

# The Slavic Scene

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES

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# The Slavic Scene

## Letter From the Chair

### Dear Friends



This fall our department is continuing to work on initiatives to expand the range and depth of our undergraduate curricula and course offerings. We are teaching new and revised courses on topics dealing with East European culture to support our recently launched concentration in Polish Language and Literature and our new minors in Ukrainian Language and Culture and in the Cultures and Literatures of Eastern Europe. Read about our new RUSLAN (Russian Service Learning in Action Network) initiative on page 8. In the winter semester we will be taking the first steps to expand the service program to include service-learning internships in Russia itself.

We are also increasing our efforts to address the broader educational needs of Michigan students, especially in the area of scholarly and analytical writing skills. We are offering, this fall, a series of First Year Seminars which seek to improve student writing through engagement with enticing and challenging topics: the Russian picaresque (Professor Ronen's "The Russian Rogue's Progress"), Prague (Professor Toman's "Prague: The Magic City"), Yiddish literature (Professor Krutikov's "Yiddish Love Stories"), and the recent literature emerging from the former Yugoslavia (Professor Aleksic's "Post-Yugoslav Short Fiction"). In the winter semester, Professor Khagi will be offering a First Year Seminar on "World Utopia and Dystopia." Later in their careers here, LSA students are also asked to fulfill an Upper Level Writing Requirement, which requires them to demonstrate further mastery. Our department already offers a large number of courses which fulfill this requirement, including our 19th century Russian literature surveys, the course on "Russia Today," our cinema courses (Central European, Russian, Polish, Czech), the cultural history of Russian Jews, a course on Exiles from the State of Ideology, and the course on Vladimir Nabokov and World Literature (the American Years). In the winter semester we plan to add four additional courses which will stress upper-level writing skills: Slavic and other European avant-gardes, modern Czech literature and culture, Russian drama from the Enlightenment to Post-Modernism, and Russian fantasy and science fiction. Some of these courses have grown quite large (with fifty to a hundred students), which allows us to create separate discussion sections and provide our graduate students with teaching opportunities in literature, cinema and culture.

Our recent cohorts of outstanding graduate students are making excellent progress toward their Ph.D. degrees. Over the last year, they collectively garnered eight prestigious fellowships for graduate study and research. Most of them were able to pursue projects in Russia or in Poland this past summer, in no small measure as a result of your generous donations.

One of our major challenges in the years ahead will be maintaining the full array of language courses which we currently offer. Although the University of Michigan and the College of LS&A are managing the effects of the current economic downturn much more successfully than many other major universities, we (and all other departments in LSA) nonetheless expect a decrease in College funding to our department over the next few years. In order to maintain as much as possible of the full range of courses, we will need some help from you, our former students and friends. For that reason, all contributions made to our Michigan Difference Strategic Fund will be dedicated to teaching all of the languages currently offered by the Department. I especially urge you to consider contributions to this fund, as it will be dedicated to maintaining the essential foundation stone of our curriculum: the teaching of Slavic languages.

On behalf of the entire department—its faculty, staff and students—  
I wish you a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy year!

Herbert (Herb) Eagle [hjeagle@umich.edu](mailto:hjeagle@umich.edu)

# The Slavic Scene

## Feature

### 100 Years of Russian at Michigan: The Beginning

By Svitlana Rogovyk

The introduction of Russian at the University of Michigan began in the 1880's. Imagine a time when U-M cost on average only \$40 per year, a time when the total of students reached 1,500 and women made up only 13% of the student population. In 1884, U-M's President, James B. Angell personally polled students on their demography to conclude that one third of the students' parents were farmers. This was the beginning of the Golden Era at the University of Michigan. By 1889, the University emerged as the largest and the most democratic in the country.

In 1885, John Dewey, Professor of Philosophy, and his wife, Alice Chipman, became the founding members of the Samovar Club. "The Samovar' is the euphonious title of a new club of University people", reported the student weekly *Argonaut*. "It takes its name from the Russian tea pot around which the members will gather on the snug winter evenings of the coming season."<sup>1</sup> The club met in the LSA building on State St. and became a venue for informal discussions of the great writers of nineteenth century Russian literature: Leo

introduced in Harvard, at Chicago, and California. In the Fall of 1908, a modest (three hours weekly), but auspicious start was made at the University of Michigan. Dr. Clarence L. Meader, Professor of General Linguistics and Comparative Philology, initiated Russian language courses "mainly as a result of the interest in Russian affairs aroused by the Revolution of 1905." In February 1909, Meader added a course in Russian literature, covering the period through Gogol, and later included Maxim Gorky, Leonid Andreev, and even Mikhail Artsybashev. In 1910, a second language course was added, as well as an ambitious experiment in Old Bulgarian (Old Church Slavonic). The 1909 *Literary Department Announcements* stated the following description:

*"In the consequence of the increasing importance of Russia in intellectual, political, and commercial activities, a practical acquaintance with the Russian language is rapidly becoming a necessity for English-speaking peoples. The courses offered below are especially designated for students interested in Russian literature, historical sources, and commercial affairs, and Indo-European Comparative philology, and for those who are preparing to enter the diplomatic service."*<sup>2</sup>

Hence, the University of Michigan began one of the country's strongest and most comprehensive programs of Russian language instruction.

Our current five-year proficiency oriented curriculum attracts more than 100 undergraduate and graduate students each semester. Their choice is conscious, just like those Michigan students 100 years ago—they want to learn and master Russian—a language of great literary traditions, as well as a major language of world politics, science, culture and business.

Photo is courtesy of U-M Bentley Historical Library



**Acknowledgments:**  
Thanks to Janet Crane, Head of the Slavic and East European Division at the Hatcher Graduate Library for providing valuable information and materials for this article.

Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev. Charles Horton Cooley, Sociology pioneer and son of the Law School's Dean, Thomas M. Cooley, was one of the active members of the club and purchased the samovar while in New York.

Because Russia continued to dominate the world's press headlines in the early 1890's, interest in the country and its language continued to grow in academia. By that time, Russian language had been

<sup>1</sup>Perry, "America Learns Russian", 1967, p.62.

<sup>2</sup>University of Michigan Literary Department Announcements, 1908-1909. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1916, p. 70-71

# The Slavic Scene

## Graduate Student Focus

### Beyond St. Petersburg

By Yanina Arnold



Yanina Arnold, Sylvia  
"Duffy" Engle Graduate  
Student Fellow Institute  
for the Humanities at the  
University of Michigan

I feel very fortunate to have been offered a Graduate Student Fellowship at the U-M's Institute for the Humanities, first and foremost because it offered me a great chance to work on my dissertation in a lively and energizing intellectual environment. I am part of the diverse and exciting group of people working on the variety of projects in art and art history, architecture, anthropology, various national literatures, history, etc. All of us are scholars, professors and graduate students; however, some fellows also write fiction, translate, make documentaries, and work on other exciting artistic projects. Among the highlights of the Institute are the Fellows' Seminars, which are run in a truly interdisciplinary spirit. In my opinion, these seminars are perhaps the most precious part of my affiliation with the Institute, since they open up doors to other scholars' "creative laboratories," offering a rare opportunity to "peek" at the projects in the process of their creation. All projects adhere to the principle of interdisciplinarity, including the seminars themselves, which are a meeting ground for various types of scholars, ideas, disciplines, theoretical approaches, types of texts, cultural artifacts, etc. Therefore these seminars are a great place to learn how to treat one's research project holistically, as a cultural phenomenon not confined to the boundaries of one discipline. Of

course, this translates into following the project wherever it takes you. For example, I work on my dissertation dealing with the interplay between Russian literature and law during the late imperial period. At times, I am a literary scholar, but I often need to guise myself as a historian, archival researcher, jurist or juror, art critic, reader of popular nineteenth century magazines, translator, and writer. This type of scholarly "metamorphoses" and the experimental and playful approach to research are encouraged at the Institute, where the spirit of "playfulness"—however strange this word might sound in the academic context—is important. A playful and flexible approach is helpful when one looks for an interesting research topic and then tries to unfold it in a new way; when practiced collaboratively, this playfulness allows for the reinvigoration of the scholarly study in the humanities, making scholarship of this type into a meaningful element of the everyday social life. Having said this, my professional plans for this year include working on my dissertation, while actively using the benefits of being a member of the current team of scholars at the Institute, to read the work of others and to be read, to observe and learn from how other scholars work, and to get as much feedback on my writing as possible.

### Slavic Graduate Student Receives Cottrell Prize

Vladislav Beronja received the Cottrell Prize for best paper, written for Prof. Kerstin Barndt's exceptional German graduate seminar (Fall 2008) on memory and museums. The paper, *"Allegory and Mourning in Dubravka Ugrešić's The Museum of Unconditional Surrender,"* analyzes Ugrešić's novel in the light of Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory and the Gogolian tradition of byt (everyday life). By juxtaposing fragments of everyday existence in Yugoslavia with "verbal photographs" of post-Wende Berlin, Ugrešić constructs a postmodern allegory that also functions as a critical commentary on the social and historical transformations at the end of the 20th century. Vlad would like to thank Prof. Barndt for her input and intellectual advice, without which this paper would not have been realized.



Vladislav Beronja

Intellectual curiosity and spirit of collaboration are the two things that, in my view, define the atmosphere of graduate studies in our Department today. The creative, energetic, and highly determined cohort of our current graduate students bring fresh air into the Program. They research a wide array of interdisciplinary topics, and the diversity of their voices and perspectives makes our work intellectually exciting and refreshing. As the Slavic field increasingly shifts towards more inclusive cultural studies, the structure of our Program continues to develop as well. This is why we encourage our students to participate in tailoring their individualized coursework—and thus begin their independent work from their very first steps with our Program. – *Olga Maiorova, Graduate Advisor*

## Meet Our Newest Graduate Students

### Jodi Greig

Halfway through her career as a psychology major, Jodi accidentally stumbled into a class on Polish literature and became instantly (and hopelessly) obsessed. Two years later, she was residing in Poland with the aid of a Kosciuszko Foundation grant. Her research interests are diverse, but her focus is primarily on issues of identity as structured by the interplay of politics, society, and gender. She is fascinated with the fracturing and synthesizing of identities that occurs at moments of political/social rupture

and their subsequent expression in cultural production. Her research focuses on prose produced during post-Communism, and has investigated how masculinity and femininity are linguistically constructed and perpetrated in contemporary literature. She is also interested in Polish feminism within the context of the “East-West” dialogue. She received a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Florida where she also minored in English and East-Central European Studies.



### Sarah Sutter

Sarah Sutter graduated from Macalester College in May 2008 with a B.A. in Russian Studies, Music, and Mathematics. Her plans to pursue graduate studies in Mathematics were quickly dropped after her inspiring study abroad experience in St. Petersburg during her Junior year. She spent the rest of her time at Macalester looking for ways to combine her interests in Music and

Russian. These included projects with Orthodox liturgical music, Shostakovich’s song cycles, and folk songs she heard performed at the Kuban State University in Krasnodar. She hopes to pursue research that focuses on the relationship between music and language. In her spare time, Sarah plays saxophone and reads comics.



### Marin Turk

Marin graduated from The University of Toronto with a B.A. in Russian Language and Literature and Psychology. She is interested in early 20th century Russian and Soviet literature in the Israeli context. More broadly, her interests include Russian poetry, post-Soviet cinema, Jewish identity, and the image of the female in

literature. In her free time, she likes to ponder the implications of Stalinist architecture, which she became acquainted with during a recent stay in Moscow. She is a Flamenco enthusiast, and aspiring pool shark.





# The Slavic Scene

## Highlights

### Bringing Contemporary Russian-Jewish Art to Ann Arbor: Pavel Lion/Psoy Korolenko

By Mikhail Krutikov

During the fall term of 2009 we had the great pleasure of having Pavel Lion on campus, a versatile artist, song-writer, journalist, and scholar of Russian literature. His visit was made possible thanks to the generous support by many units: Center for World Performance Studies, the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, CREES, Slavic Department, Department of Comparative Literature, Institute for the Humanities, International Institute, and LSA. The diversity of sponsors reflects the diversity of Pavel's many talents, which were vividly demonstrated by the series of events with his participation.

Pavel Lion, better known among his international Russian-language audience as Psoy Korolenko, is a unique figure on the post-Soviet stage. Part of the club culture which emerged during the 1990s, he has brought to Russia the rhythms, vibes and sensitivities of the klezmer music, a tradition which he creatively adapts to the contemporary taste. Highly sophisticated in his approach to music and words, he is able to appeal to a broader audience, who often enjoy the music, but miss the play. An accomplished scholar and engaging journalist, he takes an active part in Russian public debates on culture and arts.

As a musician and singer, Pavel played three different programs in Ann Arbor. Joined by his Berlin-based friend and colleague (and U-M graduate) Daniel Kahn and his band The Painted Bird, Pavel performed *The Internationale*, a provocative post-klezmer punk-cabaret engagement with the dominant ideologies of the past century. A much more lyrical tone was taken in the vocal duo (with Yana Ovrutskaya, a Moscow-based singer and writer) *Tsuzamen Aley*n (Together Alone), a pastiche of well-known and original songs about solitude, love, longing and abandonment. The next night the audience was treated to a burlesque show, *The Sweetest*, in which Yana and Pavel were joined by an assortment of local musical talents, including Professor Benjamin Paloff who made his public debut as a ukulele player on the stage of the Kerrytown Concert House.

For a number of years Pavel Lion has been taking

part in the project *Silent Film + Live Music*, aimed at providing viewings of old silent movies with original live musical accompaniment. Students, faculty and the general public had a unique opportunity both to see one of the masterpieces of Soviet film, *Bed and Sofa* (1927) and hear Pavel Lion and Daniel Kahn performing a post-modernist rap-style running commentary to the film, while playing keyboards.

Putting on his academic hat, Pavel spoke about his work with the film at the Slavic colloquium, and discussed his translation work with a group of scholars as part of the Department of Comparative Literature Year of Translation series. In a special lecture he presented a unique perspective on the well-known cultural dichotomy between two of Russia's capitals, Moscow and St. Petersburg, by exploring the difference between the respective klezmer music scenes in the two cities.



Artist-in-Residence, Pavel Lion thrills crowds with his enthusiastic and humorous art.


You can enjoy fragments of his performances online at [www.myspace.com/theinternationale](http://www.myspace.com/theinternationale)

## The 16th Annual Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival

By Jessica Zychowicz

If the gripping cinematography, polished acting, and riveting scripts fail to convert you into a lifetime Polish film fan, which would certainly be anomalous, then surely the homemade pastries and revealing lectures will turn you into a regular at the *Annual Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival*. November 14th and 15th will mark the Festival's 16th year in Ann Arbor. Sponsored by the Ann Arbor Polish cultural fund, Michigan Polish Club, and the University of Michigan, the Festival has a long history of bringing contemporary Polish documentaries, animated shorts, and feature films on diverse issues to a wide audience ranging from distinguished scholars to passing aficionados. In addition to screening films, the Festival also hosts esteemed Polish filmmakers and actors who engage audiences with lectures on their work, its synthesis, and Polish cinema's cultural relevancy not only to Poland, but to issues in the world at large. Past guests have included Zbigniew Rybczynski (director, Oscar for Best Short in 1983), Andrzej Fidyk (documentary filmmaker, member of the European Film Academy), Marcel Lozinski (documentary filmmaker, Oscar nomination in 1994), Cezary Pazura (triple winner of the "Golden Duck Award" for best Polish actor), and more.

This year's festival offerings include four documentaries, three dramas, one comedy, and a short animated film by the award-winning Tomasz Bagiński. On Sunday afternoon, featured guest and talented director, Basia Myszynski, will discuss her documentary, *Modejska - Woman Triumphant* (2009) about the Polish actress Helena Modejska and her overwhelming influence on early American film. Another featured documentary, *Coming Out in Poland* (2008), directed by Sławomir Grunberg, will also explore gender issues through a well-known Polish radio anchor's personal narratives and his recent experience "coming out" as gay. On Sunday evening, director Waldemar Krzystek will discuss his drama, *Little Moscow* (2008), which takes a look



**Nov. 14-15, 2009**  
**Michigan Theater**  
**State Theater**  
Ann Arbor, MI

**Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival**  
[www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival](http://www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival)

| <b>Saturday, November 14, 2009</b>  | <b>Sunday, November 15, 2009</b>   |
|---|--|
| 1:00 PM Documentary Segment<br><i>Gun for Hire</i> (documentary)<br><i>Po-Lin</i> (documentary) | 1:00 PM Documentary Segment<br><i>Coming Out in Poland</i> (documentary)<br><i>Modejska - Woman Triumphant</i> (doc) |
| 6:00 PM <i>General Nil</i> (drama)  | 5:00 PM <i>Scratch</i> (drama)   |
| 9:00 PM <i>How Much Does the Trojan Horse Weigh?</i> (comedy)                                   | 7:00 PM <i>Little Moscow</i> (drama)<br>Festival Guest: Waldemar Krzystek,<br>film director                          |

Program may change without notice. All films are shown with English subtitles.

The Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival occurs annually in November. Please check their website for 2010 dates, [www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival](http://www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival)

at the stormy relationship between Poland and the Soviet Union in the pivotal year 1968, as experienced by two lovers entangled in an extramarital affair. The Festival itself will be framed by two opening and closing events. On November 1st there will be a free, on-campus screening of Anna Jadowska's *Dekalog po Dekalogu* (2008), a triad of films based on Kieslowski's Decalogue series. Wrapping up in high style, the Festival will officially end with a public reception at Amadeus Restaurant, where one can ask those final, burning questions about this year's films, while imagining next year's selections.

For more info: [www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival](http://www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival).

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## In the Classroom

### Russian Service Learning Project Kicked Off in January

A new initiative combines the University of Michigan's expertise in Slavic Studies with its leading role in the development of Service Learning. Project RUSLAN (Russian Service Learning in Action Network), directed by Alina Makin, Department Lecturer IV and Residential College Intensive Russian Program Head, is now in its second term, and further exciting developments are being planned. In its first term, RUSLAN attracted 13 students to its for-credit service-learning pilot course and 35 students to its occasional one-day community service events. Working in partnership with the federally-funded Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, St. Vladimir's Russian Orthodox Church, organizations representing families with children adopted from Russia, and with local school districts, RUSLAN students offered support to the following:

- local Russophone seniors as language partners/ESL tutors, friendly visitors, citizenship exam tutors, and computer tutors
- children adopted from Russia seeking cultural or language enrichment
- students in local schools who were interested in being taught Russia-oriented culture lessons, as part of the world studies curriculum.

Feedback from clients and students was equally positive, with the learning element of the experience at the forefront of many evaluations.

This term students in the for-credit course (Russian 316/616/RCLang 333) are continuing to work with Russophone seniors. For many this represents a unique chance to increase language proficiency, while gaining rich culture-specific insight, and an understanding of the universal issues of generational difference. The first one-day community service event of the term attracted over a dozen students eager to write and address holiday greeting cards in Russian. Building on the initial success of RUSLAN, Alina Makin and Russian concentration advisor Michael Makin (Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures) have now put together a program that will take students to provincial Russia for an alternative spring break in late February 2010. Participants will work in local museums, schools, and community organizations, in the small town of Vytegra (Vologda oblast'). This proposal gained the support of U-M's Ginsberg Center, one of the country's biggest and best centers for service learning, which awarded Project RUSLAN a \$10,000 competitive grant, providing seed money for further growth.

Michigan's Slavists believe RUSLAN offers a totally new (and possibly unique) opportunity for students to use their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge in the local community, enriching it, and themselves in the process. It is hoped that, within the next year, a new track in the Russian concentration will offer students the option to make RUSLAN course work, and also local and Russia-based internships, a major part of their degree, and thus positioning themselves for a wide variety of postgraduate opportunities. Those interested in supporting Project RUSLAN should contact Slavic Chair, Professor Herb Eagle. For more information on the project itself, please contact Alina Makin ([resco@umich.edu](mailto:resco@umich.edu)), Project Coordinator. The project's website is currently under construction and should be completed by mid-November.

RUSLAN volunteers delivering Purim gifts and holiday smiles to 100 senior citizens (Left to right: Gordon Makin, Ethan Stockdale, Yefim Zaltsman, Kristin Steagall)



Deborah Renner, Jewish Family Services' Volunteer Coordinator, training RUSLAN students before they begin their service.





# The Slavic Scene

## Staying Connected

### Graduate Benjamin Rifkin, Dean of the School of Culture and Society

Ben earned his Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literatures in 1990, writing a dissertation on semiotics of narration in film and prose fiction with Herb Eagle. Now at the College of New Jersey, Ben is delighted to be working at an institution with Michigan's colors, even if at the College of New Jersey as blue and "gold" (rather than maize). One of his colleagues, William Behre, the Dean of the School of Education at the College of New Jersey, also has a doctorate from the University of Michigan, so "M Go Blue" has resonance even in the meetings of the Deans' Council.

Ben is the Chief Academic Officer of the School of Culture and Society, the division of humanities and social sciences within the College of New Jersey. The largest of TCNJ's seven schools, Culture and Society is the academic home for over 1600 students and 110 tenure-stream faculty. Ben looks back fondly at his experience at

the Slavic Department at the University of Michigan: "Serving as the coordinator of the lower division Russian language program from 1987-1989 was a critically important experience for me as a teacher and as an administrator. I'm grateful to Professor Mersereau and to all the faculty at Michigan Slavic for the trust they showed me. I dedicated a volume I edited, on mentoring foreign language instructors, to all my mentors: I will always have a special place in my heart for Michigan. Among other things, it's where I met my wife, Lisa Fell, who was a graduate student in the Department of Sociology."



Ben will be attending the annual AATSEEL conference in Philadelphia in December 2009, and he would be delighted to reconnect with Michigan Slavic graduates (current and past) at the conference or by email at [rifkin@tcnj.edu](mailto:rifkin@tcnj.edu).

### Rifkin named Dean of Culture & Society —Press Release from the College of New Jersey—

EWING, NJ ... The College of New Jersey announced today that Benjamin Rifkin will join the campus community as Dean of the School of Culture and Society, effective July 1, 2009.

Rifkin comes to TCNJ from Temple University, where he served most recently as head of the Russian section in the Department of French, German, Italian and Slavic Languages. Prior to that he served as vice dean for undergraduate affairs at Temple, and

has held chair and director positions at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Middlebury College. He holds advanced degrees from Yale University (MA) and the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor (AM, PhD). He has extensive experience in curricular development including both courses and programs, and designing new majors, as well as designing assessment programs.

A successful grant writer, Rifkin has garnered more than \$1.3 million in grants

for programs in language, international education, and undergraduate teaching improvement. His publications include advanced-level audio/listening comprehension lessons, articles on teaching and learning Slavic languages, commentary on teacher preparation in modern languages, analyses of performance-based learning outcomes, essays on contemporary Russian film, and a book on contemporary Russian literature and film focusing on questions of narratology.

# The Slavic Scene

## Staying Connected

### Professor Emeritus Vitalij Shevoroshkin

By Herb Eagle

Our long-time colleague Vitalij Shevoroshkin, Professor in the Linguistics Department, as well as in our own, retired from active faculty status this past June, although he is still very much a presence



Photo taken at the First International Symposium on Language and Prehistory (Nov. 1988). From left to right: Benjamin Stoltz, Sergei Starostin (Chair of Dept. of IE and Comparative Linguistics, Russian State Univ.), Vyacheslav Ivanov (Professor in Moscow and Los Angeles, CA), Professor Vitaly Shevoroshkin, Eugen Helimski (Professor in Cologne, Germany)

in the department as he continues his research as an emeritus professor. He earned his Doctorate in 1964 and a Doctorat d'Etat in 1966 from the USSR Academy of Sciences. After emigrating from the USSR in 1974, he was a visiting professor at Yale for three years before joining the faculty at the University of Michigan in 1979. As a scholar he has made very significant contributions to the study of world languages, in particular to elucidating the

interrelationship between the Indo-European languages and other language groups. His major books in this area include *The Lydian Language* and *Sound-chains in the World's Languages*. He has authored scores of articles and also edited

a seminal series of books on the reconstruction of ancient languages, including *Reconstructing Languages and Culture* and *Languages and their Speakers in Ancient Eurasia*, as well as volumes on Nostratic, Dene-Sino-Caucasian, Austric and Amerind languages. He was a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and has garnered many awards for his work on ancient languages, including NSF and NEH grants, a Fulbright Fellowship, and a University Faculty Recognition Award. In his honor, the volume *Indo-European, Nostratic and Beyond: Festschrift for V.V. Shevoroshkin* was published in 1997.

Professor Shevoroshkin played a key role in our department and in the Linguistics program at U-M. In Linguistics, he taught courses on Indo-European, the indigenous languages of the Americas, and Anatolian languages as well as on historical linguistics and the genetic relations among languages. In our department, he taught the core courses in linguistics: Old Church Slavic, Russian phonetics, History of Russian, Structure of Russian, and courses on contemporary spoken Russian, as well as a variety of seminars on language and culture. His erudition, enthusiasm, and warmth in dealing with colleagues and students enriched our work and will continue to do so in his new emeritus role.

### International Conference on Philology, Literatures, and Linguistics

By Svitlana Rogovyk

The Second International Conference on Philology, Literatures, and Linguistics, was held in Athens, Greece, bringing together more than 150 scholars and graduate students of languages, literatures, and linguistics from about 25 countries. It was organized by Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER). ATINER was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world could meet in Athens and exchange ideas on their research and discuss the future developments of their discipline.

In the Language and Society session, where I presented my paper, "*Issues in Ukrainian Language Teaching and Learning*," participants from China, Poland, Iran, and Brazil shared their views on topics about Bilingual Instruction in Chinese Universities, Formal Characteristics of Code-Switching in Electronic Communication, The Cultural Context of Classroom Materials, Language Study in the Later Year of Life, and more. Other areas of interest included sessions on Literary and Linguistic Studies, Second Language Acquisition, and Identity and Gender issues. Conference participants had a great opportunity to continue their discussions during multiple cultural events, organized by ATINER.



Svitlana Rogovyk near the ruins of Acropolis, Athens, Greece.

# In Print

# The Slavic Scene

## Please Don't Clean This Office: The Endless Mess of Translation

By Benjamin Paloff

The University of Michigan has a formidable tradition of engaging translation in both theory and practice. And with good reason: in ways that have long been evident in literary studies, and that are becoming increasingly easier to recognize in fields as disparate as politics and computer science, translation represents the front line of interpretive practice, the crossroads where disciplines and discourses meet, fuse, and, if we may allow ourselves recourse to Hegelian language, produce unexpected, exciting syntheses. My own work in translating, theorizing, researching, writing, and editing has generally focused on these problems of “carrying over,” as the Latin origin of translation would suggest, not only from a source language or culture into a target language and culture, but from one sphere of activity into another.

For the approaches to translation one finds at this institution, as well as among our collaborators at home and around the world, give the lie to the very distinction between theory and practice, which already begs for a translation of its own: translation here refers to the practice of interpretation through theory, as well as the theories of interpretation that arise out of multifarious practices, so that theory and practice merely represent two poles of a common enterprise. Translation is the meeting place where these differences are negotiated.

In my own work, such negotiations appear in an array of guises, as articles on Polish literature for scholarly journals and popular magazines, as editorial work (primarily for *Boston Review*), as poems (the writing of which has been supported this year by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts), or else simply as translations. As a translator, I have endeavored to work with as many different kinds of material as possible, including poems, plays, and critical theory. Recent projects have included Dorota



Assistant Professor Benjamin Paloff musing among his papers in 3012 Modern Language Building.

Masłowska's play *A Couple of Poor, Polish-Speaking Romanians*; Marek Bieńczyk's novel *Tworki*; a book-length essay, *Transparency*, also by Bieńczyk; and Krzysztof Michalski's *Eternal Flame: Essays on Friedrich Nietzsche*. But while this work, coupled with my articles, may fall most readily under the heading of “translation,” it arises from a single web of enthusiasms and concerns. The pleasure of exploring these interconnections, rather than trying to clean them up or straighten them out, remains one of the great blessings of my life.

**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:**

Herbert J. Eagle

**Assistant Editor & Layout:**

Rachelle Grubb

**The Regents of the University of Michigan**

Julia Donovan Darlow  
Laurence B. Deitch  
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Permit #144



## Supporting Slavic Studies

One of our major challenges in the years ahead will be maintaining the full array of language courses which we currently offer: first through fifth year Russian, first and second year intensive Russian, a special two-course sequence for “heritage” speakers of Russian who enter the program with some command of the language, first through fourth year Polish, and two years of instruction each in Ukrainian, Czech, and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian. Although the University of Michigan and the College of LS&A are managing the effects of the current economic downturn much more successfully than many other major universities, we nonetheless expect a decrease in College funding over the next few years. In order to maintain our full range of courses, we need some help from you, our former students and friends. All contributions made to our Michigan Difference Strategic Fund over the next three years will be dedicated to teaching all of the languages noted above and all of the current “years” of those languages. We urge you to consider contributing to this fund, as it will be dedicated to maintaining the essential foundation stone of our curriculum: the teaching of Slavic languages.

[www.giving.umich.edu](http://www.giving.umich.edu)

