

The Slavic Scene

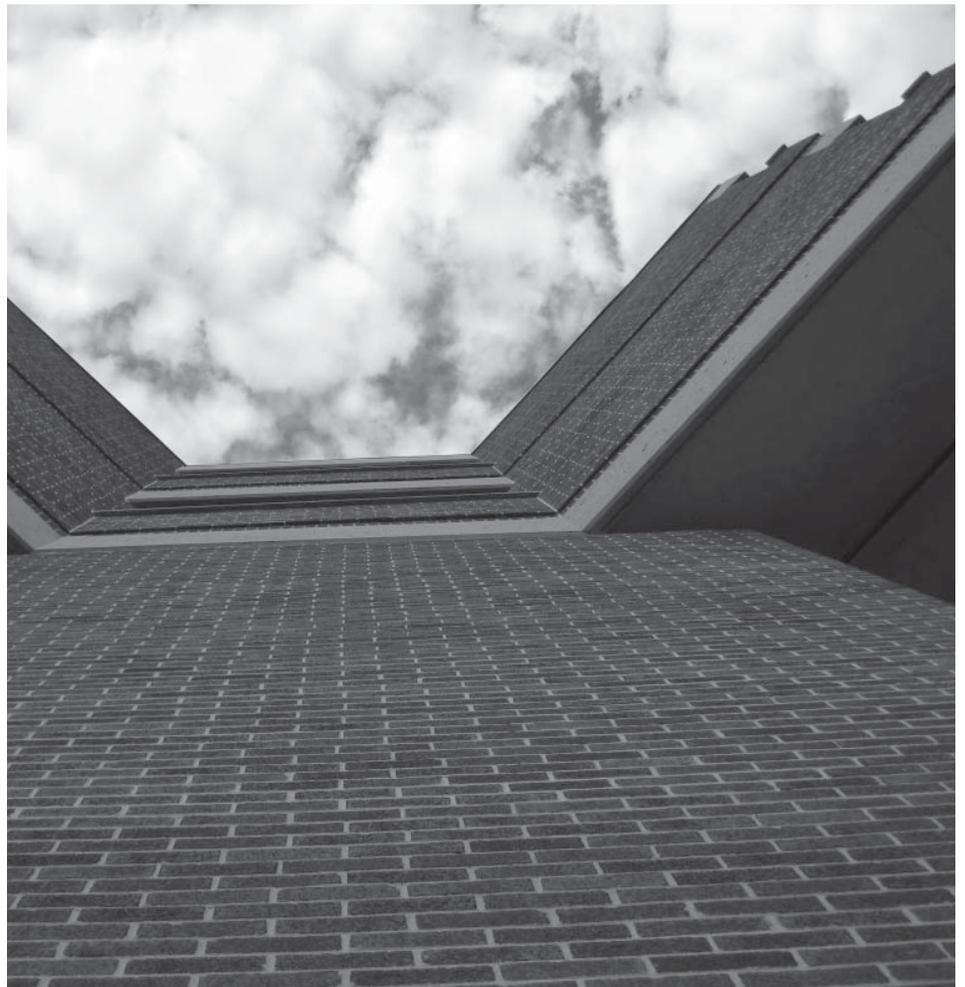
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES

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www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic



The Modern Languages Building

The Slavic Scene

Letter From the Chair

Dear Friends



In 2010-2011, we will be celebrating 100 years of Russian language instruction at the University of Michigan! Svitlana Rogovyk reminded us of this upcoming anniversary a year ago and

has, since then, done considerable research on the Department's early history (see her article on the facing page). Professor Horace W. ("Bill") Dewey, who helped build the Department in the 1950s, will be remembered fondly by many of you who were students in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Although he is mentioned in the article facing as an instructor of Russian, he went on to become an eminent professor of Russian History and Literature (he taught Old Russian Literature and 18th Century Russian Literature). In our next issue, we will complete the Department's history by describing the establishment of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (including Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, and Serbo-Croatian) and the Center for Russian and East European Studies in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and their impressive growth during the subsequent years, when our Department became one of the nation's strongest. The 1970s was the decade when Carl and Ellendea Proffer established Ardis Publishers in Ann Arbor as a major publisher of works "forbidden" in the former Soviet Union and also succeeded in bringing the great Russian poet (and future winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature) Joseph Brodsky to our Department, where he taught throughout that decade. We are planning a commemorative event honoring Brodsky (who would have turned seventy this year) for 2011-12, to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of his arrival in Ann Arbor.

In the decades which followed, our Department played a major role in educating Ph.D.s in the field and in providing the country with its next generations of scholars and teachers. Karen Evans-Romaine's remarks (on p.10 of this issue) provide a glimpse of what our outstanding students have contributed to the field. In becoming a tenured professor in the Slavic Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison this year, she followed in the footsteps of another of our graduates, Benjamin Rifkin, who went on to chair that department in the 1990s (Karen also followed Ben as Director of

Middlebury College's exceptional School of Russian). In fact, many of our Slavic Department's Ph.D.s went on to chair Slavic and Russian Departments, Centers for Russian and East European Studies (as well as Centers for International Studies and for Interdisciplinary Studies) at such places as Brown, Dartmouth, Wesleyan, Macalester, Tufts, UCLA, Northwestern, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Wayne State, Ohio State, and the Universities of Iowa, Kentucky, Virginia, Florida, Alaska and Michigan (to my former colleagues and students whom I may have omitted, this list is "off the top of my head," so to speak; if I've forgotten a college or university where you were chair, please let me know. We'll do an expanded list in the next issue).

We continue to be in the forefront of scholarship in the field, with five new books by our faculty out this year. The books by Professors Makin, Toman, and Herscher which I noted in last spring's newsletter are already out, and the new books by Professor Maiorova and Krutikov will be published by the end of this year. As far as undergraduate education goes, we continue to innovate. Thanks to the efforts of Alina and Michael Makin, our RUSLAN (Russian Service Learning in Action Network) program expanded to projects in Vytegra, in Russia's Northwest, with an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) project this March. There are many student exchange programs centered in Moscow and Petersburg, but ours is the first that will allow undergraduate and graduate students to do service learning work and pursue their research in a small town in the Russian provinces (one undergraduate will already be doing both this summer, see the article on pp. 4-5). We are hoping to expand the ASB experience into a full semester-abroad program in Vytegra, which will be an important component of the "Russia in the World" track of our undergraduate concentration. There are exciting new developments in our graduate program as well, but I will save that for the fall issue of Slavic Scene.

Have a wonderful summer and keep well,

Herbert (Herb) Eagle hjeagle@umich.edu

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Feature

100 Years of Russian at Michigan: the Chronology of Success

By Svitlana Rogovyk

Russian Language Studies at the University of Michigan started with a single language course in 1910. The program was one of only a handful continued in the United States after the Revolution of 1917 when Soviet Russia emerged and challenged the rest of the world with its new ideology. During the first two decades of U-M's Russian Language Studies program, enrollment and course offerings grew in popularity. By 1920 both Russian language and literature courses were extended into the summer session, and in 1927 the myriad of literature courses were each split into six discussion sections to accommodate the high student enrollment.

advanced degree programs in this field that would appeal to a broader audience, the department introduced an innovative language curriculum for Russian. By 1948, graduate courses in Russian poetry and drama were added, all taught in Russian. The department also established interdepartmental courses, guided the development of the library collections on ancient and modern Russia, and awarded fellowships, the first of its kind. There were four full and part time positions within the Russian Department in 1950: Lila Pargment (Assistant Professor); Horace W. Dewey (2/3 time instructor); Tatiana Pytkovsky (instructor); and Wilma Leopold (Teaching Fellow).

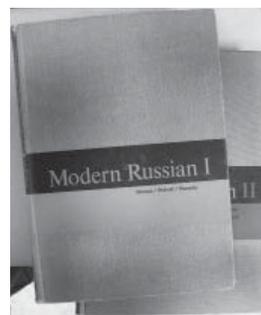
1930s Professor Lila Pargment (pictured below) joined U-M's Russian Language Studies program in 1930. At that time, it was housed within the Department of Latin. Through Pargment's inspired leadership and the successful addition of a Leo Tolstoy pro-seminar in 1938, Prof. Pargment spearheaded the move for Russian Language Studies to be recognized as its own entity. It was established in 1939 as the Department of Russian.



1960s The University of Michigan, under contract with the U.S. Office of Education, held a conference to "develop criteria for a two-year college sequence of specialized materials for learning the Russian language."² On the recommendation of the Modern Language Association, Dr. Assya Humesky (University of Michigan) (pictured at right), Dr. Charles Dawson (Syracuse University), and Dr. Charles Bidwell (University of Pittsburgh) were selected to author the two-volume *Modern Russian* textbook, which served as a model in the Russian field for years to come.



1940s The University of Michigan's Department of Russian continued to be proactive in expanding and improving its program, although, at the time, the American sentiment was that "Russian and other Slavic languages were still considered exotic and were studied largely by philologists and the curious."¹ In order to administer



Professor Assya Humesky (pictured above) co-authored *Modern Russian I and II*, the standard textbook for Russian language learning for many years

¹ Albert Perry, *America Learns Russian*, p. 99

² Ornstein, p. 9

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Classroom Spotlight

Completely Off The Beaten Path: RUSLAN's First Alternative Spring Break in Provincial Russia

This semester, Project RUSLAN (Russian Service Learning in Action Network), with generous support from the Ginsberg Center for Service Learning, completed its first ever Alternative Spring Break (ASB) in Russia. Nine U-M students flew from Detroit to St. Petersburg on the Thursday before the mid-term break. After two days of acclimatization and touring St. Petersburg, they headed to the small town of Vytegra in the northwest corner of Vologda Oblast.

RUSLAN ASB was directed by Alina Makin, Head of the Residential College Intensive Russian program, RUSLAN Project Coordinator, and Slavic Department lecturer. Through coordination with Tamara Makarova, Director of the Vytegra Museum of Local History, students were placed in a series of service-learning assignments, including the museum, the town's two K-12 schools, and the village school. Vytegra, a small, provincial town, was an ideal location for a short service-learning project (to make a difference in a controlled, low-cost, and manageable environment), and also a great way to show the students the contrast between the

grandeur of St. Petersburg and the simple elegance of Vytegra. Student response—as can be seen from the extensive entries and photographs on the group blog—was very enthusiastic.

The service assignments ranged from digitizing sound archives and translating museum materials, to working with English classes and introducing Russian kids of all ages to American geography and culture. These assignments were carried out with enthusiasm and efficiency, and reciprocated with excited interest. Each day's activities were balanced between service, cultural programming, and reflection/debriefing. As with all RUSLAN activities, great emphasis was placed on the combination of the principle of learning through service and its reinforcement through cultural enrichment. The practical application of newly acquired skills, knowledge, and both linguistic and cultural proficiency was one of the key goals of the ASB program. Some ASB students opted to receive academic credit for their service and learning activities.

continued on next page



Such was the impact of the RUSLAN ASB on its participants that several students have already announced that they want to go back next year. Moreover, the ASB has already had another consequence the program's creators hoped for: an Honors student has designed a thesis project based on local materials, and is returning to Vytegra this summer to combine an internship in the Museum with several weeks of research on the local Veps-speaking community, supported in part by a CRIF (CREES Internship and Research Fund) grant from CREES. (Veps is a Finno-Ugric rather than a Slavic Language).

Project RUSLAN plans to make Alternative Spring Break an annual event, giving priority to applicants who have already participated in the project's Ann Arbor-based activities (e.g., working with Russophone seniors, working in local schools, etc.). The activities were highlighted in the November 2009 Slavic Scene newsletter. It can be viewed online at: www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/about/newsletter.

If you are interested in supporting this project, please contact the Slavic Department Chair, Professor Herb Eagle at hjeagle@umich.edu, or Alina Makin, Project Coordinator at resco@umich.edu, or call the Slavic Department at (734) 764-5355.

The Ginsberg competitive grant that provided crucial seed funding for both programs will end in June. Extra support is needed to keep the cost of the trip low, otherwise participants are required to fund a majority of the trip themselves.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- Project RUSLAN website: www.umich.edu/~resco/RUSLAN.html
- Alternative Spring Break (ASB): www.umich.edu/~resco/RUSLANASB.html
- Student Blog: ruslanasb.blogspot.com/

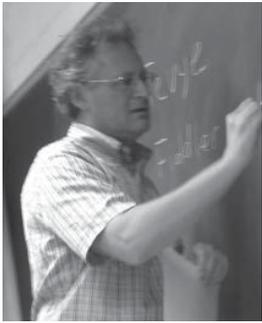


From left to right: U-M RUSLAN ASB students at Nikolai Klyuev's memorial site in the village of Makachevo; dancing after dinner; participating in museum events; and giving classroom presentations.

The Slavic Scene

Congratulations

Promotion for Professor Mikhail Krutikov



Pending the Regent's approval, Mikhail Krutikov will be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure effective September 1.

His new book (forthcoming from Stanford University Press) and his many other publications continue to remind us how valuable his work is to the Slavic and Judaic fields. Please congratulate Professor Krutikov on this excellent news for him, for our department, and for the Program in Judaic Studies.

Prof. Maiorova Receives LSA/OVPR Humanities Award

Congratulations to Professor Maiorova, who is one of a very small group of outstanding LSA faculty selected for the LSA/Office of the Vice President for Research Michigan Humanities Award for Academic Year 2010-2011.

By combining this grant with her sabbatical leave, Professor Maiorova will be able to dedicate a full-year to research and writing for her new book. In addition to being a very strong endorsement of Professor Maiorova's scholarly and pedagogical achievements on the part of the College of LS&A and OVPR, this award brings honor and recognition to the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.



Aleksandar Bošković Receives Rackham Fellowship



After being nominated by the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Aleksandar received a Rackham International Student Fellowship, about thirty of which were awarded for all the Departments in the University. The fellowship will provide him with an opportunity to dedicate the entire summer to his preliminary dissertation research. He would like to thank all the graduate students and professors in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures who helped him to immerse himself fully in the department's vibrant intellectual exchange, and to advance significantly in his graduate studies.

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Congratulations Graduates



Sergei Sychov

Ph.D. in Slavic Languages & Literatures

Sergei has accepted a temporary position as a Visiting Associate Professor at the Department of Translation, Translation Theory and Psycholinguistics at the Lugansk State Institute of Culture and the Arts.

Slavic Graduates

Monica Arendt Minor in Polish Language, Literature, & Culture

Nathan Boese Minor in Russian Language, Literature, & Culture

Matthew Buszek Bachelor of Science, Polish

Illiana Falkenstern Bachelor of Arts, Russian with Honors

Joseph Holberg Minor in Cultures & Literatures of E. Europe

Brandon James Minor in Russian Language, Literature, & Culture

Evan Johnson Minor in Russian Language, Literature, & Culture

Mayya Malakh Minor in Russian Language, Literature, & Culture

Boris Milter Bachelor of Arts, Russian

Beth Muszkiewicz Minor in Polish Language, Literature, & Culture

Piotr Pitz Bachelor of Arts, Russian

Kathryn Pytiak Minor in Ukrainian Language, Literature, & Culture

Konrad Sawicki Minor in Polish Language, Literature, & Culture

Alicja Sobilo Bachelor of Science, Polish

Maria Sumina Bachelor of Arts, Russian

Tully Svekric Minor in Czech Language, Literature, & Culture

Nikolas Tyckowski Minor in Polish Language, Literature, & Culture



Mayya Malakh



Piotr Pitz



Kathryn Pytiak

Undergraduate Award Winners

Nicole Disser Political Science BA, East European Studies Minor, 2010, *Slavic Dept. Prize for Best Paper Written in a Student's Native Language in a Mini-course*

Lisa Hebda Neuroscience BS, continuing student, *Excellence in Polish Language Studies Award*

Samantha Horsell LSA, continuing student, *Slavic Dept. Prize for Best Seminar-Style Paper Written in a Student's Native Language*

Lauren Anne Lueder REES & Comparative Literature BA, continuing student, *Slavic Department Prize for Excellence in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian Language Studies Award*

Kristina Pingston Honors LSA, continuing student, *Slavic Department Prize for Best Literary Analysis Written in a Student's Native Language*

Joanne Powell Psychology BA, continuing student, *Slavic Department Prize for Best Film Paper Written in a Student's Native Language*

Kathryn Pytiak Psychology BA, Ukrainian Language, Literature, & Culture Minor, 2010, *Excellence in Ukrainian Language Studies Award*



Lisa Hebda



Lauren A. Lueder

Thomas Wallace REES & Political Science BA, 2010, *Prize for Best Paper Written in a Slavic Language Learned at the University of Michigan*



Kristina Pingston



Tom Wallace

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Highlights

Between Visual Arts and Rock Music Czech Mini-Week Features Three Cultural Events

By Ewa Pasek



Czech Mini-Week started with Professor Jindřich Toman's presentation of his recent monograph *Photo/Montage in Print* (Praha: Kant, 2009), the second volume in the series *The Modern Czech Book*. The monograph was one of last year's finalists in the competition for the best illustrated Czech book. It offers a unique collection of mass

printed visual materials and a thorough, insightful commentary by the author. In the book, Toman focuses on the role of photography (specifically photomontage) in the Czech print media context: books, dust jackets, magazines, and postcards. The informal character of the presentation allowed for a lively discussion on monograph-related issues that were of special interest to the audience.

The second event of the week was organized around the visit of Dr. Craig Cravens from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Cravens presented an invited lecture on *Rock & Roll in a Police State: The Czechoslovak Underground*. His presentation was a fascinating journey through the history of

Czech rock music from its beginnings in the 1950s through its underground development in the 1970s and 80s, to its triumphant comeback after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The talk focused on the Czech rock band *The Plastic People of the Universe*, whose history entwined with politics in the most extraordinary ways. The band's 1976 trial was the impetus for Charter 77, the human rights declaration founded, by the dissident writers, among others, and future Czech president, Václav Havel.

Czech week concluded with the showing of director Miloš Forman's two earliest movies: *The Audition* and *Black Peter* with introductions by Professor Herbert Eagle. The movies were made in 1963, long before Forman won five Academy Awards for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. *The Audition* is a faux-documentary in which Forman intertwines two fictional plots and documentary footage showing young amateur singers auditioning for a role in the Semafor theatre. *Black Peter*, Forman's first feature film, tells the story of a quiet, but painful, adolescence set against the background of a provincial, sleepy town. In both movies we can see the prominent features of the Czech New Wave, as well as the elements of individual style that Forman would develop throughout his career.



Professor Jindřich Toman's *Photo/Montage in Print* was the subject of the first event of Czech Week



Dr. Craig Cravens presented the history of Czech Rock & Roll as the second Czech Week event



Two films—*The Audition* and *Black Peter*—by Miloš Forman concluded Czech Week

Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg Offers Unique Experience for All

During the winter semester, the Slavic department and Center for Russian and East European Studies (CREES) assisted the University of Michigan and the



University Musical Society in preparing for the visit of the Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg led by internationally acclaimed artistic director Lev Dodin. The department offered new courses and re-designed existing ones to feature and introduce the production. In addition, numerous extracurricular events throughout campus and the community were

designed to provide insights into Chekov's play, its author, the acting, and more.

- Nina Shkolnik's Third and Fourth Year Russian language classes had discussions with Dina Dodina (Director's Assistant) along with two actors: Igor Chernevich (Doctor Astrov) and Sergei Kuryshev (Uncle Vanya). They spoke about *Uncle Vanya* and about theater in modern Russia, and answered students' questions. The students also read essays about Chekhov, as well as several of his short stories. Many attended the performance of *Uncle Vanya* and discussed it in class, stating that they loved the play, the acting, and the fact that they actually were able to understand it in Russian.

- Alina Makin's Second Year Russian class and the CREES community joined together for Russian Tea, welcoming students, RUSLAN volunteers, and members of the local community. Maly cast members came as well, and conversed in Russian with attendees.

- Drama Lecturer Katherine Mendeloff and Prof. Michael Makin presented "Who is Chekhov?" at the Ann Arbor District Library. Mendeloff spoke about why actors and directors love working on Chekhov and emphasized the challenges of the subtext beneath the lines of dialogue. She states, "the actor

has to know his character very deeply in order to show what they are thinking on the inside while they may be saying something quite different." The Chekhovian world was demonstrated by Mendeloff's students from the Residential College, performing part of the second act of *Uncle Vanya*.

- Professor Maiorova's class (Survey of 19th-century Russian Literature) read *Uncle Vanya* before the play and invited Sergei Kuryshev, the actor who played Uncle Vanya, to visit the class. Students submitted questions for the actor, which were compiled together and guided the conversation between the actor and students. After attending the production, the students analyzed the innovative stage design, the plot twists the director introduced, and the interpretations of the characters fleshed out by the cast. In subsequent sessions students read many of Chekhov's short stories, and the production often served as a point of departure for their comments. Online forums maintained by the course's Graduate Student Instructors (Jessica Zychowicz and Colleen Theisen) made it possible for everyone to join in the discussions.

- The students from Russian 357 (Russian Drama in Context: From the Enlightenment to Post-Modernism; Prof. Maiorova) found themselves in a unique position to discuss *Uncle Vanya* in

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Staying Connected

Hello from Alumna Karen Evans-Romaine



In some sense I have come full circle since receiving my doctorate from the University of Michigan's Slavic Department in 1996. While completing my dissertation on "Boris Pasternak and the Tradition of German Romanticism," I ran the Moscow Fulbright office in 1993 – 96; that exciting period allowed me not only to conduct dissertation research at the Russian State Library and RGALI, attend stimulating conferences, and meet the Pasternak family, but also, as part of my job, to travel around Russia, from Petrozavodsk to Yakutsk, spreading the word about Fulbright. It was a hard job to leave.

What persuaded me was a tenure-track position at Ohio University, where I taught Russian language, literature, and culture to bright and dedicated students in a very collegial environment and ran a biannual Spring Quarter program in Moscow. I taught at Ohio University for 13 years and led the OU Moscow Program six times; in 2006–07 I taught at Smolny College in St. Petersburg on a Fulbright lecturing/research grant.

In my research I have focused mainly on Pasternak's life and work, but I also became involved in textbook co-authorship. University of Michigan Slavic Department alumnus Richard Robin (George

Washington University), asked me to join the author team for the third edition of the leading Russian textbook in North America, *Golosa*, and as an already enthusiastic fan of that book, I jumped at the chance. We are now working on the fifth edition, together with co-authors Galina Shatalina and Alexei Pavlenko.

University of Michigan Slavic Department alumnus Benjamin Rifkin invited me to join the faculty of the Middlebury College School of Russian starting in 2001, and I remained at Middlebury for nine summers, first leading the Level 1 Russian program and then, for six years, as Director. The Middlebury experience is indescribable for faculty and students alike; miracles unfold there every summer. I will always treasure my decade there, but I stepped down in order to devote all my energy to my current position, and to family.

Last August, I joined the Slavic Department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, teaching advanced language, twentieth-century literature, and teaching methodology. It was a doubly fortunate move for me, because I had the honor of joining the faculty of one of the best Slavic Departments in the U.S. and the happiness of joining my family, partner Irina Shevelenko and our three-year-old son Misha, adopted in Petersburg. My work at UW-Madison just became even more stimulating than I expected upon arrival: the Slavic Department and Language Institute, together with the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia, were recently awarded a grant of just under \$1 million from the National Security Education Program to start a new Russian Flagship Center, which I will direct.

None of these professional experiences would have been possible without the support and education I received at the University of Michigan Slavic Department, to whose faculty and fellow graduate students I remain profoundly grateful.

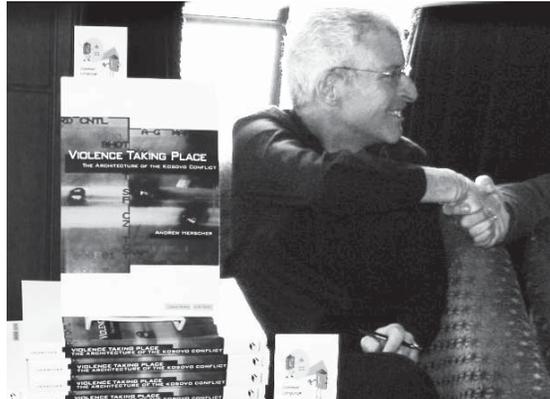
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The Slavic Scene

In Print

Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict

Professor Andrew Herscher's book is the first history of the architectural mediation of political violence in the former Yugoslavia and a theoretically innovative architectural history of political violence more generally. Tracing intersections of violence and architecture from socialist modernization, through nationalist and so-called ethnic conflict, to postwar reconstruction, the book offers new perspectives on the Kosovo conflict, the relation of architecture and violence, and the NATO bombing of the former Yugoslavia. It has been published by Stanford University Press, in the series "Cultural Memory in the Present."



Assistant Professor Andrew Herscher welcomes readers to his book launch and signing event April 14th

Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg Offers Unique Experience for All

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comparative perspective. Over the semester they explored Russian drama in its theatrical and political contexts, examining a wide array of comedies and tragedies that have profoundly enriched the Russian intellectual landscape. The course culminated in a conversation with Igor Ivanov

- Professor Maiorova gave a presentation at the Prelude Dinner held by the University Musical Society at the Alumni Center before the opening night. The talk highlighted the innovative character of Chekhov the dramatist, discussed the engaging evolution of the play, and briefly explored how

Chekhov transformed modern drama.

- Graduate student Sarah Sutter wrote a research paper for Svitlana Rogovyk's 5th Year Russian Language course in which she discussed American reception of Russian theater and Chekhov's works. Her paper provides

an overview of America's history with Chekhov's plays and then focuses specifically on public reception of the performances and special events that took place during the Maly Theatre residency.



Professor Maiorova (at podium) moderates the discussion between her students (photo on right), Director's Assistant Dina Dodina, and actor Sergei Kuryshev (Uncle Vanya)

(Professor Serebriakov) and Dina Dodina. As some students observed afterward, this meeting and the production itself helped them to integrate drama into the larger picture of Russian society.



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In Memoriam

The University of Michigan Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures offers our deep condolences and sympathy to the families who lost their loved ones in the tragic air disaster which killed the President and First Lady of Poland April 10, 2010. At this sad time, we remember the visit of President Kaczynski to the University as a participant in the 1999 conference "Communism's Negotiated Collapse: The Polish Round Table Talks of 1989, Ten Years Later."



We ask you to consider supporting the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures gift funds. Your gifts will ensure:

- Scholarships in support of undergraduate study abroad and internship opportunities.
- Increased support for the Department's research and fellowship programs, which support graduate student and faculty projects.
- Enhancements to the teaching and learning of less commonly taught languages such as Czech, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Polish and Ukrainian.

Please consider giving generously to our effort to build the Department's future financial security. A gift of \$10,000 or more would create an endowment in your name for a purpose which will ensure the future of the Department and aligns with your interest in Slavic studies. In these tight budgetary times your support is all the more critical. Please contact Sheri Sytsema-Geiger to make your contribution: sytsema@umich.edu or by telephone (734) 764-3227.