

SLAVIC NEWS

WINTER 2007

Slavic Languages and Literatures, Box 353580
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195-3580

LETTER FROM CHAIR GALYA DIMENT

We are pleased to present our new adjunct and affiliate faculty who joined the department in the last 12 months.

Adjunct Associate Professor Laada Bilaniuk. Laada's home department is Anthropology, but her research interests and passions — linguistic and cultural policies in Ukraine — make her a natural addition to our faculty. Her book, *Contested Tongues: Language Politics and Cultural Correction in Ukraine*, was published by Cornell University Press in 2005. Check it out — it's a great read! Her BA is from Yale and her PhD from the University of Michigan.

Adjunct Assistant Professor Barbara Citko. Barbara was hired by the Department of Linguistics in 2005. Her BA is from the University of Gdansk and her PhD from Stony Brook University. She is very much a Slavic linguist; her research interests include understanding the structure of Slavic languages and how this understanding can drive the development of syntactic theory. We are very grateful to our colleagues in Linguistics for bringing her to our campus!

Adjunct Assistant Professor Bruce Kochis. Bruce, whom some of you undoubtedly know, has been teaching at UW Bothell since 1994. He is our very own alum: his BA is from UW and he majored in Russian. He then got a PhD, also in Russian, from the University of Michigan. Bruce founded the UW Human Rights Education and Research Network and in 2000 received a Distinguished Teaching Award. We are delighted to have him aboard!

Adjunct Associate Professor Brian Reed. Brian teaches English poetry and literature, but he is fluent in Russian, does some of his research on Russian poets, such as Nikolai Khlebnikov and Joseph Brodsky, and co-edited a wonderful book on Soviet Constructivists, *Situating El Lissitzky: Vitebsk, Berlin, and Moscow*. His undergraduate education took place at Harvard and Oxford, and he and Gordana Crnkovic had the same PhD advisor at Stanford, Professor Marjorie Perloff, with whom he co-edited the Lissitzky book.

Adjunct Assistant Professor Guntis Smidchens. Many of you, no doubt, know Guntis as well. He has been teaching in the Department of Scandinavian Studies since 1993; first as a Lecturer and, since September of this year, as Assistant Professor. Guntis is single-handedly responsible for the well-being and strength (as well as, through his fundraising skills, wealth) of the Baltic program here. He received his PhD from Indiana and his research interests include languages, folklore, and the cultures of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Affiliate Lecturer Claudia Jensen. Claudia and we go back a long way. A specialist on Russian and Soviet classical music, and especially on the musical culture of Muscovy, she has taught courses for us on Russian opera and Shostakovich and has served as a member on PhD committees. She recently received an NEH grant for her monograph on Muscovite music. Claudia is our second affiliate faculty — our Slavic Librarian Michael Biggins became our affiliate faculty in 2000 and has been graciously teaching translation courses for us every year.

We consider ourselves truly blessed and enriched to have these talented and accomplished scholars and teachers join our ranks!

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR VISITING SCHOLARS

by Phoebe Ambrosia

The Slavic Department is hosting two visiting Fulbright Scholars this year! After spending autumn quarter pursuing their own personal research interests, Piotr Lewinski and Nedzad Ibrahimovic will both be joining the faculty in creating some of the most intriguing new courses the University has to offer.



Dr. Piotr Lewinski comes to the University of Washington from Wroclaw, Poland, where his dedication has earned him a reputation as one of the top distinguished linguists and lecturers of Wroclaw University's School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreigners. As a student in the '80s, he specialized in the history of art, though his interest in linguistics led to a master's thesis on "The Semantic Analysis of Composed Words of Which the Second Elements Do Not Appear as a Separate Lexeme." Since then Dr. Lewinski has been designing custom language programs for English teachers, Baptist missionaries, and various business and industry directors based in Wroclaw.

As many of the best language instructors do, he began creating his own materials for these programs in an effort to help his students with the specialized lexical and grammatical problems they face. The results of his uniquely tailored efforts are some of the most praised classroom texts available to Polish linguists. His goal has always been to make the process of learning an enjoyable one for his students. Besides publishing texts for Polish language instructors, Lewinski's work during his study in Milan, Italy, the "Grammatica teorico pratica della lingua polacca," has been referred to as "the most acclaimed modern language text of its kind in Italian." His more recent studies at Devry in Chicago led to the publication of his thesis on "The Rhetoric of Advertising." This has since become a preferred textbook at many universities in Poland.

For the University of Washington, Dr. Lewinski has created two new courses that he is very excited to teach. This winter, for the Jackson School's REECAS program, he will lead students through the historic and cultural development of Poland as a central European country, from the aftermath of WW II to its admission to the European Union and beyond. He relates that, "Now, after experiencing so many historical disasters, Poland is no longer an exotic country. It has become far more normalized in the eyes of the international community. But still, even to its European neighbors, Poland is seen by some as very strange — completely unknown and abnormal. People still have it in their minds that there is no wealth, no cars, and little industry in Poland. Their idea of Polish agriculture is one which involves only horses! This would be true if one looked at publications from twenty years ago, but certainly not from today's Poland." To illustrate his point, he related this story about an American exchange student studying in Poland in 1986, the very tail end of Communism there. "The student had become embarrassed to throw out trash from her apartment after realizing that hers was the only colorful trash she'd seen during her stay there. The extravagant color clearly marked her as a foreigner. This would not be the case today."

Lewinski is adamant that students learn about modern Polish culture. "It is a beautiful country, a thousand-year-old culture with beautiful architecture, important literature, art, and film. The informed individual needs to banish from his mind any associations of Poland with bleakness and poverty," he says. His class will examine what WW II, Stalinism, and the break with communism have meant to Poland. The place that Poland holds as the first nation to liberate itself from Communism's sway will be an important part of this course. During spring quarter Lewinski will continue as a visiting lecturer in the Slavic Department with a new course on the music, theater, film, and literature of Poland.



Our visiting Fulbright scholar from Tuzla, Bosnia, is **Dr. Nedzad Ibrahimovic**. He has worked as an award-winning director of documentary film in The Netherlands, has taught literary theory in Bosnia, and has been the editor for the Journal of Art Theory, *Razlika/Difference*, which he founded in 2000. When asked about his expectations for his newest appointment as a visiting lecturer at the University of Washington, he says:

"This visit to the United States is very important for my experience as a teacher. Though I have worked for years with Bosnian students, American students are an entirely new experience for me. Everything that I know of American culture has come through the films I've seen and from observing the foreign policy decisions of American leaders. I hope that actually being in America will prove immensely valuable towards establishing the realities of this country and its people, versus what Hollywood portrays." Ibrahimovic believes that there are many differences that distinguish American culture from Balkan. "I just don't know what they are yet!" he laughs.

The first course he will be teaching at the University of Washington during winter quarter, titled "South Slavic Film after the Apocalypse of the 1990s," will focus on Balkan cinema created after the latest Balkan wars (1991-1995). He will

encourage his students to analyze the way that contemporary South Slavic film treats the ballast of history. "Like the authors Kusturica, Dragojevic, Tanovic, Bresan, and Zalica who are on the look-out for a new framework, a new story, we will look for possible new frameworks that emerge from their films," says Ibrahimovic. During his time as a scholar in Bosnia, his research has centered around Yugoslav film and film-makers. "What I find interesting now," he says, "is that in present-day South Slavic film, one can find many models and ideas regarding the past. Directors present allegories of that time period when political and cultural opinions could not be voiced so openly. It allows for a cinematic explanation of what happened in those regions during the last few decades."

Students taking Ibrahimovic's spring course, "South Slavic Literature in Exile," will read texts by those writers who willingly left, or were forced to leave, the former Yugoslavia during the tumultuous years of communism and war. Among the writers studied will be Aleksander Hemon of Bosnia, now in Chicago; Semezdin Mehmedinovic, also of Bosnia, now in Washington, DC; and Dubravka Ugresic, who left Croatia for Austria and The Netherlands. "It is always interesting," notes Ibrahimovic, "the kind of literature that writers in exile produce. The group of writers we will be following did have a great deal of their work published under communism, but when the war broke out, these writers left Yugoslavia. The interesting questions for us now are: why did each of them choose exile, and what effect has it had on their writing?" He notes that many of these authors are now writing and being published in English, German, and other languages besides their native Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian. The effect of non-native language in the narrative of these writers will be examined in this course, as will the widening presence of Balkan writers within the global community's literary awareness.

CZECH CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

In the spring of 2006, the Czech Center for Education and Culture (CCEC), a nonprofit corporation, was founded in Seattle to promote cultural and academic exchange between the Czech Republic and the Pacific Northwest. The CCEC will strive to implement a range of initiatives and to build alliances across borders, while contributing to the sharing of knowledge and ideas. The Inaugural Reception and Fundraiser of the new CCEC was held on November 9, 2006 in Seattle, with honored guest His Excellency Petr Kolar, Ambassador of the Czech Republic. Proceeds from the inaugural reception and fundraiser were used to fund a Czech Studies Endowment at the University of Washington as well as to provide scholarship support to students pursuing Czech studies (Jehlik Scholarship Fund), and future educational and cultural programs and activities of CCEC.



From left to right: Ambassador Petr Kolar; Czech Lecturer Jaroslava Soldanova; Professor and Chair Galya Diment; Daniel Novy, First Secretary to the Ambassador

UW POLISH STUDIES ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE: ANOTHER YEAR OF PROGRESS

by Krystyna Untersteiner

Lectures, a visiting Fulbright Scholar, the Spring Auction, Solidarity Archives, and funding scholarships for students are all on the UW PSEC's agenda for the 2006/07 academic year.

This fall the Distinguished Speakers Series, funded by a private donation from Andrzej and Izabella Turski, hosted two lecturers. Dr. Thaddeus Radzilowski from Piast Institute gave an interesting lecture on the history of Polish labor in the U.S. Dr. Jacek Furdyna from the University of Notre Dame talked about accidental scientific discoveries that changed the world. During the spring quarter the Speakers Committee is planning two lectures. In April we are expecting a visit by the Polish Ambassador to the United States, Janusz Reiter. The Committee is arranging for a public lecture and a reception with his Excellency. In May, Professor Richard Dunn of the UW's Department of English will talk about Joseph Conrad in celebration of the "Year of Joseph Conrad".

A group of friends of Polish Studies is organizing the *Viva Polonia* ball on January 27, 2007. All proceeds from the formal black-tie dinner and dance will be donated to the Polish Studies Endowment Fund. On February 24 we are looking forward to a night at Seattle Opera, featuring Polish contralto Ewa Podles in the title role of Georg Handel's *Julius Caesar* and a fundraising lunch with the star the following day. The Auction Committee is tirelessly at work on the third annual Spring Auction, which will take place on March 10.

The first Fulbright Scholar of Polish Studies, Dr. Piotr Lewinski, brought to the university through the combined efforts of the UW PSEC, Ellison Center and the Polish Fulbright Commission, will be teaching during the winter and spring quarters.

His lectures will concentrate on a variety of topics pertinent to Polish culture at the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries. Dr. Lewinski will also give a free public lecture entitled “Myths about Life in Poland” at the Polish Hall on January 16, 2007.

Members of the committee involved with the creation of the Solidarity Archive at the UW Library have delivered books and memorabilia to Professor Biggins. The Library has purchased copies of underground press from Poland and is in the process of cataloging and making the materials available to the public.

This year the committee’s fundraising efforts are focused on raising funds to provide support for students who would like to deepen their knowledge about Poland or the Polish language. We are hoping that proceeds from the Spring Auction will help us to realize this project. Best wishes from all of us for a happy and healthy new year!

Dates to remember:

Tuesday, January 16, 2007: “Myths about Life in Poland,” a lecture by Dr. Piotr Lewinski

Saturday, January 27, 2007: *Viva Polonia Ball*

Saturday, February 24, 2007: G. Handel’s *Julius Caesar* with Ewa Podles in the title role

Sunday, February 25, 2007: Fundraising luncheon with Ewa Podles

Saturday, March 10, 2007: 2007 Polish Studies Spring Auction

TBA: Lecture and reception with the Polish Ambassador

Thursday, May 3, 2007: Lecture about Joseph Conrad by Professor Dunn

For more information you may e-mail us at: contactus@PolishStudiesUW.org or go to our website at:

www.polishstudiesuw.org

NEWS FROM YOU

At the end of July 2006, **Roy Chan** (BA 2002) wrote, “I just passed my qualifying exams in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. I was examined in both my major fields, Chinese and Russian literatures. I am preparing to begin my dissertation, a project examining the often paradoxically intertwined trajectories of dream narrative and realism in Republican-era Chinese literature, with an eye on the shared epistemological and critical premises under which both modes seem to operate. Some projected chapters will tentatively include a connection to and comparison with Russian literary counterparts. In the meantime I spent last summer in Beijing undergoing intensive advanced training in Chinese (both Classical and modern), and this summer I’m picking up Japanese as a research language here at Berkeley. As a graduate student I have taught second-year Russian, Reading and Composition, and the intro survey in Chinese literature. In spring I received an Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award from the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department, for which I got a mounted certificate that looks even cooler than my college diploma (and, apparently, Berkeley’s PhD diplomas as well!). After three years of studying wushu (the standard form of Chinese martial arts), I am now taking up taiji as a way to recover from the trauma of oral exams.”

Gray Carpenter Church (BA 1977) writes, “First, I want to say HELLO to my friends, Ann Winski, Ann Romeo, Masha, Irena, Joyce, Zhenya, Kolya, “Gryaz,” and all the other folks from the 1975-77 Russkii Dom, as well as the ever-amazing Nora Gerbertovna Holdsworth. Those were great days, weren’t they, Ribyata?!”

“In 2006 my husband Al and I spent our wedding anniversary sport fishing (catch and release, of course) and bird watching in Costa Rica. We also took three trips to Baja to fish, bird watch,

and soak up the sun. In March I transferred into my ideal job: I train people to use the software produced by my employer, IBS-Interpret [same company, new (goofy) name]. On the five-day maiden voyage to Catalina Island of our new Riveria Sport Fisher, “Gray Light II,” our first fish caught (and released) was a striped marlin — a lucky omen (so says Al)! Coming in 2007: two months overseas training customers in Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark (looking forward to seeing some new birds there), and maybe a Greek cruise with Al afterwards. But, more important, my 50th birthday blow-out will be March 31, 2007. I’m planning a huge ‘50s theme — and there’s always room for more friends! So don your leather jackets or poodle skirts and come party with Elvis and us in Southern California!”

After earning a PhD at Harvard University, **Antonina Filonov Gove** (BA 1959) went on to teach in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Vanderbilt University from 1969 to 2000. Now Professor Emerita, she and her husband — also a Professor Emeritus from Vanderbilt — live in Boulder, Utah, where she is working on autobiographical sketches.

After six years as a freelance journalist in Berlin, **David Graber** (PhD 1996) moved to Prague in August and has been teaching business English to Czech managers, bankers, lawyers, and ‘Big 4’ accountants. “Prague is wonderful. These are some of the best and most motivated students I’ve had in my life.”

Bill (Vasiliy Kar’lich) Howard (BA 1961) writes, “I was deeply moved to read of the passing of Vladimir (Volodya) Gross in the newsletter. I first met Volodya in the summer of 1961, when I was taking and he was teaching a 15-credit-hour intensive Russian language course. Not only was he there for the many hours a day in class, he was almost always available for many, many hours outside of class to help and push along his students. We were invited to his home on Capitol Hill to meet his mother, Lyudmila, to share Russian meals and family life.

“In many ways Volodya was a very key player in the founding of the Russian House in the fall of 1961. I no longer recall whose idea it was initially, but Volodya certainly helped to push the idea and — perhaps more important — to sell it to University officials, so that when we opened the Russkii Dom in fall quarter 1961, we already had unofficial recognition and unwritten sponsorship from the then Far Eastern and Russian Studies Department. Volodya not only helped us find a Russian housemother (to meet University requirements for a coed co-op) but was instrumental in finding and hiring our Russian cook. He was there to help us label everything in the house with little signs in Russian. He was a regular guest at the house. He arranged for a number of our Russian visitors in that first year, etcetera, etcetera. Suffice it to say, the Russian House probably would not have made it through its first year without his considerable (and unpaid) help.

“In 1962 I went off to work in Washington, DC and abroad, returning to Seattle only rarely on home leaves or vacations, and did not return for good until 1991. I planned then to re-enroll in graduate school with the idea of finishing a thesis, and one of the first things I did on visiting the campus was to look up Volodya. Volodya took me around to introduce me and to remind everyone to be helpful, saying, ‘This is Vasya. Make sure he has what he

needs.’ He hadn’t changed a bit.

“He will be much missed.”

Don Livingston (PhD 1998) continues to teach Russian at Arizona State University and teach yoga on the side.

Even before earning her MSW in June 2006 from the University of Washington, **Anna Olson** (BA 1998) began working in public child welfare for the Division of Children and Family Services in Seattle. In autumn she travelled again to Denmark to visit close friends and their new baby.

Michael Seraphinoff (PhD 1993) has continued his writing and translation work, which now “includes five book-length works. These are my published dissertation, *The 19th Century Macedonian Awakening*; the novel *Macedonian Gold*, plus translations of the novel *Kalesh Andja*; *Some Great Old Stories from the Old Country - Macedonia*; and *The Descendants of Alexander of Macedon*. I presently work for the International Baccalaureate Organization of Cardiff, Wales as examiner responsible for Macedonian. I also recently returned from a visit to Macedonia.”

GIFTS

Gifts to the Department play an indispensable role as we build and develop our new programs. Below we recognize the generosity of individuals and businesses that have contributed in the past six months.

Our newest fund is the *Czech Studies Endowment*, created to support students studying Czech language at the University of Washington.

Vilma Vojta

Sara D. Votipka

Nancy G. Weinstein

The *Friends of Slavic Languages and Literatures Fund* made be used at the discretion of the Department Chair. Gifts to this fund are invaluable, enabling the department to allocate funds wherever the need is greatest.

Contributors to Balkan Studies include:

Mary Sherhart

Contributors to the general fund include:

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Gray Carpenter Church
George W. Grantham
Hans Hasche-Kluender, MD

Carolyn and Richard Leon
Bruce W. McKinney
Anabel Malmquist
Ann Maltzoff

Cynthia and Richard Marriott
Mary K. Mohler
David M. Nemerever

Like the Friends Fund, the *Institutional Allowance* may be used at the discretion of the department to support its various activities. The annual Outstanding Undergraduate Award and Outstanding TA Award both come from this fund. A special subset provides the Nora Holdsworth Scholarship to the winner of the annual Olympiada of Spoken Russian.

John and Yvonne Basil
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The *Lew R. Micklesen Graduate Fund* supports graduate student programs in the Slavic Department.

David Miles and Hope Hensley

Susanna J. Westen

The *E. Harold Swayze Graduate Fellowship Fund* supports graduate students in the Slavic Department.

Marian Swayze Erdelyi

Susanna J. Westen

Each year since 1989 the *Vadim Pahn Scholarship Fund* has been used to pay tuition for one student to attend the UW's summer quarter intensive Russian language program. This year's recipient was Cadence McAfee, who studied second-year Russian.

Bruce W. McKinney

The *Ukrainian Studies Endowment Fund* was created to endow a chair of Ukrainian Studies.

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Donors to the *Polish Studies Distinguished Speakers Fund*:

Anthony and Hanna Krol

VLADIMIR GROSS MEMORIAL ENDOWED FUND

It is with great honor that the Ellison Center would like to announce the Vladimir Gross Memorial Endowed Fund to honor the legacy of Vladimir Gross, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, who taught Russian language at the UW for nearly four decades. Sadly, Professor Gross passed away on January 23, 2006. The endowment will provide support for undergraduate students interested in studying the Russian language, including those wanting to travel to Russia for language study. While preference will be given to undergraduates to study the Russian language, funds may also be used for undergraduate students to travel to Russia to study the country's history, literature or culture.

Vladimir Gross led a fascinating life. Born in Manchuria, China in 1933 to Russian parents, his family moved two years later to the Soviet Union. As a boy, Gross and his mother toiled for three years in a German labor camp before eventually making their way to Seattle in 1949, where Gross completed high school. He served in the United States Air Force from 1953 to 1957 before receiving his BA (1961) and MA (1964) from the University of Washington's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. Due to the lack of teachers and increased student demand, he began teaching Russian as just a sophomore in 1959. He would continue to do so until retiring in 1995. Another course he taught, on Soviet Dissident Music and Russian Balladiers, was particularly popular with Russian language students and enabled them to explore Russian culture, language and modern Soviet life through the context of music and song.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

The Slavic Department is very grateful to alumni and friends for their generous support. Please help the department continue its efforts by giving generously whenever possible. You may send a check made out to the University of Washington Foundation with one of the funds designated on the memo line of your check. Please send the check along with this form to the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Washington, Box 353580, Seattle, WA 98195-3580.

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- SLAVIC NORA HOLDSWORTH SCHOLARSHIP – Scholarship for winner of annual Olympiada competition
- POLDIS POLISH DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS FUND – Showcase achievements of Poles by bringing speakers to campus
- POLFUL POLISH FULBRIGHT FUND – Increase Polish-specific course offerings by bringing Polish Fulbright scholars to the UW
- POLEND POLISH STUDIES ENDOWMENT – Promote permanence and expansion of program to include more levels of Polish language, history and culture
- RUSSHO RUSSIAN HOUSE FUND – Provide general support for the Russian House
- WESTEN1 SHOSH WESTEN OUTREACH FUND – Support for departmental outreach efforts
- SWAYZE SWAYZE FELLOWSHIP – Fellowship support for Slavic Department graduate students
- UKRANI UKRAINIAN ENDOWMENT FUND – Provide Ukrainian language and culture instruction
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NEWS ABOUT YOU

We would like to keep in touch with you, as we hope to share news of our alumni in next July's newsletter. Please fill out the form below, clip and send to us: Slavic Department, Box 353580, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195-3580. At the same time, please make any needed changes on your label below. Thank you. ***You can also contact us by email at slavicll@u.washington.edu.***

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