



# Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

**Slavic Alumni Newsletter**

**Vol. 18 (Summer 2017)**

## *The Dragon*

*Town Anthem*

*There is a little town, where everybody smiles*

*Its name has no blemish*

*Its people no troubles*

*And all of the cats and donkeys agree*

*That our little town is the best place to be.*

*All thanks to the Dragon*

*The Dragon*

*Sing we to our town of the Dragon*

*The Dragon Ohh*

*He is our wonderful, darling, marvelous, heavenly*

*Adorable DRAGON!*

“The only way to be free of dragons is to have one of your own.”

One of the highlights of Slavic outreach for the year was the staging of Evgenii Shvarts’s *The Dragon* in fall 2016. Its production was the aim of the course “Slavic Drama in Context” (Littrans and Theatre & Drama 423), which was taught by Professor Manon van de Water, who is not only the current GNS Chair but also the long-time Director of UW’s Theatre for Youth Program ([uwmadisonfy.com](http://uwmadisonfy.com)). The mission of the Theatre for Youth Program is to “offer quality



*Pictured is the cast of “The Dragon.”*

productions that respect young people’s capacity to construct meaning, both on an emotional and intellectual level.” The play was adapted and directed by Jen Plants, Senior Lecturer in Playwriting and Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies at UW-Madison.

Shvarts (1896-1958) wrote the play in 1943; it is categorized among his so-called “dark fairytales for adults.” As van de Water notes, it is a play that “speaks to the imagination of young people through its imagery of dragons, knights, and magic, but it is simultaneously an allegory of fear, corruption, complacency, and complicity.” In the 1940s, this allegory was directed at the German people. The play was, however, not performed in Russia until after Stalin’s death because the Soviet censors correctly surmised that its allegorical target could have equally been Stalin’s own regime. The play’s relevance to the present was also not lost on those who par-

ticipated in the staging; as Plants points out, the play should “remind us that dragons aren’t real at all, unless we sacrifice our openness to fear in order to bring them to life.”

UW-Madison performances took place at the Fredric March Play Circle and were supported by CREECA, GNS, the Theatre and Drama Graduate Student Organization, and the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program. Thanks to funding provided by the Ira Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment Grant that Professor van de Water received for her Theatre for Youth Program, the production was offered free to rural schools around Taliesin. The Taliesin performances were sold out. Participating schools included Kickapoo Middle School, Webb Middle School, and Merrimac Community Charter School. Almost 400 students in the fourth to seventh grades attended the play.

One of the play’s actors was current Slavic PhD candidate Assel Almuratova, who played the role of Elsa, the town’s next sacrifice to the dragon. Assel had previous theatre experience as an undergraduate in the drama club of Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan, but *The Dragon* was her first experience in a big role on a real stage. In response to what she liked most about her involvement in the play, Assel highlighted the joy of performing for children: “They are an incredible audience. It’s unpredictable what they will like or dislike and how they will react. In one of our last shows, during the Dragon and Elsa’s wedding scene, Elsa has an emotional monologue where she laments her destiny and she asks the townspeople: ‘Is there someone who can help me?’ One boy from the audience spontaneously shouted: ‘I can!’ It was amazing.” She added that each of the Taliesin shows culminated with a collaborative workshop where children were invited to participate in three scenes from the play and evaluate the situations “from the inside” by making choices

similar to or different from the character’s. The workshop- ing encouraged full submersion in the reality of the play and ultimately gave the youth audience “not only a sense of culture, but also a sense of community.”

Other GNS graduate students acting in the production were Matthew Young (Slavic) and Leah Ewing (German). ■

## In this issue...

<i>The Dragon</i>	1
Letter from the Chair	3
Alexander Dolinin and Galina Lapina Retire	4
Annual Polish Film Festival	5
Profiles in Polish	6
Faculty News	8
UW Russian Folk Orchestra 20th Anniversary	9
Russian Flagship Profiles	10
UW-Slavic PhD Alums	13
Inaugural Slavic Sci-Fi Course	17
Pel’mini Party	17
Back-Panel Trivia	20

Visit our new GNS webpage!

We can be found at <https://gns.wisc.edu>.

We are also on Facebook as the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic and on Twitter as @dept\_gns.

Slavic Alumni Newsletter

**Editor:** David Danaher

**Newsletter Layout:** Ashley Kempken

## Letter from the Chair

Manon van de Water

This past academic year has been challenging and exciting, and much has been accomplished. On July 1, 2016 the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature was officially merged with the Departments of German and Scandinavian Studies into the new department of German, Nordic, and Slavic (GNS)—the second largest department in the “language building” Van Hise. It was a year of transition in which we moved to bring the three programs together, exchanging information and practices and learning from each other, and getting used to each other. Although the chair’s office of GNS moved to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor where German is housed, the 14<sup>th</sup> floor is still Slavic and much has remained unchanged. Although . . . our Slavic departmental administrator Jane Roberts retired in the summer of 2016, and the new Graduate Coordinator for GNS, Mark Mears, moved into the 14<sup>th</sup> floor office. David Bethea retired too that summer, but his office is still there as he remains the Director of the Summer Pushkin Program. Galina Lapina and Alexander Dolinin retired at the end of May 2017 and have consolidated their office. The retirements of such formidable scholars and teachers like Professors Bethea and Dolinin warrant a conference to celebrate their work which will be held some time in 2018. We will start the planning in the fall semester. Please check our new website <https://gns.wisc.edu> for updates.

Of course, this also means we welcome new people. Maksim Hanukai (Ph.D. Columbia University) will be a visiting assistant professor for next academic year. Maksim was with us in the fall semester of 2016 as a VAP, and we are very happy he decided to join us again. Sergey Karpukhin (Ph.D. University of Wisconsin – Madison) will also join us in the fall semester as teaching academic staff; he will teach, among



*Manon van de Water*

other things, the famous Nabokov course cross-listed with English. Meanwhile we are getting ready for a search to hire someone at the tenure-track or recently tenured level to join the Slavic Faculty in fall 2018. Once we have the administrative permission, this too will be posted on the GNS website.

Last academic year we had no less than three Slavic faculty on sabbatical leave. Given the merger and the shortage of staff, Slavic performed very well and upheld their reputation within the new department. Nevertheless, I am happy to welcome back Professors Karen Evans-Romaine, Andrew Reynolds, and Halina Filipowicz. In addition to her Flagship duties, Karen has generously agreed to serve as the program head for Slavic starting this fall while I concentrate further on the merger.

I have already mentioned Mark Mears as GNS graduate coordinator on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor, but I also want to introduce you two other stellar GNS staff members: Nicole Senter, GNS Academic Department Administrator, and Katja Mohaupt-Hedden GNS Financial specialist. Katja is managing the gift funds, and I am happy to let you know that this summer we have a new one added. Nicole created and maintains the website, and in addition has brought us up to speed with social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

I am excited for the new year to start and to pick the fruits

of our accomplishments this next year. I hope you will check out our website, and maybe post on our social media pages. Please stay in touch! ■

## Alexander Dolinin and Galina Lapina Retire

At the end of May, UW-Madison Slavic Studies said goodbye to Professor Alexander Dolinin and to Senior Lecturer Galina Lapina, who have both retired after working in the department for over twenty years. With great sadness at their departure, we would like to thank them for their extraordinary service to our department and its programs.



*Alexander Dolinin*

Alexander Dolinin has been a critical presence in our department for the past 24 years. He joined the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature in 1993 and has been at the heart of both our undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as of the field of Slavic studies in the US and beyond. His contribution to the graduate program in Slavic is impossible to overestimate, as he was not only responsible for a significant part of our graduate curriculum, but also advised more dissertations than any other faculty member in the past twenty years and served on the dissertation committees of the overwhelming majority of our PhD degree recipients. Profes-

sor Dolinin's courses for undergraduate students, including his very popular courses on Dostoevsky and on Vladimir Nabokov's Russian and American writings (the latter also serving the needs of English Department majors), made a huge difference in our program's visibility on campus and its ability to attract students. A born teacher, someone who is genuinely disposed to engaging minds and igniting intellectual curiosity, he impacted the lives of hundreds of his students over almost quarter of a century of teaching at UW-Madison.

Professor Dolinin's reputation as an outstanding scholar of Russian literature was of paramount significance for our department's national visibility. Initially trained as a scholar of the Anglo-American literary tradition, he then reinvented himself as a Russianist, having retained and expanded a broad comparatist expertise. Professor Dolinin joined UW-Madison already as a mature scholar and author of a 1988 pioneering study of Walter Scott's reception in nineteenth-century Russia, *Istoriia, odetaia v roman [History Dressed Up as a Novel]*. In the course of his career at UW-Madison, he established himself internationally as a leading scholar of Pushkin and Russian Romanticism (see, for example, his 2007 award-winning book *Pushkin i Angliia [Pushkin and England]*) and simultaneously as a one-of-a-kind expert in the work of Vladimir Nabokov (see especially his 2004 book *Istinnnaia zhizn' pisatel'ia Sirina: Raboty o Nabokove [The Real Life of Sirin the Writer: Studies on Nabokov]*). Professor Dolinin published dozens of articles related to these two major areas of his expertise, as well as to a few others, in edited volumes and professional journals; he also served as scholarly editor and commentator of Pushkin's and Nabokov's works in Russian. At UW his research achievements were recognized through the awarding of a Vilas Associateship (1999-2000) and a Kellett Mid-Career Award (2005).

The quantity and quality of the students and colleagues he has mentored, helped, advised, or inspired in one way or another is attested to by the contributions in the two-volume *Festschrift The Real Life of Pierre Delaland: Studies in Russian and Comparative Literature to Honor Alexander Dolinin* (Stanford, 2007 [*Stanford Slavic Studies*, vols. 33-34]).



*Galina Lapina*

Dr. Galina Lapina, who also joined our department in 1993, has made a distinguished career in teaching and has made tremendous contributions to the development of the Russian language curriculum at UW-Madison as well as to the national reputation of the UW-Madison Russian Flagship program. She has also remained active as a scholar of Russian-American cultural intersections and as a translator from English to Russian. Among other works, her Russian translation of Brian Boyd's monumental *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* went through two editions (2001 & 2010); her translation of Robert Robinson's memoir *Black on Red: My 44 Years inside the Soviet Union* came out in 2012.

Galina Lapina taught courses that were vital for the make-up of our undergraduate program. Be it her two-semester sequence on Russian Life and Culture through Literature and Art, her course on Anton Chekhov, her Fourth-Year Russian, or her another two-semester sequence on History of Russian

Culture / Contemporary Russian Culture (in Russian)—students genuinely admired her intelligence and appreciated her dedication as a teacher. The last two-semester sequence mentioned above was specially designed by Dr. Lapina in 2011 for students on the newly introduced Russian Flagship program track—a rigorous, intensive program of study of Russian language and culture funded by the US Department of Defense through its National Security Education Program. These courses played a major role in the Russian Flagship curriculum; the success of Russian Flagship students owes a great deal to Galina Lapina's teaching and linguistic and cultural guidance. They also helped many of our graduate students to pass their Russian language examinations required before advancement to dissertator status.

We will deeply miss Alexander and Galina who have been such an important part of our Slavic community for so long. We wish them well in this new stage in their life, and we hope they will keep in touch and share their news with us.

## **The 26th Annual Polish Film Festival**

The annual Polish Film Festival is Slavic's most well attended outreach event, and its Fall 2016 incarnation was no exception. The event is free to the public, and this year four films were screened in Union South: *Kamper* (2016, dir. Łukasz Grzegorzek), *Karbala* (2016, dir. Krzysztof Łukasiewicz), *Blindness* (2016, *Zaćma*, dir. Ryszard Bugajski), and *Planet Single* (*Planeta singli*, 2016, dir. Mitja Okorn). Over 500 people attended the screenings. The Festival is organized by the Polish Student Association with the support of the Slavic Program, CREECA, the Polish Heritage club, and WUD. The Fall 2017 Festival will feature a Polish-French film about Maria Skłodowska-Curie, a Polish scientist who was not only the first woman to win the Nobel Prize, but also

the only person to win it twice as well as the only winner in two different scientific disciplines. ■



*Pictured is a poster for Planet Single, one of the films shown during the Polish Film Festival.*

## Profiles in Polish

### Piotr Puchalski

I'm a doctoral candidate in Modern European History and Professor Kathryn Ciancia's advisee. I'm currently traveling to Poland and Western Europe to conduct dissertation research, which was made possible by generous grants from the Lapinski family, IRIS, and CREECA.

I was born in 1992 in Warsaw, Poland, where I finished elementary school before coming to the United States at the age of thirteen. I majored in European Studies and French at New York University, my undergraduate institution. I joined the History Department at UW-Madison in the fall of 2014. For a more comprehensive CV, please refer to my personal website at [www.piotr-puchalski.com](http://www.piotr-puchalski.com).

My main academic interest is the interwar history of Poland (1918-1939), especially the newly resurrected state's attitude toward colonialism. In my first academic publication

published in *The Historical Journal* in March 2017, I explore the ways in which statesmen constructed Poland's colonial identity during the Polish mission to Liberia (1934-1938). I argue that Poland's colonial lobby imagined the country's presence in Liberia as a unique form of colonialism, distinct from its Western counterparts. The emerging Polish colonial aspirations rested on the idea that Poland, a formerly occupied nation, was better suited to serve as an intermediary agent between Europe and Africa than Britain or France. Poland's colonial identity was a perfect means of rallying patriots around the flag and creating domestic support for the country's maritime projects, but a colonial ideology obscured Poland's plausible objectives in Liberia and distracted the Poles from executing their economic plan.

In my dissertation project, I continue to examine Poland's relationship with colonialism and the way it affected domestic and foreign politics. I believe that participating in international colonial discourse allowed Polish statesmen to define their country as occupying a unique position in the Wilsonian world of empires, nation-states, mandates, and colonies. The popular appeal of colonialism mobilized citizens to learn maritime skills such as sailing, make donations to maritime causes, invest their money abroad, and educate themselves about foreign lands and cultures. In addition, colonialism was closely intertwined with emigration and the "Jewish Question" in Poland. The government imagined not only Polish Catholics but also Jews as its potential agents, offering them a prominent role in the nation abroad at a time when Jews became an increasingly shunned minority at home. Lastly, I am also interested in the ways in which Polish statesmen used the "Colonial Question" as a diplomatic leverage against Germany. At the same time, the Poles attempted to persuade Britain and France to commit to the internationalization of Western imperialism to avoid genocidal co-

lonial wars overseas and in Europe on the eve of World War II.

I hope that a study of Poland's colonial aspirations might not only show them as one manifestation of the tensions in the interwar international system but might also help us understand the opportunities and perils of the current fluctuations in geopolitics.

### **Natalia Chreptowicz**

It was a crisp summer morning when I first entered the Van Hise building at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Having graduated from a high school program that only offered Spanish and French courses, I stood intrigued by the countless language departments promoted in the colorful announcements and posters. With little time to spare however, I hurried into an elevator and rode up to the sixth floor to room 662. There I was scheduled to meet Dr. Ewa Miernowska, my soon-to-be professor of Polish, and take my placement test for Polish language studies.

Just as I arrived to Pani Ewa's office, another student was leaving. I overheard her saying goodbye in French and became momentarily concerned that I arrived to the wrong room. My cheeks began to flush until I heard "Dzień dobry, Pani Natalio." Although relieved by this Polish greeting, I was also taken aback by it for a couple reasons. For one, it was the first time that I was referred to as *Miss* Natalia. I only knew of university students in Poland being addressed by their professors with such formality. Moreover, I was startled by how sweet our shared language sounded that morning. I moved to Madison just the previous day and did not realize before that I had not spoken to anyone in Polish since. This small reminder of home in Chicago made me smile. When it was time for my placement test, I took my paper and pencil into the hall and responded to a few short essay prompts,

careful to dot every "z" and put a tail on every "ę." After attending Polish School on Saturdays for thirteen years, I was prepared to enroll in the highest-level course and fulfill the university's language requirement for a Bachelor of Science degree in my first semester of college. Afterwards, I planned to focus solely on my science classes and build a competitive GPA for medical school.

Indeed, I was placed in "Slavic 278: Third Semester Polish" – the only course that I needed to satisfy the language requirement – and my first class was scheduled for the following week. The wait felt increasingly longer though as my longing for home became stronger with every subsequent day. In Slavic 278, I hoped not only to practice more of my Polish, but also to connect with students of the same cultural background and become a part of a new Polish community in Madison. Surely enough, I found many of my now close friends among my classmates. As a group of only twelve individuals, we had many opportunities to become well acquainted with each other, such as through small group projects and thought-provoking class discussions. Under Pani Ewa's guidance, we enjoyed exploring together a wide range of contemporary topics pertaining Poland in addition to its language, literature and history throughout the semester. Soon after realizing how well I improved my language proficiency in Slavic 278, I scheduled another meeting with Pani Ewa, but this time to declare the Polish Major.

In college, my major in Polish not only set me en route to learn more about my culture and further sharpen my language skills, but it also opened unexpected doors for me outside of the classroom. Of these were the opportunities to be awarded the Lapinski and Zawacki Scholarships for Polish academic achievement by the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature. These significantly alleviated the stress of paying for my expensive textbooks and summer

tuition. After graduating in May, my Polish studies have also allowed me to comfortably work with the Polish patient population as a medical scribe and apply for a volunteer position as a Polish medical interpreter in the Chicago area. I will also use my language skills and cultural knowledge to continue serving the Polish community as a future Family Medicine practitioner. With that said, I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to integrate the Polish Major into my premedical curriculum during my undergraduate career. My classes not only served as a home away from home, but also helped me better understand my unique heritage and thus better care for my community upon my return to Chicago. ■

## Faculty News

### Halina Filipowicz (Professor)

I spent the 2016-17 academic year on sabbatical leave, working on my new book in which I use the lens of drama to reconsider the history of Holocaust memory in Poland. In April 2017, I gave a CREECA lecture, “What We Talk about when We Talk about Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit),” in which I addressed contemporary efforts to rethink the troubled relation of Holocaust literature to the category of form. My review article, “Rediscovering Zofia Nalkowska,” was published in *The Polish Review* in December 2016. Since the fall of 2016, I have been serving as Book Review Editor for literature and the arts at *The Polish Review*, an interdisciplinary journal.

### Irina Shevelenko

During the past academic year I taught for the first time our two-semester undergraduate survey of modern Russian literature, and I enjoyed this experience tremendously. I also repeated in Fall 2016, with significant changes compared to

its 2009 version, a graduate seminar on the topic of Russian nationalism and aesthetic experiment in the early twentieth century. The latter has been the subject of my research project for over ten years, and I was happy to finally see my book, *Modernizm kak arkhazim: natsionalizm i poiski modernistskoi estetiki v Rossii*, come out in Moscow in March 2017. Two presentations of this book took place in June in the Moscow and St. Petersburg branches of the Higher School of Economics; the book was also a subject of interviews on Colta.ru, Gefter.ru, and Gorky.media, and a radio show “Kul'tura povsednevnosti” on Govorit Moskva (18 June). I will be preparing an English version of this book during the coming year. In the meantime, my other project of the past few years, an edited volume under the title *Reframing Russian Modernism*, was approved for publication by the University of Wisconsin Press; it will come out in spring or early summer 2018. By coincidence, this coming spring I will also teach for the first time a “foundational” course on Russian modernism for our graduate students, and I am very much looking forward to it.



*Irina Shevelenko*



## Slavic Welcomes New Assistant Professor Marina Zilbergerts

In fall 2016, Marina Zilbergerts arrived at UW-Madison as the Lipton Assistant Professor of Eastern European Jewish Literature and Thought. She has a joint appointment in the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies and the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic.

Marina received her BA from Yeshiva University in New York, her MA from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and completed her PhD in Comparative Literature at Stanford University. Her research focuses on the interplay between Jewish and Russian literature, specifically on the development of Hebrew and Yiddish literature in the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Her in progress book, *Words that Matter: Materialism and the Rise of Jewish Literature*, draws on her dissertation research to explore the productive tensions among literature, science, and religion in the Russian Empire.

Zilbergerts will be teaching four courses over 2017-18. In the fall, she will teach *Russia and the Jews: Literature, Culture, and Religion*, which “gives students a rigorous background in Eastern European literature, the many social and literary movements associated with it, and the complex intersections of Jews with the rest of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire.” In the spring, she will teach a course called *Struggling with God in Literature*, which “explores the human struggle with injustice in the world, and the desire to transcend it.” She will also offer a poetry-intensive course sequence with Dead Yiddish Poets Society in the fall and Dead Hebrew Poets Society in the spring. The sequence gives students the opportunity to “experience the masterpieces of Yiddish and Hebrew poetry in translation, as well as in the original.” Zilbergerts is herself a poet, and is working toward publication of her first collection of poetry. ■



*Marina Zilbergerts*

## UW Russian Folk Orchestra Celebrates 20th Anniversary with a Gala Concert!

Victor Gorodinsky, the founder and music director of the UW Russian Folk Orchestra and a Slavic Languages Librarian at Memorial Library, was a proud papa on April 8, 2017 as his musical child celebrated a 20th birthday with a gala concert in Mills Hall. The orchestra played to a packed concert hall. Its anniversary celebration was featured in a piece in



*Soloist Anna Gubenkova performs at the gala concert with instrumentalists in the background. Photo courtesy of the UW Russian Folk Orchestra Photo Gallery.*

the Wisconsin State Journal as well as on NBC 15 News and on Voice of America (in Russian here: <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/wisconsin-orchestra/28466454.html>).

A CD and DVD of the gala concert will soon be available!

The all-volunteer orchestra has 39 musicians, and current Slavic PhD candidate Brian Kilgour plays the Alto Balalaika. A CD and DVD of the gala concert will soon be available!

The homepage for the orchestra can be found at <https://www.russorch.wisc.edu>. You can learn more about the instruments used, check out the orchestra's very own YouTube channel, and link to pictures of the gala concert. ■



*Pictured are the members of UW Russian Folk Orchestra that participated in the 20th anniversary concert in Mills Music Hall. Photo courtesy of the UW Russian Folk Orchestra Photo Gallery.*

## Russian Flagship Profiles

### Henry Misa

The Russian Flagship program was the reason I came to Madison, but when I came to Madison I had no idea what carrier I wanted to pursue. Having dabbled in Russian in high school, I decided to try Kazakh just for fun. Little did I know that I would visit Kazakhstan three times over the period of

my bachelor's degree, and five years later, be galloping towards a life-long study of Central Asian history.

My capstone year in Almaty can be understood through descripts of two of my experiences: my home stay and my internship.

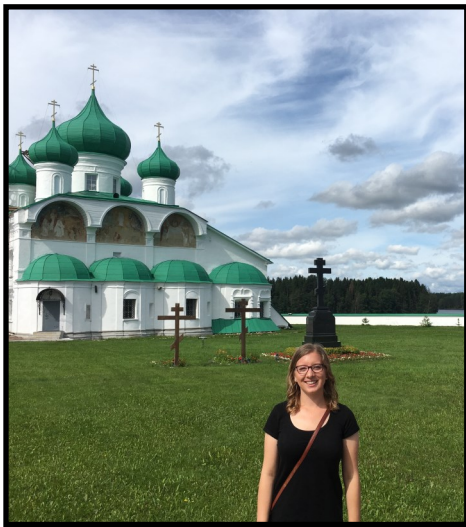
My host family lived in a new apartment building a short walk from the Kazakh Nation University (KazNU), where my host mom taught English and Kazakh linguistics. Staying with a host family, observing and participating in simple every day life in Kazakhstan are the best ways to lean about the country and begin to understand it on its own terms.

For my internship I worked as a researcher at the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Under the guidance of a scholar from KazNU, I studied the ways that the nomadic populations of Turgai Oblast' utilized mass education projects, both Islamic and Russian, to advance their social power from the late 19th century until 1916. This research culminated in a presentation and round table discussion at KazNU's history department's annual conference, conducted in Russian and Kazakh.

My post-capstone plans are as follows. This summer I am studying intermediate Tojiki at CESSI in Madison. This fall (2017) I begin a MA/PhD program at the history department of Ohio State University (OSU). My experience in Kazakhstan taught me that Central Asia is best understood through its own languages. At OSU I will study Uzbek and Persian. My Russian gives me access to a vast historiography and archeological data, which facilitates a broad variety of research questions. By studying and reveling in the complexities of Central Asia's past, especially the periods that are often labeled "pre-colonial," we nurture a deeper understanding and respect for this region in a way that does not seek to define Central Asia's future for it.

## Alex Steiner

As I prepare to ship off to Almaty to complete the Overseas Capstone Program this fall, I cannot help but reflect on the last three years at Madison with wistfulness. I have so enjoyed making this place my home. Of course, there are innumerable experiences that have impacted my undergraduate career, but Russian Flagship really has defined it. The impetus for studying Russian stems from my Russian-Jewish heritage, and when I became more interested in politics and historiography in Eastern Europe after the Euromaidan protests, I took a leap of faith, transferring to Madison specifically to join this program. I could not be more pleased with that calculated risk. Through Flagship I've gained the tools to achieve so many of my personal, professional, and academic goals. Every proficiency milestone, each conversation, all of the hours spent speaking, writing, reading, listening, and laughing have added up to something inexplicably impactful. Russian classes have often been the highlight of my day, and the 14th floor of Van Hise has become my on-campus home.



*Alex Steiner*

Beyond the excellent instruction, rigorous courses, and incredible academic resources, Flagship has carved out a community within the wider UW, and to be a part of that has

truly been a privilege. I've met

some very dear friends here, and every single tutor, TA, professor, and administrator affiliated with Flagship has played a significant role in my success at Madison. I'm so grateful for the encouragement and support I've received from Flagship faculty and staff over the years - they have been instrumental in my formation both as a student and as a person.

From studying in St. Petersburg to numerous scholarship opportunities to writing and presenting a research paper in Russian, I have no doubt that many of the defining experiences of my college career would not have been possible without Flagship. I will not soon forget the day I stepped onto Red Square or the night that I met Masha Alyokhina from Pussy Riot. I am truly indebted to this program for enabling me to not only study a foreign language, but to utilize my language skills in a way that fosters mutual understanding and cultivates global citizenship. At the risk of sounding utterly cliché, I'm confident that what I have gained from the Flagship Program will continue to impact me in ways that I am only just beginning to discern.

## Suzy Mihalyi

I consider it a great stroke of luck that I found the Russian Flagship Program. During my first year at UW-Madison, I felt a lot of pressure to study a hard science. Though I had always excelled at studying foreign languages, I ultimately decided to major in geological engineering with a second major in geology and geophysics. My dream job is to solve problems related to the environment, sustainability, or renewable energy.

On a whim during my sophomore year of college, I decided to take a Russian language course for liberal elective credit. Russian class quickly became the best part of my day. Shortly into the course, I heard about the Russian Flagship

Program, and I immediately knew that it was the perfect avenue to advance my Russian language skills alongside my engineering studies.

I assumed that it would be difficult for me to combine Russian language and engineering, but it has proven to be quite easy. I have received a lot of support from Flagship staff and students, as well as my wonderful teachers and tutors. Additionally, since geology is a global field, I have found a lot of intersectionality between Russian Language and geological engineering. I am currently studying abroad in



*Suzy Mihalyi*

Kazakhstan, where they are hosting Expo 2017 on the theme of “Future Energy.” I have had many great opportunities to talk about the Expo in Russian, and I even have the privilege to present on clean energy to my discussion club at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

In the future, I look forward to completing the yearlong Russian Overseas Flagship Capstone Program and finding a job where I can use my knowledge of engineering and Russian language to help solve global problems pertaining to our environment.

### **Henry Meger**

As a Spanish language and literature major, my path to Russian is a curious one. I chose to journey from Romance to Slavic not only out of personal linguistic, historical and liter-

ary curiosity, but also through the desire to follow the footsteps of my great-grandmother, Helen Eugenie Moore Anderson. Despite never having met her, I can say that she is certainly the most significant influence on my academic and professional goals when it comes to matters linguistic. She served as ambassador to Denmark and Bulgaria in the 1950s and 60s, learned to speak Danish like a native, and enough Bulgarian to deliver a Fourth of July speech in Sofia on behalf of NATO and the US in 1963 when she wasn’t allowed to do so in English. Through my studies of Russian and other languages, I hope to support this century’s piers under that critical bridge that my great-grandmother helped to forge between east and west. She is the reason for which I hope to someday work as a translator and interpreter to facilitate global discussion and cooperation on critical diplomatic and ecological issues facing my generation via words rather than wars.

The progress that I’ve made towards this goal so far has been significant and wouldn’t have been possible without the Russian Flagship Program. Not only has the program provided me with the tools and resources necessary to immerse myself in the language at home, but has also served as the stepping stone by which I’ve hopped across an ocean and continent to the city in which I write these paragraphs: St. Petersburg, Russia. During my time in Russia I’ve learned a good



*Henry Meger*

deal about myself, the world, and my place in it. I’ve come to know a people and culture that ticks differently, that’s on a

different wavelength than ours and the others in which I've lived.

On this topic, there is far too much to summarize in just a few words, but I have, for example, found a certain truth to the peach and coconut cliché. By and large, many Americans and western Europeans with whom I've come into contact are peaches: soft and smiling on the outside, readily inclined to dish out hellos to passers-by, and displaying a proclivity to small talk, while locking up our most personal, embarrassing, and emotionally heavy bits deep down, available only to a select group of friends and family. A significantly larger number of Russians seem to be coconuts: wearing a brazen shell that can seem cold or intimidating to the foreign eye, providing short one-word answers to our ice-breakers, and uttering hellos, pleases, and thank-yous more conservatively. Yet, once this shell is broken, you become friends for life, you'll be asked the most personal of questions, and you look into a pair of eyes that seem to scream "look at me!" behind which there is a thread to the soul and fireworks bursting in harmony with the exchange of ideas and thoughts.

In light of this and hundreds of other sociolinguistic micro-lessons that I've received thanks to the Flagship Program, perhaps one of its most unique aspects is that I've learned to connect the innate relationship between such cultural differences in worldviews to their reflections in language. In other words, I've become convinced that it's no coincidence that it's the Russian's language in which we say "it dreamed itself to me" rather than "I dreamed," or that we exclaim "formlessness!" instead of "disgraceful!" Honing this craft of developing a posture, attitude, and mentality of another language is paramount in the path to a successful career in interpretation, and Flagship has greatly catalyzed this process for me. ■

## UW-Slavic PhD Alums

### Colleen Lucey (PhD, 2016)

#### 1. *What do you teach in Arizona and who are your students?*

When I first started in 2014 at the University of Arizona, I taught second-year Russian, Women in Russian Literature and Culture, and 20th-Century Russian Literature. Since then, I have taught other courses in the curriculum, including third-year Russian, a large undergraduate course on Contemporary Russia, and a graduate seminar on contemporary women's writing in Russia.

Teaching a wide range of courses has been enlightening in terms of getting to know the UA student population. As with many state universities, the undergraduate population is diverse, but I think this is even more so in Arizona. In the same class we will have diversity in terms of race, native language, age, region, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, political affiliation, etc. All this makes for extremely interesting and dynamic conversations when discussing course material, especially issues related to contemporary Russian culture. Our students also come to university with strikingly different levels of preparation, which adds its own level of complexity both in the classroom and when working individually with students. They are a hard-working group of undergraduates who never cease to amaze me with their creativity and talent.

#### 2. *What will your new position be in Fall 2017 and what are your teaching/research plans?*

I will begin a tenure-track position in Fall 2017 in Russian and Slavic Studies at UA. This new position will allow me to concentrate more fully on research and publishing. Currently I am working on my book project, gathering archival material in St. Petersburg and Moscow. My monograph examines the portrayal of commercial sex in nineteenth-century Russian literature and visual culture. In addition to the book pro-

ject, I have a keen interest in contemporary Russian drama, especially original works produced in the last decade. In the coming years, my hope is to develop a new class at UA on Russian theatre and performance and establish an artist in residence program at UA for young Russian playwrights.



*Colleen Lucey*

3. *What would you highlight as particularly helpful to you professionally and/or personally during your time as a PhD candidate in Slavic?*

I am sincerely indebted to our graduate program for its superb training in Russian and Slavic Studies. From day one the faculty took an interest in my growth as a teacher and scholar, pushing me to go beyond my comfort zone and think deeper about my work and its larger meaning (Prof. Kornblatt's "So what?" comes to mind here). My dissertation advisor, Prof. Dolinin, worked patiently with me over many years on my research project, for which I am eternally grateful. In terms of other concrete examples, I would say the Wisconsin Slavic Conference was important in preparing for national conferences such as ASEES. A seminar facilitated by Prof. Evans-Romaine on job interviews demystified the process early on for many of us and revealed how better to prepare for the market. Our practicum course taught by Dr. Tumarkin played a huge role in learning how to work collaboratively and how to develop assessment materials. I would also say that the professionalism of the faculty – their expertise, leadership, and mentorship – set an example for how to

work both during grad school and beyond.

4. *What do you miss about Madison?*

This is a hard question! I hold Madison close to my heart – it is a fantastic town. There are numerous things I miss about Madison: concerts on the square, the Union, the farmers market. Most of all, though, I miss the exchange of ideas with faculty and graduate students. I have many fond memories of brainstorming ideas for papers with fellow grads late into the night at Memorial Library. That kind of collaboration is incredibly important.

**Ben Jens (PhD, 2011)**

1. *What do you teach in Arizona and who are your students?*

I think I've taught just about every class we offer at UA except for the linguistics courses. I've had 1st- and 3rd-year Russian language off and on in my time there. In terms of culture classes, I've been teaching the "Eastern European Cinema in a Social Context" course the last two years, which has been a great experience; it's about half Russian/Soviet films and half Eastern European films, so we get to talk about a lot of different issues and introduce students to the history and culture of the region. It's a large (~150 students) class geared towards freshmen, and I've taught it in-person and online. I've done some 19th/20th century Russian surveys, a survey on the Balkans, and the vampires/werewolves class, and this past year I was able to pilot a course on Eastern Orthodoxy (thanks to Judith Kornblatt for her help!) and in the fall I'll pilot an East European sci-fi course (thanks to David Danaher for his help!). The "tier 1" courses at UA are large freshmen seminars, so those could have anywhere from 50-200 students. Most of the "tier 2" courses (like the 300-level at UW) are smaller, about 15-60 students, although the vampires course gets pretty large (about

150). One of the things I like about UA is how diverse our student population is – we usually have quite a few first-generation students, and I think I had more diversity in my one first semester Russian class than I did in all my other classes at 3 institutions combined. That's not a dig at the other institutions, but more just a product of being in a border town, near Native American lands, and in a place with surprisingly strong Pacific island ties for being in the desert. I think all that adds a layer of dynamism to the classes, and keeps things fresh even if I'm repeating a course like the film class every semester.



*Ben Jens*

2. *What will your new position be in Fall 2017 and what are your teaching/research plans?*

In the Fall I'll have the new title of Assistant Professor (non-tenure track). Long-term, I'll be continuing to put things together on a book project on silence in Russian literature and culture, and in the short term working on a paper on Tarkovsky's reception of Pavel Florensky's theories and creating some commissioned entries for the web-based project "Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History."

3. *What would you highlight as particularly helpful to you professionally and/or personally during your time as a PhD candidate in Slavic?*

Professionally I think the most helpful things for me were the methods course for my teaching, and working with the faculty, primarily Judith during the dissertation of course, on research methods and approaches, as well as just seeing how they handled their professional life and the university. Personally, though, I think the general vibe in the department from students, faculty, and staff helped keep me going during grad school, with lots of assistance from Lori and Jean! Lately working with Prof. Bethea on the Pushkin Summer Institute has also helped a lot, especially in terms of thinking about how to expand the audience for Slavic studies and thinking about my own approaches to teaching due to our work with the STARTALK initiative.

4. *What do you miss about Madison?*

Mostly I miss the people, since I've gotten to return to Madison regularly through my summer work with the Pushkin program. It's been interesting to watch the city change over the years and a little sad to see some places close up, but luckily most of the places I have fond memories of (like the Terrace and others) have been able to stay more or less the same.

### **Kat Scollins (PhD, 2009)**

1. *Tell us about your teaching in Vermont: what do you teach?*

I feel very lucky to have found a home in the small—but dynamic!—German and Russian department at the University of Vermont, back in my hometown of Burlington, VT. As a member of a very small program, my teaching responsibilities are substantial and varied: Russian language courses at all levels, from elementary through advanced content courses, as well as courses in Russian literature in translation. I teach introductory Russian every semester (which takes up much of my teaching load), but I try to develop a new course

(or at least substantially revise one) every year, to stay fresh—by now, I’ve created twelve different courses here. Although I arrived at UVM with solid teaching qualifications and experience, it did take me some time to develop specific courses and teaching methods that fit the culture and curriculum of this Russian program. Thankfully, my students are a flexible, motivated, and enthusiastic bunch, and they’re pretty much up for anything! Some of my favorite teaching moments so far include reenacting famous duels with water pistols (to lighten up an advanced-level Russian literature course), judging my students’ Russian karaoke skills (for a course on Russian Phonology), and betting on high-stakes faro games (in a 1st-year seminar on the St. Petersburg literary tradition). This fall I’ll be teaching a course in English on the literature of the revolution – maybe I’ll try to work in a storming of City Hall...?

2. Tell us about your recent tenure book – and how we can order it!

Thanks, I would love to talk about that—I really had no idea how long and complicated the process of academic publishing could be, and I’m very excited that it’s finally coming out! My book is called *Acts of Logos in Pushkin and Gogol: Petersburg Texts and Subtexts*, and it will be published soon (this fall, I believe) by Academic Studies Press. It all started with a question that had obsessed me since graduate school: why do the wrong things (noses, overcoats, statues) come to life in the literature of St. Petersburg, while its human “heroes” remain, basically, voiceless and marginal? In my reading of the tradition, this type of aberrant material animation is a direct result of the struggle for authority (both verbal and political) in Peter’s new capital; each chapter of the book is a close analysis of the powerful, performative function of language in one of the foundational texts of the city’s literary tradition. I just saw the cover for the first time the other

day—my oldest Russian friend (whose family I lived with on my very first trip to what was then the city of Leningrad) designed the cover image, and I’m thrilled with how it came out!



*Kat Scollins and family*

3. What would you highlight as particularly helpful to you career-wise and/or personally during your time as a Slavic PhD student?

Wow, I don’t even know where to start with this one! First of all, our professors provided us with an admirable (and, I think, unusual) professional model that combined rigorous scholarship with inquisitive, energetic teaching. Their example highlighted for me the vital relationship between pedagogical and scholarly pursuits: ideally, the energy and interactions of the classroom can inspire creative and relevant scholarship, while original research informs and vitalizes our teaching; both are important for a healthy, productive academic career. I am grateful to have begun my own professional life at the UW, among faculty members who understand the value—and interdependence—of both aspects of academic life, and I’ve tried to follow their example. Second (but no less important), I found at the UW an extraordinary intellectual community among my fellow graduate students—a community I still rely on with questions about everything from translation to teaching methods. My own de-



partment at UVM has been supportive and generous, but it is quite small (and we're pretty isolated up here in Burlington). In the absence of a large community of colleagues with similar interests, I have come to rely on my extended network of UW Slavic grads at least as much as I did when I was still a student.

4. *Name one thing that you miss about Madison and tell us why.*

I loved Madison – my husband and I had a hard time leaving! There are many things I miss (beers on the Terrace and burgers at the Weary Traveler spring immediately to mind), but honestly what I miss most of all is that close community of scholars that I already spoke of above. I loved collaborating on teaching activities in the TA office, brainstorming paper topics with fellow grads over kibbeh at the Mediterranean Café, and hashing out some important point over pitchers at the Union, professor and students alike, long after class had ended... we're still in touch with one another on social media and at conferences, of course, but nothing can ever replace that easy sense of collective we enjoyed while we lived there. It was (and remains) a special place, and I feel lucky to have been a part of it. ■

## Inaugural Slavic Sci-Fi Course

In Spring 2017, Professor David Danaher offered a new lit -in-translation course, Slavic Science Fiction in Literature and Film. This undergraduate course surveys classic authors and texts from the Russian, Polish, and Czech traditions.

*How many students took the course and did anything surprise you about them?*

We had around forty-five students for the first time, including two non-traditional senior auditors (one of whom had studied sci-fi at in the English Department at UW-Madison in the 1970s). Students came from all sorts of disciplines – from

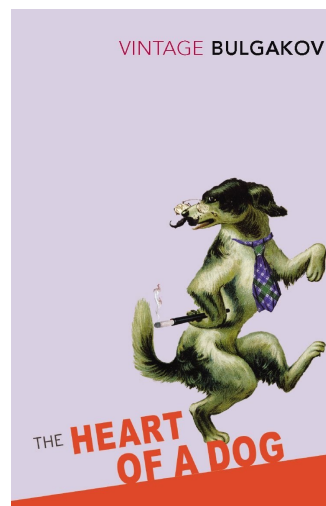
Engineering to the Humanities. One thing that surprised me was how unfamiliar with classic Slavic sci-fi texts the students were, even those who were themselves self-professed sci-fi geeks.

*What was a highlight of the course for you?*

For the inaugural version of the course, we invited three guest speakers, and these were definite highlights of the course for all involved. Anna Tumarkin gave a sequence of wonderful talks on Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog*, Eliot Borenstein made another triumphant return to UW campus to give a talk on Slavic versus American sci-fi, and Cecil Wilson, one of our current PhD students, who wrote his undergraduate thesis on the Strugatsky brothers, gave a provocatively participatory talk on *Roadside Picnic* (what is the Zone, who is a stalker, what is the Sphere?).

*Will you teach this course again?*

Absolutely! Who wouldn't like to teach about robots, newts, dog-to-man transmogrification, a time-travelling Ivan the Terrible, a sentient ocean planet, and reviews of books that have yet to be written? Plus I now have a half-dozen thematic t-shirts that I really can't wear for any other occasion. I'm looking forward to teaching it again in Spring 2019. ■



## Support Slavic Studies at UW-Madison!

We are grateful to those who have made donations to support our activities. Your generous donations support fellowships, graduate-student conference travel, visiting speakers, and adjunct lecturers for mini-courses as well as undergraduate prizes for exceptional progress in the study of language, literature, and culture and special events.

We would particularly welcome contributions to the Slavic Community Fund! To donate, please go to [gns.wisc.edu](https://gns.wisc.edu), click on Give, and designate the Slavic Community Fund (#12744986) in your donation.

### The Slavic GSO's Pel'meni Party!

On a Wednesday in April of this year, the Slavic Graduate Student Organization hosted "Pelmeni Party: A Fundraising Evening of Food and Fun" at Paul's Pel'meni Restaurant off State Street. 30% of each food purchase made from 7:00 PM -11:00 PM was generously donated to our organization. Attendees enjoyed delicious food, interesting Russian and English conversation, and fun pelmeni-themed trivia (which you can try your hand at as well—see the quiz on the back panel of this newsletter).

We are happy to report that the fundraiser was a great success! We raised \$210, which will go towards continuing our work on campus. The Slavic GSO is a UW-Madison Registered Student Organization which organizes cultural and social events to strengthen the bonds of our Slavic community. We hold academic conferences, professional development workshops, research colloquiums, student social events, and more.

It was also a good night for Paul's Pel'meni, whose owners said that the crowd of hungry pelmeni eaters was much

larger than they typically see on a Wednesday night. Paul's is a popular Madison restaurant that features a modern update on traditional pel'meni toppings. After choosing between potato or beef (or a mix) pelmeni, you can decide to add "the works," which is a spicy sauce made from butter, yellow curry, sweet chili sauce, cilantro, and topped with sour cream. If you prefer more traditional pelmeni, you can get that at Paul's too.

The Slavic GSO is very grateful for the support of its community of colleagues, friends, teachers, students and, of course, the wonderful owners and staff of Paul's. A big thank you to everyone who came out to "eat for a good cause" with us! ■



**We are thrilled to announce that we are hosting a new Slavic Blog. This will enable us to provide up to date news for Slavic Languages and Literatures and provide a stronger spotlight for our Alumni. Since we will be focusing more of our time online, we will be discontinuing our printed newsletter.**

**To view our blog visit [gns.wisc.edu/SlavicBlog](http://gns.wisc.edu/SlavicBlog)**

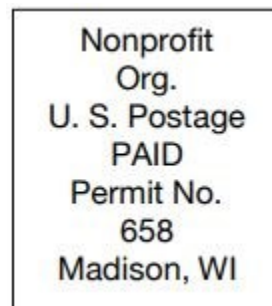


*Pictured above is the recognizable Van Hise tower with a view of Lake Mendota in the background. The 14th floor of Van Hise is home to Slavic Languages and Literature!*

**Back-Panel Trivia Quiz: Pel'meni, Answers:**

1. pel'menyh, masculine filling. Pel'meni are always a savory dish!	2. bread ear
3. sour cream, butter, dill, vinegar, mustard, horseradish; occasionally ketchup and/or mayonnaise.	4. Some examples: Italy – ravioli; China – wontons; Poland – pierogi (cf. Russian vareniki); India – modak; Vietnam – banh bot loc; Korea – mandu; Czech Republic – knedlicki; Georgia – khinkali; Japan – gyoza
5. They are larger and are eaten with mustard. Pozy are also commonly made of mutton and beef, whereas the meat filling in pel'meni is often pork, lamb, or beef. Chicken and fish versions also exist.	6. Vareniki can be sweet or savory, depending on their
7. The late 14th-early 15th century	
8. The 19th century! Ekaterina Avdeeva, author of the Dictionary of Words and Expressions used in Siberia (Словарь употреблений в Сибири слов и выражений) describes pel'meni as "the same thing as what Russians refer to as 'little ears' (ушки)." Attestations of something like pel'meni, although named differently and possibly differing in size or composition, appear far earlier in written texts.	
9. Пельмени ('pelmeshki')	
10. The Russian store "Intermarket" located on Old Middleton Road.	

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic  
1432 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Dr.  
Madison, WI 53706-1525



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Back-Panel Trivia Quiz: Pel'meni

1. The Russian word 'pel'meni' (пельмени) is grammatically plural in number; its singular is almost never used. What is the singular form, and what grammatical gender is it?

- Пельмень, masculine
- Пельменя, neuter
- Пельменя, feminine
- Пельмень, feminine

2. Etymologists trace the origins of the word 'pel'meni' to the Finno-Urgic word 'pel'nian' (pelnian). What does 'pelnian' mean?

- Filled dough
- Bread ear
- Boiled treat
- Eat much

3. With which of the following do Russians typically top their pel'meni:

- Sour cream
- Butter
- Pickle juice
- Ketchup
- Jam
- Mayonnaise
- Dill
- Vinegar
- Horseradish
- Sriracha
- Mustard

4. Dishes like pel'meni appear in many cultures around the world. Name as many other versions of dumplings (filling wrapped in meat) as you can.

5. Russian pel'meni originated in the indigenous cuisine of some Siberian peoples. The people of the autonomous Buryat Republic in eastern Siberia eat "буузы" (buuzi in Buryat) or "позы" (pozy in Russian). How do they differ from pel'meni?

- They are larger and are eaten with mustard
- They are only eaten at holiday celebrations
- They are smaller and filled with horseradish
- They are eaten exclusively for breakfast

6. How do vareniki (вареники), a dish common to several Slavic cultures, differ from pel'meni?

- Vareniki cannot be eaten with sour cream
- Vareniki can be sweet or savory
- Vareniki are always fried in a pan
- Vareniki have yeast in their dough

7. At about what time did pel'meni first appear in Russian cuisine, and from where?

- mid-10th century, with the Christianization of Russia
- early 17th century, as part of Peter the Great's modernization project
- late 14th-early 15th century, from the peoples of the Ural Mountain region
- early 20th century, as a Russian version of Stalin's favorite Georgian dish

8. When do pel'meni first appear in written Russian texts?

- 15th century
- 20th century
- 19th century
- 11th century

9. What is the diminutive form of the Russian word 'pel'meni' (пельмени)?

10. Where in the Madison area can you buy frozen pelmeni? (Note: Paul's doesn't count, because they cook it for you!)

*Answers found on the side of panel of page 19!*