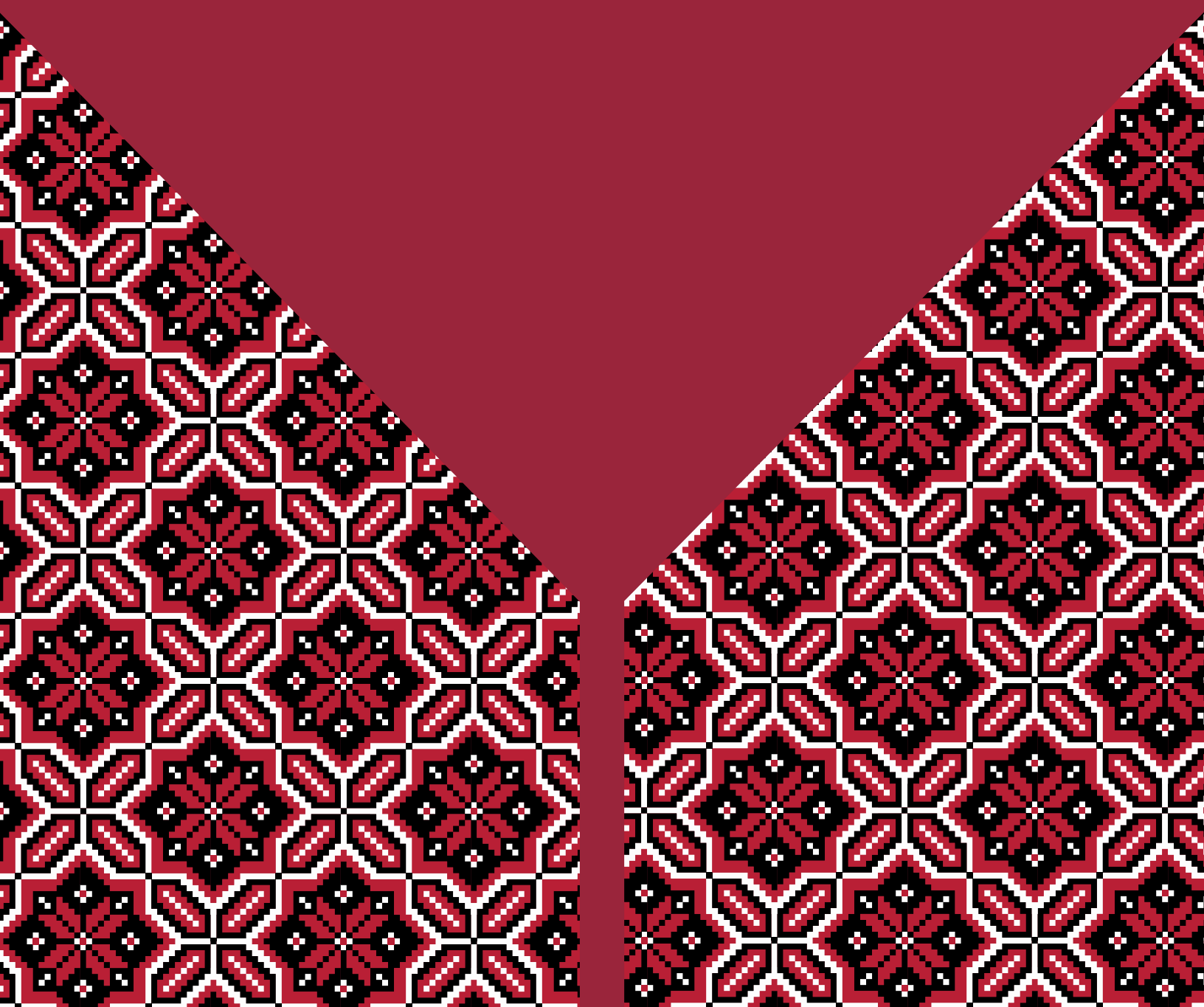


A YEAR IN REVIEW

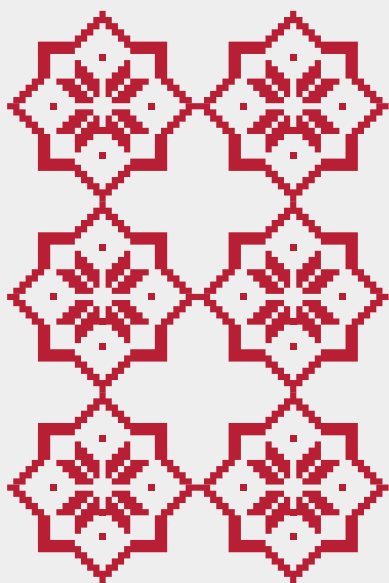
A look back at 2024 from
the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre



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The Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) at MacEwan University is located in ᑭᓯᐅᓴᐅᓴᐅᓴᐅᓴ Amiskwacî-wâskahikan, Edmonton, Alberta, on Treaty Six Territory and the Métis Homeland. This land is the traditional home and gathering place of diverse Indigenous Peoples, including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit and others. We honour and are learning from the cultures, worldviews and practices of these diverse communities.

Indigenous-Ukrainian relations are longstanding and complex. At URDC, we are dedicated to untangling our Indigenous-Ukrainian stories. We recognize this process is challenging and are committed to creating shared spaces where we can listen, reflect and learn how to live well together.



The Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) has grown into a dynamic centre for education, research and cultural and community connections. The centre enhances MacEwan University's dedication to exceptional undergraduate learning by creating enriched opportunities for students, faculty and the broader community.

From a one-person centre and the Kule Chair position, URDC now includes two staff members, two chairs, the Gene Zwozdesky Artist in Residence and a 12-member interdisciplinary team (called Team Ukraina) from across the university.

Ukraine-related studies have grown to more than 10 projects, promoting and furthering MacEwan's research and scholarly activities.

Innovative courses have been introduced, including COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) and WIL (Work-Integrated Learning), and research assistantships in POLS 383, ENGL 383, SOCI 395 and HLST 400, contributing to MacEwan's commitment to preparing future-ready graduates.

Several projects have been brought to life, such as Visiting Scholars programs, Ukraine Week, the Local Narratives oral history project, URDC awards, student and academic support forums, and health technology grants.

Greater involvement has come from sociology, nursing, political science, English, music, communication studies, health and community studies, and (limited) business collaborations.

The URDC's activities, whether building connections between Ukraine and its global diaspora or creating collaborations within our university, reflect a willingness to take risks and try new approaches. This work isn't about quick wins but rather laying the groundwork for meaningful, lasting change. The results can be seen in the relationships built, and the doors opened for dialogue, exploration and creativity.

At its very core, URDC is about people: their ideas, passion and care. Faculty, students and community partners have shaped a centre that feels alive, not just with activity, but with purpose. The past five years demonstrate a steady growth and deepening impact, with every project, course and collaboration leaving a mark. URDC has become more than a centre – it is a bridge between cultures, a hub for meaningful research and a home for transformative learning. Its progress embodies the power of connection, the resilience of our communities, and a vision of education and research that values humanity above all else.

During these challenging times, URDC holds Ukraine close, bringing the community to the campus and the campus to the community.



Members of Team Ukraïna -- Ukraine Team.

Team Ukraïna – Ukraine Team

URDC is deeply grateful to the faculty members who make up its Team Ukraïna – Ukraine Team, whose talents, dedication, hard work, creativity and commitment are the cornerstone of every initiative and project at the centre. Their commitment fuels the work we do.

TEAM MEMBERS:

Dr. Jeff Stepnisky, Sociology

Dr. Gail Low, Nursing

Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, Nursing

Dr. Michael Gulayets, Sociology

Dr. Chaldeans Mensah, Political Science

Dr. Jeffrey Rice, Political Science

Dr. Natalia Rohatyn-Martin, Human Services and Early Learning

Dr. Oksana Tashkinova, Sociology

Lindsey Whitson, Library

Dr. Serhiy Buryak, Earth and Planetary Science

Dr. Kathryn Holland, English

Polina Budyanska, URDC

Larysa Hayduk, URDC



RESEARCH

Research chairs

Through the efforts of URDC and with the financial support of the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE), two academic chairs have been created at MacEwan University: the Chair of International Health (CIH) and the Kule Chair of Ukrainian Community and International Development (Kule Chair).

Peter and Doris Kule Chair of Ukrainian Community and International Development

About the Kule Chair

The Kule Chair is dedicated to fostering community development and international cooperation. It supports research and initiatives that enhance the well-being of Ukrainian communities in Canada and Ukraine, emphasizing sustainable development and cultural preservation. The responsibilities of the Kule Chair are many and varied, including the promotion of Ukraine as an academic subject, advancing research that focuses on Ukrainian-Canadian issues, collaborating with Ukrainian scholars both in Canada and Ukraine, and supporting student study and research related to Ukrainian issues.

Dr. Roman Petryshyn was the first Kule Chair from 2004 to 2015; Dr. Svitlana Krys held the Kule Chair appointment from 2016 to 2021; and Dr. Jeff Stepnisky has held the Kule Chair appointment since 2022.

Chairs have led and been involved with many research projects. Since 2016, these have included research on Ukrainian Gothic literature, the collective memory of Ukrainians both in Edmonton and in Ukraine, the history of sociological theory in Ukraine, and the resilience of Ukrainian immigrant youth. This research has led to presentations at national and international academic conferences, such as the Canadian Sociological Association, the Maidan Museum annual conference and invited

presentations at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) and the Fulda School in Germany.

Research and writing from Kule Chairs also appear in journals, such as *the Canadian Slavonic Papers*; *the Slavic and East European Journal*; *Gothic Studies*; *Space and Culture*; *Emotion, Space and Society*; *the Canadian Journal of Sociology*, and *The Conversation*.

Chairs have been awarded external funding by the University of Alberta and the Alberta Foundation for Ukrainian Education Society to support the editorial work of *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies*. Chairs have also been awarded Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding for research on the commemoration of the Revolution of Dignity at Kyiv's Maidan Museum, as well as collaborative research with the Dalhousie University Resilience Research Centre on the resilience of Ukrainian youth in Canada under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visa.

Engaging MacEwan students in Ukraine-focused research

As a student-centred undergraduate university, MacEwan encourages its students to be involved in the research process, and Kule chairs have consistently hired and trained MacEwan students.



Dr. Jeff Stepnisky

Advancing Ukrainian Studies: Dr. Stepnisky's 2024 achievements as Kule Chair

Dr. Stepnisky has served as an advisor on an honours project on the International Criminal Court and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Students have also served as managing editors for *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, where they learned editorial and administrative skills. They have also assisted on projects such as collective memory at the Maidan Museum, and collective memory of Ukrainians in Edmonton, learning skills such as research design, online and archival data collection, qualitative analysis software and academic conference presentations.

Being of service

Kule chairs engage in extensive service activity for both MacEwan and external professional organizations. These activities contribute to the development of Ukrainian studies both at MacEwan and in the community more broadly.

Dr. Svitlana Kryś served as editor-in-chief of *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* from 2016 to 2023 and initiated the Kule Chair Speaker's Series, a regular event which featured academic talks at MacEwan on Ukrainian issues. Dr. Stepnisky extended this series to include Ukrainian film screenings at MacEwan during Ukraine Week. He has also served as the chair of the Graduate Student Paper Conference Paper Award Committee for the Canadian Association of Ukrainian Studies.

In 2021, Dr. Stepnisky was appointed as the Kule Chair, Ukrainian Community and International Development Research (UCID), a role that was renewed for an additional two years in July 2024. Throughout 2024, Dr. Stepnisky has been deeply engaged in academic and community-focused endeavours. These include active participation in five Ukraine-related research projects, the publication of a peer-reviewed essay and presentations at three academic conferences. A highlight of the year was Dr. Stepnisky's keynote address at the Kyiv Konnection banquet.

Beyond these achievements, Dr. Stepnisky co-supervised an honours project, mentored two research assistants and contributed as a co-applicant to a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant in collaboration with Dalhousie University. Dr. Stepnisky was also awarded an individual SSHRC Insight Grant valued at \$45,454.

The five Ukraine-related research projects undertaken during this period include "Classical Ukrainian Theory," "Remembering Maidan," "Ukrainian Youth Resilience in Canada," "Ukrainian Memory in Downtown Edmonton," and "Needs of Ukrainian Newcomers in Edmonton."

Chair of International Health

The Chair of International Health (CIH) focuses on health-related research and initiatives, particularly those that address population health challenges in Ukraine. This includes collaborative projects with Ukrainian health-care institutions and the promotion of health education. Housed in the Faculty of Nursing at MacEwan University, the CIH is dedicated to promoting education in international health and conducting research in Ukraine and Eastern Europe.



Announcing the new Chair of International Health

In October 2024, MacEwan announced that Dr. Gail Low would be its second Chair of International Health. The chair works on advancing knowledge through scholarly activity connected to international health, primarily in Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

"Dr. Low is a passionate educator and researcher," says Dr. Christy Raymond, dean of the Faculty of Nursing. "Her research on living well later in life and her focus on international research collaborations are critical and timely. As Chair of International Health, she will undoubtedly create and share

significant knowledge with faculty, students and the community around us, as well as continue to build capacity for further research in our faculty. We also very much look forward to Dr. Low continuing to grow our important partnerships in Ukraine."

Created through an endowment from the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education, which has a 25-year partnership with the university, the position is housed in the Faculty of Nursing and works closely with the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre to continue collaborations in Ukraine.

Meet Dr. Gail Low

Dr. Low, an associate professor in the Faculty of Nursing, will hold the CIH appointment for a three-year term. She currently leads a research team that explores opportunities related to mental health promotion, and worked with attendees at the 2024 Canadian Association on Gerontology & Geriatrics conference symposium held in Edmonton in October 2024. Her local and international research about quality living in later life looks at a broad range of influencing factors, including religion and spirituality, place, health, work and supportive relationships.

Farewell to the outgoing chair

Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, the first faculty member to fill the CIH role in 2020, studies the health of immigrant and refugee children and families, international and intercultural nursing, and planetary/global health.

Since 2018, she has facilitated a partnership between MacEwan and Ternopil National Medical University (TNMU) faculty and students through a yearly course called Global Health Perspectives that was offered in-person for two years and has been online since 2020. The course has enabled students in

both institutions to become globally minded and culturally aware through cooperative teamwork and critical reflection. In developing the course content, faculty members share pedagogical expertise with a commitment to mutual learning, reciprocity and equity. This has been a main catalyst in the development of a sustainable partnership in which team meetings take place every two weeks. Collaboration on research and pedagogical approaches to nursing theory and practice has led to presentations at national and international academic conferences, such as Metropolis, the Association for the Study of Nationalities, The International Public Policy Association, ICN (International Council of Nurses), The Planetary Health Alliance and the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH).

Dr. Burgess-Pinto collaborated with TNMU and Collegium Mazovia faculty members in Siedlce, Poland, to organize an international virtual nursing conference. The topic of the 2024 conference was Nursing and Modern Challenges, and participants were from Belgium, Ireland, Great Britain, Poland, the USA and Canada.

Her current research projects include a study of Ukrainian mothers in Alberta under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visa, which includes two Ukrainian students hired as research assistants. She studies the resilience of Ukrainian youth in Canada under the CUAET visa in collaboration with the Kule Chair, led by the Dalhousie University Resilience Research Centre. She is also conducting a study of nursing in war in collaboration with TNMU faculty.

Dr. Burgess-Pinto organized panels that addressed issues related to nursing in wars and disasters and co-hosted the director and assistant director of TNMU nursing school, who visited MacEwan as part of the URDC Visiting Scholar program.

More recently, faculty members from TNMU and MacEwan have initiated a community of practice project called “Challenges of the Profession – Transnational Conversations,” a monthly collaboration to exchange ideas, experiences and expertise focused on trends and issues in nursing from an international perspective.

Visiting scholars

MacEwan University's Visiting Scholar program is built on the idea of exchange and collaboration. Since 2006, more than 40 scholars have contributed to MacEwan's academic and public profile, student learning and the understanding of Ukrainian Studies. Scholars have enhanced the student experience through research, lectures, seminars, performances, collaborations, consultations and publications in the field of Ukrainian Studies and its component disciplines.

Not a Netflix Series: Russia's War against Ukraine

*By Joanna Clark Dawyd,
MacEwan University Bachelor of
Communications Studies student*

Dr. Olesya Khromeychuk visited MacEwan in January at the invitation of URDC. A historian, writer and director of the Ukrainian Institute London, she offers a unique perspective that intertwines personal loss with professional dedication to raising awareness about Ukrainian culture and current events.

During her talk, “From Visibility to Knowledge: The Case of Ukraine,” Dr. Khromeychuk focused on Ukraine as more than just a country at war but a place of culture and literature with a rich history worth preserving.

While her visit to Edmonton was short, she made the time to sit down for an interview in MacEwan's podcast studio with URDC to discuss the current situation in Ukraine.

In recent years, Ukraine has been at the forefront of global attention due to Russia's ongoing aggression. While the beginning of the full-scale invasion in 2022 captured the world's attention, the people of Ukraine knew how quickly the attention of those outside Ukraine could wane. After Russia's initial aggressions and occupations began in 2014, public notice quickly faded, and Ukraine seemed to disappear from the news cycle, leaving Ukrainians on their own to deal with the enemy. Dr. Khromeychuk is heartened by the longer-lasting focus this time around but is still concerned it will fade again as the



Dr. Olesya Khromeychuk

“Vulnerability is also a resource,” she said. “It’s the channel through which we can explain something so unimaginable and yet so commonplace, like political violence, like wars.”

public outside Ukraine begins to tire of war news.

“Some international commentators and maybe some of the general public began to view the Ukrainian situation – Russia’s war in Ukraine – as a kind of Netflix series,” she said. “You know, ‘Ooh, where’s the next episode, or when’s the next season going to come out? The season called Ukrainian Counter-Offensive. Oh, it hasn’t come out yet. Ok, let’s see something else.’ But of course, it’s not. It’s not a movie. We’re talking about horrendous, brutal, genocidal war where lots and lots of people are dying.”

Dr. Khromeychuk emphasized the danger of “Ukraine fatigue,” explaining that it plays into Russia’s strategy to diminish global support for Ukraine’s struggle and strives to shake the world out of this passive viewing of the war.

But what can we do? Acknowledging that it is a feeling of powerlessness that can lead to this passivity, said Dr. Khromeychuk, reminding us that even those outside of Ukraine can help support Ukrainians as they strive to protect their democracy and statehood. She advocates for staying informed and engaged, seeking out reputable news outlets with on-the-ground reporters. In addition, she encourages us to find avenues of support – staying in touch with individuals inside the country, learning the Ukrainian language, donating to organizations that can make a difference in Ukraine, or even experiencing the culture by watching Ukrainian films or reading a Ukrainian novel. “Explore Ukraine for the country that it is. And yes, try to stay invested in Ukrainian victory for as long as it takes,” she said.

Dr. Khromeychuk is adamant that while Ukraine is a war zone, it is also a treasure trove of culture that is worth delving into. Learning about Ukrainian culture provides a window into another place that humanizes the conflict and leads to greater emotional awareness of the lives of Ukrainians instead of viewing them as far away and abstract.

She underscored the importance of exploring Ukraine’s cultural treasures to foster a deeper understanding of the nation. From literature to film, Ukrainian culture provides a lens through which to see the resilience and spirit of its people in the face of adversity.

Dr. Khromeychuk’s personal connection to the war is strongly tied to the loss of her



brother in 2017. At first, she found it difficult to speak about it, but she began to process her grief through writing and realized that sharing her story would communicate the complexity of Russia’s war and help people understand it better. Sharing her own story of loss and heartbreak as the sister of a fallen soldier allowed Dr. Khromeychuk to reach broader audiences.

“Vulnerability is also a resource,” she said. “It’s the channel through which we can explain

something so unimaginable and yet so commonplace, like political violence, like wars.”

She lamented that there are so many of these stories to be told but encouraged others to be emotionally invested and open to hearing the trauma felt by an entire generation of Ukrainian society. This emotional resonance, she added, is how the world will come to understand the realities of this war.

Fostering Transatlantic Academic Collaborations

Dr. Olha Poliukhovych is a literary critic, scholar and vice president of Research and Academic Affairs from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA), MacEwan’s long-term partner institution. She visited MacEwan in October

and actively engaged in strengthening ties between Ukrainian and Canadian academic institutions in collaboration with Dr. Jeff Stepnisky, Kule Chair, and URDC.

Dr. Poliukhovych’s talk at MacEwan focused on understanding Ukrainian academia during



Members of Team Ukraina — Ukraine Team.

the war and addressing global responses. The event is part of a larger series designed to highlight Ukraine's academic contributions on a global scale.

Dr. Poliukhovych also met with MacEwan's Department of English at a meet-and-greet event organized in collaboration with Dr. Pam Farvolden, department chair. The informal interaction served as an opportunity for cross-disciplinary discussions, promoting transatlantic scholarly collaboration.

In a talk in Ukrainian to the local Ukrainian-Canadian diaspora, a joint effort coordinated by the Ukrainian National Youth Federation (UNYF), the Ukrainian National Federation (UNF) and the Ukrainian Women's Organization (UWO), Dr. Poliukhovych emphasized her role in promoting Ukrainian culture and education abroad, especially among communities deeply connected to Ukrainian heritage.

She also participated in a conversation with renowned writer Myrna Kostash at the University of Alberta in collaboration with the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, which focused on Kostash's influential book, *All of Baba's Children*. The book, which became a bestseller, delves into the experiences of three generations of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada, shedding light on their struggles, cultural adaptation and contributions to Canadian society. Dr. Poliukhovych emphasized how the work remains relevant today, especially in the context of the renewed interest it has garnered in Ukraine.

Dr. Poliukhovych's visit aimed to expand academic ties between MacEwan and NaUKMA, with discussions focused on potential collaborative research projects and faculty exchanges, ensuring the continuation of fruitful academic partnerships across borders.



Dr. Craig Monk, Larysa Hayduk, Dr. Olha Polikhovych, Dr. Craig Kuziemytsky, Dr. Jeff Stepnisky.

Research projects at MacEwan

By Milana Tymoshenko, Bachelor of Commerce student, MacEwan University

MacEwan boasts a rich research agenda dedicated to Ukraine and the Ukrainian-Canadian community. This compilation highlights the diverse studies undertaken by scholars at MacEwan, showcasing the university's commitment to excellence and its role in fostering a deeper understanding of Ukraine-related issues.

These projects are the URDC's contribution to community-engaged scholarly activities in support of MacEwan's Teaching Greatness: Strategic Vision 2030.

Ukrainian Youth Resilience in Canada

Led by Dr. Michael Ungar (Resilience Centre, Dalhousie University)

MacEwan Collaborators: Dr. Jeffrey Stepnisky, Sociology, Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, Nursing, Dr. Oksana Tashkinova (Project Manager)

"The Impact of Temporary Status on the Settlement Experience of Newcomer Ukrainian Youth" is a four-year study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The project involves four participating universities across Canada. This study examines how Ukrainian youth under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization

for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program navigate temporary visa policies and the services available to them. Researchers are investigating the coordination of these services, the role of stakeholders, policy implementation challenges and how experiences vary depending on location (Alberta and Nova Scotia).



Dr. Craig Kuziemy, Hon. Heather Klimchuk, Dr. Christy Raymond, Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk and Sofia Budianska at the research exhibit in the MacEwan Library.



A research panel discussed the project in October during MacEwan's Ukraine Week.

Ukrainian Resettlement in Edmonton

Led by Dr. Jennifer Long, Anthropology

Research Assistant: Sofia Budianska

Conducted as a pilot study in early 2024, this research seeks to understand the role that Ukrainian-Canadian communities have played in supporting newcomers, as well as the experiences of those who have resettled in Edmonton since March 2022.

Current findings reveal Ukrainian-Edmontonians' crucial role in addressing settlement service shortfalls immediately after the invasion. Before government funding reached established settlement organizations, Ukrainian-Canadian diasporic support mobilized personal and professional networks to help newcomers find resources, housing and community support. The study underscores the significance of local Ukrainian communities in facilitating the successful resettlement of newcomers.

Classical Ukrainian Theory

Led by Dr. Jeff Stepnisky and Dr. Danylo Sudyn (Ukrainian Catholic University)

The researchers are exploring the classical social theoretical scholarly tradition in Ukraine, which has never been done before.

Remembering Maidan

Led by Dr. Jeff Stepnisky

Dr. Stepnisky applies theories of collective memory to study the commemoration of the 2013/14 Euromaidan Revolution/The Revolution of Dignity at the Maidan Museum in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Mothering in Exile

Led by Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, Nursing

Collaborators: Dr. Olabisi Oyaleme, Nursing Larysa Hayduk, Slinko (artist)

Through narrative inquiry, the researchers uncover the personal stories of challenges faced by displaced Ukrainian mothers of school-aged children who came to Canada under temporary visas. This study examines the emotional and psychological challenges these mothers face as they juggle temporary legal status, cultural preservation and the need to establish new lives for their families. Artist Slinko, adds a creative layer to this project by incorporating poetic video interpretations of the mothers' stories, providing a deeper emotional insight into their journeys.

This project sheds light on the particular difficulties faced by mothers, who often bear the burden of sustaining family life while grappling with the uncertainty of temporary visas. It underscores the resilience of Ukrainian women and their efforts to maintain cultural ties and stability for their children in a new country.

Ukrainian Newcomer Experiences

Led by Dr. Jeff Stepnisky

**Research assistant:
Dr. Oksana Tashkinova**

In partnership with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Alberta Provincial Council and the City of Edmonton, MacEwan's research team has been exploring Ukrainian newcomer experiences, aiming to understand the challenges faced by newcomers as they settle in Edmonton. The study included a survey of more than 400 participants and focus groups, including a group of deaf Ukrainians who escaped the war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Memory in Downtown Edmonton

Led by Dr. Jeff Stepnisky

Ukrainian Memory in Downtown Edmonton is a small project that was started shortly after Dr. Stepnisky was appointed Kule Chair. In this project, dovetailing with the theoretical work on the Maidan Museum, he applies theories of collective memory, space and place to the experience of historical Ukrainian settlers in downtown Edmonton.

Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative

**Led by Larysa Hayduk
and Maryna Chernyavska
(University of Alberta)**

The "Visiting Neighbours, Learning from the Land" project aims to build respectful relationships between Indigenous and settler (in this case – Ukrainian) communities with a focus on Treaty 6 territory – the land where we live, work and learn. This project is part of the Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative, which aims to build land-based, place-based relationships between Indigenous and Ukrainian-Canadian communities.



Sofia Budianska

"I have grown so much throughout my time gathering the life histories of Ukrainian newcomers"

Originally published at MacEwan.ca/News

My journey to Edmonton began in September 2021 when I came to MacEwan as an international student, just a few months before the full-scale invasion started in Ukraine. My plan was to study psychology – I never intended to do research, and I never imagined that research would be in anthropology – but I have grown so much throughout my time gathering the life histories of Ukrainian newcomers.

Since last February, I've worked as a research assistant with Dr. Jennifer Long on a collaborative project with MacEwan's Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre and the Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers. I've moderated focus groups, helped host two PhotoVoice workshops and conducted life history interviews with 15 Ukrainian newcomers. Now, we're sharing a timeline that highlights significant moments and collective memories from those interviews with an interactive exhibit in the Library during Ukraine Week. We hope the MacEwan community will contribute their experiences of immigration and resettlement.

Through this research experience, I have grown so much. I've learned about my own culture, strengthened my connection to the Ukrainian community in Edmonton, and seen the impact of collective efforts and how local actions can resonate on a global scale.

My personal connection to this research has made this experience even more valuable. Studying something I care about and being able to empathize with the people in this work has made the experience so much brighter. That's why I'm passionate about encouraging other students to get involved in research that makes a real difference.

*– Sofia Budianska, Research Assistant and
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology student*



EDUCATION

Dr. Marielle Papin, assistant professor, political science, MacEwan and Canada Research Chair in Urban Wellness.

Mariupol: Stories of rebirth

By Joanna Clark Dawyd, MacEwan University Bachelor of Communications Studies student

The closing event for MacEwan University's 2024 Interdisciplinary Dialogue series, Cities of Tomorrow, delivered in partnership with URDC, took place on March 20 in the Kule Theatre. With a poignant focus on Mariupol, Ukraine – a city profoundly impacted by Russian hostilities – this installment in the series of educational forums, "Mariupol: Stories of Rebirth," centred on how the present and future of this city have been shaped by the Russian invasion and brought together three scholars to discuss how Mariupol has been withstanding the ongoing hostilities.

Larysa Hyduk and Lindsey Whitson, co-chairs of the Interdisciplinary Dialogue Project (IDP) initiative, opened the evening



Dr. Oksana Tashkinova on Mariupol's past, present and future.



with an introduction and land acknowledgment before Dr. Jeff Stepnisky, current Kule Chair, stepped in to moderate the panel discussion. Navigating through complex themes of survival, adaptation, hope and envisioning a future amidst uncertainty, the dialogue was not only an academic exploration but also a testament to solidarity with Mariupol and other communities facing similar challenges worldwide.

Dr. Oksana Tashkinova, an associate professor from Pryazovskyj State Technical University and a native of Mariupol, provided a personal and scholarly perspective. She began by discussing her research project, "Mariupol: Past, Present, and Future," and shared how the community in her home city has developed and changed through the ongoing conflict. Dr. Tashkinova researches the trauma experienced by the city's residents and how they have responded to the disruption in their homeland. Her discussion touched on the turmoil felt by those who have had to make life-altering choices about whether to stay or evacuate to other countries around the world, highlighting how the community has coped with displacement. She

shared quotes and insights from her research illuminating the interconnectedness of the people of Mariupol despite the forced migration. Dr. Tashkinova underscored the community solidarity derived from social networks and revealed that the people of Mariupol have managed to maintain a sense of hope and resilience, serving as essential lifelines amidst the turmoil.

Joining Dr. Tashkinova were Dr. Marielle Papin, assistant professor of political science and Canada Research Chair in Urban Wellness at MacEwan, and Dr. Denise J. Larsen, a professor from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education.

Dr. Papin's expertise in urban and international relations provided insights into how cities like Mariupol can sustain their residents amid conflict, focusing on policy frameworks and grassroots initiatives. With a focus on urban and international relations, she researches the ways cities support their residents and develop environmental initiatives and policies. She discussed how the compounding of urban crises leads to the burial of hope and detailed how a city can

help to reduce that burden through urban climate, wellness and other policies to reduce vulnerabilities. She emphasized improving residents' connections to each other to promote hope and urban wellness.

Dr. Larsen contributed a unique perspective on fostering hope within communities grappling with crisis, drawing parallels from educational and psychological contexts. She focuses her research on the concept of hope in educational practices and counselling psychology. Dr. Larsen shared historical evidence of the resilience of hope, from WWI to the COVID-19 pandemic, and gave examples of how educational programming focused on teaching hope can foster continued resilience in children.

This interdisciplinary dialogue event illuminated not only the challenges faced by the city of Mariupol but also the enduring spirit and determination required to shape its future against all odds. As the world continues to grapple with crises that redefine urban landscapes, it is hope, resilience, and the power of community that will allow for rebuilding. This event continued the efforts by displaced Ukrainians, Canadians of Ukrainian heritage, URDC and other organizations to spread awareness of what is happening in Ukraine.



Dr. Denise J. Larsen, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

Sociology field school students connect in Poland

By Joanna Clark Dawyd, MacEwan University Bachelor of Communications Studies student



Dr. Michael Gulayets with his MacEwan and UCU students in Wroclaw, Poland.

The Sociological Field School, SOCI 395, is an innovative Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiative between MacEwan and the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine. Under the guidance of MacEwan's Dr. Michael Gulayets and Dr. Myroslav Kashchuk from UCU, SOCI 395 invites students to explore significant social issues through collaborative research projects.

Dr. Gulayets considers the course to have two important pillars: studying social issues and intercultural exchange. He says that "the added complexity of working with someone from a different culture, and not only studying this social issue from different perspectives but having group partners who might bring different perspectives to the project, and...learning how to navigate through these different perspectives—to me, that's really a key component of [what] the field school is: exposing students to that intercultural learning."

The field school's first trip in 2019 saw ten students complete the course during the

Spring term and then travel to Ukraine to spend two weeks at UCU. While that was the first successful trip, once back in Canada, Dr. Gulayets wanted to make the course more in-depth and more collaborative with the Ukrainian students.

After a pause due to the pandemic and another cancellation due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the SOCI 395 class was able to complete the course and the trip in 2024 successfully.

Throughout the Winter term, Canadian and Ukrainian students engaged in weekly online classes where they discussed important topics in sociology and worked on group research projects. Students' diverse backgrounds and perspectives enriched their research endeavours, leading to meaningful discussions and insights. Sharing knowledge and allocating tasks based on individual strengths contributed to both professional and personal growth for all involved.

At the end of the term, students from MacEwan and UCU met in Wroclaw, Poland, where they had the opportunity to finalize



The SOCI 395 international class.

“I gained a deeper understanding of Ukrainian and Canadian cultures through invaluable intercultural exchanges. The project broadened my horizons, helping me grow as an individual.”

their projects and present their findings. The in-person component of the course proved to be a pivotal moment for many participants, who found the collaborative work both rewarding and challenging.

“This opportunity has been truly enriching,” said Maria, a student from Ukraine. “I gained a deeper understanding of Ukrainian and Canadian cultures through invaluable intercultural exchanges. The project broadened my horizons, helping me grow as an individual.”

She noted the bittersweet nature of her experience, contrasting the peaceful atmosphere of Poland with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. “It’s a juxtaposition of peace and war that was difficult to process. It’s hard to fully grasp the luxury of peace until you’ve lived without it. It’s saddening to forget what peace is really like.”

MacEwan student Natalie Mamo said the class was impactful and offered a completely different perspective on issues. “I was able to hear a Ukrainian perspective on the social issues I was covering that are frequently ignored in Western academia. Collaborating with Ukrainian students helped me develop a more critically oriented view on social issues because it made me realize just how much non-Western perspectives are excluded from common discussions of these problems. It was also interesting to see firsthand how different cultural factors influence perspectives on social issues.

By fostering intercultural dialogue and collaboration, this course enhances academic learning and promotes a deeper appreciation for the shared human experience – one that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. Dr. Gulayets reflected, “Working with people from different backgrounds can be challenging, but in the end, I think it’s very rewarding. I know it’s very rewarding for me. And you know, when you see the students working together and the projects they come up with in the end, I believe it’s really rewarding for them as well.”

Canada-Ukraine Model United Nations

*By Joanna Clark Dawyd,
MacEwan University Bachelor of
Communications Studies student*

The Canada-Ukraine Model United Nations project was launched in 2019 when Dr. Chaldeans Mensah, the faculty advisor for the MacEwan UN Club, and Larysa Hyduk of URDC connected with universities in Ukraine with the goal of collaborating to engage and prepare students to attend the National Model United Nations (NMUN) conferences internationally. The MacEwan UN Club recently celebrated its 30th year, and with that maturation came the ability and desire for members to expand beyond the walls of MacEwan and the borders of Canada to share their experience and knowledge with other students interested in participating in Model UN conferences and activities.

As part of the project, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) and Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) partnered with MacEwan in two ways. First, peer-to-peer training allows students to teach the rules and procedures of how to conduct themselves at a United Nations simulation. This type of training had already been taking place within the MacEwan UN Club as new members joined, so its members were well-positioned to begin sharing their knowledge internationally. Aidan Lapp, the club’s VP director general, oversees this educational process and says that the peer-to-peer aspect makes working with the international students a much more comfortable experience since there is no pressure of grading, just a passion for learning about the UN and international diplomacy. “There’s a lot of mutual respect when working with the students.”

The project’s second component included a collaborative course led by Dr. Mensah at MacEwan and Dr. Halyna Protsyk at UCU. The course included both student-led components and lectures by diplomatic experts from Ukraine and NMUN headquarters. The initial iteration of this



MacEwan and Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) teams in Japan.

course was disrupted by the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, but the second time the course was offered both the Canadian students and the Ukrainian students were able to complete the course and attend NMUN conferences in Germany and New York City in 2023.

In March 2024, students from MacEwan and the Ukrainian universities again attended the New York NMUN conference, for the third time, receiving recognition and awards for Best Position Paper and Distinguished Delegation. This conference is the largest university-level model UN conference in the world, with over 4,000 students attending from around the world.



Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) team at the NMUN conference in New York.

“Canada-Ukraine Model UN project is simply a success story, which involves strong students engaging with their colleagues in Ukraine to help them with the processes of the simulation of UN committees.”



Dr. Chaldeans Mensah at the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities in February 2024.

The peer support and mentorship between MacEwan students and the students from the two Ukrainian universities continued as both delegations attended the Japan University English Model United Nations (JUEMUN) conference in June. This conference fostered a collaborative environment ideal for building and strengthening the MacEwan UN Club's international ties. In addition to participating in JUEMUN's UNESCO-focused conference, the Canadian and Ukrainian students partnered to experience the culture of Japan during the trip with cultural tours that were a great forum for continued intercultural learning.

"Canada-Ukraine Model UN project is simply a success story, which involves strong students engaging with their colleagues in Ukraine to help them with the processes of the simulation of UN committees," says Dr. Mensah. "Our members, based on their past success in New York, have the confidence to be able to teach their colleagues the skills. The club, in addition to each year preparing for the New York trip, is now also actively engaging with international contacts in Germany, Ukraine, and Japan, and I think this shows the maturity of the club and its ability not just to focus on themselves, but also to see themselves as part of this global community where they can impart their knowledge and build cross-cultural connections around the world."

Overall, the Canada-Ukraine Model UN Project has succeeded in the goal of empowering students from Ukraine to attend Model UN conferences around the world. The MacEwan UN Club hasn't stopped there, however. The club hosts an annual online conference (MacMUN) to connect with as many international students as possible.

Enhancing English proficiency among Ukrainian Newcomers

URDC, in partnership with MacEwan University's School of Continuing Education (SCE), continues to deliver impactful English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses tailored for Ukrainian newcomers in Alberta. In 2024, a grant from the Government of Alberta allowed the SCE to produce a tailored curriculum for Ukrainian newcomers taught in four cohorts running from September 2024 to April 2026. The EAL courses are designed to improve oral communication skills in various social and academic situations, from small talk and group discussions to telephone skills and giving instructions, by focusing on practical language that helps newcomers integrate smoothly into Canadian society.

In the Spring 2024 term, with the generous support of the Rotary International District 5370, the program expanded to include beginner and intermediate-level courses, each accommodating 25 students. Participants receive a certificate of



MacEwan's School of Continuing Education administers free English as an Additional Language courses for Ukrainian newcomers.

attendance upon completing the 12-week program to confirm their progress in mastering the English language.

These in-person courses not only support the necessary language learning skills of the newcomers but also help create friendships and connections among the newcomer community members.

The team of the School of Continuing Education's professionalism and commitment to the students is truly

inspiring. Tremendous thanks to the Rotary International District 5370 and the Government of Alberta for their support and for helping ensure newcomers in Alberta have the necessary tools to thrive in their new environment.





CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In Conversation with the inaugural Gene Zwozdesky Artist in Residence

*By Joanna Clark Dawyd, MacEwan University
Bachelor of Communications Studies student*



Slinko, MacEwan's first Gene Zwozdesky Artist in Residence.

Christine Zwozdesky, the wife of late Gene Zwozdesky, has made a generous contribution of \$30,000 to MacEwan University's Artist in Residence program. This program proudly carries the name of Gene Zwozdesky, a beloved figure in Alberta's Ukrainian community who left a lasting legacy as a politician, musician, and passionate community builder. Gene believed deeply in the power of art to connect, inspire, and heal, and his vision for a thriving artistic community in Edmonton is at the heart of this initiative.

The Artist in Residence program was initially brought to life through a generous \$75,000 donation from the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE), which provided funding for five years of programming. Christine's recent contribution will extend this meaningful program for an additional two years, creating more opportunities for artists to share their talents with students and our broader community.

This program's success was made possibly thanks to the strong partnership with MacEwan's Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications, their expertise and financial support. Each year, the program highlights a different fine arts discipline, and this year MacEwan is proud to host its second Artist in Residence in the field of theatre arts.

We are deeply grateful to Christine Zwozdesky for her remarkable generosity and her continued dedication to this program, including her annual participation in the artist selection process. Her support ensures that Gene's inspiring legacy will continue to help the Ukrainian culture flourish in Canada.

Multidisciplinary artist Slinko spent January to April 2024 at MacEwan as the inaugural Gene Zwozdesky Artist-in-Residence, supporting, advising and guiding MacEwan students from her interdisciplinary perspective, giving talks and joining Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, Dr. Bisi Oyelana and Larysa Hayduk in the ongoing academic research project, "Mothering in Exile."

The URDC caught up with Slinko to discuss the experience.

URDC: Can you tell us a bit about where you are from and how you became an artist?

SLINKO: For as long as I can remember, I have always been an artist. In fact, my earliest memory is of making a drawing in my grandparents' apartment in Bakhmut, where I was born. I went on to study art from a very early age and continued through different schools and disciplines: painting, sculpture, video and graphic design. To make a long story short, I hold an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in Sculpture and Extended Media.

URDC: How has your cultural heritage and background influenced your art?

SLINKO: I left Ukraine shortly after the collapse of the USSR, which was quite an earth-shattering experience personally. It was very disorienting, and the changes in society became rapid and irreversible. However, I don't think I fully understood the magnitude and historic perspective of these events until much later. Perhaps this is why I regularly returned to Ukraine to both create my work and understand where I came from. This relationship with my past and with Ukraine, its culture and history is something I can't simply put aside and say, "That part of my life is over. I'm an American now." It is more like an instinct that keeps resurfacing with every deep emotion and ties to people and places.

URDC: What do you currently draw inspiration from for your artistic practice?

SLINKO: The war on Ukraine, and I do mean "on" its culture and language, its history, and its very existence as a nation and idea, has narrowed my focus. I have been making work in and about Ukraine since 2005, and I've followed closely ever since the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the occupation of the Eastern territories. Donetsk, where I grew up and began my art in earnest, is occupied, most likely indefinitely. It's a kind of

realization you don't expect, a sense of belonging to an inaccessible place, or, as is the case of now entirely levelled Bakhmut, a no longer existing place. It is a form of belonging through total dispossession: my family homes and even the graves of our ancestors lie in ruin. This haunts me. This makes me think of specific periods in Ukrainian history, like the Holodomor, the Great Terror of the 1930s and the industrialization of Donbas in particular. I think about the categories of landscape, still life and portraiture being violently reaggregated materially and symbolically. I think about ruins in need of their own love language. I think about beings affected by war but who are invisible to the news headlines: plants, insects, small things suffering in invisibility. But I also think about laughter and the possibility of levity in the darkest of moments. I read or listen to many Ukraine-related sources, but also, strangely, I find a lot of inspiration in reading Piero Camporesi's work, who was an Italian anthropologist of medieval Europe.

URDC: Do you have an underlying goal or purpose for your art?

SLINKO: I feel more purposeful as an artist today as part of the Ukrainian diaspora because there is a lot more at stake. I know my role is very small, but I think of it as part of ensuring Ukrainian cultural life continues to flourish. More specifically, I want to give form to all these complicated and unspoken feelings associated with belonging and shine light on forms of life that are often overlooked or dismissed. This is why reimagining landscape as a portrait of still life may be a good framework.

URDC: What did you work on during your residency at MacEwan?

SLINKO: Before coming to MacEwan, I had wanted to connect with the Ukrainian diaspora and explore how belonging is articulated and embodied in exile. At MacEwan, in collaboration with the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC), I was able to join a research project that looks at the experiences of recent refugees fleeing war in Ukraine, specifically mothers and their children. This research takes the form of a narrative inquiry, which is a kind of reflexive storytelling that weaves together the interviews of the research subjects and the responses of the researchers to them. For me as an artist, this is a

completely new way of engaging with material. As part of this research group, I am working on creating a video portrait of the inquiry itself, trying to both be part of a collective process and apply my artistic skills.

URDC: How did you collaborate or engage with students and/or faculty at MacEwan?

SLINKO: At the start of the semester, when I began my residency, I did a number of studio visits with fourth-year students. We talked about what they were going to work on for the final exhibition, the ideas and plans they had, and how they were going to realize them. All this time, while I was working on my own work, the students were inching towards their exhibition, which had just opened at the Mitchell Art Gallery in Allard Hall. It was so exciting for me to see how their projects developed and came to full realization. I have to say I was really impressed with their work ethic, their consistency in developing ideas and their vision of themselves as emerging artists.

URDC: What was most memorable or influential about your residency at MacEwan?

SLINKO: The people. The people I have met, by far and large, are just incredible humans: warm, welcoming and empathetic. Larysa, Polina, Elisabeth, Riaz and Anna, to highlight a few. It has been a truly rewarding experience to be part of the Fine Arts Department at MacEwan. Working alongside so many fellow artists who teach as well as continue their own artistic practices is a remarkable opportunity for appreciating how much goes into culture making. From studio visits to lectures to the daily challenges of making work, it really is a collective process. We often need each other to flesh out what can be just an inkling into a coherent idea or to brainstorm different ways of making things. In conversations, ideas get articulated and paths forward emerge.

URDC: What is next for you?

SLINKO: There is a lot of work processing these two years affected by the war so far, and there is a lot of thinking about the darker side of being a human. But, I think, eventually, there will be light, and lightness, and life in various and maybe even unpredictable forms.

Many thanks to Slinko for investing time and creativity into the MacEwan community during the residency.



As part of Ukraine Week, URDC hosted the Smallest Support campaign by the Ukrainian Institute – Український інститут and Bickerstaff.284, marking its first and only stop in North America. The Tiny Newsstand was filled with pocket-sized newspapers, each carrying genuine messages of solidarity from around the world.

Celebrating culture and resilience: Annual Ukraine Week

MacEwan University's campus came alive this October during the third annual Ukraine Week, a celebration of Ukrainian culture, resilience and international academic exchange. Organized by URDC, the week-long event allowed students, faculty, staff and the broader Edmonton community to engage with the richness of Ukrainian traditions while reflecting on the challenges the nation faces today.

Smallest Support campaign

Hosted in collaboration with the Ukrainian Institute and Bickerstaff.284, the Tiny Newsstand installation, making its only North American stop at MacEwan, featured pocket-sized newspapers filled with heartfelt messages of solidarity from around the globe. This simple yet powerful display emphasized the strength of international support for Ukraine and set a reflective tone for the week.

Threads That Connect

Co-produced by the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts (ACUA), Threads That Connect is a stunning fashion show and celebratory showcase of contemporary designs. The show highlighted the creativity of Ukrainian artists while paying homage to traditional cultural motifs. After our inaugural successful 2021 show, this year's fashion show exemplified the evolving blend of modern and traditional influences within Ukrainian fashion.

Research panel

A URDC-hosted research panel highlighted the Ukraine-related work of MacEwan scholars, including Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, Dr. Jeff

Stepnisky, Dr. Oksana Tashkinova, and Dr. Jennifer Long and her RA Sofia Budianska. Another impactful addition to the academic section of the week was a visual timeline chronicling the experiences of Ukrainian newcomers to Canada between 2022 and 2024. Created by MacEwan researcher Dr. Jennifer Long and research assistant Sofia Budianska, the timeline looked at the stories of resilience and adaptation as Ukrainians navigated the complexities of building new lives in Canada while maintaining their cultural identity.

Creative workshop

Community connections were further strengthened during a free creative workshop for MacEwan students led by Liubov Kostetska. Alongside the Ukrainian artist, students co-created a custom-designed tote bag with Ukrainian motifs.

Launch of *The Girl from Dresden*

Doubling as a fundraiser for URDC, Dr. Steven Kashuba's book, *The Girl from Dresden*, is a gripping story about a security dragnet, spies and child abductions. As it was rightly noted during the launch, the history of the latter is relevant today because of the criminal abduction of Ukrainian children by Russia. From the latest information released by Ukraine's Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, from nearly 20,000 children that have been forcibly taken from Ukraine to Russia, Ukraine has managed to successfully bring 1,002 children back home.

ShockolaD concert

A live performance by the Ukrainian jazz band ShockolaD brought soulful melodies and infectious energy to end the third Ukraine Week. The renowned European band engaged MacEwan's Bachelor of Music students for an unforgettable encore jam, leaving attendees with a deepened appreciation for the richness of Ukrainian culture, as well as the incredible talents of our students.

Ukraine Week 2024 was a resounding success, blending art, education and community to celebrate the enduring spirit of Ukraine. Through events like this, MacEwan University continues to honour its commitment to cultural understanding, global partnerships and international solidarity.



From April 12 to 13, the 2024 Ukrainian Film Festival in Edmonton (UFFE) showcased a variety of Ukrainian films at the Metro Cinema. Photo courtesy of the Alberta Society for the Advancement of Ukrainian Studies, the head organizer of UFFE.

Highlights from the 2024 Ukrainian Film Festival in Edmonton

*By Joanna Clark Dawyd,
MacEwan University Bachelor of
Communications Studies student*

Metro Cinema has a long history and is well known for independent film screenings, so it was the ideal location to act as a hub of cultural celebration for the 2024 Ukrainian Film Festival in Edmonton (UFFE). The festival brought together filmmakers, enthusiasts and curious audiences to revel in the richness and diversity of Ukrainian cinema.

Each year, the UFFE is made possible through the efforts of several organizations that promote Ukrainian culture and scholarship in Edmonton, including the Alberta Society for the Advancement of Ukrainian Studies, the Contemporary Ukraine Studies Program at the University of Alberta's Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, and URDC. The Government of Alberta contributes financially to the festival.

This year's line-up of contemporary Ukrainian films included the acclaimed documentary *20 Days in Mariupol*, which won the 2024 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature Film. In the Rearview told the story of how a small van roamed the roads of Ukraine, transporting Ukrainian refugees to the border to find safety. *Luxembourg, Luxembourg*, a film by Antonio Lukich, tackled themes of family and belonging as two brothers search for their absent father. Alisa Kovalenko's film *We Will Not Fade Away* depicts the resilience of Ukrainian people through five teenage protagonists who grew up in the volatile Donbas region. And Tonya Noyabrova's *Do You Love Me?* explored the story of a teenage girl experiencing the end of Soviet Ukraine.

The six films highlighted the diversity of contemporary Ukrainian cinema, tackling issues both complex and insightful and sharing the culture of Ukraine with Edmonton audiences in a way that informs, entertains and celebrates.

Supporting scholars in Ukraine

By Joanna Clark Dawyd, MacEwan University Bachelor of Communications Studies student, and Polina Budyanska, URDC administrative assistant

The Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) was delighted to work with this year's recipients of its Non-Residential Grants for scholars who chose to stay and work in Ukraine. Each grant is valued at \$2,000 CAD and awarded to a scholar from URDC's partner institutions in Ukraine.

This funding plays a crucial role in supporting academic endeavours amidst the ongoing conflict with Russia. Despite the challenges posed by war, the dedicated academics who received this year's grants continue their valuable contributions to academic research. Their projects not only address critical issues, such as mental health support, cultural identity in cinema and economic security but also contribute valuable insights to global discourse. Grant recipients also collaborate with MacEwan faculty and deliver online lectures at MacEwan and in the community.

These six projects exemplify the dedication and ingenuity of Ukrainian scholars facing immense challenges yet continue to advance knowledge and underline the transformative power of research in fostering resilience and progress in the midst of adversity.

Dr. Mariia Lihus

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

An investigation of how Ukrainian national identity and post-Soviet life are portrayed in films by directors like Kira Muratova and Iryna Tsilyk, Dr. Lihus's project, "The 1990s as a Liminal Space in Ukrainian Women's Cinema," aims to contribute a critical female perspective to the discourse on postcolonial reflection within Ukrainian humanities. Her work sheds light on the complexities of societal transition during a transformative period.

Dr. Olena Moiseyenko

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

Dr. Moiseyenko delves into the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed in international legal settings, focusing on cases involving themes including genocide and war crimes. Through meticulous analysis of case files from global judicial bodies, her research aims to deepen understanding of how language influences judicial outcomes on an international scale.

Dr. Iryna Vyshenska

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

Dr. Iryna Vyshenska's research focuses on sustainable forestry management strategies that promote native biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Her project, "Management of Invasive Tree Species in the Restoration of Forestry Damaged by Military Actions," addresses the challenges posed by invasive tree species during reforestation efforts, comparing the growth and resilience of native and introduced species. This work is pivotal in restoring Ukraine's vast forested areas affected by military actions.

Dr. Svitlana Danchak

Ternopil National Medical University

By conducting psychological assessments at the Institute of Nursing to diagnose various mental health conditions, Dr. Danchak's project aims to improve mental health support. Through developing and implementing strategies that provide emotional support and promote behavioural adaptation among participants, this project provides vital support for the mental health of students and faculty during wartime.

Dr. Petro Baykovskyy

Ukrainian Catholic University

Dr. Baykovskyy's work explores the influence of Euroscepticism on Ukraine's efforts toward European Union integration. Analyzing anti-Ukrainian sentiments within Eurosceptic movements, he seeks to understand their motives and effects on Ukraine's accession process. His work aims to counter divisive narratives through scholarly and journalistic publications, fostering international collaborations to strengthen Ukraine-EU relations.

Dr. Olha Zakharova

Mariupol State University

Focused on bolstering economic security in Ukraine amidst current global challenges, Dr. Zakharova's project aims to develop methodologies for assessing economic security levels, identifying risks and formulating protective strategies. This research is instrumental in strengthening Ukraine's resilience and recovery efforts, addressing both internal reforms and external geopolitical pressures.



Annual URDC Arts and Music Awards

URDC SUPPORTS MULTIPLE ARTS AND MUSIC AWARDS
THAT PROMOTE UKRAINIAN CULTURE IN ALBERTA.
RECIPIENTS FOR 2024 AWARDS INCLUDE:

UKRAINE MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION AWARD

Schubert Hernando, Bachelor of Music student, Major in Composition

Byrne McMullen, Bachelor Music student, Major in Performance

Kate Stephensen, Bachelor Communication Studies student, Music Research

THE ALBERTA COUNCIL FOR THE UKRAINIAN ARTS AWARD

Feyeria Bandura Group, traditional Ukrainian Music

ANNA PIDRUCHNEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Sofia Kostashchuk, Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications, MacEwan University

Maksym Hutsuliuk, School of Business, MacEwan University

ROMAN SOLTYKEWYCH MUSIC AWARD

Olesia Shewchuk, Conductor of the Ukrainian Barvinok Choir

SERGE EREMENKO MUSIC AWARD

Viter Ukrainian Dancers and Folk Choir



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Book launch supports URDC programs

*By Milana Tymoshenko,
Bachelor of Commerce student,
MacEwan University*

On October 6, the book launch of *The Girl from Dresden* by Dr. Steven Kashuba took place during the Ukraine Week at MacEwan University. This event was a celebration of the new book and a fundraiser for URDC. All money from the book sales at the event was donated to support URDC programs.

Dr. Steven Kashuba, chair of the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) Trust, spoke to the audience about his book – a gripping story about a security dragnet, spies and child abductions. Although the book is about the past, it is important today because, during the current war in Ukraine, hundreds of Ukrainian children are being kidnapped and taken to Russia.

Dr. Kashuba is deeply involved in supporting education and culture through his work with UFCE, the fundraising arm of URDC, and UFCE Trust. His dedication to helping the Ukrainian community is clear.

The launch of *The Girl from Dresden*, Kashuba's story of survival, and his generous donation reminds us that we all have a part to play in helping those affected by war.



Dr. Kashuba and Larysa Hayduk at the book launch.



A display honouring Dr. Kashuba's long-standing relationship with MacEwan's School of Business.

Writing Ukraine: In Conversation with Myrna Kostash

In December 2024, URDC brought the community together for a “Writer in Conversation” event featuring renowned author Myrna Kostash and Dr. Jeffrey Stepnisky, the Kule Chair of Ukrainian Community and International Development. Kostash shared excerpts from her latest essay collection, *Writing Ukraine*, reflecting on her Ukrainian heritage and its impact on her identity.

In an engaging discussion, Kostash reflected on her journey to connect with her cultural roots, weaving in history, family narratives and personal experiences. Her reflections on heritage and identity resonated deeply, striking a chord not only with Ukrainian-Canadians but with anyone tied to immigrant stories. Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, a MacEwan nursing professor, emphasized the universal relevance of these themes, highlighting their cross-cultural significance.

Guided by Dr. Stepnisky, the conversation delved into themes of memory and belonging, exploring the interplay between personal stories and broader questions of identity. The candid and warm exchange captivated the audience, offering both challenges and joys of tracing one's roots.

After the discussion, Myrna stayed to meet attendees, signing copies of her books *Ghosts in a Photograph* and *Writing Ukraine*. Over refreshments at the reception, conversations continued as guests shared their thoughts and personal stories inspired by the evening.

More than a literary event, this gathering was a celebration of memory, identity and connection – reminding everyone of the importance of understanding where we come from and what it means in today's world.



Myrna Kostash and Dr. Jeff Stepnisky in conversation at the event.

A night of memory: The 29th annual Kyiv Konnection Banquet

By Joanna Clark Dawyd,
MacEwan University Bachelor of
Communications Studies student,
and Polina Budyanska, URDC
administrative assistant

On May 14, the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) hosted the 29th annual Kyiv Konnection Banquet at St. John's Cultural Centre. Each year, this event celebrates Ukrainian cultural heritage in Edmonton. Dr Melike Schalomon, dean of MacEwan's Faculty of Arts and Science, opened the evening with a warm welcome speech, setting the perfect tone for the banquet and MacEwan's ongoing partnership with UFCE.

In a keynote speech titled “Hotels, Halls and Temples: Memory and Place in Early Ukrainian Edmonton,” Dr. Jeff Stepnisky shared stories of Ukrainian heritage in downtown Edmonton, guiding the audience back to the 1900s to take a walk through significant places such as the Galician Market, Narodny Dim, Rudyk Block and the Holowach Tree. Many of these sites have now changed beyond recognition, but the heritage and memories embedded in these locales deeply resonated with the audience, stirring a profound recognition of the historical roots of Ukrainian identity in Edmonton.

Dr. Stepnisky's talk was a reminder of the cultural connections that shape the local community by focusing on preserving places that build and hold memories. He highlighted the importance of place in the collective memory, especially in light of the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine that has led to widespread destruction. As the current Kule Chair at MacEwan, Dr. Stepnisky studies the concept of collective memory from a sociological perspective, and his own cultural heritage informs his work.

After the keynote, Dr. Olenka Bilash presented the annual UFCE Presidential Award to two exceptional individuals. The honour was bestowed upon Larysa Hayduk, director of URDC, for her invaluable contributions to the Ukrainian community through the URDC's projects and initiatives, and to Ivan Fedyna for his work with UFCE and unwavering commitment and support of the Gene Zwozdesky Artist-In-Residence program. The award, a symbol of recognition and appreciation, acknowledges both recipients' dedicated and tireless work towards ensuring the Ukrainian culture in Alberta is flourishing. The standing ovation from the audience was a testament to the profound impact of their contributions and a clear sign that the awards were truly well-deserved.

Also displayed at the event were photographs taken in Ukraine since 2022. The images portrayed the raw emotion of the people of Ukraine, and the destruction of homes, monuments and culture being wrought by the current conflict and served as a powerful homeland connection to the evening's theme of memory and Ukrainian culture. The exhibit was made available courtesy of Firefighters Aid Ukraine.

The annual banquet, a significant and empowering fundraiser organized by UFCE, plays a crucial role in supporting the URDC's projects and initiatives. Through these collective efforts, with our community's generous support, we can continue to strengthen the ties between Canada and Ukraine, fostering education and community engagement. Each contribution, no matter the size, is a step towards preserving and promoting our rich Ukrainian cultural heritage in Edmonton and beyond.



MacEwan team at the annual Gene Zwozdesky Golf Tournament Fundraiser, organized by UFCE in support of the URDC initiatives.



Larysa Hayduk and Ivan Fedyna receive the UFCE Presidential Award for their contributions to the Ukrainian-Canadian community.



A photo exhibit made possible by Firefighter Aid Ukraine.

With deepest gratitude

TO URDC PARTNERS

URDC expresses its sincere appreciation to its many partners. Your partnership and collective efforts have truly enriched the centre's initiatives. Thank you, дякуємо to:

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Ukrainian Catholic University
National University of Kyiv-
Mohyla Academy
Ternopil National Medical University
Mykola Lysenko National Music
Academy of Lviv

We also extend our deepest gratitude to the organizations and individuals whose generous contributions have been instrumental in furthering URDC's mission this year. Your support enables us to continue advocating for Ukrainian culture and supporting academic research and cooperation between MacEwan University, Alberta and Ukraine.

ДЯКУЄМО, THANK YOU TO:

The Ukrainian Foundation for College Education
The Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) Trust
Rotary International District 5370
Ukrainian Canadian Congress-Alberta Provincial Council
The Canada-Ukraine Foundation
Ed Stelmach Community Foundation
The Shevchenko Foundation
Alberta Ukrainian Commemorative Society
Alberta Society for Advancement of Ukrainian Studies
Alberta Ukrainian Heritage Foundation

TO URDC PARTNERS

URDC extends its deepest gratitude to the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) for yet another year of steadfast support, generosity and dedication to supporting Ukrainian academia and culture.

With support from UFCE's incredible fundraising efforts, URDC continues to expand and deepen MacEwan University's educational and cultural connections with Ukraine. UFCE's commitment and hard work have played a vital role in empowering URDC's programs and initiatives, enhancing the centre's reach and impact within Alberta's academic and cultural communities. We are genuinely grateful for UFCE's passion, vision and unwavering belief in the URDC's mission. Thank you for being an indispensable part of this year's journey and success.

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A YEAR IN PHOTOS





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