An Interview with Vitaly Chernetsky

by Renee Perelmutter

Vitaly Chernetsky, joined the Slavic department in Fall 2013. A native of Odessa, Professor Chernetsky completed his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, and he has taught at Columbia University and Miami University of Ohio. His interests are in 20th and 21st century literature and film, particularly from Russia and Ukraine. Dr. Renee Perelmutter talked to Professor Chernetsky about his research, experiences at KU, and plans for the future.

RP: You come to KU as a mid-career scholar with a distinguished record of scholarship, teaching, and service at places as diverse as Columbia, Harvard, Northeastern University, University of Greifswald in Germany, and Miami University. Could you please tell us about the highlights of your trajectory so far? What attracted you to KU Slavic?

VC: I feel that I have been incredibly fortunate and privileged to work at several outstanding academic institutions. From the outset, I was guided, on the one hand, by a passion for acquainting new audiences with the riches of bold, innovative, thoughtful literature and art (especially of the contemporary period) of the two cultures in which I grew up as a bilingual and bicultural person (Ukraine and Russia), and on the other, by engaging with the intellectual discourses that sought to explain global paradigm shifts occurring over the course of the recent decades. I was inspired by my teachers, both back in the still existing USSR and here in the US, where I had a tremendous honor to arrive in 1989 as one of the very few students from the Soviet Union selected for an exchange program that resulted from the agreements concluded at the Geneva summit between Reagan and Gorbachev. At Duke University, where I was placed by the exchange program, I met both incredibly inspiring professors (such as Fredric Jameson and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) and fellow students passionate about thinking boldly about the world we are living it and the changes it has been experiencing. The first outlines of my overarching project were by and large conceived during my first year in the US, as the former Soviet Bloc countries were transforming at an unprecedented pace.

As a teacher, I am inspired by similar goals; I seek to empower my students to engage boldly and constructively with a diverse set of intellectual discourses and cultural practices and to develop an in-depth understanding of the cultures of the region we study and teach. At Columbia, I acquired a valuable experience in building new sections of an established, highly regarded program (Ukrainian studies, contemporary Russian culture, and film studies within a Slavic Department context); at Northeastern, I saw opportunities to share my passion with a diverse urban student body, a large percentage of which came from underprivileged backgrounds. Greifswald hosts the leading summer school in Ukrainian Studies; teaching there provided a very important change in perspective. At Miami, I was excited to contribute to a young, vigorously growing program that arose and strengthened at a time when Slavic and East European studies were seen as a discipline in crisis. KU’s Slavic Department attracted me by its reputation for excellence, its record of training and sending out into the world first-rate scholars, teachers, and contributors to non-academic intellectual fields. The challenge of revitalizing the teaching of contemporary culture and bringing film to a prominent place within the Department’s curriculum has been particularly attractive and exciting. I am delighted by the Department’s collegial atmosphere, intellectual diversity, and the passion and dedication I see among both faculty and graduate students.

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Chair’s Corner

by Stephen Dickey

A great deal has transpired in the department in the two years since the last issue of the Chronicle appeared in September 2012. The Fall 2012 semester brought sad news to the department. Two of our long-time colleagues passed away, Professor Jadwiga Maurer in October, and Tamerlan Salaty in December. Professor Maurer (1930–2012) taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Polish language and literature at KU from 1968 through 2001 when she retired. In addition to her mentoring of graduate students and colleagues, she is best known in the academic world for her 1990 study ‘Of an Alien Mother’ — Sketches on the Ties of Adam Mickiewicz with the Jewish World. This book broke new ground in the interpretation of Adam Mickiewicz, the national poet of Poland. Starting with the likelihood that Mickiewicz’s mother was a descendant of converted Jews, Professor Maurer probed the significance of poet’s Jewish roots to his fashioning of his life and art.

Tamerlan Salaty (1922-2012) was a long-time instructor of Russian language in the department teaching many generations of KU students the intricacies of Russian grammar. He was well known, both inside the classroom and out, for his endless supply of humorous stories and he loved working with students in office hours. He was generous with his time and helped many students and people from Russia get settled in Lawrence. He retired from teaching in 1993, at the end of the large swell of students who became interested in Russian in the years of Gorbachev’s glasnost’ and perestroika.

This sad news is tempered with the department’s good fortune in successfully concluding a search for a mid-career specialist in 20th and 21st century Russian literature in Spring 2013. Professor Vitaly Chernetsky joined the department in Fall 2013 coming from Miami University of Ohio. He brings a range of research and teaching interests to the department in the Russian and Ukrainian literary traditions and will expand our course offerings to embrace Russian and Soviet film, and Russian and Slavic science fiction. We are very happy to have him with us. You can read more about his career in this issue’s cover story.

Another stroke of good fortune has been yet another successful search in Spring 2014, this time for a visiting assistant professor of Russian literature. Professor David McVey has joined us this semester, also bringing substantial expertise in Russian and Polish literature as well as Russian and East European film.

Lastly, I am delighted to announce that Professors Renee Perelmutter and Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova were awarded tenure in Spring 2014. Their promotions are essential to the continued productivity and vitality of the department, and we welcome them to the ranks of senior faculty!

Many changes are going on in the University at large—we have reorganized business practices so that a set of specialists in a Shared Services Center handle the accounting and human resources issues for the department. The job duties for other department staff positions have been realigned and so the Slavic Department now shares Ms. Eileen Larson, an Administrative Assistant, with the East Asian Languages and Cultures department. Further discussions of re-organization have started on the academic side, with the Dean encouraging language departments at KU to unite under the common structure of a School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures.
The final shape and name for this new school are being worked out during this academic year. Although the new structure will bring with it a number of realignments, all of the department’s degree programs will remain intact. This is crucial to us, since in the past few years we have been successful at recruiting very strong cohorts of new graduate students.

The reorganization at the University has also touched the general education requirements for the whole university. The new KU CORE was launched in Fall 2013, and Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova developed and offered the Department’s first First-Year Seminar, drawing on her research expertise in the Polish post-socialist coming of age novel to frame an interesting cross-cultural exploration of what it means to come of age in a time of transition. The first-year seminars are a way to expose first-time students to the range of topics and offerings that the university has.

The department in August 2013 launched a major upgrade of our webpage, where we can now update news and other information about the department and the faculty’s activities easily. It is now easier than ever for our alumni to update us on changes in your personal life and career by filling in our online form (http://slavic.ku.edu/submit-contact-information-ku-slavic-department). The department is also on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/KUSlavic), where we would love you to “like” the page and stay in touch with us. We are always anxious to hear news from our students, since the accomplishments and career paths of our alumni offer the best answer when current students ask: “So what can I do with a BA in Slavic?” Following up on a session about careers and foreign languages that the KU career center and I organized in September, in early December of 2013 Cassandra Peyton (SLL, BA, 2000) came to campus to talk about how her career has developed from working with non-profit organizations in Eastern Europe to becoming a diplomat for the US Department of State, where her next assignment will take her to Latin America.

Given the limited funds that the state has to support public higher education, the department must rely more and more on support from our alumni and friends to accomplish our mission. The years of work that Professor Edith Clowes put into fundraising for the department to offer Czech language instruction are close to fruition, and it seems likely that in the near future the Margaret Jackson Clowes Czech Language Fund will allow us to offer two years of Czech instruction on a rotation. I know that I speak on behalf of everyone in the department when I say how grateful we are for this extraordinary support.

I want to thank all of our alumni for their previous donations, and I want to encourage you to continue supporting the department and our current students. This year when you donate, I would like you to note the name(s) of faculty member(s) in the department who particularly encouraged you and helped you during your years at KU and beyond, so that we can start building “Faculty Tribute” list. To note these faculty names, please use the space on the Endowment webpage that allows donors to name a person in whose memory or honor the gift is given.

And finally, two other changes need mentioning. First, Professor William Comer has left to direct the Russian Flagship Program at Portland State University, after 22 years with our department. Throughout that time he directed the KU Russian language program; he was instrumental in bringing the Project GO intensive Russian-language study program for ROTC students to KU. Professor Comer directed the Ermal Garinger Academic Resource Center from 1998 to 2007, digitizing the center and laying the foundation for all the work that EGARC does today. He led KU’s Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies for one year, and also chaired the Slavic Department for five semesters (stepping down at the end of the Spring 2014 semester). The American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages recognized Professor Comer’s contributions to Slavic and East European Languages.

Second, Professor Maria Carlson retired at the end of the Spring 2014 semester after 27 years at KU. She entered the department in 1986 at the very start of Gorbachev’s perestroika and devoted 11 years to leading KU’s Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. Professor Carlson became a mainstay of the department during her tenure; her courses, such as “The Devil in Russian Literature,” became signature courses of the department. She has achieved wide renown both across the US and internationally for her scholarly publications on the Silver Age period of Russian literature and culture and on Russia’s Theosophical movement. She was also highly regarded as an adviser of graduate students, for which she received the College’s Byron Alexander Graduate Mentor Award in Spring 2014. Although retired, Professor Carlson has a full agenda of research projects that she intends to complete, including a book on vampires in Northern Europe and a textbook on Slavic folklore. We are grateful for her years of dedicated service and wish her the very best in many years of active engagement with the KU campus on her array of research topics.
Marta Pirnat-Greenberg presents Joshua McMullen and Joe Cummings with awards for Excellence in Elementary BCS.

Marta Pirnat-Greenberg presents Andrew Bledsoe with the Award for Excellence in Elementary Slovene.

2014 Honors Reception

Dr. William J. Comer officiates the ceremony.

Awards for Excellence in Intermediate Russian (left to right): Ike Uri, Alex Kuhn, Mitchell Starrs, Ms. Anna Karpusheva, Ms. Alexandra Fisher.

Awards for Excellence in Elementary Russian (left to right): Parker Riley, Mr. Jaron Castilleja, Katie Johns, Ms. Alexandra Fisher, Mike Hemphill, Ms. Liz Burkum, Aidan Dmitriev, Mr. Matt Menzenski, Taylor Cameron, Dr. William J. Comer.

Dr. Irina Six presents Jimmy Sloan and Ruth Remmers with awards for Excellence in Advanced Russian.

Marta Pirnat-Greenberg presents Joshua McMullen and Joe Cummings with awards for Excellence in Elementary BCS.

Marta Pirnat-Greenberg presents Andrew Bledsoe with the Award for Excellence in Elementary Slovene.
Marta Pirnat-Greenberg presents Megan Luttrell with the Award for Excellence Intermediate BCS.

Dr. Renee Perelmutter (right) presents Randi Hacker with the Award for Excellence in Intermediate Yiddish.

Mr. John Korba (right) presents awards for Excellence in Intermediate Czech to Bob Jameson and Amelia Davidson.

Dr. Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova (center) presents awards for Excellence in Intermediate Polish to Ashley Colen (left) and Caroline Geiger (right).

Malgorzata Stamm presents the Award for Excellence in Elementary Polish to Holly Mills.

Dr. Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova (right) presents Jason Cash with the Award for Excellence in Advanced Polish.
Dr. Maria Carlson and Dr. Irina Six mingle during the reception.

Ms. Esra Predolac (right) presents the Award for Excellence in Elementary Turkish to her student Eliza Taitielieva.

Ms. Esra Predolac (left) presents Sarah Gerges and Raider Fowler with awards for Excellence in Advanced Turkish.

Dr. William J. Comer (right) conducts the initiation into the National Slavic Honor Society: Amy Lauters, Taylor Broadfoot, Natalie Cristin Perry, Andrew Bledsoe.

Dr. Irina Six and Dr. Marc Greenberg present Taylor Broadfoot (left) with the award for Outstanding Graduating Major.

Dr. Maria Carlson and Dr. Irina Six mingle during the reception.
An alumnus’ legacy creates exciting new opportunities for SLL Students

by Taylor Broadfoot (SLL BA ’14)

Gabriel Al Salem (SLL BA ’89), whose incredible story was featured in LC Fall 2011, was born in Lindsborg, Kansas to a German mother and Kuwaiti father. Hardworking and charismatic, he pursued a number of interests at KU such as Russian and French, theater, and cello. As one of KU SLL’s most distinguished alumni, his post-graduate career spanned throughout Central Asia, Russia, Yugoslavia, and Mongolia and he became a driving force behind business advisory services in the era of privatization in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

After his untimely death in 2010, his wife Viktoria Olskaia, close friends, and colleagues established the Gabriel Al Salem Foundation (GASF), aiming to promote the best practices in management consulting in emerging economies in Central Asia and other post-socialist countries.

SLL faculty members Dr. Marc Greenberg, Dr. Irina Six, and undergraduate intern Taylor Broadfoot (SLL BA ‘14) traveled to Kiev, Ukraine to attend the third annual conference held by the GASF and to work with the foundation to develop an experiential learning program for students of SLL. Following the conference, Broadfoot and Greenberg worked with Viktoria Olskaia and other GASF colleagues to develop an experiential-learning program in Gabriel’s adopted hometown, Almaty, Kazakhstan. The program will allow KU students to experience working in a Russian-speaking environment and learn the necessary cultural context to operate in post-socialist economies.

The true test would be traveling to Kazakhstan to solidify the relationships with trusted Kazakh partners and build the foundation of the program. Thanks to funding from Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies Ann Cudd and a generous travel grant from the University Career Center, Taylor worked closely with the chair of Certified Management Consultants of Kazakhstan and GASF treasurer, Gulsum Akhtamberdieva, to meet and exchange ideas with governmental and non-governmental agencies throughout Almaty.

Several Kazakh firms and institutions are eager to work with and KU students for an 8-week internship. Partnerships have now been formed with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, a government organization developed to support local business and entrepreneurship, the Kazakhstan Press Club, a close partner of the GASF and one of the largest PR firms in the country, and Paragraph Company, a large and competitive infor-
The first cohort of interns will travel to Almaty in the summer of 2015. Students will be housed and enrolled at KIMEP University, one of the oldest and most prestigious American-style business schools in Almaty. In addition to taking Russian language classes in the World Language Center at KIMEP, students are encouraged to enroll in English-language business and journalism classes at no additional charge. Located in the heart of downtown Almaty, KIMEP University has all the amenities a student would expect from an American college: renovated dormitories, laundry facilities, three dining halls, a medical clinic, and a caring, English-speaking staff.

Almaty is an elegant, culturally diverse, modern, and extremely cosmopolitan city with a thriving business community and breathtaking natural scenery, crowned by the majestic Tien Shan mountains. Coupled with Kazakhstan’s growing economy (the 3rd fastest growing in the world), the wealth of experience from this program will benefit students pursuing an international career. Whether a student is looking to learn the Russian language, work actively with local businesses, or participate in international journalism—there is something for everyone in this program!

To learn more about the internship program, please visit the webpage here. Scholarship funds for KU students are now being raised. Those interested in donating to the Gabriel Al-Salem Memorial Student Opportunity Fund may go to this secure website or contact Prof. Greenberg for other options.

SLAV 740 “Intro to Graduate Studies”: New and Improved

by Maria Carlson

In the Fall 2013 semester, new SLL graduate students enrolled in SLAV 740—as they always have. Only this time, instead of the traditional “Bib and Methods,” they became part of a whole new course: “Intro to Graduate Studies.” In a successful, collaborative teaching effort among the French, Slavic, and German Departments, students from all three departments met together and worked with Profs. Bruce Hayes (French), Maria Carlson (Slavic), and Leonie Marx (German) to learn what graduate students need to know and how they should plot their career paths. In addition to learning why, where, and how to do research, 740 students also created their own professional web sites on Weebly (very impressive!), blogged about issues in higher education and the history of literary theory (very entertaining!), completed a digital humanities project with Brian Rosenblum of IDRH (Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities), worked with rare books in Spencer Library under the supervision of Sally Haines and Jon Giulian, and participated in a mock conference based on their semester’s research project. The conference, held on 7 December 2013, was spectacular! The quality of papers was well above the average and clearly demonstrated how much the students had grown over the course of the semester.

The SLAV 740 students also had multiple sessions (and hands-on experience in Watson Library’s computer labs) about available research resources from our Slavic librarian, Jon Giulian. All of the students met together to learn about open access and research visibility from Prof. Marc Greenberg and Ada Emmett (Scholarly Communication, Libraries), about CV and résumé construction and job searching with Wendy Shoemaker of the University Career Center, and about alternative careers from a panel of KU professionals, including SLL’s own Dr. Jonathan Perkins, Director of EGARC. It was a lot to assimilate, but students clearly benefited from the redesign of the course and the opportunity to interact with peers from related departments. It’s a brave new world out there, and SLL graduate students are going to be ready for it.
KU Slavic Presents Strong Showing at SLS

by Rebecca Stakun

The Slavic Linguistics Society held their annual conference in Seattle, WA September 19–21. SLL graduate student Matt Menzenski noted a particular strong presence of Midwest graduate students at the conference, especially from KU and OSU. KU was represented by six students and faculty members at the conference. Stephen Dickey presented his paper “On a Putative Case of ‘Native Slavic’ Biaspectuality: Determinate Verbs of Motion”; Matt Menzenski presented the paper “Aspectual Morphemes as Verb Classifiers in Slavic and Non-Slavic Languages”; Erin Moulton and John Korba co-presented their research “Verbs of Communication in Russian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, and Czech: A Comparative Study of Verbal Aspect and Pragmatic Contract”; and Krzysztof E. Borowski presented his paper “What’s in a Name? Molise Croatian vs. Molise Slavic”. Finally, as the outgoing chair of SLS Marc L. Greenberg ran the business meeting and turned the leadership over to Anton Zimmerling of Sholokhov Moscow State University for the Humanities/Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences.
KU Russian Students Interview Russian Writer

by Irina Six

On December 6, 2013, the students of my RUSS 600: The Classics of Russian Culture class had an amazing chance to talk to a famous Russian writer, historian and journalist Konstantin Kovalev. For us, it was an early afternoon discussion held in a teleconference room in EGARC. For Konstantin Petrovich, it was a late evening conversation from his home office in downtown snowy Moscow. For everybody, it was a chance to speculate about the phenomenon of Russian music of the 19th century, examine contemporary music, and discuss the future of world music.

Some of the many questions the students asked Konstantin Kovalev included:
- What made Russian music flourish in the middle of 19th century?
- Was Russian music unique or was Russia just following the European music trends?
- Why were none of the 19th Russian composers professional musicians?
- How can one attract young people to classical music?
- What is the future of classical music?

Probably nothing educates students more than learning from people with a vision, and even more so in content classes taught in a foreign language. However, people with vision (especially if they are foreign experts in the field) are not easily accessible. Here is where technology helps in learning languages and cultures, and not just through “googling” information or online translations. Teleconferencing with guests from around the world can truly enhance the students’ interest in the discussed subjects.

Kovalev, an author of multiple books on Russian music history and a frequent guest of multiple Russian TV and radio programs, is famous for his unique vision of Russian music history. Thanks to EGARC’s resources and helpful staff, the advanced students of Russian had a unique chance to appreciate the vision of a Russian scholar and hold an hour-long conversation … in Russian. It made my day and the positive feedback from students was overwhelming. Luke Franklin writes, “The cumulative interview with Konstantin Petrovich Kovalev was one of the absolute highlights of my semester. I deem it in part to the man’s wide-ranging knowledge and personality, but I am very grateful to Prof. Six for providing us the opportunity. To try to employ some of the concepts and history we had been learning into a practical context with a learned and accessible scholar was challenging and rewarding. It’s hard to separate the tangible benefits of the conversation from the feeling that enjoying a chat with Konstantin Petrovich would be a luxury desired by most of the cultural elite—much less American language students. We, as a class, not only gained closer insight into a very informed conception of Russian classical music, but a view on contemporary cultural problematic, and an opportunity to engage in intellectual discussion with an unfamiliar figure (an intimidating prospect, at the least). Prof. Six proved to be the most accessible and encouraging figure of this first semester returning to grad-school, and I am grateful for her contradictorily empathic and disciplined course structure.”

The recording of the conference is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHXvLxg9D8w&feature=youtu.be

More information about Konstantin Kovalev-Slucheckii can be found on his personal website: http://www.kkovalev.ru/index.htm
Jayhawks Abroad

The Lawrencian Chronicle recently received a number of Dr. Joseph L. Conrad’s (1933–2003) old photographs, taken in the former Yugoslavia, USSR, and Berlin. Although many of the place names are known, the faces are not. The editors of LC ask our readers and SLL alumni, “Do you recognize anyone in these photographs?” If so, please contact Rebecca Stakun at rstakun@ku.edu. For more information on Dr. Conrad, please visit https://slavic.ku.edu/joseph-l-conrad-memorial-award.
**Student News**

**Alexandra Fisher** was awarded a summer FLAS in 2014 for the study of Ukrainian. She also participated as a volunteer for the Canadian team for the 2014 Winter Paralympics in Sochi, Russia.

**Kayla Grumbles** published her article “Their Daughter, Their Comrade: Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya’s Image in Soviet Media 1942-1987” in the Fall 2013 issue of Berkeley’s undergraduate journal *Troika*. Her research for the article was funded through the Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Achievement Award (URSA) grant program.


**Megan Luttrell** organized a Slavic folk dance workshop in fall 2013, and organized/led a pysanky-making workshop in spring 2014. She hopes that both workshops will continue to be regular events and this year’s folk dancing workshop has already been scheduled for Nov. 7. Megan also published a review Andrew Kaufman’s *Understanding Tolstoy* was published in *SEEJ* 58.1. Her review of Lucia Aiello’s *After Reception Theory: Fedor Dostoevskii in Britain, 1869-1935* will appear in *SEEJ* 58.4. Megan also translated an article entitled “Dmitrii Mileev and the Restoration of Wooden Architectural Monuments in Early Twentieth-Century Russia,” which will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Russian Review*.

**Matthew Menzenski** spent six weeks this summer in Saint Petersburg, Russia, studying at Saint Petersburg State University on a Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship. He was awarded another FLAS fellowship to study Polish at KU in 2014–2015. He presented a paper, “Aspectual Morphemcs as Verb Classifiers in Slavic and Non-Slavic Languages,” at the Slavic Linguistics Society’s annual meeting in Seattle on September 19th, and also presented an invited talk, “The...”
Interview with John Korba
by Matt Menzenski and Rebecca Stakun

You spent academic year 2012–2013 at the Prague branch of the Institute of Psychology of the Czech Academy of Sciences working on your dissertation. Could you tell LC readers a little about your work there? Why did you decide to go to Prague?

My project examines different uses of the past tense imperfective verb in Czech and Russian via psycholinguistic experimentation, which I studied in the KU linguistics department. The institute has a great laboratory in partnership with Charles University, and my mentor, Filip Smolík, is a researcher at the institute and a former Fulbrighter at KU, where he ultimately received his PhD in the Child Language Program. Filip was a great mentor and the members of the institute were also helpful and supportive, so it worked out really well!

Why aspect? And why did you choose your particular approach?

Any student of a Slavic language knows how difficult aspect is, and graduate students who learn two or more become even more confused. The challenge of explaining it drew me into the field, and Dr. Dickey has done a lot of research to help us understand the differences. He helped orient my particular research project. I chose experimentation in particular because I wanted to address certain questions that had a variety of plausible explanations but that are difficult—at least for me—to try to prove, revise, or refute with only the help of native speakers or a few choice examples.

What obstacles did you face while conducting your research?

Plenty! For more general obstacles, I had great difficulty registering with the police in the Czech Republic and finding a place to live; a lot of the Fulbrighters had this experience, though. Particular to my project, it was a challenge to conduct the experiment, but equally difficult was coordinating the necessary paperwork and such back in Kansas. In hindsight, a mid-year trip back to Kansas might have made that portion easier.

What was the most rewarding aspect of your trip?

The end! It was fulfilling to finish the Czech experiments and find some interesting results that both supported some of the hypotheses we had and also introduced new questions. It was also rewarding to connect with scholars who study that area of the world, both Czech scholars and Americans and foreigners who were also researching there. It is possible to connect with some people at conferences, but so much easier when you are abroad for an extended time.

Do you have any advice for junior colleagues conducting similar research trips?

I recommend thinking about your trip and the necessary arrangements as early as possible. Seek out a good mentor and senior scholars who have researched in the same way as you (even if their topic is entirely different), and ask these folks what you will need—and need to avoid! I saved some time using the help and advice of others. Finally, do not feel guilty if you have trouble at times being abroad; you’re living there, so it is more than your research project. A corollary to that is: enjoy yourself!
First Part of ‘Text Analysis’ is ‘Text’: Applying Digital Methods to an Under-Documented Language,” at KU’s Hall Center for the Digital Humanities as part of the Digital Humanities Seminar Series on September 29th.

Rebecca Stakun received the 2013 Jerkovich Scholarship for the Study of the Former Yugoslavia. In January 2013 she presented her paper “Anna Karenina as a Gothic Figure” at AATSEEL in Boston and “Phantoms of Power in Pelevin” at the 2014 AATSEEL conference in Chicago where she also organized and chaired a panel on interdisciplinarity in Slavic literature and culture. She is currently acting Graduate Student Representative to the Executive Council of AATSEEL. From May 2013 – August 2014 she was a student content developer for Mezhdu nami. She will present her paper “Homo homini lupus: Adaptability in the Prose of Viktor Pelevin” at ASEEES in San Antonio this November.

Finally, congratulations to Liz Burkum and Jaron Castilleja who recently finished their MA degrees and to Anna Karpusheva, who completed her MA and began PhD coursework this fall!

Alumni News

Jeb and Kristina Adams (MA REES, 2004) run a thriving private K–6 school in rural Macedonia and include in their program a subsidized component for underprivileged kids of Roma, Turkish, and Albanian backgrounds whose access to good education would otherwise be severely limited. Among other things, they promote literacy in native languages (including minority Albanian, in which they publish a school newsletter) alongside American English. To learn more, visit Adams Edukacija on Facebook.

Halina Filipowicz (Ph.D., 1979), Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is pleased to report that her book, Taking Liberties: Gender, Transgressive
Patriotism, and Polish Drama, 1786-1989, will appear from Ohio University Press in December 2014. She is currently working on a new book, Struggles for Memory: Polish Drama and the Discourse of Polish-Jewish Relations, 1943-2013. Her recent publications include an essay, “Binaonal Stardom,” in Women's Review of Books (September-October 2012). She has also guest-edited a gender-themed issue of The Polish Review (no. 1, 2014). Focused on new approaches to Polish literature, culture, and history through the methodologies of gender and women’s studies, this special issue showcases latest research by scholars from Britain, Canada, Sweden, and the United States. Their articles respond to the challenge of incorporating Polish gender and women’s studies into an enlarged global framework. Filipowicz’s contribution to the special issue is the introductory article, “‘Am I That Name?’ Feminism, Feminist Criticism, and Gender Studies,” that charts new directions in feminist scholarship on Polish literary and cultural history. Filipowicz also became the series editor for newly established Polish Studies series at Academic Studies Press.

Jon Giulian (MPhil, 2002), Librarian for Slavic and Eurasian Studies, was appointed Head of the Libraries’ International & Area Studies (IAS) department in July 2013. It is a two-year appointment. In August 2013 he published the paper: “‘Seans chernoi magii’ na Taganke: The Hunt for Master and Margarita in the Pravda Digital Archive” in Slavic and East European Information Resources (SEEIR) 14 (2/3). The following February (2014) at the KU Libraries Strategic Sharing Forum, Giulian gave a talk, entitled, “Where Professional Practice Meets Research: Case of the Missing Theater Review (from the Diary of Slavic Librarian),” which highlighted his work on this project. Giulian also published a feature on KU Slavic and Eurasian Collections in the SEES Newsletter and redesigned the new ACRL SEES website during 2012–2013. Giulian also designed a new website for ASEEES Committee on Libraries and Information Resources (CLIR), and as Head of the ASEEES CLIR Website Working Group, he coordinated the transfer of content to the new website. Giulian took part in organizing and moderating the ASEEES Webinar (Nov. 2013) “Power Your Research with Worldcat, Europeana, HathiTrust, and GoogleBooks.” The Slavic and Eurasian Studies unit of Watson Library put together an exhibit on Nobel Prize Laureates for literature from the CREES regions. Jon selected works for Russia/Soviet Union and Yugoslavia: Ivo Andrić, Ivan Bunin, Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Sholokhov, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Malgorzata Stamm selected items for Poland: Czesław Miłosz, Władisław Reymont, Henryk Sienkiewicz, and Wioleta Szymborska. In the spring of 2014 Giulian was awarded two research grants: the first was KU General Research Fund award ($6,044) for FY 2014-2015 for the project entitled: “Usability of Library E-collections on Tablet Devices: Practitioners’ Perspectives.” Working with two library colleagues, the team will lead a Cooperative Learning Community (CLC) of library staff to discover and evaluate the application of tablet devices in various library departments; the second award was a Libraries Research Fund grant ($560) to complete the transcription of audio interviews for his project on “Library development in the post-Soviet era: Case studies in the evolution of East European libraries.” Also in the spring, Giulian attend the Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA) 2014 Leadership Institute in Estes Park, Colorado. In the fall of 2014 Giulian will attend the 2014 Workshop of the International and Area Studies Collections in the 21st Century (IASC21), which brings together librarians and mid-level administrators responsible for the oversight and coordination of area studies collections and staff at their respective universities.

Geoff Husic (MA, 1985) is in his 27th year as a librarian in the KU Libraries, with responsibility for the Balkan, Central Asian and Middle East collections. Geoff additionally serves as an administrator of KU’s scholarly digital archive, KU ScholarWorks, and facilitates archiving REEES and Slavic-related content and enriching it with descriptive metadata to improve discovery.

Yuki Onogi (BA, 2008) recently accepted a position with Newedge Group as Junior Broker in the Financial Futures, Options and Equities (“FFOE”) Business Line on the Japan Desk in Chicago. Yuki has also published
two articles in 2013: “Japan’s Post-Fukushima Quest for Stable LNG Supply: America or Russia?” (in The United States and Japan in Global Context) and “Technology as a Bargaining Power: Japan’s Possible Future Diplomatic Tool” in International Solutions for Energy and the Environment (iSEE). He continues to actively use his Slavic language skills.

Cassandra Payton now has a daughter, Tessa Dorothea Divjak, born at 2:32 pm on 10 July 2014 weighing in at 7.7 lbs and measuring 21.5 inches. After a diplomatic posting in Tuzla, Casse will next be posted to the consular section of Embassy Colombia (where the President is a KU grad). She is now working at the State Department in Washington, DC, improving her Spanish.

Howard Solomon (PhD, 1997) became the Minister Counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in June 2013. Over the last several years, both in his prior position as Deputy Minister Counselor and current, Howard has greatly enjoyed life and work in Russia, having had the opportunity to travel around the regions, meet extraordinary individuals, and help with visits by President Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry, Librarian of Congress James Billington, and many more dignitaries. He continues to be an avid amateur photographer, getting out and about to take pictures when there is free time. His wife, Karla remains with him in Moscow, while their daughters, Libby and Maggie are studying in college and boarding school respectively.

Malgorzata Stamm (MA, 1999) was recently awarded the KU Libraries Staff Excellence Award for 2014. Colleagues praised Stamm for her dedication, personable service to students and faculty, her expertise in processing Slavic and Eurasian materials, and for her support of Polish Studies both within and outside the library. During the 2013-2014 academic year, Stamm taught First-year Polish in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Anatoly Vishevsky (PhD, 1985) recently published his book Сквозь призму детектива: Мир романов Бориса Акунина и Леонида Юзефовича. In September 2014, he co-edited (with Boris Briker) a collection of stories Черновицкие рассказы, where he is also one of the authors.

Laura Wilhelm (PhD, 1994) continues to work with the Russian community in West Hollywood and was recently featured in a two-part interview in the “Russian at Work” section of AATSEEL’s newsletter (Oct. 2012 and Dec. 2012).
Faculty News

Professor Maria Carlson retired this year (on 2 August 2014) after 27 years as a graduate faculty member at the University of Kansas. She explained that she is stepping down from her job, but not from her profession. Frankly, she says, in order to meet her research quota (which her teaching, service, and advising duties moved to the back burner), she has found it necessary to quit her day job. Also, she finds that it makes sense to move on and liberate a tenure-track position for a young, dynamic, and up-coming PhD in our profession. She never planned to stay forever.

Prof. Carlson has a dozen writing and other projects in the queue, and she looks forward to tackling them. Those waiting for “the vampire book” will be glad to know that Prof. Carlson’s research on the unclean dead is proceeding apace; freedom from teaching, advising, and service duties should allow her to finish the project in a reasonable period of time.

During her last two semesters at KU, Prof. Carlson worked with her colleagues Bruce Hayes in French and Leonie Marx in German to transform SLL’s foundational course, SLAV 740 “Bib and Methods” into a new, completely-reconceptualized SLAV 740 “Intro to Grad Studies.” Profs. Carlson, Hayes, and Marx then team-taught this course to 18 graduate students from all three departments (see article on page 8) in Fall 2013. In Spring 2014 Prof. Carlson taught a brand-new course, a graduate seminar on “The Russian Romantic Short Story.”

Dean Ann Schofield (left) presents Dr. Maria Carlson (right) with the Byron A. Alexander Graduate Mentorship Award in Spring 2014.

Dean vitaly Chernetsky was excited to join the Slavic Department at KU in the fall of 2013 and had a very productive first year. He organized a visit to campus by a prominent Ukrainian writer, Yuri Vynnychuk, who delivered the 2013 Palij Lecture. He also presented a talk, “National Cinema and Cinematic Nationhood: The Case of Modern Ukraine,” at the CREES brown bag series, and participated in two CREES brown bag round tables, on LGBT issues in Russia and on the Ukrainian city of L’viv. His article on the Kazakh filmmaker Rashid Nugmanov, director of the 1988 cult favorite Igla starring the rock musician Viktor Tsoi, was published in the first English-language book on Central Asian cinema, Cinema in Central Asia: Rewriting Cultural Histories. In September, he attended the L’viv Book Forum, Ukraine’s largest book fair, to promote the Ukrainian-language version of his book, Mapping Postcommunist Cultures: Russia and Ukraine in the Context of Globalization, which came out earlier that year. In November, he presented a paper

mittees. Her national service is extensive, with service with the Department of Education, NCEEER, and AAASS (now ASEEES). (But the most fun she ever had was being KU University Marshal and carrying the University Mace to protect the Chancellor from bodily harm during official functions.)

Being constitutionally unable to stop herself from remaining involved in the life of SLL, Prof. Carlson will certainly stay in touch with colleagues and students. She will occasionally appear in the classroom: in Spring 2015 she will team-teach a course on American and Russian Symbolist painting and culture with her colleague in the History of Art, Dr. Charles Eldredge, Distinguished Professor of American Art. But most of all, she looks forward to the opportunity to continue learning and to pursue her own research interests.
on the Russian reception of Serhii Zhadan, a prominent contemporary Ukrainian writer, at a conference organized by the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany. The crisis in Ukraine has commanded a lot of Prof. Chernetsky’s attention, as he continues, until April 2015, to serve as the president of the American Association for Ukrainian studies. He translated for The New York Times an op-ed by one of Ukraine’s leading contemporary writers, Yuri Andrukhovych. Three of his own op-eds on the events in Ukraine were published by 2paragraphs.com; he also gave numerous interviews to local and national news media. In April, Prof. Chernetsky delivered a guest lecture on the background of the crisis in Ukraine at Middlebury College. Also in April, he participated in a round table on the crisis in Ukraine organized by CREES and guest-taught a class on this crisis for the KU School of Journalism. His article “Ukrainian Literary and Cultural Studies: The State of the Field,” was published in the May 2014 AATSEEL Newsletter. Also in the spring of 2014, his article on Zakhar Berkut, an important Ukrainian film from 1972, was published in Canadian Slavonic Papers. In May, Prof. Chernetsky delivered several introductory lectures, a public lecture on the history of Ukrainian film, and led post-screening discussion sessions at KinofestNYC 2014, the 5th Annual New York Festival of Ukrainian and East European Cinema. In the summer of 2014, Prof. Chernetsky presented a paper at the international conference Translation in Russian Contexts: Transcultural, Translingual and Transdisciplinary Points of Departure at Uppsala University in Sweden. He delivered a lecture on Ukraine for the Project Go program at KU and guest-taught two workshops on the crisis in Ukraine at the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies.

Dr. Chernetsky (center) with Ukrainian author Yuri Vynnychuk (left) and John Biersack (right).

Professor William J. Comer’s main activity in 2013-13 (in addition to chairing) has been working on Между нами, an on-line textbook for Introductory Russian that he is co-authoring with Lynne deBenedette (Brown University), Alla Smyslova (Columbia University), and Jonathan Perkins (KU). The textbook unfolds like a graphic novel and tells the story of four American students spending a year in different cities in contemporary Russia. Through the interactions and (mis)adventures of the four main characters, students learn to communicate in Russian and recognize and appreciate essential features of Russian culture. The text is being piloted during the 2013-14 academic year, and it should be completed by January 2015, when it will become an open-access resource. KU’s Ermal Garinger Academic Resource Center has played a fundamental part in this project, translating the authoring team’s word documents into a highly functional and nicely designed website. And the authors owe special thanks to Keah Cunningham and Anna Boyles (the main illustrator for the website and a student in second year Russian), as well as Irina Six, SLL graduate students Rebecca Stakun, Olesya Shtynko, and Anna Karpusheva, and the GTAs who have taught out of the materials. For more information, the curious should visit www.mezhdunami.org. Professor Comer and his coauthors have presented the work to colleagues at KU in September 2013, at Brown in October 2013, and with the profession at large at the 2014 AATSEEL conference in Chicago.

Summer 2013 was KU’s first year offering Project Global Officers scholarships to ROTC students who enrolled in intensive summer language programs in Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Russian on the KU campus and abroad. The program sponsored 11 students for our on-campus programs and has fostered discussions about language pedagogy among the participating instructors. In Summer 2014 we were able to fund 17 students on the KU campus, and 9 for study abroad in Morocco. The scholarships are funded with a grant from the Institute for International Education on which Professor Comer is the principal investigator.

Professor Comer’s article “Lexical Inferencing in Reading L2 Russian” appeared in the online peer-reviewed journal Reading in a Foreign Language in October 2012 (Vol. 24 Number 2), and his “Thinking through Teacher Talk: Increasing Target Language Use in the Beginning Russian Classroom” was published in the 2013 issue of The Russian Language Journal.

In Spring 2014 Professor Comer was lured away from KU to Portland State University where he will direct their Russian Flagship Program and serve as a faculty member in World Languages and Literatures. As one of only four federally-funded Flagship programs for Russian, Portland State’s program offers exciting opportunities to work on Russian language curricula from elementary to superior levels and to conduct longitudi-
nal studies of Russian language learners as they work towards advanced proficiency.

**Stephen M. Dickey** was an invited speaker at the Fourth Conference of the International Commission on Aspec-tology of the International Committee of Slavists held in Gothenburg, Sweden from 10–14 June; the title of his talk was “Verbs of Motion in the Early History of Slavic Verbal Aspect.” He was also an invited speaker at “Constructional and Lexical Semantic Approaches to Russian,” a conference held in St. Petersburg from 12–14 September; the title of this talk was “On the Aspectual Usage of Verbs of Communication in (18th-) and 19th-Century Russian. Focus: Отвечать ‘Respond, Answer’.” The latter talk as well as an article in volume 21, issue 1 of the *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* entitled “See, Now They Vanish: Third-Person Perfect Auxiliaries in Old and Middle Czech,” make use of recursive-partitioning methods of statistical analysis that Dickey was introduced to while at the Centre for Advanced Study in Oslo in 2012. Otherwise, he has joined with Laura A. Janda of the University of Tromso to try to convince the world that Slavic verbal prefixes are verbal classifiers on a par with numeral classifiers in Asian languages. Their latest efforts in this regard were talks given at the KU Linguistics Colloquy, entitled “Slavic Perfectivizing Prefixes as Verbal Classifiers: Parallels with Numeral Classifiers” (14 November 2013) and a talk delivered by Laura at the Andalusian Symposia on Slavic Studies entitled “Extending the Verb Classifier Hypothesis: Aspectual Prefixes as Sortal Classifiers in Slavic and Procedural Prefixes as Mensural Classifiers in East Slavic and Bulgarian” (5 May 2014).

In Fall 2013, Professor Dickey teamed up with Chance Clutter of the KU Career Center to produce a presentation on career opportunities for students of foreign languages, which was given on 26 September. The presentation is innovative in that it focuses on marketing more than particular career paths. This year the presentation will be given again on October 9, with Professor Vassileva-Karagyozova representing the Slavic Department.

Lastly, Professor Dickey assumed chairmanship of the department beginning this semester.

Professor **Marc L. Greenberg** continues to serve as chair of the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures and, beginning in Fall 2013 he has been Special Advisor to the Dean of the College to form the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. In 2013 he published with co-authors A. Townsend Peterson and Ada Emmett “Open Access and the Author-Pays

**Problem: Assuring Access for Readers and Authors in a Global Community of Scholars** in the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*. The same article was translated into Russian and published as “Проблема модели open access и платы авторов за публикацию: обеспечение доступа читателей и авторов в рамках мирового научного сообщества” in the periodical Научная периодика: проблемы и решения. In March 2013 he was an invited speaker, along with Dean of Libraries Lorraine Haricombe and SPARC Director Heather Joseph at a conference Open Conversations about Open Access at the University of Oklahoma, where he was invited to give his talk “Open Access for Faculty. What’s in it For Them?,” later re-prised for the KU Libraries. Also, with co-author Ada Emmett, he ran multiple iterations of the workshop “Improving your research visibility: A hands-on guide to improving research ‘impact’ for scholars” for KU faculty throughout the fall semester 2013. In Spring 2013 he gave a live performance and lecture “Seven Strings Make a Russian Guitar” for KU Mini-College 2013.

In October 2013 with Zbyněk Holub, University of Opava, he presented the paper “A Fixed Star is
Born: Fixed Pitch-Stress in South-West Bohemia” at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Slavic Linguistics Society, Szczecin University (Poland). At the same conference he was elected Chair of the Executive Board of the Slavic Linguistics Society, which post he will hold until the next conference in October 2014 at the University of Washington, Seattle.

He continues to serve as Linguistics Editor for Slavia Centralis. He was also named to the Editorial Board of Вопросы ономастики (Russian Academy of Sciences).

In Summer of 2014, Dr. Irina Six participated in Fulbright-Hays group project in Moscow, Russia “Russian teachers for the 21st century: Maximizing teaching effectiveness by immersing into language, culture and standard-based teaching.” Financed by a grant from the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program, the project was designed to enhance TORFL (Test of Russian as a Foreign Language, in Russian TPKI) in the United States. This test for foreign learners of Russian is designed and administered in Russia, and until recently has not been widely known among American learners of Russian. After intensive training, Dr. Irina Six was certified as a TORFL tester in the United States. The Fulbright program also stipulated production of publishable teaching materials for different levels of teaching Russian. Dr. Six’s teaching project is called The Collapse of the Soviet Union and What Russian People Think about It. The project focuses on presenting Russian modern culture via recent history and is freely assessable at https://sites.google.com/site/fullbrighthaysrussia2014/irina. The video clips, supplemental instructor guidelines, and student study materials are designed for advanced speakers of Russian and enables them to take a deeper look at the collapse of the Soviet Union through the eyes of Russians 25 years later. Dr. Six’s project aims to advance Russian language skills while promoting knowledge of other disciplines.

Prof. Ani Kokobobo completed her edited volume: Russian Realism and the Fin-de-Siècle Mentality: Twilight of Realism, that will be forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in 2015. She has been busy writing an introduction for the volume as well as completing her own contribution, “Corpses of Desire and Convention – Tolstoy’s and Artsybashev’s Grotesque Realism.” Prof Kokobobo had an article come out in Russian Review (Fall 2013), “The Travelogue and the Ode: Radischev’s Polemic the with the Court Ode in Puteshestvie iz Petersburga v Moskvu.” She has also written two articles on Tolstoy this fall: one essay is a long biography of Tolstoy (“The ‘Old Magician’ in Pursuit of Truth—Lev Tolstoy’s Lifelong Search for Meaning”) forthcoming in the 2014 volume Russia’s Golden Age (Amenia, NY: Grey House); the other essay treats bodies in Tolstoy’s War and Peace (“Trembling Napoleon and Fat Kutuzov—Bodies, Historical Figures, and Historical Determinism in War and Peace”) and is forthcoming in the volume Critical Insights: War and Peace (Amenia, NY: Grey House, 2014). This fall Prof. Kokobobo also translated a short story by the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare “The Migration of the Stork” which is currently under editorial consideration with a literary magazine. Currently, she is working on completing her book manuscript, Freakish Others and Monsters Within—Russian Realism and the Grotesque 1869-1899.

Visiting Assistant Professor David McVey has just transferred to KU from The Ohio State University, where he taught Russian literature and film. At KU he teaches Russian literature and culture, as well as advises the Russian Club. His research centers on questions of gender and borders in Russian culture. Currently he is transforming his doctoral dissertation on the films of Pavel Lungin into a book. He is also finishing an article on the significance of borders in Finnish director Aki Kaurismaki’s adaptation of Crime and Punishment. In addition to participating in a roundtable called “From Tikhie to Gromkie: Social Critique in Contemporary Russian Cinema” at the 2014 ASEEES conference, he will also be presenting a
Dr. Renee Perelmutter has continued working on her monograph, (Im)politeness and Identity Construction: Russian women’s discourse online. She is currently finishing the book and is hoping to submit it for publication by the end of 2014. Dr. Perelmutter was awarded tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor this year. In Spring 2014, she stepped down as a CREES Associate Director in order to concentrate on her research, and received the CREES Faculty Service award in Fall 2014. Dr. Perelmutter was nominated again this year for the Barbara Schowen Undergraduate Research Mentor award, and received an honorable mention.

Esra Predolac joined KU’s Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures last fall as the new Turkish instructor. She is working on her dissertation (Linguistics, Cornell University) in which she investigates various syntactic phenomena pertaining to clausal complementation, focusing on Turkish. She presented her paper “Revisiting Turkish Finite Complement Clauses” at the Conference on Central Asian Languages and Linguistics (ConCALL) at Indiana University in May 2014. She is also currently co-editing the Proceedings of the 9th Workshop on Altaic Formal Linguistics to be published by MIT.

Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova has been very productive in 2013 and 2014. She has been awarded tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. Her book По пътя на барока: рецепция и трансформация на бароковата парадигма в славянските литератури [In the Footsteps of the Baroque: Reception and Transformation of the Baroque Paradigm in Slavic Literatures] was published by Sofia University Press. She completed and submitted her second book manuscript Coming of Age in Times of Change: The Initiation Novels of Poland’s Martial Law Generation to Rochester University Press. She is currently working on an article entitled “Bringing Up Girls in Communist Poland as Reflected in Polish Post-1989 Coming of Age Novels” for a special issue on Gender and Childhood of the Italian journal Genesis. In January 2013 Prof. Vassileva-Karagyozova travelled to Boston, MA to attend the AATSEEL and MLA National Conventions. At ATSEEL she presented a paper “The Diseased Generation of Poland’s Political Transition” and at MLA she chaired a panel that she had put together “Embodiments of Identity in the Slavic Grotesque.” In Fall 2013 Prof. Vassileva-Karagyozova designed and taught a freshmen seminar entitled “Novels and the Shaping of Generations.” The class focused on the cross-cultural examination of Polish and American coming-of-age novels and their role in shaping the generational consciousness of the Polish ’89 and the American Beat generation. Her work on this new course was supported by a CREES Curriculum Development Grant.

Marta Pirnat-Greenberg’s textbook Colloquial Slovene received a comprehensive and favorable review in the journal Slovenski jezik - Slovene Linguistic Studies.— Her online BCS teaching materials for intermediate to advanced levels, based on a short contemporary Croatian novel, were given a pilot run in an online reading/writing course last fall. They underwent a final revision this summer, based on the experience from their use in the course, and are now in their final stage of formatting for online publication by EGARC. In Spring 2014 she introduced hybrid language learning into second semester BCS by designing online learning modules for one class period per week, with very good learning outcomes and much improved student experience and motivation. She was awarded a CREES/EGARC Online Language Instruction Grant for developing more online learning modules for Elementary BCS. Her fourth-semester BCS class participated in the campus-wide WWI Twitter project by translating two mini-reenactments into BCS, launched in May, and subtitling a short Serbian documentary about the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. For the third year she has been teaching Slovene via Skype to a doctoral student at UConn, a very promising young translator of Slovene literature; four short stories that the student translated with her help from Slovene during last summer appeared in the journal of translation Alchemy (UCSD) this spring and another one this August in World Literature Today.

Jewish studies minor Maggie Boyles (right) was awarded a prize for her research presentation on First Women of the Yiddish Stage.

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VC: The book was a logical outcome of that project originally conceived in 1989-90. On the one hand, I was inspired by my encounter with theories of postmodernity, postcoloniality, and cultural aspects of globalization; on the other, I felt the need to bring these discourses into a constructive engagement with innovative cultural practices in literature and other arts in Russia and Ukraine. Back in the early 1990s, there was considerable resistance on behalf of Western thinkers concerning potential applicability of these theoretical models to the Second World, while on the ex-Soviet side, there was often a superficial engagement with these models, where they were seen as little more than a passing fad. I felt a pressing need to bring the two into a comprehensive dialogue which, as I argue, changes not only our understanding of the cultural processes in post-Soviet nations, but also impacts our understanding and engagement with these theoretical discourses aspiring to provide lasting models of global cultural development. Within the field of Slavic/East European/Asian Studies, there was initially considerable resistance to viewing Russia and Ukraine as two fundamentally divergent paradigms of post-Soviet development, although more recent history has rendered this opposition largely moot. I sought to identify what in my opinion were the particularly innovative paradigms of innovative cultural production (especially, although not exclusively, in literature) that were genuinely engaged with the challenges of postmodernity, postcoloniality, and globalization in all their contradictory manifestations—paradigms that were productive and innovative not only in their domestic context but for our planet as a whole. The book took a long time to reach the readers, first in English and now also in Ukrainian, but has been receiving thoughtful responses from intellectual audiences in many countries. To my surprise, probably the strongest and most productive engagement has been coming from Europe, and I have been fortunate to participate in active dialogue on these and related topics with colleagues in the UK, France, Germany, Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, and other nations.

RP: You are currently working on a manuscript entitled *Displacement, Desire, Identity: East European Writers and the Diasporic Momentum*. How does your second project interact with your first? As a Ukrainian-American, how does your personal experience contribute (if at all) to your work on diasporic identities in literature?

VC: Like my first book, my current project carries within it a distinct autobiographical investment. I am fascinated by the histories of interaction between the writers and thinkers who found themselves displaced far from their homelands due to a variety of reasons and the multiple communities with which they interacted: of the homelands they left, of the new lands where they lived, of the diasporas with which, as creative individuals, they often had a complex, challenging relationship. Diaspora studies have been booming within Western scholarship in recent years, but similarly to the discourses on postmodernism and postcolonialism, this new burgeoning scholarly trend has been lacking in engagement with the cultural products by authors of Slavic/East European background. In this book, I look at several distinct case studies, beginning with Joseph Conrad and ending with our time, of these interactions between individual displaced writers and their multiple communities; similarly to my first book, the project is genuinely comparatist in its outlook, as the authors in question are drawn from multiple national traditions, from Poland to Russia to the nations of former Yugoslavia. Thus, while inspired by my own experiences, the project is not a veiled memoir but a scholarly book that seeks to reinvigorate dialogue between academic communities that do not often take the time to engage with each other or do so at a level that leaves much room for improvement.

RP: In addition to scholarship, you are also a prolific translator, working especially often with modern Ukrainian writers. Why is it important for you, personally, to engage in this work? How does translation interact with your scholarly work?

VC: My interest in translating stemmed from the same concerns as my scholarly project: I wanted to bring literary texts I was passionate about to new audiences in hope that these audiences could see something genuinely innovative and eye-opening in those texts. I translate from both Russian and English; as I operate on a daily basis in the English-speaking environment, this direction of translating comes to me more naturally and with greater ease, although I have done some translation into Ukrainian and Russian as well. Within Russian literature, as the number of active translators from Russian into English is greater, I have been increasingly selective and only committing to the projects that deal with contemporary writing that deals with aesthetic, intellectual, and social issues that are of particular importance for me. The number of active
translators from Ukrainian into English is much smaller; therefore I have felt that I could make a bigger difference in this particular field, because the probability that these texts might remain untranslated if I didn’t tackle them was higher. Yet here too I prioritize the authors and texts that speak to my personal interests particularly strongly. As with scholarship, translation requires genuine interest and dedication to the texts and issues one is working on if one seeks a successful end product.

RP: Do you have any advice for our students and friends of SLL who would like to work as translators?

VC: If in literature it was my scholarly concerns that helped shape my teaching philosophy and interests, in cinema it was an interest in teaching this cultural form that eventually led to a scholarly engagement with the topic. In Soviet and post-Soviet cinema, I am especially attracted by cultural and intellectual diversity. Perhaps in no other cinematic tradition worldwide filmmakers have sought so often to become theorists of cinema as well; this is true both of the 1920s greats and of the late Soviet era. In post-Soviet cinema, we are observing two competing trends than can be traced back to the dawn of filmmaking in the Russian Empire, but now these trends seem particularly divergent. On the one hand, we have a cinema of intellectual engagement, often produced on shoestring budgets in conditions of great economic and physical difficulty; on the other, we have technically polished and often ideologically vapid, if not outright reprehensible, attempts at blockbusters that tell us more about the political problems faced by our region than about a search for aesthetic or intellectual relevance and innovation. Crossovers between these two dominant modes are rare and therefore all the more fascinating. From the outset, cinema was viewed by the Bolshevik regime as perhaps the most important art form, and thus this collective and technology-dependent art has had a particularly complex and fascinating history of engagement with dominant ideologies and illuminating attempts to encode messages of resistance and challenge to them. This course focuses on the films and filmmakers that were particularly influential internationally, from the “heroic era” of Soviet silent cinema of the 1920s to the early 2000s. It incorporates not only films and film criticism, but also original theoretical writings by some of the filmmakers. I also seek to challenge the dominant russocentric model of presenting Soviet/post-Soviet cinema, and emphasize ethnic and regional diversity within it.

RP: At KU, you are teaching a range of courses on Soviet and post-Soviet literature and film. In Spring 2014 you taught a graduate course on Soviet & Post-Soviet Russian Cinema. What kind of material was covered? What excites you the most about post-Soviet cinema?

VC: As I argue in my first book, one of the most important strands of cultural innovation in the postmodern era is the growth of opportunities for representatives of historically oppressed, marginalized communities to speak about their experience. One of the chapters of the book focuses specifically on the place of Russian LGBTQ writing within this larger trend. Within the underground late-Soviet literature, the work of Evgenii Kharitonov (1941–1981), the first major Russian gay writer since the Silver Age, has been particularly influential, not only thematically but also in terms of aesthetics and politics of writing and cultural production more broadly. I move in this chapter from an in-depth analysis of key works by Kharitonov, placing them in the context of innovative LGBTQ writing internationally and the theoretical frame-
work of queer theory, to a discussion of several authors of the younger generation, most notably Yaroslav Mogutin. Since the mid-1990s, I have also been translating Russian gay and lesbian writing into English and Ukrainian. Within the field of Ukrainian studies, I have also sought to identify the role of LGBTQ concerns in the contemporary socio-cultural sphere, highlighting the instances of both productive and problematic engagement with the topic within contemporary writing and other forms of cultural production, as well as the instrumentalization of fear of, and hostility to, this minority culture and its voices within some of the culturally retrograde, isolationist circles both in Ukraine and in Russia. Attitudes to this minority group and its voices, historically stigmatized within dominant Western cultures and scapegoated by totalitarian regimes in all corners of the world, can be seen as a canary in the coalmine of social development, and therefore require attention from anyone who cares about social progress in the region we study.

RP: We’d love to hear about your plans for the future!
VC: Right now I am completing the translation of another contemporary Ukrainian novel, Yuri Andrukhovych’s Twelve Circles, which has already achieved considerable resonance in continental Europe (in German, French, Spanish, and Polish), with other translations also planned or in progress. I also would like to prepare a teaching-focused anthology of materials on Ukrainian cinema, similar in structure to the influential volume The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, and correcting that volume’s regretful neglect of Ukraine-related content. With colleagues in New York City and Ukraine, I am now working on a mini-festival of newly rediscovered Ukrainian films of the silent era that should, I hope, profoundly alter our understanding of the dynamic of cinema’s development in the Soviet Union during this incredibly rich and influential period. Other projects in progress look at some unusual voices in contemporary russophone writing, such as the poetry of Fr. Sergei Kruglov, a rare liberal voice within present-day Russian Orthodox Church and an innovative poet in intense dialogue with global modernist and postmodernist writing, and the experimental poetry and prose of Shamshad Abdullaev, the leader of the so-called Ferghana School, in my opinion the most interesting instance of postcolonial russophone literature in the former Soviet Union. And on the teaching side, I am currently teaching a new course on Russian and East European science fiction, which too perhaps can lead to new scholarly projects.

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