



the
slavic scene

volume 37, summer 2023

Photo by natagolubnycha

lsa.umich.edu/slavic

table of contents

Letter From the Chair	3
Highlights	4
Faculty Focus	5
In the Classroom	6
Staying Connected	7
Graduate Focus	8 - 9
Undergraduate Focus	10 - 11

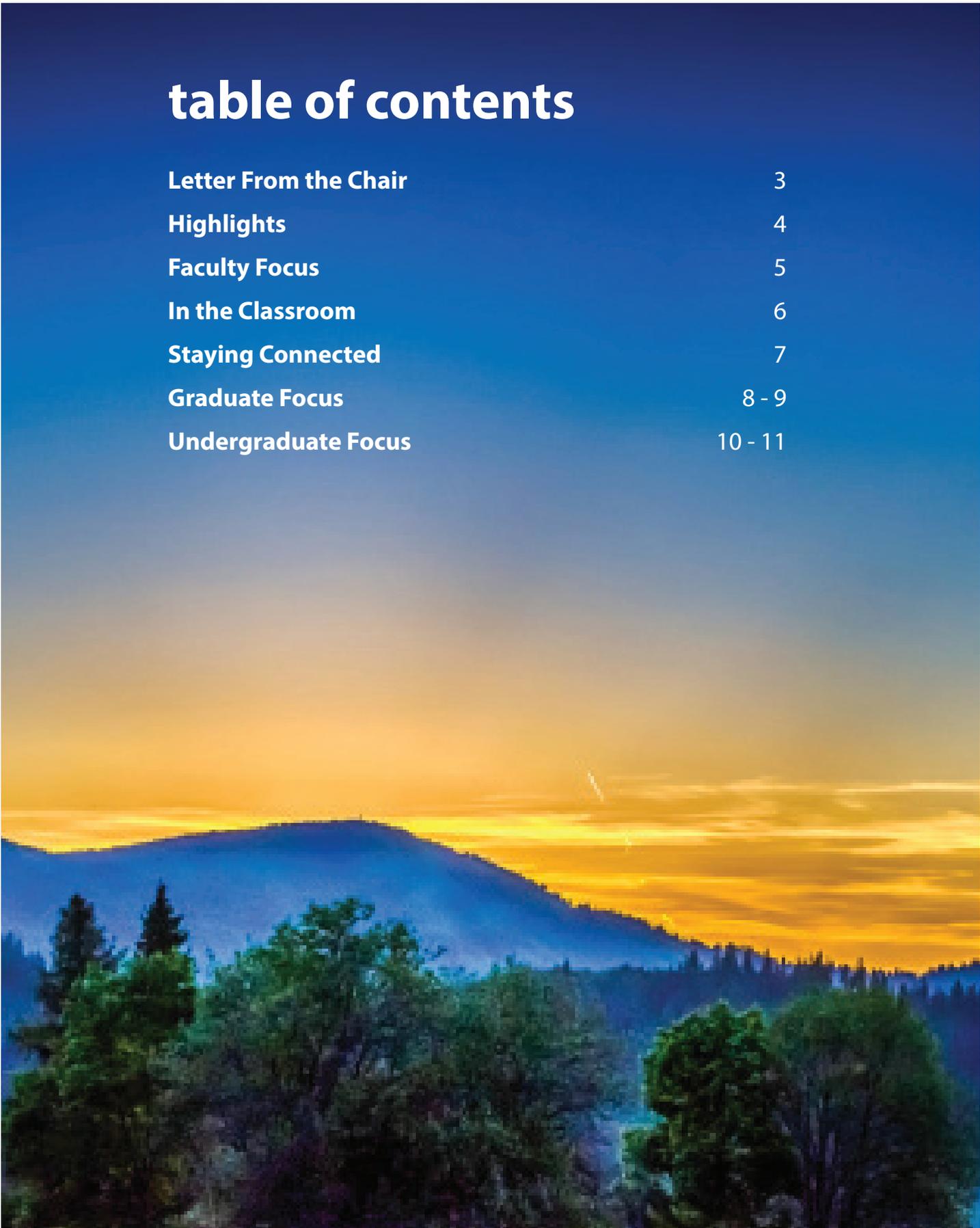


Photo by zyoma_1986

letter from the chair



Dear friends,

With a year of progress behind us, I am eager to share the achievements and highlights from our department during the past academic year. This spring, we celebrated the graduation of five majors and 20 minors. Total undergraduate enrollment in our classes this year grew to 1,577 from 1,427 last year. Likewise, enrollment in language classes expanded to 316 from 285. These encouraging numbers reaffirm the growing interest in the languages and cultures of our region.

Keeping pace with students' interests, we expanded our language program to incorporate third-year BCS (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian). Another addition to our Balkan area studies was a minicourse on Albanian Literature in Exile taught by the Albanian scholar Dr. Lisandri Kola. This minicourse featured a talk by the renowned poet and public intellectual Visar Zhiti. We look forward to enriching our course offerings in this area.

Our Ukrainian classes continue to grow, appealing both to beginners and students with a foundation in other Slavic languages. This year, for the first time, a graduate student instructor, Grace Mahoney—currently completing her dissertation on Russian and Ukrainian literary museums—taught a first-year Ukrainian language class. Thanks to a generous donation from Mr. Jerry Kowal, honoring his late father Dr. Lubomir Kowal, a former U-M Flint professor of economics, we can continue to host remote minicourses taught by Ukrainian scholars on Ukrainian culture, history, and politics. These courses have attracted a diverse student body across the University, including students studying in fields like engineering, computer science, and business. Complementing our course offerings, our committed lecturers have enriched the student experience with cultural activities, from celebrating Ukrainian winter traditions to organizing film festivals. While we strive to broaden the scope of Slavic Studies, our current prime objective is to amplify our Ukrainian program.

Despite the demanding teaching schedules, our faculty members remain actively engaged in research. Professor Sofya Khagi has published the *Companion to Viktor Pelevin* featuring contributions from our Ph. D. students, and the Russian version of her book *Pelevin and Unfreedom* is due out later this year. Professor Jindrich Toman's study *Bohemian Jews and Their Nineteenth Century* is lined up for a July 2023 release. We were also pleased to host Lena-Marie Franke, a visiting research student from the University

of Regensburg in Germany this winter, conducting her dissertation research on the early responses to the Holocaust in Czech literature. We anticipate further collaborative efforts with her institution. In March, Professor Vlad Beronja (Ph.D., 2014) from the University of Texas, Austin, visited Ann Arbor, with a thought-provoking talk titled "Sideways Glances: The Poetics of Queer Space in the Post-socialist Balkans." We had the pleasure of hosting him at a luncheon with our graduate students, where he shared his experiences and insights into the job-hunting process.

As I pen this letter, it marks my last in the capacity of chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. As my second term draws to a close, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone in the department, particularly our remarkable staff, for their unwavering support during this challenging period. We hold onto the hope of better times on the horizon.

Sincerely,

Mikhail Krutikov

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mikhail Krutikov'.

Professor and Chair, Department of
Slavic Languages & Literatures

highlights

Sideways Glances: The Poetics of Queer Space in the Post-socialist Balkans

Vladislav Beronja, Assistant Professor, Slavic and Eurasian Studies, University of Texas at Austin

Vladislav Beronja, Assistant Professor in Slavic and Eurasian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and 2014 U-M Slavic Languages & Literatures Ph.D. came to campus in March to discuss his work on queer studies. This event was presented by the Lesbian-Gay-Queer Research Initiative (LGQRI) at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWG), with co-sponsorship from the Departments of Comparative Literature and Slavic Languages and Literatures.



In the last twenty years, activists, artists, and scholars in the former Yugoslavia have begun to unearth, document, and reconstruct queer histories, spaces, and cultural practices that have historically been marginalized and threatened by erasure in the region. This “archeological impulse” came on the wave of queer activism and the rise of LGBTQ+ visibility politics following the collapse of state socialism in the 1990s, while frequently challenging Western perceptions of the region within the dominant Orientalizing and Cold War imaginaries. Drawing on this growing body of scholarship and activism, Beronja’s presentation examined the transformation of *štajga*, or the cruising grounds—from a previously invisible site of sexual modernity in late Yugoslav socialism into a counter-archive of queer history in the post-socialist present. Beronja focuses on Uroš Filipović’s *Staklenac* (*Glass Arcade*, 2002), a seminal work of queer autofiction in Serbia, alongside the more recent work of the queer archive collective as an attempt to document, archive, and render discursive the geographies and practices of queer culture in the context of postsocialist Croatia. Beronja argues that *štajga* serves not only as an historical alternative to the contemporary politics of queer visibility and respectability, but also as a site that registers the shifting relations between non-normative sexuality, queer poetics, and capitalist form.

Ukrainian Winter Traditions Celebration

Patricia Kalosa, Executive Assistant to the Chair

The Slavic Department hosted several scholars and their children from war-torn Ukraine on the afternoon of Monday, January 16th. The event was a wonderful celebration of Ukrainian culture with over fifty people in attendance. The Ukrainian scholars have relocated to the U.S because they are not able to safely conduct their research in Ukraine due to the ongoing war. The scholars and their families were thrilled to attend the Winter Traditions Celebration and are happy to be here in southeastern Michigan where they can pursue their research and the children have an opportunity to attend school.



faculty focus

Assya Humesky, Professor Emerita, 1925-2023

Patricia Kalosa, Executive Assistant to the Chair



Assya Alexandra Humesky, a renowned scholar of Ukrainian language and literature, passed away at Birchwood Retreat in Chelsea, Michigan on March 31, 2023, at the age of 97. She was born on May 23, 1925, in Kharkiv, Ukraine, to Serhiy Pylypenko and Tetyana Kardinalowska. Assya's father was arrested and executed by the Bolsheviks when she was nine years old, and during the war, she and her family were conscripted as forced laborers by the Germans. They lived in labor camps in Graz, Austria, and worked in a munitions factory.

After the war, Assya, her mother, and her sister moved to London, where she met Eugene Humesky, a fellow Ukrainian refugee. They promised to write to each other every week, and after five years of correspondence, they reunited and were married in 1953. They were together for 60 years until Eugene's passing in 2013. Assya attended Albertus Magnus College and Radcliffe College, where she earned her Ph.D. in Russian language and literature. Her Ph.D. dissertation was a comparison of the neologisms of the Russian poets Vladimir Majakovsky and Igor Severyanin, and she studied linguistics with Roman Jakobson and Ukrainian language and literature with Dmytro Chyzhevsky (*A History of Ukrainian Literature*, 1975), and Church Slavonic with Horace Lunt. She joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1953 and taught Russian language and literature courses. In 1969, she began teaching Ukrainian language and literature courses in addition to Russian language and literature courses. After teaching for over 40 years, Assya retired in 1998.



Assya was a founding member of the Ann Arbor chapter of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America and was active in several Ukrainian scholarly organizations, including the Shevchenko Scientific Society and the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S., where she served as vice president. She was also a beloved friend and mentor to her colleagues and students in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at U-M, where she initiated the Ukrainian studies program and authored the textbook for the Ukrainian courses she taught.

Assya was the author of *Modern Ukrainian* (1980), a widely used book on Ukrainian grammar, and published numerous articles on Ukrainian literature, which can be found in her *Selected Works (Vybrani filolohichni pratsi)*, (2017). She also co-authored two Russian language textbooks, *Modern Russian I* (1964) and *II* (1965).



Assya loved singing, music, poetry, philosophy, mushroom hunting in the woods, and was an acknowledged mediocre cook. She was a devoted mother to her two sons, Roman "Rick" and Ihor "Gary". She is survived by her sister Mirtala, nephew George, sons Rick (Mary Jane) and Gary, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Assya Humesky will be deeply missed by her colleagues, friends, and students. She was a brilliant, kind, thoughtful, and gracious teacher and friend who made a lasting impact on so many of her students, both graduate and undergraduate. Her legacy will continue to inspire and influence generations of scholars of Ukrainian language and literature.

in the classroom

A Symbol of Intellectual Resistance and Freedom

Lisandri Kola, Lecturer, Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures



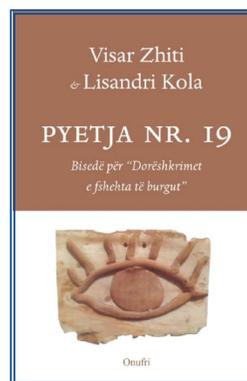
On April 14, 2023, the Albanian poet Visar Zhiti visited the University of Michigan as a guest speaker, delivering a speech on his book *Secret Prison Manuscripts*, which contains his

secretly written poems during his serving time in several Albanian prisons under communism. Mr. Zhiti shared his extraordinary life and literary journey under the Albanian communist regime and his inspirational poetic world—a symbol of intellectual resistance and freedom.

Mr. Zhiti, under the regime in Albania, was sentenced to ten years in prison (from which he served eight years), because his poems did not ‘pass’ the state propaganda and censorship laws. As his act expertise states, his poems contained ‘grave errors’ (cf. for more Robert Elsie, *The Condemned Apple*, 2005); they were considered hermetic and against the paradigm of socialist realism under Enver Hoxha’s rule. But as the poet states, he continued to write within prison to keep his sanity under the regime’s dire circumstances.

From 1979-1987 Visar Zhiti wrote eleven notebooks of poetry and the odyssey of his prison poetry is unique and audacious. It is important to bring to attention that in the Albanian communist prisons, paper and pen were not allowed, and this was another struggle politically imprisoned authors had to face. Therefore, *Let’s Save the Poems* became the leitmotif of the Albanian poet Visar Zhiti and other inmates with whom he shared the sufferings they endured in several prisons and labor camps, which motivated the poet to testify the Albanian Golgotha. Whether in solitary confinement, copper mains, or the cell, Zhiti kept composing and committing his poetry to memory and sharing them with other trusted inmates so as not to forget them. Thus, his poems were passed hand to hand or transmitted orally until he secretly managed to find some notebooks to write them down. Though, as Zhiti states, he didn’t manage to save all the poetry, he was able to rescue eleven notebooks and, with the help of his family members, got them

safely out of prison. Ironically, Zhiti’s poems came out of prison even before the author gained freedom. All eleven notebooks were published in 2021 by the Albanian publishing house, Onufri under the title *Dorëshkrimet e fshehta të burgut* (*Secret Prison Manuscripts*), and this book won the National Albanian Prize in Poetry in the same year. Zhiti’s manuscripts are not a random published edition of Albanian prison literature, but a national event for the Albanian literary tradition, which with a few other authors, establishes an antiregime literature. Given the weight that this edition has for the Albanian culture, I conducted an interview with Mr. Zhiti regarding his prison writings, which came out this year in the book co-authored with V. Zhiti, *Pyetja numër 19* (*The Question no. 19*: Onufri, 2023). In this book, I argue that Zhiti’s manuscripts have shaped Albanian literature as an aesthetical and political dissidence and have significantly contributed to shaping prison literature written under the communist regime of the Eastern Bloc. Additionally, an insightful observation has been made regarding the infamous prisons and forced labor camps such as Spaçi and Qafë Bari where the poet was convicted. I argue that such places should be museums of national memory and urge that the post-communist political transition consider Zhiti’s prison poems and other authors who witnessed the Albanian former regime’s crimes, not just as literature but as a rare and real document that mirrors Hoxha’s regime. To quote R. Elsie, "one of the cruelest regimes of East Europe."



The lecture *Let’s Save the Poems: Visar Zhiti’s Manuscripts in Albanian Communist Prison* was generously co-sponsored by our department and CREES. I had the pleasure of hosting it as part of my Albanian Literature in Exile mini course (*Albanian Literature of Exile*).

staying connected

After Graduation Reflections

Mark and Anne Dillen, Russian Language & Literature BA Alumni



Returning to Michigan last November to visit the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, decades after our time here as students, evoked complex reactions. Almost a half-century has passed since we walked the halls of the Modern Languages Building as undergraduate Russian majors. Mark remembers the MLB under construction, brickwork and concrete taking a modernistic form, while Russian classes were taught in the dilapidated and nondescript Frieze Building across the street. Campus buildings, old and new, seem to have followed a plausible developmental logic. Students and faculty, on the other hand, are all different in less discernible ways. How precisely? For that matter, how have we, the returnees, changed?

The two of us left Ann Arbor in the 1970s to become U.S. diplomats, spending much of the following decades at centers of Slavic languages: Moscow, Belgrade, Sofia, and Kyiv. Learning the languages and dialects of this region helped us to perceive cultural diversity in ways that we had previously only dimly understood. We returned to Ann Arbor glad to see Ukrainian language being taught — still being taught — at Michigan. Not many universities can boast of this record. Moreover, there are scores of literary writers now writing in Ukrainian — something that was not the case when we were undergraduates.

During our Ann Arbor visit, Professor Krutikov kindly introduced us to students and faculty. We toured the remarkable exhibit at Lane Hall of Ukrainian women artists, "I Have A Crisis For You..." curated by Grace Mahoney, doctoral student, and Jessica Zychowicz, Ph.D. alumni, Slavic Department.

We recall our Michigan days fondly. Mark's first Russian study book, "Basic Russian," was purchased used from Ulrich's Book Store on South University in 1969. Russian-language lecturer Howard Dwelley, his cigarette dangling and black coffee stationed at the ready, sitting behind a wooden desk, was Mark's introduction to the Russian language. Professors Suino, Proffer, Brown, and Titiunik — that we remember so vividly after all these years must surely signify the impact they had on us.

Anne studied both Russian and Ukrainian, and graduated with a double major in Russian Language & Literature and History, with honors. Mark's BA was in Russian Language & Literature and Russian and East European Studies.



In recent years, post foreign service, both Mark and Anne were Fulbright Scholars in Ukraine, with Mark teaching journalism at Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, and Anne lecturing on public diplomacy at Ukraine's Diplomatic Academy in Kyiv. Anne also conducts programs on women's leadership and serves on the board of directors of the Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation. Mark handles communications for Ukrainians of Colorado, an NGO working to support Ukraine, and also works as a bilingual case coach at Lutheran Family Services, assisting Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Colorado under the United for Ukraine initiative of the Biden Administration.

As we record our impressions of today's Slavic Department, set against a multitude of memories of the department we once knew, we are struck by the critical need for expertise in Ukrainian language, history, and culture, as well as Russian and other Slavic languages. A new generation needs to understand and be able to work with this immensely significant area of the world. It is the only way we can hope to communicate with it.

graduate focus

Presenting Projects About Czech Cinema

Tanya Silverman, Current Ph.D. Student



Although my academic engagements with Czech films and texts typically concentrate on their respective auteurs and authors, for one recent project, I decided to shift the focus to a different type of cultural figure: the actor. Boleslav (Bolek) Polívka is a prominent actor in Czech cinema and theater. Two films with Polívka that caught my attention were *Pupendo* (Jan Hřebejk, 2003), in which he stars as the talented sculptor Bedřich Mára, and *Something Like Happiness* (Bohdan Sláma, 2005), in which he plays the unemployed Onda Souček. Both mid-2000s movies feature Polívka as a flawed paterfamilias who faces setbacks in the professional realm and finds solace in alcohol consumption. Another parallel that exists between these two post-communist films is the sense of better opportunities in the West.

I have worked on this project about Polívka within the contexts of the Slavic Department for some time—initially as a seminar paper for *Infantile Masculinities* with Ania Aizman (Winter 2021) and subsequently as an abstract for a workshop in *Research Methods* with Sofya Khagi (Fall 2021). I then presented a version of this paper at the department’s Czech-themed Winter Colloquium in February 2023. I discussed my ideas about how Polívka’s father figures in these mid-2000s films embody certain traditions of anti-heroism and interests in alcohol that have been present in Czech texts since the late nineteenth century, according to Marcin Filipowicz. I compared the tendencies of Mára and Souček with those of other characters from Polívka’s career, for example, the notorious *nouveau riche* Bohuš from *The Inheritance* (Věra Chytilová, 1992) and upright Vicar Holý from *Forgotten Light* (Vladimír Michálek, 1996). I spoke about how the social circumstances of Mára and Souček reflect notions of border constructions in national cinemas, insofar as the men deal with projections of success in places beyond the bounds of Bohemia. I also highlighted how alcohol acts as a revelatory device in the films’ narratives.

Prior to the Colloquium, I had presented an iteration of this paper about Polívka at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) convention in November 2022 in Chicago, Illinois. I also had the opportunity of returning to Illinois—namely, Urbana-Champaign—to present my research about the director Věra Chytilová at the Czech and Slovak Studies Workshop. While Chytilová is mainly recognized for her experimental endeavors thanks to *Daisies* (1966), I have been exploring her pursuits with documentary modes and educational experiences at FAMU, the national film school. In April 2023, I traveled to Denver, Colorado, for the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference to present a paper about the Czech emigre director Ivan Passer and the parallels between the films that he created amid the Czech New Wave and New Hollywood movements. I plan to further develop these research projects about Chytilová and Passer in Prague.

Postdoctoral Appointment: McKenna Marko, Ph.D. Alumni '22

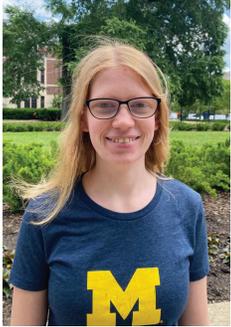


I am very excited to join the University of Leeds, UK, this September as a postdoctoral researcher in Holocaust literary studies. In collaboration with colleagues at Leeds and Washington University St. Louis, I will spend the next two and a half years editing and contributing to the *Cambridge History of Holocaust Literature*, which will showcase innovative research that rethinks the aims and scope of Holocaust literary studies. In addition, I will be involved with designing a teaching manual and public engagement program for Holocaust studies in the UK and the US. I will bring my enthusiasm for the Slavic (and Hungarian) world to Leeds as I say farewell to the University of Michigan and the department for now!

graduate focus

From Germany to Michigan

Lena-Marie Franke, Visiting Graduate Student



During the Winter of 2023, I had the opportunity to join U-M's Slavic Department as a visiting graduate student. Traveling to the U.S. for the first time was exciting and I immediately felt at home in Ann Arbor, especially thanks to the welcoming atmosphere and engaged student life. Besides working on my dissertation in

Czech literary studies, I was delighted to join in scholarly activities in the Slavic and Judaic Departments, such as seminars, lectures, and film evenings. As a visiting student, I was also able to participate in U-M's vast offerings of non-academic events, such as joining an English conversation circle, the Arts Chorale choir, and several trips around the state of Michigan organized by the Adventure Leadership Center. All of which gave me unique opportunities to connect with locals and international students and to discover Ann Arbor and its surroundings.

As part of my dissertation about early Czech Shoah literature, which started in 2021 at the University of Regensburg, I am currently working on

a chapter about representations of the Theresienstadt ghetto in the early postwar time. At the Slavic Department's colloquium in March, I had the chance to present and discuss parts of this chapter. The discussion at the colloquium raised interesting questions and remarks that I will consider while further working on my dissertation.

For analyzing *Representations of the Theresienstadt Ghetto in Survivors' Testimonies*, I chose two texts, *A Ghetto of Our Days* (1946) written by Mirko Tůma, and *Jewish Tragedy* (1947) by Richard Feder. While Tůma with *A Ghetto of Our Days* gives an overall history of the ghetto, depicting its development and identifying events that influenced and changed life in the ghetto, Feder in *Jewish Tragedy* strives to provide the common history to

the Czech Jews deported to Theresienstadt. Feder thus links the fate of the Czech Jews in the Theresienstadt ghetto to the historical persecution of Jews, while at the same time largely leaving out tensions within the Jewish community and tensions between different ethnic and religious groups in Czechoslovakia. The different narratives, but also the different standing in society of the two authors – Tůma as an unknown young man, and Feder as a renowned and experienced rabbi – is reflected in the perception of the reports in Czech media. Within the Jewish community, Feder's book was reviewed more positively and uncontroversially, whereas in majority media both texts were reviewed favorably. Still, both *A Ghetto of Our Days* and *Jewish Tragedy* were not very widespread and known. They are instead two different examples of texts of the first phase of Czech Shoah literature, showing how Jewish survivors wrote about the persecution and suffering of the Czech Jews, at the same time when the competing, more popular narrative, centering around political prisoners and antifascist resistance, emerged.

...Jewish survivors wrote about the persecution and suffering of the Czech Jews [while] the competing, more popular narrative, centering around political prisoners and antifascist resistance, emerged.

Additionally, during my visit to the U.S., I was able to take two scholarly trips; both trips were helpful and inspiring. The first was to participate

in the annual Czech and Slovak Studies convention at the University of Illinois. Secondly, I visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and its archive in Washington D.C. While the archive was a long-time expected and as valuable a source as I'd hoped for my research, visiting the museum was interesting in terms of current debates on memory culture in Europe and America.

I am happy to have joined U-M, which enabled me to proceed with my dissertation and gain new inspiration and memories inside and outside of campus. It was a great experience to meet U-M graduate students and scholars to engage in discussions. I am thankful to the Slavic Department for hosting and welcoming me!

undergraduate focus

Congratulations to our 2023 Graduates!

Patricia Kalosa, Executive Assistant to the Chair

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures celebrated our students, their hard work, and many accomplishments in a graduation ceremony on Friday, April 28, 2023, at 1:00 PM in the Michigan Room of the Michigan League. The ceremony included a warm welcome and remarks from Professor and Department Chair, Mikhail Krutikov and included a recognition of the graduates and award winners by our department faculty including Michael Makin, Ewa Malachowska-Pasek, Marija Rosic, Eugene Bondarenko, Svitlana Rogovyk, Nina Shkolnik, and Piotr Westwalewicz. See our website, lsa.umich.edu/slavic, for ceremony photos and additional details. A big thank you to graduates, their friends and families, and to all of the Slavic Languages and Literatures faculty and staff who helped to create a wonderful, lasting memory!

BOSNIAN/CROATIAN/SERBIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE MINORS:

Michael Gormley | Bianca Ivezaj*

EAST EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES MINORS:

Jared Gonder | Colleen Sharkey | Olivia Utter

POLISH LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE MINORS:

Anna Fifelski | Julia Janeski* | Tessa Krajewski
Minh-Quan Nguyen | Julia Ubysz

RUSSIAN MAJORS:

Molly Duplaga | Megan Major | Thomas Pazik
Samuel Vogler*

POLISH MAJOR:

Alexander Wegrzyn*

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE MINORS:

Erin Conlon | Maria Deckmann | Olivia Evans
Ethan Hinman | Madison Krumins* | Giselle Mills
Hannah Steele* | Nicholas Wood* | Cynthia Zhao

UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE MINOR:

Molly Duplaga

DOCTORAL DEGREE: Jason Wagner

Dissertation Title: *Yiddish Ruthenias: Home Landscapes in the Modernist Poetry of Moyshe Kulbak and Dovid Hofshsteyn in the Age of Revolutions and National Revivals in Eastern Europe*



Marija Rosic and Michael Gormley



Ewa Pasek, Julia Ubysz, Piotr Westwalewicz, Tessa Krajewski, and Marija Rosic



Michael Makin, Nina Shkolnik, Megan Major, Elena Fort, Eugene Bondarenko, Svitlana Rogovyk, Molly Duplaga and Alina Makin



Michael Makin, Alina Makin, Sara Ruiz, Giselle Mills, Svitlana Rogovyk, Erin Conlon, Elena Fort, Eugene Bondarenko

undergraduate focus

Slavic Students Enriched with a Variety of Cultural Events

Patricia Kalosa, Executive Assistant to the Chair



Take a simple, everyday, plain, white egg and turn it into a small masterpiece of color and design—that's pysanky. Easter egg decorating is an art form that dates back centuries. Known as pysanky in Ukraine, eggs are decorated using the wax-resist, or batik, method and are often covered in beautiful Slavic folk art motifs. This year, dozens of students came to the Modern Languages Building to create their own work of art using this ancient method of egg decorating. And pysanky is just one of a number of hands-on cultural activities our Slavic students have the opportunity to work on throughout the academic year.

Every year, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures holds a wide variety of engaging and inviting cultural events for students while also providing information about the culture of the region. The events are held in order to stimulate and teach languages to our students in unique and creative ways. The events are planned and coordinated by instructors Svitlana Rogovyk, Ewa Pasek, Piotr Westwalewicz, Marija Rosic, Alina Makin, and Nina Shkolnik.

During winter term, our 3rd and 4th year Russian students spend several weeks rehearsing for and then acting out a Russian play using their newly-acquired Russian language skills. Instructor Nina Shkolnik directs the students and, over the years, the Russian classes have performed such plays as *Office Romance* (Служебный роман), a play adapted from the stage play *Coworkers* (Сослуживцы), *The Garage* (Гараж) a 1979 comedy directed by Eldar Ryazanov, based on a screenplay by Emil Braginsky. And this past winter term, Nina had the pleasure of directing her talented Russian students in *The Wedding Mishap*, adapted from the play, *Wedding*, by Mikhail Zoschenko. Nina remarkably converts our 3rd floor meeting space into a small, informal theater where students can enjoy the play. The plays have been a wonderful way to get students to concentrate on and understand the Russian language in a different and interesting format. If you'd like to view the student plays over the years, see <https://lsa.umich.edu/slavic/undergraduate-students/languages/russian/russian-plays.html>.



Other cultural events our Slavic students can enjoy throughout the academic year include Slavic Easter Monday traditions such as Polish Wet Monday and Czech pomlázka, Poetry Day (see *Slavic Scene*, Winter 2023), Ukrainian Film Series (see *Slavic Scene*, Winter 2023), and Maslenitsa, where students learn more about Russian culture and traditions and can participate in a матрёшка (matryoshka nesting doll) decorating contest, enjoy traditional Russian блины (bliny), while watching puppet show presentations by students of the Residential College, directed by Alina Makin. Maslenitsa may be one of the oldest surviving Slavic holidays and is one of the many cultural events our students can enjoy in the Slavic department today!

**The Department of Slavic
Languages & Literatures**

3040 Modern Lang. Bldg.
University of Michigan
812 E. Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275
(734) 764-5355

Chair and Editor:

Mikhail Krutikov

Assistant Editor & Layout:

Jennifer Lucas
Wendy Sutton

**The Regents of the University
of Michigan**

Jordan B. Acker
Michael J. Behm
Mark J. Bernstein
Paul W. Brown
Sarah Hubbard
Denise Ilitch
Ron Weiser
Katherine E. White
Santa J. Ono (ex officio)



Follow us @umslavic



**Please consider giving to funds
established to support students from
war-torn nations and to study Ukrainian**

LSA Priorities: <https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/scu/lisa/priority>

LSA Conflict Zone Student Support Fund:
<https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/give/basket/fund/339539>

Ukrainian Fund: <https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/scu/lisa/sll>