



# Kopernikana

THE COPERNICUS CENTER FOR POLISH STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**The Copernicus Center for Polish Studies** (CCPS) at the University of Michigan was established in 2019 after more than 40 years of activity and programs offered by the Nicolaus Copernicus Endowment. The endowment and a Polish program were launched in 1973 in cooperation with students, faculty, and the Polish Americans of Michigan who contributed generously with their time, energy, and financial assistance. CCPS continues the tradition today by supporting faculty, programs, and student fellowships in Polish studies. It also organizes the Annual Copernicus Lecture—established in 1980—which brings prominent academic, cultural, and political figures to campus to advance a deeper understanding of Poland’s people, culture, and history, as well as its growing influence in world academics, arts, and affairs.

**Geneviève Zubrzycki**, *Program Director*

**Marysia Ostafin**

**Piotr Michałowski**, *Acting Director Winter 2021*

**Benjamin Paloff**, *Acting Director Fall 2020*

**Ewa Pasek**

**Brian Porter-Szűcs**

**Kate Wroblewski**

# From the Directors

Despite a year of profound loss and unprecedented challenges, the Copernicus Center for Polish Studies managed to offer a robust program of events and guest speakers. It was our great pleasure to welcome alumni and current and past faculty to share their research and observations. Highlights included the Annual Copernicus Lecture by acclaimed international film director **Agnieszka Holland**, and speakers from Warsaw, Barcelona, and London. The subject matter covered a wide range of interests: gender politics and populism, Polish avant-garde jazz movements (complete with a jazz concert), Polish attitudes towards European integration, and an overview of the multifaceted artistic accomplishments of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson. We are thrilled to announce that **Ewa Pasek** and **Megan Thomas** received the 2021 Found in Translation Award and that returning director of CCPS, **Geneviève Zubrzycki**, was selected as a Guggenheim Fellow.

If there is one theme that tied the year's program together, it is "community"—the voluntary community of those who engage with CCPS to develop a stronger understanding of Poland and the world around it, as well as faculty, staff, guest speakers, donors, and students who make our programs possible.

**Benjamin Paloff**  
**Piotr Michałowski**

*Acting CCPS Directors 2020-21*

I'm delighted to be back after a productive sabbatical, and grateful to **Ben Paloff** and **Piotr Michałowski** for stepping in last year and offering a rich program in spite of the pandemic. Given ongoing health concerns, most of our events will continue to be virtual this year. We are featuring a "book club" series, welcoming authors of recent books to discuss their work and process, and engage readers in the conversations. We began with a conversation with **Bill Johnston** on his new translation of the epic *Pan Tadeusz*, followed by a presentation by **Patrice Dabrowski** on her latest book, *The Carpathians*. Stay tuned for more on the book club series this winter, and an announcement about the 2022 Copernicus Lecture.

As happy as I am to be back this fall, it is with a heavy heart that I announce the retirement of our administrator extraordinaire, the heart and soul of the Copernicus Center for Polish Studies, **Marysia Ostafin**, after nearly 40 years of service to the University of Michigan. We are incredibly grateful for her outstanding contributions to CCPS. We will miss her energy, wit, and sense of style, but are certain she will remain an active member of our community.

**Geneviève Zubrzycki**

*CCPS Director*



## 2020–21 Program Highlights

**Oct 14 Lecture.** *“Aging Nationally in Contemporary Poland: Memory, Kinship, and Personhood.”* **Jessica C. Robbins**, assistant professor of anthropology, Wayne State University.

**Oct 15 Roundtable.** *“Assessing the State of Play in Polish Politics: The 2020 Presidential Elections.”* **Anna Grzymała-Busse**, Michelle and Kevin Douglas Professor of International Studies, Stanford University; **Benjamin Paloff**, associate professor of Slavic languages & literatures and comparative literature, U-M; **Brian Porter-Szücs**, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of History, U-M.

**Oct 28 Lecture.** *“Music and Resilience in Early Postwar Poland.”* **Mackenzie Pierce**, assistant professor of musicology, U-M.

**Nov 6-8 Annual Copernicus Lecture.** *“An Interview with Agnieszka Holland.”* **Agnieszka Holland**, film director; **Johannes von Moltke**, professor of Germanic languages and literatures and film, television and media, U-M; **Benjamin Paloff**, associate professor of Slavic languages & literatures and comparative literature, U-M.

**Nov 18 Lecture.** *“Someone Else’s Problems: The Dissident Author Post-Dissidence.”* **Benjamin Paloff**, associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures and comparative literature, U-M.

**Feb 1 Lecture.** *“Gender Politics and the Populist Moment: Will the East Save the West?”* **Agnieszka Graff**, associate professor at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw.



## Fall 2021 Events



**Feb 18 Lecture.** "Free Improvisation and Jazz Avant-Garde in Poland: From Tomasz Stańko to Mikolaj Trzaska."

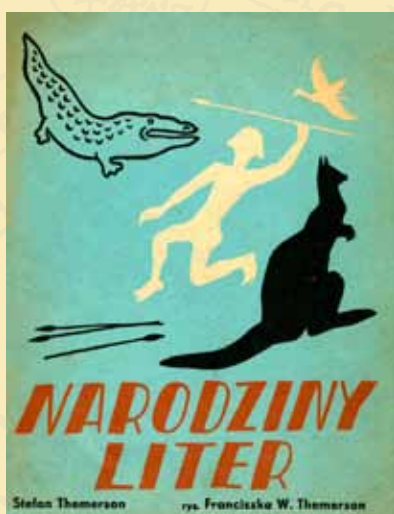
**Maciej Lewenstein**, professor of physics, Institut de Ciències Fotòniques.

**Feb 20-21 Concert.** "Avant Jazz from Poland: Free Improvisations by Mikolaj Trzaska and Macio Moretti."

**Mar 1 Lecture.** "Poland's Place in Europe: Mission Accomplished?"

**Jacek Stawiski**, editor-in-chief, TVN24.

**Apr 8 Lecture.** "The Themersons and the Art of Translation." **Jasja Reichardt**, writer, curator.



**Wed, Sep 22 Lecture.** "Translating *Pan Tadeusz*: A Conversation with Bill Johnston." **Bill Johnston**, professor of comparative literature, Indiana University.

**Sun, Oct 3–Thu, Oct 7 Conference.**

"What's New, What's Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies." Organizer: POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

**Wed, Oct 27 Lecture.**

"The Carpathians: Discovering the Highlands of Poland and Ukraine." **Patrice Dabrowski**, associate, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute.



**Fri, Nov 5-Sun, Nov 7 28th Ann Arbor**

**Polish Film Festival.** For films and times, see [annarborphilmsfestival.com](http://annarborphilmsfestival.com).

Organizer: Polish Cultural Fund-Ann Arbor.

**Wed, Nov 17 Roundtable.** "Is a Polesxit on the Horizon? Poland's Domestic Politics, Law, and the EU."

**Marcin Menkes**, associate professor, Warsaw School of Economics, and visiting professor of law, U-M;

**Sławomir Sierakowski**, political analyst and co-founder, *Krytyka Polityczna*;

**Jarosław Szczepański**, assistant professor of political science and international relations, University of Warsaw, and Academy of Justice, Institute of Law (Warsaw). Moderator: **Geneviève Zubrzycki**, professor of sociology and CCPS/WCEE director, U-M.

Visit [ii.umich.edu/polish/events](http://ii.umich.edu/polish/events) see video of past lectures and register for upcoming events

# Z E M S



## Faculty News

**Anna Muller** (History, UM-Dearborn) guest edited and co-authored the introduction titled, “Husbands Who Do Not Beat,” in a special issue of *Polish American Studies* (Vol. 78/ 2021).

**Ewa Pasek** (Slavic) received the 2021 Found in Translation Award (jointly with Megan Thomas) for the translation of Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz's *The Career of Nicodemus Dyzma* (Northwestern University Press, 2020). She also presented at NAATPI on Open-Book/Open-Note Oral Quizzes for Intermediate Polish Learners.

**Mackenzie Pierce** (Musicology) joined the CCPS faculty in 2020. His article, “Zofia Lissa, Wartime Trauma, and the Evolution of the Polish ‘Mass Song,’” was published in the *Journal of Musicology*. He co-authored a chapter with Andrea Bohlman, titled “Friend and Force: Nadia Boulanger’s Presence in Polish Musical Culture,” in *Nadia Boulanger and Her World* (Chicago University Press, 2020).

**Brian Porter-Szűcs** (History) published *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj: historia Polski bez martyrologii* (Wydawnictwo Filtry, 2021), a heavily revised version of *Poland in the*



*Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom* (Wiley, 2014), which has become a bestseller in Poland and an audiobook. A comedy club in Warsaw (*Klub Komedii*) launched

a series of acts in which they satirized Polish history, using his book as a foundation.

**Endi Poskovic** (Art & Design) had works selected for the Main Exhibition at the 2021 Krakow International Print Triennial “Dissonant Futures” at the Nowa Huta Centrum Kultury in Poland.

**Geneviève Zubrzycki** (Sociology) was Visiting Professor at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2020, and École Pratique des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2021. She published “The Comparative Politics of Collective Memory” in the *Annual Review of Sociology* with doctoral student Anna Woźny, as well as “*Quo Vadis, Polonia?* On Religious Loyalty, Voice, and Exit,” which appeared in *Social Compass*. She is the recipient of a 2021 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship.

## Student Awards

*Copernicus Master’s Fellowships (2021–22):*

**Arina Vlasova** is a student in the Masters in International and Regional Studies (MIRS) program with a specialization in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. She holds a BA in sociology from Saint Petersburg State University in Russia. Her research examines Polish and Russian secondary school teachers’ attitudes towards sex education.

**Christopher Chorzepa** is a JD candidate at the Law School and holds a BA in political economy and history from Williams College. His research on Poland focuses on antitrust/competition laws and the current government’s latest attempt to “repolonize” the media by pushing out foreign-owned media companies.

*Excellence in Polish Language Award*

(2020–21): **Minh-Quan Nguyen**, BSE Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering

*Copernicus/Slavic Polish Language Scholarships (2020–21):*

**Margaret Dominic**, BA Biopsychology, Cognition, & Neuroscience; **Anna Fifelski**, BA Creative Writing-Literature; **Caroline Freel**, BA Creative Writing-Literature; **Sarah Gondek**, BA LSA; **Robert Grasinski**, BSE Computer Science; **Julia Janeski**, BA LSA; **Tessa Krajewski**, BA LSA;

Brooke Weichel at the  
Kosciusko statue in  
Washington, D.C.



**Minh-Quan Nguyen**, BSE Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering; **Emma Peplinski**, BA Film, Television, & Media; **Michelle Ptak**, BA Psychology; **Patrick Pullis**, BA Political Science; **Jonah Sobczak**, BA Film, Television, & Media; **Maxwell Wadley**, BS Biochemistry

*2021 Summer Internships in Poland:* **Emily Anfang**, BA Judaic Studies, Galicia Jewish Museum; **Claire Brady**, BA International Studies/Political Science, Culture.pl; **Olivia Evans**, BA Creative Writing-Literature/Russian, Tatra Museum; **Emily Kopp**, BA History/International Studies, Tatra Museum; **Colleen Sharkey**, BA History/Political Science, Galicia Jewish Museum; **Brooke Weichel**, BA International Studies/Political Science, Culture.pl

Kudos to **Joseph Blattert** and **Madeline Topor**, who graduated with majors in Polish from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures!

Congratulations to **Anthony Cichocki**, **Emily Litynski**, **Shannon Murphy**, **Karolina Rak**, **Laura Scerbak**, and **Emily Webber**, who graduated with minors in Polish from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures!

## Alumni News

**Alena Aniskiewicz** (PhD Slavic '19) presented her research on Polish hip-hop at the Polish Studies Association Conference and the International Association for the Study of Popular Music-US Conference. In addition, she contributed writing on Polish literary culture to Culture.pl.

**Paulina Duda** (PhD Slavic '16) accepted a position as a visiting assistant professor at Brown University to teach courses on Polish language and culture, and Central European cinema. She published an academic review of Ewa Mazierska's book, *Polish Popular Music on Screen*, in *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*. She continues to teach and conduct research at the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology in Warsaw.

**Erica Lehrer** (PhD Anthropology '04) will be exploring decolonizing approaches to museum practice in the specific historical context of Eastern Europe with the Polish-focused research cluster National Heritage and Traumatic Memory. She will bring minority voices (Jewish, Roma, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, African-diaspora, and LGBT) and refugee perspectives to bear on Polish museum collections.

**Jessica Robbins** (PhD Anthropology '13) published *Aging Nationally in Contemporary Poland: Memory, Kinship, and Personhood* (Rutgers University Press, 2020) and was promoted to associate professor with tenure at Wayne State University.





# In Memoriam



Left to right:  
Marian Krzyzowski,  
Josef Blass,  
Adam Michnik

Devoted friend and CCPS supporter, **Dr. Josef Blass**, died on October 2, 2020. After leaving Poland in 1968, he came to the University of Michigan to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics. In 1981, he founded Pension Research Institute (PRI) with the mission of bringing academic-level research to the financial marketplace and contributing pension plans to businesses, individuals, cities, universities, and states. His involvement in the dissident movement in Poland was legendary and he became highly supportive of the Solidarity movement and its leadership during the difficult period of Martial Law. From 1989 on, Josef worked with nearly every Polish government offering advice and support on issues of pension reform and privatization. His role in organizing the historic 1999 conference, "Communism's Negotiated Collapse: The Polish Round Table, Ten Years Later," and encouraging the University of Michigan to recognize Adam Michnik with an honorary doctorate, is well known.

**Jan Lityński**, Polish politician, journalist, and opposition activist, died on February 21, 2021. He was co-founder of the anti-government Workers' Defense Committee (KOR), a participant of the Round Table negotiations in Poland, and from 1989 to 2021, he was a deputy to the Sejm. We were thrilled to host him, along with many of his Round Table colleagues at the 10th anniversary conference, "Communism's Negotiated Collapse."

**Eugenia Staszewski** (1916–2020) was born to Polish parents in Detroit, Michigan where her musical talents were nurtured in small orchestras and settlement houses which provided educational and cultural opportunities to aspiring students. From there she went on to earn a seat with the

Detroit Symphony Orchestra where she played the viola. After her retirement, she and her sister Wanda moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico where she continued to support musical activities and musicians. Eugenia and Wanda left a sizeable bequest gift to the Copernicus Center for Polish Studies and we are touched and grateful for their foresight, loyalty to all things Polish, and their generosity.

**Adam Zagajewski**, former dissident in exile, died in Krakow on March 21, 2021. He was one of the leading voices of Poland's *Nowa Fala*, also known as the Generation of '68, a group of poets who opposed the corruption of language imposed by communism and promoted simplicity and honesty into their native tongue. Among Zagajewski's numerous awards were the *Prix de la Liberté* (1987); the Neustadt International Prize for Literature (2004); and the Princess of Asturias Award, the Spanish-speaking world's highest humanities award (2017). In 2005, we had the honor to host him for the Annual Copernicus Lecture, "Without End: A Poetry Reading by Adam Zagajewski." Adam Zagajewski pondered the concept of liberty, as in his poem *Freedom*:

*But even when I am at a loss to define  
the essence of freedom  
I know full well the meaning  
of captivity.*





### **U-M Polish Student Association**

The University of Michigan Polish Student Association (PSA) is a student-run organization with the mission to promote Polish culture on campus. During the pandemic year they hosted fundraisers for Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels and Suicide Prevention at U-M and organized virtual events such as alumni game night, baking kołaczki, and decorating pisanki and bombki. As in past years, the PSA co-sponsored the Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival.

## **Polish-Jewish Fellowships**

**D**estroyed by the Nazis and suppressed by the communists, Jewish life in Poland was revived in the 1990s. It is again threatened by a new wave of anti-Semitism and legislation that restrict research and speech on the Holocaust. Given the urgent need to protect and encourage research in the history of Polish Jewry and the Holocaust in Poland, CCPS seeks to host researchers, NGO leaders, and Jewish activists whose activities are curtailed by the current government and the overall socio-political climate. CCPS has a strong program that captures Polish-Jewish culture; history; and problems of populism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism; as well as partnerships with institutions such as U-M's Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, and the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. We hope to fund one- to three-month research visits to U-M by Polish scholars, journalists, and artists whose work is targeted by the "Holocaust law." Visiting fellows will share their work with U-M faculty and students as well as with local communities and take advantage of our extensive library resources, writing workshops, and networking opportunities.

# *To Our Donors*

Following new guidelines from the Office of University Development, we no longer include donor honor rolls in our publications. Your donations remain critical to support our public programming as well as our students' language training and research.

CCPS is pleased to be the recipient of a sizable gift from the estate of **Eugenia Staszewski**.

The estate of **Edward Vandenberg** made a generous gift to CCPS in support of Polish studies at U-M.

In the past year, gifts to CCPS were made in memory of **Gladys Bobak, Zielinski** and **Teresa DeMonte Bobak, Wladyslaw Hodakowski, Frieda Jardim, Cass S.** and **Marjorie Jaros, Peter A.** and **Eleanor H. Ostafin, Edward Vandenberg,** and **Helen Stephanie Zaleski**.

A gift to the **Amelia Kulesa Konopka Endowment** was made in memory of Amelia E. Konopka Merry. The family of Amelia Kulesa Konopka established this endowment in 2001 to improve knowledge of Poland's culture and history among U-M students and memorialize her quest for knowledge and her Polish heritage.

## **Estate Planning**

Create your own Polish legacy at U-M by learning about the different giving options available to you. The university will work with you to find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family and the future of CCPS. For more information, visit **plannedgiving.umich.edu**.

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