to reach Germany. We were talking about our journeys. I would take a plane and reach Detroit in 13 hours. A taxi would be waiting to take me to the flat I had rented. My passage was to be comfortable and well arranged.

Unlike me, Hambik was in fog about his trip. He had to leave for Turkey and find those who would smuggle him to Greece across the sea. Thereupon he would surmount the borders of Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Austria and finally reach Germany. He was happy he could swim, so if the boat capsized he would probably survive unlike thousands of refugees who died in the Mediterranean and Aegean waters this summer. He had no idea how long it would take him to reach Germany, and where he would find shelter and food if his journey lasted too long and he ran out of money. My journey promised me new opportunities, while his journey put him in absolute uncertainty suggesting just a hope for a better life.

Journey, passage, movement, various reasons and purposes of leaving the home country, losses and achievements, new knowledge, new work, new home, risk, hope ... these are what my friend and I were going to face and explore. These are what I have worked on since my PhD study. My PhD thesis was devoted to the migration practices and cultural transformations entailed by them. I received my PhD in the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. Currently I work at the University of Michigan as a Manoogian post-doc fellow. I am going to write my PhD dissertation and prepare it for publication as a book. In the second semester I am going to teach a course on migration as a factor instigating cultural dialogs, influencing transnationalism and nationalism discourses, economic activities, public movements, and other developments in the post-Soviet area. I hope that after that course my students will be more familiar with multisided aspects of migration and grow interested in creative reflections about the movements of people, cultures and capital.

The Slavic Scene

Staying Connected

William Lamping



My interest in Russian and Slavic Studies derives from my family's heritage – my mother's family is from Belarus, my father's is from Poland and Serbia (they were ethnic Germans in Serbia, not Serbs). The University of Michigan offered enormous opportunities to pursue my interests. As a 4th generation Wolverine, my family is well-aware of the value of Michigan degree. In fact, four of my great-great uncles graduated from U of M in 1914 and went on to fight for Polish independence in the 1920s.

Learning Russian has given me access to my family's history, through documents, passports, and photos in Russian and Trasianka, a pidgin mixing of Russian and Belarusian.

The resources available through the Slavic Languages Department are phenomenal. My sophomore year, I spent Spring Break in St. Petersburg and northern Russia as a member of the Slavic Languages Department Alternate Spring Break program. In my junior year, I interned with a Polish political party in their Warsaw office. That internship led to my first job after I graduated in 2013. Since then, I

have worked in European Parliament, a Bulgarian think tank, and interned for the Hudson Institute on Russian strategic studies. Especially in the aftermath of the Maidan Revolution, a background in Central & Eastern Europe offers significant career opportunities in U.S. foreign policy.

I entered the Gerald. R. Ford School of Public Policy to further my professional interests last year through a Master's of Public Policy. Currently, I study Ukrainian and as a Graduate Student Instructor, I teach Russian and Soviet History. Last summer, I interned with the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tirana, Albania. Currently, I seek to enter the State Department as a member of the Foreign Service.

Through my time at Michigan, I connected with my family heritage, I have traveled across Eastern Europe, and utilized my degree as a foundation for my dream career in international affairs. I am proud to be a graduate of the Slavic Languages Department. Go Blue! Давай синий!

William graduated with a major in Russian May 2013.

We'd love to hear from you!

If you're an alumnus or otherwise affiliated with the Slavic Department, and want to share your story about how the department has impacted your life, please contact us at slavic@umich.edu. You may be featured in an upcoming issue!

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Anastasia Tkach



Anastasia Tkach is currently in her second year of an MA in Russian and Eastern European Regional Studies at Columbia University. Studying Ukrainian language and culture at the University of Michigan continues to shape her interests, as she pursues the developments and contemporary events of Ukraine in her academic research today. At Columbia, Anastasia has continued to study the Ukrainian language in addition to taking courses

pertaining to Ukrainian foreign policy, media, and history. Through these classes, Anastasia researched topics including the early implementation of the lustration law in Ukraine, as well as the use of 'Euromaidan' social media sites after the demonstrations ended. Courses in U-M's Slavic department prepared her to meet author Serhiy Zhadan at a conference on Kharkiv held at Columbia this past winter, as well as to return to Kyiv, Ukraine in the summer to conduct thesis research.

In the first half of 2015, she interned at Freedom House, working on its Nations in Transit publication and conducting research on democratization in post-Soviet states. She is currently working on her Master's thesis which will focus on public space in Ukraine, looking closely at the ways in which decommunization laws, reforms, and the memorialization of protest space have attempted to change public space in Ukraine and make the country more democratic. These academic interests have all developed and grown from her first introduction to the study of Ukrainian language and culture at the University of Michigan—her very first introduction? Svitlana Rogovyk's mini-course on Ukrainian culture.

Anastasia graduated with a minor in Ukrainian Language, Literature & Culture in May 2014.

Justin Zemaitis



My name is Justin Zemaitis, and I received my B.A. from the University of Michigan in 2014 with concentrations in International Studies and Russian. Following graduation, I really wanted to continue in Slavic studies, and enrolled in the Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies (REEES) M.A. program at U-M. I have always been fascinated with Slavic languages and literature (and I have Slavic heritage), and I figured that focusing more on international relations in different REEES related

regions would be really beneficial in becoming a more rounded individual concerning the Slavic field of study. I aspire to work for the U.S. State

Department and to establish a career that utilizes my Russian or Ukrainian language skills, along with my knowledge of REEES and everything that I have learned from my academic experience at U-M. Following graduation from the M.A. program, I am planning to move to Moscow and teaching English for a semester or so, while applying for jobs in the U.S. government.

Justin graduated with a major in Russian in August 2014.

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In Print

Professor Paloff Releases Second Poetry Collection



Assistant Professor Benjamin Paloff's second collection of poetry, *And His Orchestra*, was released on October 6. In it, he "examines how we relate to others by relating to ourselves, and vice-versa—how the speech that runs through our heads as we run errands, wash the dishes, or brush

our teeth is always and inescapably in conversation with those to whom we owe an unpayable debt. In poems that orchestrate imaginal dialogues with absent friends, *And His Orchestra* traces the inner experience of attachment, intimacy, and separation."

—Text from *Carnegie Mellon University Press*

Professor Paloff will be doing a reading from his new book as part of the "Poetry at Literati" Series at Literati Bookstore, 124 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor, on November 4th, at 7pm.

The Joy of Recognition: Selected Essays of Omry Ronen

by Michael Wachtel

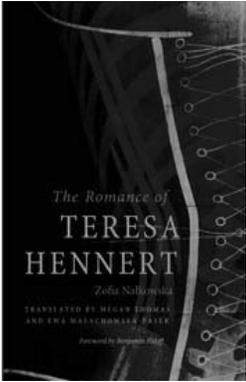
On November 1–2, 2013, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures organized a conference in memory of Omry Ronen (July 12, 1937, Odessa–November 1, 2012, Ann Arbor). The conference included papers given by his former students as well as an evening of recollections. During the conference many participants expressed their regret that Omry's English-language essays were published in journals that are not easily accessible. Barry Scherr and I suggested that we put together a volume of this work, and Herbert Eagle and Jindrich Toman expressed their willingness to publish it as part of Michigan Slavic Publications. That volume is now complete.

In addition to twenty essays written in English, it includes Barry's keynote address at the conference ("Omry Ronen's Critical Legacy"), an interview with Omry translated from Russian, and Omry's complete bibliography. Thanks to the enthusiastic participation of his former students — Karen Evans-Romaine, Sara Feldman, Susanne Fusso, Julie Hansen, Olga Peters Hasty, Yvonne Howell, Mariya Lomakina, Nancy

Pollak, Karen Rosenflanz, and Timothy D. Sergay — we were also able to offer translations of selected essays from his Russian language scholarship. The book, entitled *The Joy of Recognition: Selected Essays of Omry Ronen*, is about 550 pages in length, and we believe that it does justice to the breadth of Omry's erudition. We plan to celebrate its appearance at a reception during this year's ASEES conference in Philadelphia. (Look for the announcement in the conference program.) In addition to this volume, Omry's legacy will be honored by a special forum in *SEEJ* (vol. 59, no. 2, 2015), with essays from the memorial conference by Sara Feldman, Olga Hasty, Timothy D. Sergay, and Michael Wachtel. The other conference essays, supplemented by several new pieces, will be published in *Uppsala University's Acta Upsaliensis* (Eastern Europe series), edited by Herbert Eagle, Karen Evans-Romaine, and Julie Hansen.

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Ewa Pasek's Translation of "The Romance of Teresa Hennert"



Ewa Pasek, lecturer in Polish and Czech, and Megan Thomas' translation of Zofia Nalkowska's *The Romance of Teresa Hennert* with an introduction from Prof. Benjamin Paloff was published this past year by Northern Illinois University Press, and has been nominated as a finalist for the AATSEEL (American

Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages) 2015 Literary Translation Prize. The Prize committee plans to announce the results by mid-November.

new Polish society, from a bumbling lieutenant who cannot stand his home life to a young Communist who believes his forebears have made a mess that only the next generation can clean up. In this world, ideological battles, personal animosity, postwar trauma, and infidelity become inextricably bound together, driving these colorful, increasingly confused characters toward corruption, suicide, and murder. Nalkowska (1884– 1954), though long neglected in the West, was a central figure in the literary life of interwar Poland and was an early pioneer of feminist fiction in Central Europe. Her spare, witty prose will surprise contemporary readers with its frank sexuality and stark illustration of dreams gone horribly, humiliatingly, dramatically awry.

From *The Times* Literary Supplement: "The characters' differing points of view, with the narrator's ironic omniscience never far away, are exceptionally well rendered in this translation, which contains helpful historical footnotes and is part of a project to bring the modernist works of Nalkowska to the attention of English readers."

-Novel summary excerpted from Northern Illinois University Press

The *Romance of Teresa Hennert* is a masterpiece of psychological realism and a still-shocking portrait of mixed motives and bad behavior. It renders a tragicomic vision of what happens when a society is suddenly deprived of the struggle that had defined it for more than a century. Written in 1922, just four years after Poland achieved independence from its neighboring empires, the novel focuses on a Warsaw community of officers, bureaucrats, intellectuals, wives, and lovers, all of them adrift in a hell of their own making—the long-sought freedom to shape their own destiny. At the center of this milieu is Teresa Hennert, whose youthful charm, modern habits, and apparent indifference to the emotional torment of those around her make her an inescapable object of their fascination and desire. Told in multiple voices and from numerous perspectives, Zofia Nalkowska's novel is a mosaic of dysfunction at all levels of the

The Slavic Scene

Graduate Student Focus

(continued from “Reflections on PhD Progress and Upcoming Post Doc at University of Toronto” pg. 5)

to the body, language, and politics. In my own intellectual trajectory, I have gained immensely from the preparation in theory and textual analysis that I received in our Slavic Department. My dissertation committee Chair, Benjamin Paloff, has transformed how I understand what a text is, and with it, a keener understanding of poetics, translation, and how to parse the written page as a kind of artifact of time. I owe thanks to Dr. Brian Porter-Szúcs in History for teaching me how to remain a skeptic of history, and thus, also for bringing critical value to my work. I remain humbled by Elena Gapova and her lifetime of work in the field of women’s and gender studies on both sides of the Atlantic. I am also indebted to Herbert J. Eagle for providing me with a visual vocabulary, steering our department, and for invaluable insights into the links between pedagogy and research.

I aspire to one day offer my own students the generous intellectual support that I have received from the Faculty at U-M. I thank Olga Maiorova for providing me with confidence and for her service as Director of CREES. I am thankful for Sofiya Khagi’s help during prelim exams and Tatjana Aleksic’s insights into the research process. I am especially grateful to Svitlana Rogovyk for her talents as a language teacher, especially for the open-heartedness with which she has shared her native language with me. I thank Ewa Małachowska-Pasek and Piotr Westwalewicz for compelling me to think—and sing—in Polish. Nina Shkolnik’s Russian lessons have also been indispensable. I also remain in admiration of Geneviève Zubrzycki in her work, her leadership as Director of CREES, and as a friend. Marysia Ostafin’s energy and friendship are also the cornerstones of our community. The Copernicus Program and the Weiser Center have made it possible for me to travel abroad for research and to engage with Polish culture in Ann Arbor; I owe thanks to the many staff members of these programs, and to Jean McKee. There are also many graduate student colleagues I would like to acknowledge whose names are too numerous to add here.

This upcoming year, in addition to participating in activities at the Munk School for Global Affairs, I will deliver two public lectures and collaborating within the Ukraine Research Group, which includes scholars from outside institutions, as well as the three visiting scholars from Europe. I am especially interested in how public diplomacy and the academy are converging and shaping global discourses in the arts and humanities. U-M CREES gave me valuable experience as Graduate Student Representative to the

Board. I have also received support from U-M in writing grants aimed at increasing diversity. In 2010, I worked with scholars, diplomats, and NGO leaders in an I.I.E.-U.S. Department of State summit on diversity in Prague. Fall of 2013, I lead a discussion hosted by our Slavic Department with former President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko and First Lady Kateryna Yushchenko. I also had opportunities to explore teaching and research using Technology and New Media. In 2014 I attended the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at U-Victoria supported by our U-M Slavic Dept. and Institute for the Humanities. I have benefitted from workshops with U-M faculty interested in civil rights and the Internet through the inter-campus initiative FemTechNet, housed at the U-M Third Century Initiative. At U-Toronto I will enrich my interests along all of these lines at Citizen Lab, a global research institute focused on the role of the Internet in civic protest.

In short, the creative ecosystem at U-M could offer no better moment than now for seizing upon the changing contexts in which we produce and value scholarship. One of my aims over the next year is to serve as a bridge for the Slavic Studies communities of Toronto and Ann Arbor. I cannot thank my colleagues and mentors at U-M enough for their ongoing support in creating sustainable peer networks, challenging courses, and challenging me, for me at least, is at the very core of what makes the University last—in time, in memory, and in writing—as a public institution.

If I could travel back to the (now oh-so-distant!) past of 2008 in order to start my Ph.D. all over again, would I? Certainly not! Yet perhaps I would, if that were to determine the difference in being able to continue collaborating with my fellow travelers on the future of writing. Either way, we are each bound in some way to time and to repetition in the truths we pursue: “But what am I going to see? / I don’t know. In a certain sense, it depends on you.” —Stanisław Lem, *Solaris*.

The Slavic Scene

Where in the World

It's a Small World!

Unbeknownst to the other, Prof. Benjamin Paloff and Marysia Ostafin (Manager at the Weiser Center and the Executive Director of the Copernicus Program) were both in Warsaw's POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews at the same time this past summer. They literally bumped into each other and snapped this happy photo.



Prof. Benjamin Paloff and Marysia Ostafin

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