

Slavic News: Winter 2022



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR, KATARZYNA DZIWIUREK

Dear Friends of the Slavic Department,



Happy 2022! I hope you are doing well and adjusting to our not quite post-pandemic reality with its constant ups and downs. Fall was a breath of fresh air, as most of our instructors returned to teach on campus. Interacting with students in person is so much more rewarding and

meaningful! Winter, with its gray weather, brought a return to the, by now quite tiresome, online teaching. There is hope for the spring, though!

First, I want to share with you some amazing news. It was 20 years ago, in the winter of 2002, that a group of volunteers started dreaming of establishing a chair of Polish Studies at the University of Washington. April 2002 saw our first outreach event: Tom Podl's presentation on *Colors of Identity: Discovering Polish Heritage through Art*. The same year we received two grants to organize a speaker series entitled *50 Years of Polish at the UW: Celebrating Polish American Heritage*. In 2004, a very generous gift from Izabella and Andrzej Turski enabled us to continue the series, now known as **Distinguished Speaker Series**, which has since presented over 80 public events: lectures, meetings with authors and artists, film screenings, exhibits on Polish art, history, famous Poles, etc.

In addition to the Speaker Series, we have held four UW Polish Studies Auctions, which raised over \$120,000. In June 2005, we established **UW Polish**

Studies Endowment Committee (UW PSEC) and created the UW Polish Studies Endowment Fund. We also developed a unique **University of Washington Fulbright Lectureship**, now called **Fulbright Slavic Award**, which combines funds from the Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission and UW PSEC to bring lecturers in Polish Studies to the university. In 2007, we established a **Student Scholarship Fund** to award financial aid to UW students interested in pursuing studies in Poland.

And now, our work and dedication have borne fruit. Thanks to a very generous donation from Ryszard Kott, **Maria Kott Endowed Professorship in Polish Studies** at UW became a reality, which means that Polish language and culture will be taught at the UW as long as the university exists. We are beyond grateful to Ryszard and his family for choosing to honor his wife Maria (Isia) by donating so magnanimously to a cause she was passionate about. You can read about Isia, a truly remarkable human being and one of UW PSEC's founding members, in a separate article.

After 20 years of monthly Saturday (!) morning (!!)

meetings, fundraising campaigns, event planning, etc., I can say that it is truly amazing to behold creation, to see something arise out of nothing thanks to the good will and generosity of a community. I am deeply thankful that I was able to be a part of UW PSEC, a grass

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roots organization of volunteers, whose selflessness and dedication are truly awe-inspiring.

In other news, this academic year we are hosting a public lecture series focused on equity, diversity and inclusion issues in the Slavic field. The inaugural event took place on December 4th and featured Jennifer Wilson, a contributing essayist for *The New York Times Book Review* and a contributing writer for *The Nation*, speaking about *A Book Critic's Task: From Gogol's Bullshit Jobs to Elena Ferrante's Class Fictions*. The next lecture, *At the Crossroads of Invisible Paths: Russia's Indigenous Writers in Local and Global Context*, will be given by Prof. Naomi Caffee of Reed College. It will take place on January 20th on zoom. The series will conclude on April 21st with a talk by Prof. Sunnie Rucker-Chang (University of Cincinnati) on *Re-envisioning Blackness in Southeast European Culture and Film*.

In addition to those marquee events we also plan to host several other speakers and Prof. Michael Biggins continues to lead the Readings from the Heart of Europe book club. Please make sure to check our website and Facebook to learn about future events!

I want to close by wishing you all a very good New Year: much success in your professional endeavors and much joy and fulfillment in your private lives. And, for all of us, may this virus and its nasty variants be obliterated in 2022!

All the best,

Kat Dziwinek

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A new collaborative [project](#), *Choose to Study Russian for Professional Needs*, funded by a Startalk* grant brings together three Russian language educators—Dr. Svetlana Abramova of the University of Washington, Dr. Maria Khotimsky, MIT, and Dr. Veronika Egorova, Harvard University—to develop a new web-based resource. It will incorporate a series of interviews with professionals in different fields, language practice activities, along with supplementary materials for promoting language study.

The project serves several goals, corresponding to the national need for studying critical languages (Russian):

- Persuade students to achieve advance-level proficiency,
- Advocate for studying Russian language,
- Develop an educational resource based on authentic Russian language materials in professional/ STEM-related fields.

Through conversations with native and near-native speakers of Russian who represent successful careers, this resource will inspire students to pursue advanced Russian proficiency in achieving success in different professional fields. The project will develop an open access educational multimedia resource that highlights Russian language use in a variety of STEM-related and public service fields to prepare students for careers as global professionals in IT and Cybersecurity, Public Health, Economics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Environmental and Energy Studies, and Aerospace Engineering. This resource will allow Russian-language students to delve into different content areas where Russian language proficiency plays an important role and provide them with a vision of job and career development opportunities.

Although students often expect their instructors to advocate for studying languages, in this project, they can see a diversity of points of view and perspectives on education and career tracks in different fields and hear not a *single* instructor's voice, but a polyphony of voices in Russian, sharing insights on pursuing superior proficiency level in the study of language and career path in science. The interviews and accompanying materials will show Russian-language professionals who advocate for the importance of learning and inspire students to work on their critical language skills.

Offered as an open-access resource, this website will provide an exceptional material for teaching content-based Russian language courses, using topics in STEM-related fields and filling in the lacunae for teaching Russian at the advanced level for content-based courses. This resource will be uniquely positioned in the field of Russian language pedagogy, since to date

there are limited resources addressing STEM and professional development topics. Dr. Egorova points out: "The majority of our students who study Russian are STEM majors, however, there is a lack of STEM-themed materials in the Russian language pedagogy field. I hope that this resource will address our students' academic interests and professional needs and provide additional motivation to continue studying Russian."

This project will be a crucial step in developing more pedagogical materials for XXI-century language proficiency, attuned to different fields. The new resource will be incorporated in teaching *Extended Russian through STEM*, the course offered in the Slavic department in fall 2022. The website is expected to go live in summer 2023.

-Svetlana Abramova

**STARTALK is a federal grant program funded by the National Security Agency and administered by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. The STARTALK mission is to increase the number of students enrolled in the study of critical-need foreign languages in K-16, as well as the number of highly effective teachers of those languages, and to create state of the art programs, materials, and curricula that exemplify best teaching practices.*

Update from SEETAW – Slavic and East European Teachers Association of Washington

The Pacific NW Council for Languages is holding its second virtual conference in March 18-19, 2022. Vinton Eberly and I are planning to submit two proposals for SEETAW:

- One for a recorded session where we'd like to gather and share briefly about any and all opportunities for learning Slavic and East European languages in this region.
- One for a live "meet-up" for anyone connected with Slavic and East European languages across these states (WA, OR, ID, MT, AK, WY) (and beyond, of course!).

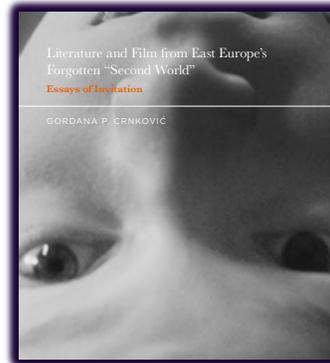
Since the conference is free and virtual, please consider registering to attend our sessions and any others of interest. They are still accepting [submissions for session proposals](#). It's a great opportunity to present to a broader audience since it's likely to attract people from outside the region because it's virtual.

If you would like to support and expand the teaching and learning of Slavic and East European languages in schools, colleges, and the community, we welcome you to [join SEETAW](#) (it's free!) and we'll post your bio and photo on our [members' page](#).

-Michele Anciaux Aoki

FACULTY NEWS

Professor Gordana Crnković published a book *Literature and Film from East Europe's Forgotten*



Second World": Essays of Invitation (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021). More on the book can be found on the [Bloomsbury webpage](#).

In December, she also participated in a remotely-held panel organized by Los Angeles's South-East European Film Festival (SEEFest), and dedicated to Croatian director Rajko Grlić's book *One More for the Road*. In the past few years, Professor Crnković has dedicated much of her time and energy to the creation of a new major in Global Literary Studies (GLITS), which will be housed in the Slavic Department.

FULBRIGHT NEWS

My name is Sofija Fedzhora, and I am from Ukraine. During the last several years and up to now, my homeland has been going through a lot of challenges such as a financial crisis, a war in the East of the country, mediocre level of education, and poor language policy that threatens with losing cultural and national identity. That is why I decided to take part in the international program to tell the world that



Ukraine is worth being known as an independent country with its unique language, breathtaking history, delicious cuisine, marvelous landscapes, beautiful national clothes, rich cultural heritage, ancient traditions, and friendly people.

This academic year (2021-2022), I am participating in the Fulbright foreign language teaching assistant program as a Ukrainian language teacher at the University of Washington (Seattle, WA). My principal activities are to teach students Ukrainian and present its history, culture, peculiarities of the language by organizing thematic workshops, cultural events, and meetings.



I cannot believe it, but I have already been in the USA for four months! My once-in-a-life trip started in September 2021 when I arrived in Seattle full of creative ideas and inspired by plenty of opportunities. The first thing that I noticed

immediately was people's attitude. Since the initial hours after my landing, I have been surrounded by pleasant people such as professor Eugene Lemcio (a third-generation Ukrainian) and his wife Diane, who helped me a lot and supported me multiple times. I am very grateful to them. Also, I found a great Ukrainian community with incredible people who do not let me feel lonely.

The first month or even two flew for me fast, as everything was new. I was aware of Seattle as a big multicultural city and of the University of Washington as one of the most prominent institutions of higher education on the western coast of the U.S., but I couldn't even imagine such a diversity of nations, people lifestyles, study courses, educational activities, etc. One of the remarkable impressions that influenced me was my visit to the Suzzallo Library. I have been looking for some Ukrainian books necessary for the language course and suddenly found the shelves filled with Ukrainian books. How I was fascinated when I saw that many of them were taught for us in different courses in the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv or even written by the

professors from my alma mater! At that moment, I realized I felt almost like at home.

This feeling that I am in the right place does not cease even now, especially from the perspective of my teaching proficiency mastering. I have been fortunate to teach Ukrainian at the Slavic languages and literatures department, headed by Katarzyna Dziwirek. It has been known because of a great variety of Slavic languages taught by true professionals. Here I have got acquainted with friendly and open-minded colleagues who share their own experience with pleasure, can advise or encourage if necessary. For instance, in the autumn quarter, I could attend some classes as an auditor to observe the learning process and students' activities during the lesson. It remarkably helped me during the preparation for my tasks.

One of the biggest advantages of the Fulbright FLTA program is the possibility of being a teacher or a teaching assistant and simultaneously taking some courses at the university as a student. Thus, in the autumn quarter, I took only one, however, extremely practical and useful course "Foreign Language Teaching Methodology" by Klaus Brandl. Thanks to his lectures, I realized how much I should learn to master teaching proficiency, but I am ready for the new experience. At the lessons, we have discussed different cases that happened in an actual student's learning environment and studied the principles of communicative language teaching & task-based instructions as well as the methodology of the oral, writing, reading, and listening developing skills. This winter quarter, I decided to take more courses as they all seemed fascinating to me. I truly appreciate the opportunity to choose different courses. In such a way, it gives students the feeling of responsibility for their progress and results.

Regarding my class, I truly enjoy lessons with my students who desire to learn Ukrainian for various reasons: self-development, language comparison, communication with relatives, etc. At the very



beginning, it was unusual for me to get used to the 50-minute lessons as in Ukraine the system of education is different a bit, but day by day I had been getting involved in the new learning process more and more. Together with my students, I endeavor to create a friendly atmosphere where no one is afraid of making a mistake. As it is known, genuine progress is possible only with the efforts and a non-stop making & correcting mistakes process. Listening to Ukrainian music, learning grammar by the means of singing songs, watching cartoons, and reading increase students' participation in a studying process and give the feeling of using the language instead of cramming it. One of the most vivid memories I had recently experienced was singing the carols during Christmastime and preparing kutia and varenyky together with my students because some of them told me they have never eaten kutia!

I am proud to be a part of the UW community, and I am very grateful to all people involved in my journey. I hope for fascinating discoveries in the future! Let's see what happens further. 😊

-Sofia Fedzhora



My name is Dawid Junke and I am an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Cultural Studies, University of Wrocław (Poland). As the recipient of Fulbright Slavic Award, during the spring trimester, I will teach a course called "Cinematic Metamorphoses. Polish

and American Cinema After 1989". Comparative nature of the course, signaled in its title, is rooted in my personal experience. Ever since I was a child, growing up in rural Poland in the 1990s, I have been fascinated with American motion pictures and television shows. They have shaped my imagination to at least the same degree as my vernacular culture did, so I am thrilled that I will get a chance to introduce contemporary Polish cinema to the University of Washington students.

The Fulbright scholarship at UW will be my second stay in the United States – in 2013 I have spent a semester

at Chapman University in Orange, CA as an exchange graduate student. During that stay I have also had the chance to visit Seattle and, though my visit was brief, I fell in love with this vibrant city. I cannot wait to come back, explore it and immerse myself in the University life. What I am most looking forward to are encounters with the U-Dub faculty and students – meeting new people, getting to know their perspective and learning from them is the aspect of academic career that I cherish the most.

-Dawid Junke

POLISH NEWS

At the beginning of the New Year, the UWPSEC has something to celebrate and be thankful for: the Maria Kott Endowed Professorship of Polish Studies has been established! We are grateful to all the donors who contributed to the Endowment Fund, which reached \$362,000 this year. Above all, we thank Ryszard Kott who matched the existing funds up to \$700,000 and pledged to provide additional funds for the endowment to reach \$1 million. This most generous gift from Ryszard is in honor his late wife Maria and we thank her for her inspiration, for her passion with which she supported the UWPSEC's causes, and for her love of Polish art, music, theater, history, and literature.

The search for the Endowed Professor will start in AY 2022/23. It will be the first and only position of this kind on the West Coast and it will ensure that Polish language and culture are present at the UW as long as the university exists!

In addition to this most important and exciting news, we want to mention that our ZOOM lecture activities didn't stop during past quarter. We hosted our former Fulbright Lecturers, Drs Justyna Budzik and Jacek Mikołajczyk, who in an engaging conversation, shared their impressions from their stay in Seattle and at the UW. Profs Neal Pease and Grażyna Kozaczka gave fascinating lectures, respectively, on Polish athletes and women writers in America. Furthermore, the UW Library hosted an exhibit *Lem's Bestiary Illustrated by Mróz* commemorating the 100th anniversary of Stanisław Lem's birth. The exhibit was made possible

thanks to the collaboration with the Polish Consulate in LA, Seattle- Gdynia Sister City, and the UW Libraries.

On February 23, 2022, Eric Karpeles will give a lecture titled, *A Singular Spirit: Jozef Czapski, His Art and Life*. In spring (date TBA), we will be hosting Dr Anna Mrozewicz, a visiting Fulbright Scholar in Scandinavian Studies, who will be talking about *Re-imagining Poland and eastern neighbors in Nordic films and TV series*.

ZOOM links to the lectures will be made accessible on the Slavic Department's website.

Wishing you a healthy and happy New Year!

-Krystyna Untersteiner, UW PSEC Chair

Maria "Isia" Kott 1955 - 2020

The endowed position is named in honor of Maria Elżbieta "Isia" Kott (1955-2020), née Kłoczowska. Maria was born and raised in Poland in a patriotic family, which included university professors and teachers, with strong attachment to Polish traditions and culture, as well as deep faith. By profession she also was an educator. After moving to Seattle, she kept close to her Polish roots, and her sons grew up speaking Polish and knowing traditions and heritage of the old country. She was well-versed in Polish culture and literature, and especially loved Polish poetry. She appreciated all arts, theatre, and music, and enjoyed visiting museums in America and all over the world. She also liked traveling and seeing natural wonders of national parks in the US and other countries. She was a wonderful and loving person who always kept in mind the less fortunate and supported them through the Catholic Church and other charitable organizations.



Maria's husband Ryszard always felt incredibly privileged that such a wonderful person wanted to share her life with him. Ryszard and his family arrived in Seattle in 1989, thinking that they would spend a

year or two in the US so he could gain professional experience at Microsoft and their two young sons could learn English. It turned out that they stayed for good. Both Ryszard and Maria became active members of the local Polish American community supporting different organizations and initiatives, and promoting Polish culture and heritage in the Pacific Northwest. Maria and Ryszard organized the first exhibition of Polish artistic posters in Seattle and over the years Maria helped organize several exhibitions related to Polish art and history. She collected works of art, from Polish folk art through Pacific NW misty landscapes, to works of her favorite painters Jerzy Nowosielski and Józef Czapski.

It was only natural that Maria became a co-founder and an active member of the UW Polish Studies Endowment Committee. She helped with identifying and inviting distinguished speakers, organizing lectures, exhibitions, and auctions, to which she donated much silver and amber jewelry, fine pottery, and small art pieces that she brought from Poland. She provided generous financial support for the Endowment Committee and for other Polish organizations.

Maria knew in her heart that the Polish Studies program at the University of Washington could grow and become a beacon of knowledge about Polish culture and she worked tirelessly to establish an endowed position at the UW. Ryszard felt it only appropriate that an endowed professorship created to honor Maria should focus on Polish culture and arts.

NEWS FROM YOU

Michele Anciaux Aoki (M.A., 1975; Ph.D., 1991) writes: "The highlight of the fall of 2021 for me was bringing together an amazing group of speakers of Slavic and East European languages to present 8 hours of live streaming content for learners of these languages at the Y-CRED Conference on October 14, 2021. The UW Slavic Department was really at the center of it. The recordings are available now on [YouTube](#). Please take a look. I want to especially acknowledge Dr. Bojan Belić for volunteering to MC (so to speak) the segment on West Balkan languages. He did an amazing job weaving it all together. Dr. Veronica

Muskheli recorded a touching interview with Marina Dunaravich about her experience regaining her Russian language in great part thanks to the UW Slavic Dept. Sofiia Fedzhora had just arrived as a Fulbrighter from Ukraine and she and Khrystyna Petriv put together a delightful presentation. Dr. Otilia Baraboi put together an outstanding selection from Romania and Dr. Michael Biggins and Dr. Naja Ferjan Ramirez had an insightful conversation in Slovenian. There is also a [shared Google doc](#) with lots of resources collated from many places. I watched the entire live stream on October 14, and it brought back so many memories of all the places I've studied, worked and traveled. Thank you to all who participated. I hope we'll have a chance to do this again sometime.

On a personal note, I am continuing to spend most of my time in Jacksonville, FL, taking care of our granddaughter, Ruth Emiko Cooper, who is now 14

months old. Such a joy! Surviving COVID-19, but eager to get back to traveling for real."

Don Livingston (Ph.D., 1998) continues teaching Russian at Arizona State University, and he is desperately hoping he can spend the summer in Budapest working on Hungarian.

Devon Livingston-Rosanoff (B.S., 2003) writes: "It's been a busy few months for our family! I'm in my last year of general surgery residency. In October I matched into the colorectal surgery fellowship at Cleveland Clinic Florida so we will be leaving Wisconsin this summer for south Florida. We also welcomed our second daughter, Harriet, in November who joins her very excited older sister Eleanor. Lots of changes this year but it's nice to be (finally) nearing the end of my medical training."

GIFTS

The following is a list of gifts made to departmental funds since July 1, 2021. Many thanks to all donors for their generous support of Slavic Studies at the University of Washington!

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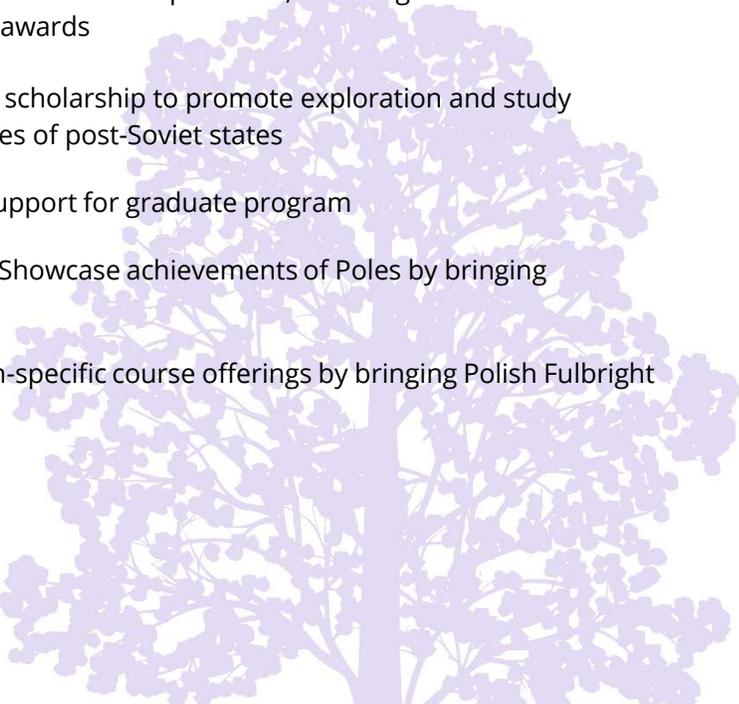
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- () POLISS Friends of Polish Studies Fund – General support for Polish studies
- () SLADIS Friends of Slavic Languages & Literatures – Gifts may be expended at the discretion of the Chair
- () SLAVIC Institutional Allowance – General support for the department, including undergraduate and graduate student awards
- () FOMSCH Oleg Fomin Scholarship Fund – Travel scholarship to promote exploration and study of the languages, cultures, and histories of post-Soviet states
- () MICKLE Micklesen Graduate Fund – General support for graduate program
- () POLDIS Polish Distinguished Speakers Fund – Showcase achievements of Poles by bringing speakers to campus
- () POLFUL Polish Fulbright Fund – Increase Polish-specific course offerings by bringing Polish Fulbright scholars to the UW



- () POLEND Polish Studies Endowment Fund – Promote permanence and expansion of program to include more levels of Polish language, history and culture
- () ROMANI Romanian Studies Fund – Support Romanian Studies, including but not limited to support for a Romanian Fulbright
- () RBCEND Slovene Studies Endowment Fund – Provide Support for Slovene Studies
- () SWAYZE Swayze Fellowship Fund – Fellowship support for graduate students
- () UKRANI Ukrainian Endowment Fund – Provide Ukrainian language and culture instruction
- () PAHNSC Vadim Pahn Scholarship Fund – Russian language scholarship for undergraduates

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