

# Slavic News: Summer 2023

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR, GORDANA CRNKOVIĆ

Dear Friends of the Slavic Department,



On June 9 we celebrated yet another departmental convocation. As always, this was a bitter-sweet moment: we were so proud of our students for reaching this final goal and being awarded their well-deserved BA-s, yet also sad to see them leave. This once-in-a-lifetime moment

was celebrated with students and their families in the beautiful Petersen Room in the Allen Library, from which our newest graduates went on to make their mark in the world. We wish them all the best and hope they will stay in touch!

The highlights of the past year included the well-deserved “smooth sailing” of the promotion and tenure of Assistant Professor Sasha Senderovich, the induction into the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences of our affiliate professor Michael Biggins, the winning of the Graduate School Presidential Dissertation Fellowship in Arts and Humanities by our Ph.D. student Biljana Konatar, and the successful defense of her MA thesis by our graduate student Svetlana Ostroverkhova. In addition to our language classes, the department offered some of our most popular literature and culture courses in this past Spring quarter, including Professor Barbara Henry’s “Underworlds,” Professor Galya Diment’s class on Vladimir Nabokov, and Teaching Professor

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Bojan Belić’s class, “What is in a Language Name? The Case of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian.” Our newest colleague, Assistant Professor Piotr Florczyk, taught for the first time his new and very successful “Introduction to World Poetry.” Lani Phillips and our Administrative Assistant, Isabelle Schlegel, continued their excellent administration of the department through the many budgetary, logistic, and organizational challenges.

Our Ukrainian Fulbright lecturer, Sofii Fedzhora, who did an impressive job of teaching the Ukrainian language and culture in the past two years, will be returning to her home and family in Kyiv. Assistant Professor Agata Stronciwilk, our Polish Fulbright who taught a fascinating class on “Food in Polish Contemporary Art,” will also be leaving us. Thank you, Sofii and Agata, for having been such great assets to our department! We will miss you.

I would like to end this letter with one sad and one happy piece of news. Professor Galya Diment, our distinguished colleague, a world authority on Vladimir Nabokov, the former Chair of Slavic Department as well as the past holder of the Byron W. and Alice L. Lockwood Professorship in the Humanities, Joff Hanauer Distinguished Professorship in Western Civilization, and Thomas L. & Margo G. Wykoff Endowed Faculty Fellow, has retired at the end of this academic year. In her Emerita status, Galya will teach one large class for us next year and direct her dissertation workshop, so we will not entirely lose her—at least for one more year. We will very much miss Galya’s excellent teaching, her sharp mind, and her collegiality!

As one generation exits, another comes in to keep up the good work. So, ending on a happy note, I am thrilled to announce that Dr. Agnieszka Jeżyk will join us next academic year as our newest colleague, the Maria Kott Endowed Assistant Professor of Polish Studies. Agnieszka specializes in the Polish avant-garde poetry of the interwar period and Slavic horror studies. She earned her PhD from the University of Illinois at Chicago with her thesis on Bruno Jasieński’s poems and is now working on a manuscript discussing marginal subjectivities in 1920s Polish avant-garde poetry. Dr. Jeżyk has published widely and taught at the University of Illinois in Chicago, the University of California Los Angeles, and most currently at the University of Toronto, Canada, where she was an Assistant Professor of Polish Language, Literature and Culture, and an Acting Director of the Polish Program. We are very grateful to the College for this new position, to Maria "Isia" Kott for her vision, and to her husband Ryszard Kott for fulfilling her dream of this Endowed Professorship.

In hopes for the speedy arrival of peace in Ukraine, wishing everyone a restful and good summer,

*Jordana Conković*

## IN THE NEWS

May 2023: Russian House featured in UW Daily



**Russky Dom: Old, Homey and Russian**

*By Sheila Gallagher*

"Is this a Russian restaurant?"

There are many misconceptions about the nature of life in this large white house at the corner of NE 45th and 21st NE. More than one curious caller has mistaken the edifice for a restaurant.

Actually, Russky Dom, the UW Russian House, is more like a co-educational dormitory with the cultural and hospitable atmosphere of Russia.

The idea of an informal Russian language living group began ten years ago when John Jacobson, then a graduate student at the University, organized a group of Russian-speaking friends and leased a house.

Their plan was to improve their fluency in the Russian tongue by talking to each other only in Russian while in the house.

Any accidental slips into English were curtailed by the payment of a five-cent fine. To preserve their sanity, the students designated one room as the house as the English room in which they were permitted to indulge in their native tongue.

**ENDORSED**

The concept of Russian House, the only one of its kind in the United States that functions as a year-around, was finally endorsed by the University.

When the original independent group dispersed, the UW purchased the present house, which it now owns and operates under the direction of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Victor Green, a native Russian, is the faculty advisor for the living group.

Russian House bears little resemblance to a standard dormitory. The atmosphere of the house is quietly homey. The building is old, the ceilings are high, and the creaky stairs leading to the upper floors (the second floor is for men and third for women) are covered with red carpet.

The walls of the living room are lined with prestigious portraits of such great Russian authors as Tolstoy, Gogol and Pushkin; and in the right hand corner is an iron, hand made by a former resident and adopted from the traditions of Christ Russia.

Nina Nikolaevna who, with the help of her husband, Metabkin, serves as a housemother and teacher, lends authenticity to the House. The daughter of a former Soviet governor of Tashkent, Nina and Metabkin came to Seattle from Japan in 1962.

**CHANGES**

The living group has undergone several changes and adjustments during the course of its ten-year history. Students are no longer fined for an occasional English slip, but Russian-English dictionaries are available to encourage vocabulary building.

Residents also participate in contemporary issue discussion groups in Russian. They are moderated by Nina Nikolaevna, and the topics range from early marriage to the problems of China and the United Nations.

The house has its own internal political structure, including a president, David Harpner, who is a graduate student in Russian Area Studies, and a business manager, Lance Warner, who is a graduate student in Russian Geography.

Resident Patricia Wall, a senior in Russian Area Studies, said that "the house conversation classes have added stability to speak freely."

A junior in astronomy, William Quilty had lived in Moscow and said, "The kitchen was cold, with too many people and not enough familiar faces. In Russian House, people are very close."

John Forrester, a senior in Russian History, also commented on the "close, communal spirit of the house."

**UNANIMOUS**

Residents are unanimous in the belief that living a foreign language improves fluency and understanding.

One of the highlights of the year for Russian House is the Easter Open House.

For the celebration the large silver summer glasses used in an array of specially prepared Russian cakes and party foods, and Nina Nikolaevna presides over a congenial gathering of Russian-speaking friends.

Russian House, NE 45th and 21st NE, houses a "close, communal spirit," though not a Russian restaurant.

**BLOOD DRIVE**  
Nov. 18 & 19  
9-5 HUB G-12  
A person's life could depend on it  
Community Service W-Way  
Cancellation on and appearing in November 11 DAILY

**STUDENT DISCOUNT**  
OFF HOURS  
MARTINIZING

## 2023 SLAVIC CONVOCATION



On June 9, 2023, faculty, staff, students and guests gathered in the Allen Library Petersen Room to celebrate the accomplishments of our 2023 graduates and award winners.

Chair and Professor, Dr. Gordana Crnković, opened the ceremony with a warm welcome and introduction of this year's keynote speaker, Era Pogosova (B.A., Slavic Languages & Literatures, University of Washington, 2000). Ms. Pogosova then spoke to our graduates about the importance of staying true to yourself, wherever life takes you.

The ceremony concluded with recognition of the award winners and graduates, who were given the opportunity to share what studying in the department has meant to them. We were thrilled to be able to celebrate in person this year and are so proud of all of the accomplishments of our students!



## 2023 Graduates and Award Winners

### **BACHELOR OF ARTS**

Anna Bobov  
Mark P. Fedorchuk  
Raj Kumar  
Isabel Hope Madewell  
Sierra Emaline O'Dell  
Matthias Keiluweit Roberts  
Jane Timmons  
Melinda Whalen  
Amelia Auguste Wright

### **MASTER OF ARTS**

Svetlana Ostroverkhova

### **AWARDS**

#### Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Mariia Usatenko

#### Outstanding Graduate Student

Taylor Eftimov

#### Slavic Excellence Prize

Samuel Abraham & Emma Peterson  
(undergraduate)

#### Outstanding Student of Polish

Robert Heilemann

#### Outstanding Students of Russian

1<sup>st</sup>-year: Julia Dupin  
2<sup>nd</sup>-year: Maximilian Scot Zuber  
3<sup>rd</sup>-year: Jane Timmons  
4<sup>th</sup>-year: Raj Kumar



## FACULTY NEWS

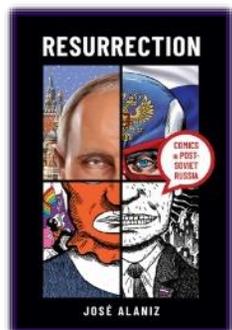


Last month **Piotr Florczyk** published a new book, this time in Polish. *Listy z Los Angeles* [tr. Letters from Los Angeles] is a collection of brief sketches and feulletones, published by Wydawnictwo J, in Wrocław, Poland. The book won the Kraków City of Literature UNESCO Prize.

**Sasha Senderovich** gave more than a dozen talks on his book, *How the Soviet Jew Was Made* (2022) during the academic year 2022-2023. These included endowed lectures at the University of Illinois and Michigan State University, and other public talks at NYU, UCLA, University of Minnesota, and several other venues. The book was named a finalist for the 2023 National Jewish Book Awards. Senderovich was awarded UW's Royalty Research Fellowship in Autumn 2022 to work on *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Short Fiction by Jewish Writers from the Soviet Union*, a book-length work of translations from Yiddish and Russian (together with Harriet Murav of the University of Illinois); he also co-led the Translation Studies Hub together with two colleagues from other UW departments. Senderovich was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure.



**José Alaniz's** 2022 book, "Resurrection: Comics in Post-Soviet Russia" (Ohio State University Press) received a nomination for the Eisner award under the category "Best Comics-Related Book." The Eisners are the most prestigious awards in the US comics industry. The prizes will be announced [at the San Diego Comic Con in July](#).



In March, **Michael Biggins** and the Society for Slovene Studies performed Act I of Ivan Cankar's play Jakob Ruda at the 2023 Midwest Slavic Conference at Ohio State University. This year, the Society of Slovene Studies celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



## FULBRIGHT NEWS

From March 2023 to June 2023, Dr. Agata Stronciwilk was a Visiting Professor at the Slavic Languages and Literatures Department. This visit was possible thanks to the Fulbright Foundation, as Dr. Stronciwilk was an awardee of the Fulbright Slavic Award. Dr. Stronciwilk works at the Institute of Art Studies at the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), where she conducts research about Polish contemporary art. During her stay at the University of Washington, she taught a course, POLSH 320 A: Introduction to Contemporary Polish Culture, titled "Community, Gender, Politics: Food in Polish Contemporary Art." The course discussed chosen aspects of Polish culture and society through the lens of food and art. It allowed students to recognize and raise knowledge about the most influential Polish artists of the 20th and 21st centuries (such as Jerzy Bereś, Alina Szapocznikow, Natalia LL, Maria Pinińska-Bereś, Elżbieta Jabłońska, Anna Królikiewicz, Iwona Demko, Slavs&Tatars, Aleksandra Ska, Joanna Rajkowska, Oskar Dawicki, WPROST Group). The discussed topics included food and politics (food scarcity during the PRL period, hunger as a political issue), feast and community building in performance art, food and gender in feminist art, food taboo and disgust, cannibalistic

metaphors, food ethics, and sustainability, food and identity in the context of migration, food and sensory experience in multisensory installations.



Apart from the course, Dr. Stronciwilk organized a poster exhibition with Prof. Michael Biggins titled "POLISH SCHOOL OF POSTER ART. NEW GENERATIONS. The Art of the Poster from the University of Silesia" which was presented at the Allen Library from May 8 to June 16. The exhibition presented posters designed by artists from different generations. It encompassed artworks created by professors, Ph.D. candidates, and students from the Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Silesia in Katowice. Displayed posters were inspired by an array of cultural texts - cinema, music, art, and literature. A significant body of work presented at the exhibition was related to a renowned poster competition organized annually by the Institute of Fine Arts – "Jazz in the Ruins." The exhibition was also presented during the Seattle Polish Festival at the Seattle Centre on July 8. Dr. Stronciwilk actively

participated in the life of the Polish community in Seattle by volunteering at the events organized by Polish Home Association and helping during events such as the "Polish Bazaar" or "Pierogi Fest."



Another event possible thanks to Fulbright Foundation and UW Polish Studies Endowment Committee was an open lecture by Dr. Stronciwilk for the UW community about Polish contemporary art, which took place on May 18 at Thomson Hall. The lecture was titled "Textile as Text. Gender and Social Issues in Polish Textile Art." The talk presented chosen Polish contemporary artists working with textiles - from disturbing, dark, and

complex quasi-sculptural "abakans" by Magdalena Abakanowicz; Monika Drożyńska's feminist rediscovery of embroidery to Małgorzata Mirga-Tas' astonishing project at the Venice Biennale 2022, which attempted to decolonize the image of the Roma community.



During her stay at the UW, Dr. Stronciwilk also participated in conferences – both in person and online. She presented a paper about a Polish artist Dagna Jakubowska

titled "A Harvest Festival of the Future. Food and Politics in the works by Dagna Jakubowska" at the Association for the Study of Food and Society conference, which took place at Boston University from May 31 to June 3. She also participated in an online conference organized by the Institute of Art and Design at The Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland, in cooperation with the Intermedia Department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Poland, titled "Deep Sea Babies: Navigating Between Dystopias and Utopias for The Blue Planet," which took place from April 13 to 15. During the conference, she presented a paper about Japanese artist Mari Katayma titled "In and out of the water. Mari Katayma's aquatic spaces." She also delivered an online lecture as a guest speaker at the conference organized by students from her home institution – the University of Silesia in Katowice. The conference "Gastro-logies, gastrof(r)ases and styles of consumption. Food in culture, literature and art" took place on May 29 and Dr. Stronciwilk's lecture was titled "Avant-garde and anthropophagy. On (auto)cannibalistic motifs in art."



## POLISH NEWS

With the beginning of 2023 we started returning to (almost) normal life, and it was nice to organize events that brought back the excitement of meeting, talking, and socializing in-person.

In January, Hanna Karczewski gave a very personal and beautifully illustrated presentation titled, "Madame Curie – Destiny Fulfilled." Hanna's presentation was unique as she is the great-granddaughter of Maria Skłodowska-Curie's sister, Helena Skłodowska-Szalay.



A week later, at the Polish Cultural Center - Dom Polski, we hosted a showing of the movie "Radioactive," followed by a lively Q&A with Hanna Karczewski and moderator Anna Kulakowski. In connection with the above events, the UW Allen Library hosted "The Lady of Radium: The Life of Maria Skłodowska-Curie," an exhibit provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland.

In March, we welcomed Agata Stronciwilk, PhD, this year's recipient of the Fulbright Slavic Award. She is an art historian and cultural studies scholar from the University of Silesia in Katowice. During Spring Quarter, Agata has been teaching the course "Community, Gender, Politics: Food in Polish Contemporary Art." In May, Agata gave an excellent lecture, "Textile as Text: Gender and Social Issues in Polish Textile Art." This was not the end of Agata's contributions to our community. On May 8, there was an official opening of the exhibit "Polish School of Poster Art. New Generations. The Art of the Poster from the University of Silesia" at the UW

Allen Library North Lobby. The exhibition was curated by Agata and professors Stefan Lechwar and Tomasz Kipka from the University of Silesia. Thank you, Agata, for sharing with us your passion for art!



We are grateful to prof. Michael Biggins and the UW Libraries for their cooperation and providing space, printing, and additional materials for both exhibits.

In May, we got great news: Agnieszka Jeżyk, PhD, who specializes in the Polish avant-garde poetry of the interwar period and Slavic horror studies, was nominated the Maria Kott Endowed Professor of Polish Studies at the University of Washington. Congratulations!



Since 1987, Polish Women's Club – Koło Pań has been bestowing the Best Student of Polish Award to our students. This year, Robert Heilemann is the fortunate recipient of the prize. Robert is a student of Electrical and Computer Engineering with a passion for robotics and technology. His interest in Polish was sparked after visiting Poland and meeting his extended family from his mother's side. Congratulations, Robert!

We wish you all a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you in Fall!  
-Krystyna Untersteiner, UW PSEC Chair

## UKRAINIAN NEWS

### Lecture Series on Ukraine's history and culture

The online lecture series on Ukraine's history and culture, which began in the winter of 2022 shortly after Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine, continued this academic year. After hosting several scholars displaced in the immediate weeks and months after Russia's invasion in 2022, this year's series focused on inviting speakers who remained in or returned to Ukraine. Conducted live during mornings hours in Seattle (late evenings in Ukraine) the lectures highlighted various aspects of Ukraine's literary and art history. On November 3, 2022, Dr. Iaroslava Strikha, independent scholar and prolific translator, spoke on "Ukrainian Writers Making and Breaking the Autobiographical Pact" an hour after electricity and internet were restored in her part of Kyiv on one of the many Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure. Maria Lanko of Kyiv's Naked Room gallery spoke on "The Fountain of Exhaustion: 369 Days, 9 Years and 3 Decades in Ukrainian Art" on February 28, 2023 and Dr. Olga Balashova gave a talk on "Ukraine's Wartime Art Archive" on March 15, 2023. Approximately forty people tuned in to each of these events, comprising audiences from Seattle, other cities in the United States as well as Europe; the series was co-sponsored by UW's History Department, Ellison Center, Art History, Simpson Center, and the Ukrainian Studies Fund.

### Ukrainian writer Serhii Zhadan's English-language translators speak at UW

During a series of two virtual visits co-sponsored by the Slavic Department and part of the lectures hosted by Translation Studies Hub (co-led by Slavic faculty member Sasha Senderovich), Reilly Costigan Humes and Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler spoke about their work translating the major contemporary Ukrainian writer Serhii Zhadan into English. On October 20, 2022, the pair spoke about "Translations that Sound Right," focusing on their work translating Zhadan's novel *Mesopotamia*. On

October 25, 2022, they gave a workshop on "Translating the Eccentric and the Commonplace," focusing on their work translating Zhadan's novel *The Orphanage*. The recording of the first of these talks is [available on the YouTube channel](#) of UW's Simpson Center for the Humanities, the main sponsor of this event. Since their talks at UW, the Reilly Costigan Humes and Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler came out with a new translation of Zhadan's *Sky Above Kharkiv: Dispatches from the Ukrainian Front* (2023), which documents Zhadan's home city's experience since the start of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine.

### "Voices for Ukraine" Reading Raises \$7,000 for Humanitarian Relief



The Slavic Department was honored to co-sponsor a reading featuring Soviet-born poets, writers, and translators that raised \$7,000 for Ukraine TrustChain, an organization supporting volunteer teams and urgent aid and evacuation in active war zones. Held on March 11, 2023 at the Folio, an important literary institution in Seattle, during the annual national Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) conference, "Voices for Ukraine" featured poets Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach and Ilya Kaminsky who were born in Ukraine and emigrated to the United States at a young age, among a dozen other participants.



## Prof. Harriet Murav, editor of *Slavic Review*, visits UW

Harriet Murav, Catherine and Bruce Bastian Professor of Global and Transnational Studies, Center for Advanced Study Professor, and Professor of Comparative and World Literature at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, and the editor of *Slavic Review*, visited UW in May 2023. In her public talk "Time of Isolation: Writing from the War in Ukraine," Prof. Murav spoke to a full house on the Ukrainian journalist Stanislav Aseyev's extraordinarily courageous chronicle of the war in Donbas that began in 2014 with Russia's aggression through its separatist proxies. Aseyev's work, Prof. Murav noted, provides a profound investigation into the experience of time that resonates with the most important 20th century philosophical reflections on the psychological and political implications of what has been called "lived time" both under duress and in "normal" circumstances.



## SLOVENE NEWS

Thanks to the generosity of the Slavic Department's alumni and friends, our fall 2023 fundraising match campaign succeeded in growing our endowment for Slovene studies by a full 66%. From an increased principal amount of nearly \$300,000 (and growing), quarterly revenue from the endowment now all but guarantees a dynamic future for the UW-University of Ljubljana Scholars Exchange, scholarships for UW students of Slovene to attend intensive summer language courses in Ljubljana, and funds to grow the UW Libraries' collections for Slovene studies as well as to sponsor special events to enrich Slovene and related Central European studies at UW and nationally.

After a three-year hiatus during the Covid pandemic, the UW-Ljubljana Scholars Exchange resumed in February 2023 with a two-week visit to Ljubljana by UW Professor Patricia Campbell (Ethnomusicology); and in May, U of Ljubljana Professor Dimitar Hristovski (Biomedical Informatics) visited UW for half a month to work with his colleagues in the UW School of Medicine. UW-Ljubljana Scholars Exchange participants deliver guest lectures, participate in seminars, and collaborate on joint research projects with the host institution's leading experts in their fields; UW faculty members and PhD students from any discipline on campus are welcome to submit applications for the exchange, which has fostered well over a hundred UW-Ljubljana research collaborations to date.

In other news, on June 2, 2023 the [Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences](#) (SAZU) announced its list of newly elected members of the Academy, which included the Slavic Department's affiliate professor Michael Biggins as a corresponding (i.e., foreign) member. In [its citation](#), SAZU credits him as "one of the most important experts on and interpreters of Slovene literature in the United States." The induction ceremony is scheduled for June 29 in Ljubljana.

## NEWS FROM YOU

**Serge Gregory** (PhD 1977) contributed a chapter on "Chekhov and the Arts" for *Chekhov in Context*, published by Cambridge University Press in February 2023. His book *The Sirens of the Hotel Louvre*, a portrait of the actress Lidia Yavorskaya and writer Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik against the background of the world of the Russian theater from 1890 to 1920, is under contract and in peer review.

**Bob Bergstrom** (BA 1977) writes: "I have never had more admiration and respect for anyone than I have for Mrs. Holdsworth, and I am indebted to her in many, many ways. There should be a statue of Mrs. Holdsworth and Pavel Viktorovich Gribanovsky

somewhere on campus. I have two photographs that I took of them in 1977 – as I was finishing up at UW. Treasures.

I missed reading of Mrs. Holdsworth's passing earlier. Very sad news. I was a student of Mrs. Holdsworth in 1974-75. She was the very best teacher that I have ever had the privilege to know or study under, and I have 5 different degrees from three different universities, including my BA in Russian Language and Literature from UW. Mrs. Holdsworth was an exceptional human being. I remember, during my first two years at UW, everyone would tell me: "Don't think of continuing with Russian past second year. You'll undoubtedly end up in Mrs. Holdsworth's third-year Russian class, and you will not survive it." So, I was expecting something pretty horrible when I walked into the classroom, in the early fall of 1974. But, to my surprise, Mrs. Holdsworth appeared to be a completely unimposing, friendly, small, middle-aged lady. "Piece of cake," I thought. Within 15 minutes after class started, I felt like my hair was blown back like in a cartoon, and immediately realized that this was a teacher of a stature that I had not even imagined possible. Mrs. Holdsworth was always in control, extremely demanding, but, at the same time, as warm and kind-hearted a person as I have ever known. I was very happy to attend her retirement party, back around 1993, with my wife and two of our then existing three children, who added page-long scribbles to the sign-in book for the party, where I had a nice long talk with Mrs. Holdsworth. I studied, on average, probably 6-7 hours a day for third-year Russian, despite taking all kinds of other subjects that year. Mrs. Holdsworth not only taught us Russian, but, perhaps more importantly, how to be a student of any subject or discipline. She once gave me an A+++ on an assignment, and that is the only grade that I remember and cherish in all my years as a student.

So – here are the pictures. First one is from Mrs. Holdsworth's retirement party at the Russian House – circa 1993. Second one is Pavel Viktorovich in front of Thompson Hall. The third one is Mrs.

Holdsworth and Vadim Pahn, at the entrance to Thompson Hall. I always say: Mrs. Holdsworth taught me to be a student and Pavel Viktorovich taught me to be a human being."



## IN MEMORIAM: DAVOR KAPETANIĆ



I had the great good fortune of attending two of the courses that Professor Davor Kapetanić used to teach here at the UW.

As I recall, the first one (I've long forgotten what the course number or course title were) was a general introduction to literary theory and criticism. I remember that from the very first day I was highly impressed with Professor Kapetanić's intelligence and his breadth of knowledge about the subject matter. I also remember that this was the first class that I was taking as a graduate student and that I was feeling that I might have been in over my head. To Professor Kapetanić's credit, he seems to have anticipated that most -- if not all -- of the students in this course might well be feeling the very same way as I was. In any event, he quickly allayed our fears, displaying a real knack for explaining the meaning of terms that we were not familiar with. And he also used humour as a way to calm our fears and lessen our apprehensions. I wouldn't go so far as to say that Professor Kapetanić made literary theory and criticism "fun" (nor do I think that he should have done that), but he certainly did

much to help demystify the subject matter in this course.

I also can't recall specifically the course number and title of the other course that I took with Professor Kapetanić, but I do know that I took it some time during the 1982-1983 academic year and that the course was designed by Hazard Adams of the Department of Comparative Literature as a seminar whereby an advanced graduate student (all-but-dissertation) who was either majoring in English or matriculating in a language & literature department was paired off with a faculty member from the same department and they were to make a joint presentation on a literary critic or theorist in their field. I had just returned from an IREX-Fulbright academic year spent in the former Soviet Union (mainly in Moscow) researching the topic of my dissertation (the novels of Vasily Narezhny). Being paired off with Professor Kapetanić in this seminar and working with him to make a presentation was like a dream come true for me, for it allowed me to put in perspective not only my recent experiences abroad, but also my understanding of the ideas advanced by literary critics and theorists in the Slavic world, especially those of Mikhail Bakhtin and Yuri Lotman. Professor Kapetanić served wonderfully as my mentor in this seminar, and I owed him a huge debt of gratitude for all that he taught me as his junior partner in this enterprise.

I have nothing but fond memories of my interactions at the UW with Professor Davor Kapetanić, both as a mentor and as a human being. I feel that I was privileged to have met him and to have worked with him. May he rest in peace. -Ronald D. LeBlanc, *Affiliate Professor, Slavic Languages & Literatures*

*The Slavic Department is continuing to collect memories of Davor Kapetanić and will publish an updated newsletter soon. If you have stories you would like to share about Davor, please write to [slavoffice@uw.edu](mailto:slavoffice@uw.edu).*

## GIFTS

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The following is a list of gifts made to departmental funds since the Winter 2023 newsletter. Many thanks to all donors for their generous support of Slavic Studies at the University of Washington!

### **Donors to the *Friends of Slavic Languages & Literatures Fund***

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- ( ) CZECHS Czech Studies Endowment Fund – Support for students studying Czech
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- ( ) SLAVIC Institutional Allowance – General support for the department, including undergraduate and graduate student awards
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- ( ) ROMANI Romanian Studies Fund – Support Romanian Studies, including but not limited to support for a Romanian Fulbright
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