



Celebrating University College Cork joining
the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies
and International Workshop

***New Paradigms in
Ukrainian Studies:
History, Politics,
Culture, and Religion***



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What does it mean to study Ukraine today? And why is this important for the Future of Europe? This workshop brings scholars, policymakers, and partners from across Ireland, Ukraine, Europe and North America into one room. Not to revisit old frameworks, but to shape new directions. Not to observe from a distance, but to build, connect, and act in the present.

At its core, this event marks University College Cork's membership of the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies. It sets out an agenda: to develop a European hub for Ukrainian studies – a place to establish new research agendas, to educate the next generation of scholars, to support displaced colleagues, and forge lasting partnerships with institutions in Ukraine and beyond. Ukraine stands at the centre of how we understand Europe today: its histories, its fractures, its futures.

This workshop is an invitation to rethink Ukrainian studies, to rethink Europe, and to reconsider how we work together.

The programme includes a concert and a cultural exhibition on 25 May at 14:00 in the Dora Allman Room.

Supported by:



UCC Futures
Collective Social Futures

UCC Futures
Future Humanities Institute

Programme

25 May – CACSSS Seminar Room

11:00 – 12:30 **Roundtable: Towards Horizon Europe**

25 May – Dora Allman

14:00 – 15:30 **Welcoming Ceremony**

Welcome Address Stephan Graham,
Head of CACSSS

Opening Remarks John O'Halloran,
UCC President

Ursula Kilkelly,
Vice President Global Engagement

Guest Addresses Antonina Shliakotina,
Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ukraine

Artur Michalski,
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland

Yuriy Petrushenko,
Director of the Fund of the President of Ukraine for Education, Science & Sports

Alim Aliev,
Deputy Director of the Ukrainian Institute

Olha Oseredchuk,
Head of the Project Office of the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies

15:30 – 16:30 **Concert and cultural exhibition**

UKRAINE VOICE music group

VOICES OF PEACE Choir

Olga Zaitzeva-Hertz

16:30 – 17:30 **Wine Reception**

Academic Workshop

New Paradigms in Ukrainian Studies: History, Politics, Culture, and Religion

26 May, CACSSS Seminar Room

9:00 – 10:30 **Global Legal and Political Perspectives on Ukraine**

(Sponsored by UCC Collective Social Futures)

Moderator: Tatiana Vagramenko (University College Cork; Barcelona Supercomputing Center)

Donnacha Ó Beacháin (Dublin City University)

Unfinished Empire: Russian imperialism in Ukraine and the near abroad

Andrew Cottey (University College Cork)

Guaranteeing Ukraine's Security: Retrospective and Prospective

Olesia Zhytkova (Dublin City University)

Sexual Corruption in Ukrainian Higher Education: Evidence, Narratives, Wartime Dynamics, and Policy Implications

Bozena Cierlik (University College Cork)

Ukraine - a historical borderland, not a backwater.

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00 - 12:00 **Culture, Religion and Memory**

Moderator: Tatiana Vagramenko (University College Cork; Barcelona Supercomputing Center)

Catherine Wanner (Penn State University)

New Perspectives from Ukraine on the Social and Political Role of Religion in Governance

Oleh Turiy (Ukrainian Catholic University)

Faith and Freedom: The Role of Religion in Processes of Transformation from Totalitarianism to Democracy in Ukraine

12:00 – 13:00 **Roundtable. Crimean Studies in the International Academic Context: Decolonising Knowledge and New Perspectives**

Moderator: Olha Oseredchuk (Ukrainian Global Coalition)

Speakers:

Alim Aliev (Ukrainian Institute)

Roman Nazarenko (National Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine)

This roundtable explores Crimea not only as an occupied territory or geopolitical issue, but as a space of Indigenous history, language, culture, memory, and knowledge. It reconsiders the place of Crimean studies within contemporary Ukrainian studies and the broader international discussion on decolonising knowledge, colonial legacies, and the role of universities in shaping academic narratives. Particular attention is given to the Crimean Tatar perspective, cultural resilience, memory, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Irish context offers an important comparative frame, opening space for reflection on language, cultural survival, and the rethinking of colonial pasts.

13:00 – 14:00 *Lunch*

14:00 – 15:30 Archives, History, and Heritage

(History Declassified Project – Critical Findings)

Moderator: Catherine Wanner (Penn State University)

Tatiana Vagramenko (University College Cork; Barcelona Supercomputing Center)
History Declassified: Secret Police Archives, Soviet Afterlives, and Memory Wars in Ukraine

Andriy Kohut (SBU Archives)
“On Our Secret Instructions”: How the NKGB Staged the 1946 Pseudo-Sobor

Julia Buyskykh (University College Cork)
“This is only for your eyes”: Ukrainian Greek Catholic local archives in Poland

James A. Kapaló (University College Cork)
Traversing Máriapócs: The Ukrainian and Hungarian Greek Catholic Underground Across Borders

15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee break*

16:00 – 17:30 Cultural Expression: Literature, Music, and Folklore

Moderator: James Kapaló (University College Cork)

Olga Zaitseva-Hertz (University of Alberta; University of Regensburg)
Remixing Tradition: AI-Generated Folk Aesthetics and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Ukraine

Iryna Stavynska (University College Cork)
Supernatural Women at War: Militarized Magic, New Femininity, and Activism in Wartime Ukraine

Barbara Siller (University College Cork)
The novelistic and photo essayistic works of Katja Petrowskaja

Natasha Ryzhova (University College Cork)
Exploring the Language Practice Landscape of Ukrainian Temporary Protection Holders in Ireland: A Spatially-Aware Narrative Approach



The Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies



The Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies (GCUS) is a governmental initiative launched in July 2024 with the support of the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, during her visit to the United States of America. The aim of the Coalition is to support and develop Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar studies worldwide, to promote accurate information about Ukraine, its culture, history, and language, and to strengthen Ukraine's capacity in the fields of humanitarian and cultural diplomacy.



Pictured: First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska (right) is pictured with Minister for Further & Higher Education, James Lawless, TD (left); Professor James Kapaló; and Professor Ursula Kilkelly, UCC Vice-President of Global Engagement.

The Coalition's activities are coordinated by the President of Ukraine's Fund for the Support of Education, Science, and Sports, the Representative Office of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the Ukrainian Institute, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

As of 11 April 2026, the GCUS brings together 74 participants from 26 countries worldwide, including 65 universities and research institutions that have signed Memoranda of Cooperation and

9 institutions that have signed Letters of Intent and are currently in the process of discussing and finalising their memoranda.

Among the Coalition's participants are leading higher education institutions and research centres from 26 countries, including the Republic of Finland, the Republic of South Africa, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Austria, Canada, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Estonia, the Italian Republic, Japan, the United States of America, the Kingdom of Norway, the State of



Qatar, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Kingdom of Sweden, the French Republic, Ireland, the Kingdom of Spain, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Argentine Republic, the Republic of Paraguay, the Republic of Poland, Montenegro, Romania, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Türkiye, and the Republic of the Philippines.

One of the key features of the Coalition is its interdisciplinary openness: institutions of all academic profiles are welcome to participate. Regardless of specialisation – whether political science, international relations, law, education, economics, media studies, cultural studies, or other fields – the GCUS offers flexible formats of cooperation tailored to the interests and capacities of each institution. Ukrainian Studies is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses language and literature, history and culture, security studies, Crimean Tatar studies, and other research related to Ukraine.

UCC's joining the coalition of over 40 institutions comes after the culmination of sustained engagement by the university supporting Ukrainian academics and pursuing research and teaching on Ukraine. The official signing ceremony took place at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation with the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska and Minister James Lawless. UCC was represented by VP Global, Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Dr Tatiana Vagramenko and Professor James Kapaló.

“The Coalition aligns with our global engagement priorities of research excellence, partnership and impact. Joining this Coalition reflects our long-term commitment to supporting Ukrainian scholars, advancing understanding of Ukraine’s past and present, and ensuring that Ukrainian culture, language and history have a firm and respected place in Irish higher education,”

*Professor Ursula Kilkelly,
UCC Vice-President, Global Engagement.*

“This partnership allows us not only to deepen academic collaboration but also to contribute meaningfully to the wider decolonisation of Ukrainian Studies. By embedding Ukraine’s experiences, heritage and contemporary realities into our teaching and research, we help preserve knowledge at risk, support colleagues affected by the war, and foster connections that will benefit both societies for generations”

Professor James Kapaló.

Joining the Coalition marks an important landmark in UCC's decade-long research successes in the area of Ukrainian and East Central Europe Studies the results of which have included Dr Tatiana Vagramenko's recent Future for Religious Heritage Award for her ongoing work on endangered heritage in Ukraine, the successful Sanctuary Fellowship scheme which secured 9 Postdoc research positions for scholars fleeing the conflict in 2022-23, and a series of projects funded by ERC, IRC, UCLA, The British Library and the US/UK-based Keston Institute.

History Declassified Project



History Declassified

The *History Declassified (HIDE) Project*, funded by the Research Ireland Pathway Programme and led by Dr Tatiana Vagamenko, is one of the core partners of this event.

Inside the KGB Archive

HIDE explores how regimes of surveillance and policing shaped religious life in the Soviet Union, drawing on newly declassified secret police (KGB) archives. These records are more than historical documents – they reveal how power operated in everyday life: how belief was monitored, how dissent was recorded, and how communities were silenced. They are not simply records of repression, but infrastructures through which power was organised, extended, and normalised.

Approaching KGB archives as systems to be read critically, *History Declassified* analyses their internal logics, administrative practices, and narrative forms. Tracing networks of surveillance, policing, and covert operations—and the hidden architectures of control that shaped everyday life during the Cold War—the project transforms these materials into a digital research environment where such systems can be explored, mapped, and reinterpreted.

Hidden Archives, Living Memory

But this is only part of the story. Alongside Soviet state archives, *History Declassified* brings into view a quieter archival world beyond official control: materials preserved under surveillance in private homes, copied by hand, carried across borders, and rebuilt after confiscation.

Fragile yet enduring, these religious community archives formed parallel constellations of memory, sustaining belief and continuity where the state sought erasure and preserving alternative ways of documenting, remembering, and claiming history.

By placing these two archival worlds in dialogue, the project reveals both the mechanisms of control and the enduring capacity to resist it.

Heritage at Risk in Wartime Ukraine

History Declassified also focuses on endangered religious archives in contemporary Ukraine. In the context of war, displacement, and institutional fragility, these collections face acute threats. Yet they also testify to remarkable resilience, preserving unique records of religious minority

life across war, repression, displacement, and political upheaval in modern Ukraine. A central aim of the project is their emergency digitisation and preservation, ensuring that these histories remain accessible for future research, public knowledge, and cultural memory.

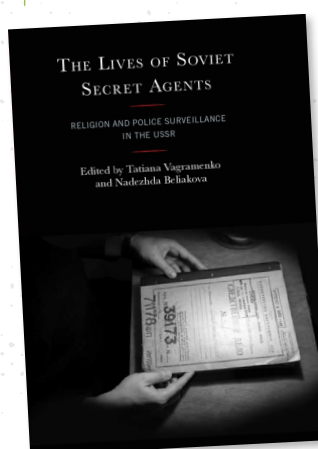
Project Team

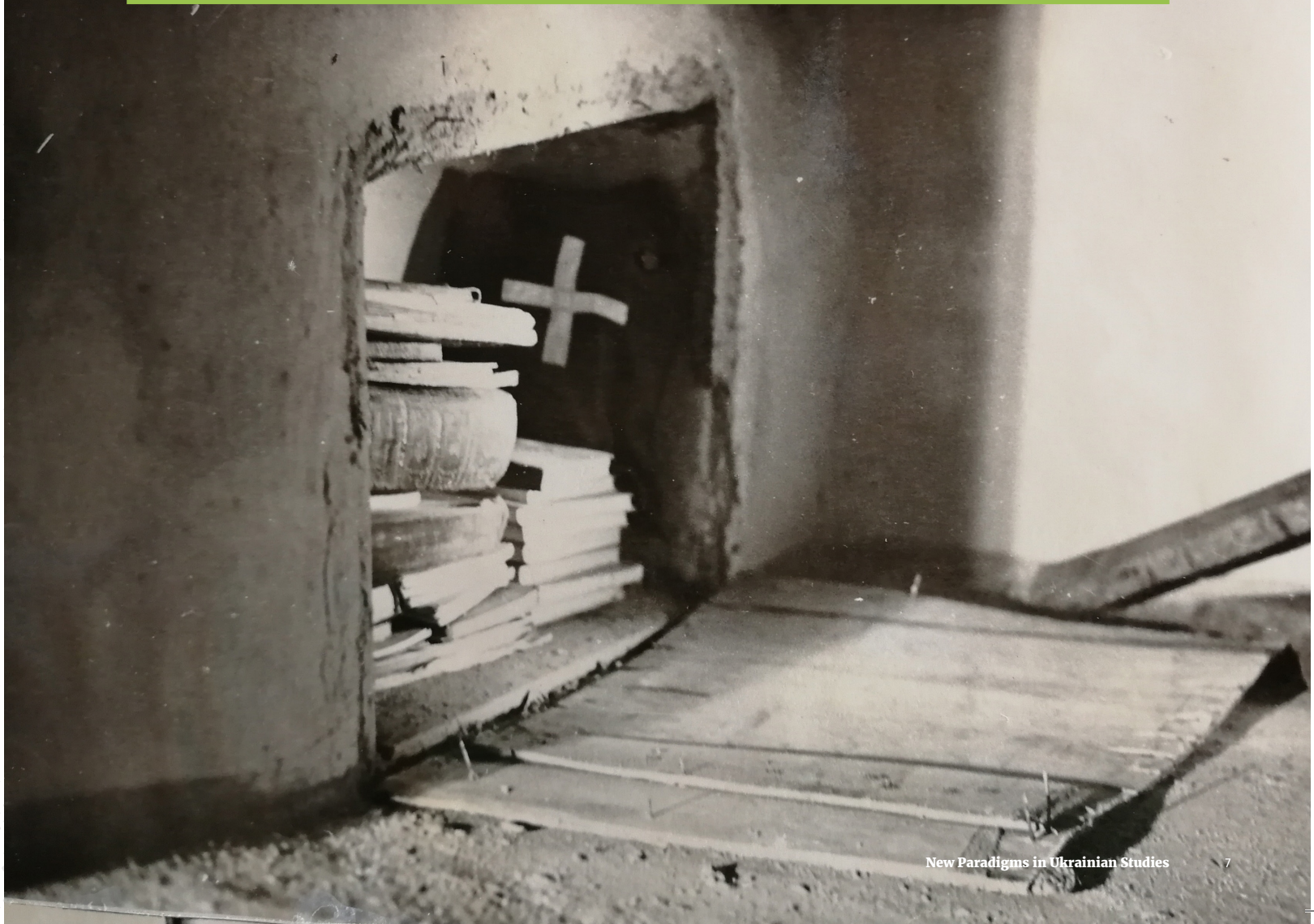
Tatiana Vagamenko, Principal Investigator.



Senior Postdoctoral Researcher at University College Cork and Research Fellow at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center, she works at the intersection of anthropology, the study of religion, and history, combining ethnographic insight with digital humanities and computational methods. She also leads the *Resilient Archives: Digitizing At-Risk Religious Heritage in Ukraine (RADAR)* project, funded by the Keston Institute and the Keston Center at Baylor University, as well as two pilot projects on digitising endangered archives in Bucha, funded by the Arcadia Fund through the British Library's Endangered Archives

Programme and UCLA's Modern Endangered Archives Programme. She is co-author of *The Lives of Soviet Secret Agents: Religion and Police Surveillance in the USSR* (Lexington Books, 2025) and author of *Indigenous Christianity: Missionary, Modernity and Marginality in the Nenets Tundra* (CEU Press, 2026).





James Kapaló, Project Mentor



Professor in the Study of Religions at University College Cork. From 2017 to 2021, he was Principal Investigator in the ERC-funded project *Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: 'Hidden Galleries' in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe*. He has an MA in Central and Eastern European Studies from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), London and a PhD in the Study of Religions from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. He works ethnographically with communities, archives and museum collections to explore vernacular knowledge, religious practices and local memory. He is author and editor of several books on religious minorities in East Central Europe including *Inochentism and Orthodox Christianity* (Routledge, 2019) and *The Secret Police and the Religious Underground in Communist and Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (Routledge, 2022) co-edited with Kinga Povedák.

Julia Buyskykh, PhD Candidate



Anthropologist with a PhD in Ethnology from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and co-founder of the NGO *The Centre for Applied Anthropology* (Kyiv), she has held numerous fellowships in Poland (University of Warsaw, Polish Academy of Sciences, German Historical Institute Warsaw), as well as in Germany and Ireland. She was a Fulbright Scholar at Pennsylvania State University (2019–2020). Her research focuses on lived religion (Orthodoxy and Catholicism) in Ukraine and Poland, interconfessional relations, pilgrimage, memory, borderlands, and ethics and empathy in ethnographic research. She is currently completing a second PhD in Anthropology at University College Cork. Her book *To the West of the Bug: Diaries from*

the Borderlands (in Ukrainian) was shortlisted for PEN Ukraine's Yuri Shevlyov Award (2024) for the best collected work of non-fiction essays.

Yulia Vlasenko, Research Assistant



PhD in Law and Associate Professor in the Department of Law at the Educational and Scientific Institute of Law, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, she is also a member of the Bar Council of the Kyiv Region. From 2007 to 2009, she was affiliated with the Centre for Human Rights Research in Ukraine at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. In 2022–2023, she held a Sanctuary Fellowship at University College Cork in the School of Law, College of Business and Law. In 2024, she joined the *History Declassified* project under the Research Ireland Ukrainian Researchers Scheme.

Nataliia Hlushchenko, Research Assistant



PhD in Law, she is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Fundamental Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law at the Academic and Research Institute of Law, Sumy State University. She has also served as Deputy Director for International Relations at the same institute. In 2022, she was awarded a Ukrainian Researchers Scheme Award and conducted research on de-extinction at Maynooth University. In 2025, she joined the *History Declassified* project under the Research Ireland Ukrainian Researchers Scheme.

Visit HIDE:
history-declassified.com



Supported by:



Concert and Exhibition



UKRAINE VOICE Music Group is a musical ensemble led by Svitlana Deikun, dedicated to preserving and promoting Ukrainian cultural heritage. The group regularly participates in cultural, international, and charitable events, including the International Choral Festival, Culture Night, and Jazz Festival. It actively supports children and young people through workshops and masterclasses and contributes to the integration and visibility of the Ukrainian community in Ireland.

VOICES OF PEACE Intercultural Children and Young People's Choir is an intercultural ensemble founded with the support of the Cork Academy of Music and Creative Ireland. Bringing together children and young people from diverse backgrounds, the choir nurtures creativity and promotes inclusion and equal opportunity. The ensemble has taken part in the national selection for the Junior Eurovision Song Contest, and its performances are distinguished by a strong theatrical dimension. Choir members also participate in international events and have represented Irish-Ukrainian creative collaboration in Belgium. Its guiding message is: *"Every voice will be heard."*

Svitlana Deikun (Mariupol, Ukraine) is a cultural practitioner, artistic director, conductor, and arts manager, as well as a teacher at the Ukrainian School in Cork. Her work focuses on supporting children and young people, developing their creative potential, and delivering cultural and educational projects. She is actively involved in organising artistic events, strengthening the Ukrainian community, and contributing to volunteer initiatives. She also participates in forums supported by the Embassy of Ukraine and plays an active role in promoting intercultural dialogue.



Olga Zaitseva-Hertz (pictured on the right) is a performer, composer, and scholar whose artistic work bridges Ukrainian traditional song, contemporary composition, jazz, pop, and experimental music.

Originally from Dnipro, in 2011, Zaitseva-Hertz founded the band Zaitsa in Germany, reimagining traditional Ukrainian songs through jazz, pop and klezmer-inflected arrangements. With the ensemble, she has performed hundreds of concerts across Europe, including a premiere at the Mela Festival in England, associated with the cultural programme during the London Olympic Games in 2012. She has also appeared as a solo singer with various orchestras and has toured internationally as an orchestral musician in productions with Andrea Bocelli and David Garrett.

Her contemporary opera project Bakhmut Rhapsody, based on frontline soundscapes, ethnographic fieldwork, and poetry by Taras Shevchenko and Lesia Ukrainka, premiered at the Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival in New York City in 2024. Her current artistic research project focuses on the sonification of Ukrainian embroidery, translating traditional patterns into musical compositions: embroidered stitches become notes, while colours shape pitch and timbre, creating polyphonic soundscapes that transform Ukrainian intangible cultural heritage into sound.







University College Cork's East Central Europe and Ukraine Cluster

UCC's new transdisciplinary research cluster seeks to challenge longstanding Western-centred frameworks in the study of the cultures, societies, history, politics and economics of East Central Europe. While recognising that regional labels are historically contingent and contested, through our research and teaching we aim to highlight the contributions of this region to wider European and global developments and challenge reductionist narratives that depict the region as peripheral, passive or derivative.

Central to our approach is a commitment to viewing countries and communities not as passive subjects of historical forces but as active agents shaping their own pasts, presents and futures. Through this work, carried out in close research partnership and in continuous dialogue with the institutions and communities in the region, the cluster will contribute to a more balanced, decentred and globally aware approach to knowledge production on East Central Europe and to inspire the next generation of Ireland-based scholars specialising in the languages, literatures, histories, politics, minority peoples, arts and religions of the region.

The cluster supports a range of initiatives, including collaborative research, innovative pedagogy, visiting speakers, student engagement, heritage language

teaching and research, and partnerships with institutions and communities in the region. We aim to build a vibrant scholarly and public platform that makes East Central Europe visible, relevant and intellectually central within our broader academic and civic conversations.

Through our alignment within UCC with *Collective Social Futures* and *Future Humanities*, and nationally with the national research priorities (*Impact 2030*), we will help Ireland meet the challenges associated with identity, belonging, and transnational citizenship, understand the roots of contemporary crises, including migration, war, nationalism, and democracy, and engage partners and communities in supporting sustainable research and teaching practices.

The East Central Europe and Ukraine Cluster UCC will contribute on a national level to

- Raising awareness of the contribution of East Central Europe to wider European and global developments
- Enhancing EU engagement and diplomatic capacity
- Improving social cohesion and integration
- Equipping skilled graduates with international and regional expertise
- Generating intercultural knowledge and the promotion of heritage languages
- Fostering collaborative research with institutions and communities in the region, as well as communities from the region residing in Ireland
- Supporting evidence-based policymaking on migration, security, and European affairs
- Supporting cultural diplomacy and global visibility

Steering Committee:

Dr Bozena Cierlik
(School of History)

Professor Andrew Cottey
(School of Society, Politics and Ethics)

Professor James A. Kapaló
(School of Society, Politics and Ethics)

Dr Barbara Siller
(School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures)

Dr Tatiana Vagramenko
(School of Society, Politics and Ethics)



Abstracts

Bozena Cierlik

Ukraine - a historical borderland, not a backwater.

Ukraine's historical significance lies not in marginality but in its enduring role as a connective borderland shaped by geography. Ukrainian lands functioned for millennia as corridors for trade, migration, and cultural exchange. From antiquity, river and steppe routes made the region a hub linking Latin, Orthodox, and Islamic worlds. In contrast to Poland's role as a stabilizing core of Central Europe, Ukraine served as a dynamic contact zone. Religion added another layer of diversity with religious pluralism acting as cultural architecture. Cultural communities often extended across imperial and political boundaries, illustrating how linguistic and social practices frequently outlasted state formations. Religion added further complexity, with pluralism serving as a durable framework for coexistence across shifting political orders. Cultural diversity was not accidental. It reflected location between civilizations, major trade and migration routes and centuries of layered settlement. Rather than a single cultural model, the region developed as a mosaic of overlapping traditions, underscoring the long-term historical consequences of geography in shaping social and cultural complexity.

Andrew Cottey

Guaranteeing Ukraine's Security: Retrospective and Prospective

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine since 2022 has prompted much debate on how to guarantee Ukraine's security. This presentation will place this debate in the wider context of discussions about the range of security policy options open to Central

and Eastern European states in the wake of the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War nearly forty years ago, comparing that debate with the debate over Ukraine's security today. It will suggest that while such debates are often cast in terms of rational strategic calculation, they are crucially also about identity and political values.

Julia Buyskykh

"This is only for your eyes": Ukrainian Greek Catholic local archives in Poland

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic community in Poland has traversed a thorny path—from an underground, silenced minority during the communist era to an increasingly distinctive and vocal presence, especially since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. One of the most striking characteristics of this emerging vocality, however, is silence itself. Silence becomes visible in strategies of avoidance surrounding "the" past: interlocutors decline to be recorded, hesitate to share family histories, request the deletion of recordings, or permit access to family photo albums while prohibiting reproduction or publication. Similar practices of dissimulation emerge within archival spaces. During my work in local, often grassroots Ukrainian Greek Catholic archives, access to selected documents was granted under strict conditions: some materials could be viewed, others photographed, but none could be published—never made vocal. The archives, too, maintained their silence, carefully guarded by their custodians. I approach the archive not merely as a repository of documents but as a sensitive body animated by living knowledge, emotions, memories, histories, and silences. I argue that silence is a technique available to both vulnerable communities and researchers. For anthropologists,





it allows a sensitive and ethical engagement with the limits of what may be known, said, or circulated about post-traumatic and post-colonial experiences.

James A. Kapaló (University College Cork)

Traversing Máriapócs: The Ukrainian and Hungarian Greek Catholic Underground Across Borders

This paper explores the varied ways in which the Greek Catholic pilgrimage site of Máriapócs in Eastern Hungary served as a nexus for intercommunal and transnational contacts for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic underground during the communist-era. Based on research in the Archives of the Hungarian State Security, I sketch some episodes centred on Máriapócs that illustrate the various ways in which the Ukrainian and Hungarian Greek Catholic communities maintained contact across national, linguistic and ethnic boundaries during communism. Unlike in neighbouring Soviet Ukraine, The Greek Catholic Church in Hungary was permitted to operate throughout the communist period albeit under intensive surveillance and shorn of its monastic institutions, which were forceable closed in 1950. Although the Church was not driven wholesale into an underground existence, clandestine networks of monks and nuns sought to preserve the Basilian and its institutions and shared heritage spanning the Hungarian-Ukrainian border. The activities of this group of

monks and nuns was infiltrated by the Hungarian state security, which gathered wide-ranging reports on their transnational travels, activities and connections including contacts with the vicar capitular of the underground Ukrainian Greek Catholic eparchy of Mukachevo, Mykola Murani, who served as a secret agent known as *Berezovskii* (in 1949) and *Sova* (from 1955 to 1979). I argue in this paper that the peculiar status of the Greek Catholic Church in Hungary during communism and its principal pilgrimage site at Máriapócs, located in relative proximity to Soviet border, helped to confound both states' attempts to control Greek Catholicism in the region.

Andriy Kohut

"On Our Secret Instructions": How the NKGB Staged the 1946 Pseudo-Sobor

Drawing on declassified records of the Soviet secret services (NKVD–NKGB–MGB) held in the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine, this paper argues that the Lviv "Sobor" of 8–10 March 1946 — by which the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was formally liquidated and "reunified" with the Russian Orthodox Church — was neither a church act nor an internal ecclesiastical initiative, but a multi-stage special operation of the Soviet secret services, planned and coordinated from Moscow. Operational plans, encrypted communications, and agent reports document



every stage: the reactivation in 1939 of the prewar agent case file “The Wanderers”; the synchronized arrest of the entire UGCC episcopate in April 1945; the creation of the puppet “Initiative Group”; and the staging of the Sobor itself. The paper concludes with what the security services themselves recorded: the formal liquidation never became an actual one, and the underground Church endured for forty-three years.

Donnacha Ó Beacháin

Unfinished Empire: Russian imperialism in Ukraine and the near abroad

Unfinished Empire: Russian imperialism in Ukraine and the near abroad introduces us to Russia’s imperial project and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It connects historical Russian imperialism and Putin’s current actions in Ukraine, framing the invasion as a modern continuation of a longstanding expansionist agenda. *Unfinished Empire* places the current geopolitical conflict in Russia’s historical trajectory, tracing Russia’s development from the tiny Duchy of Moscow through the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation. It explains the context of the war and the consequence for Russia’s neocolonial relationships with its “near abroad”. The book argues that collapse of the Soviet Union was not so much an event as an ongoing process, which the Kremlin is trying to reverse. The book benefits from extensive field research conducted in all fifteen post-Soviet republics during the last quarter century and hundreds of interviews with political actors at all levels of society.

Natasha Ryzhova

Exploring the Language Practice Landscape of Ukrainian Temporary Protection Holders in Ireland: A Spatially-Aware Narrative Approach

This PhD project examines how physical, social, and virtual spaces shape the English language learning experiences of Ukrainian Temporary Protection Holders in Ireland. Focusing on 20 recently arrived participants, the study explores how spaces such as schools, community centers, shops, workplaces, hotels, host homes, and online platforms either facilitate or restrict English engagement. The project is grounded in critical spatial theory, drawing on Lefebvre, Foucault, de Certeau, Harvey, Massey, Soja, and Benson to frame space as socially produced and influential in language learning. It also uses Norton’s concept of investment to examine learners’ motivation and changing relationship with English over time. Preliminary findings highlight status loss, housing insecurity, trauma, neurodiversity, accent difficulties, and digital self-directed learning as key factors shaping language practice and integration.

Barbara Siller

The novelistic and photo essayistic works of Katja Petrowskaja

Katja Petrowskaja was born in Kiev in 1970 and lives in Berlin since 1999. Her literary debut, the novel *Vielleicht Esther* (2014, *Maybe Esther*) is a biographical narrative centering around the theme of memory and the modes of remembering. The book was awarded the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize and has been translated into more than 30 languages. Petrowskaja’s more recent works are two photo essays: *Das Foto schaute mich an* (2022) and *Als wäre es vorbei. Texte aus dem Krieg* (2025), in which the author reflects on selected images from her personal archive as well as from other private and official archives: many of the images capture scenes of the Ukrainian war. Petrowskaja takes a unique angle to reflect on the images, on what and, more importantly, how it is portrayed. The presentation will introduce the writer by discussing some of her work.

Iryna Stavynska

Supernatural Women at War: Militarized Magic, New Femininity, and Activism in Wartime Ukraine

This project examines the transformation of Ukrainian folkloric female figures folklore in Ukrainian wartime culture, focusing on the relationship between tradition, gender, and activism during war. Following the 2022 Russian invasion, Ukrainian society showed an upsurge of interest toward folklore, and magical female figures in particular. These new portrayals of folkloric women, however, drastically differed from those before the war: no longer passive or demure, they were now imagined as powerful supernatural protectresses of Ukraine. Claimed as symbols of resistance by women in the army and female partisan groups in the occupied territories, these supernatural female figures became intrinsically connected with wartime activism and resistance. Using the figure of the witch as a case-study, this presentation explores some of the patterns in Ukrainian wartime portrayals of folkloric women, considering how they inform, and are informed by, wartime discourse on gender norms, tradition, and activism.

Oleh Turiy

Faith and Freedom: The Role of Religion in Processes of Transformation from Totalitarianism to Democracy in Ukraine

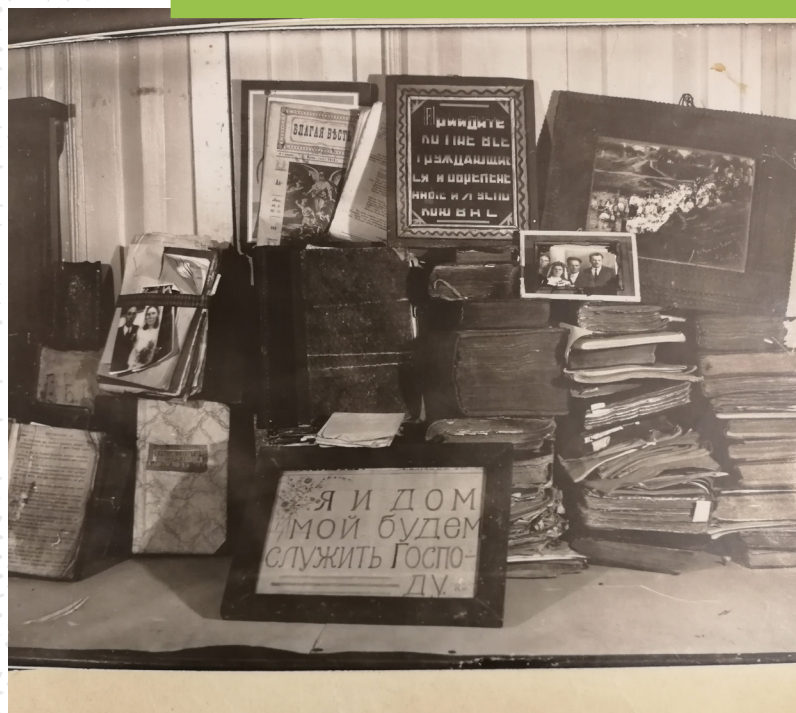
One of the foundations of the totalitarian communist regime was its war against religion, the persecution of believers and the imposition of atheism, which claimed hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of victims. Its long-term effects were equally profound, producing a type of homo sovieticus that outlived the system itself. For this reason, rethinking the experience of the totalitarian past and its impact on the present is an integral part of building a genuinely democratic Ukrainian

state and a healthy civil society based on respect for human dignity and human rights, including religious freedom. Since its establishment in 1992, the Institute of Church History at the Ukrainian Catholic University has carried out a series of projects focused on state persecution of religion and the resistance of believers. The study of declassified archives, especially secret police agent files, shows that under Soviet rule church structures were also instrumentalised by the state, with a particularly important role assigned to the Russian Orthodox Church, which continues to serve as an ideological pillar of authoritarianism in contemporary Russia. At the same time, even persecuted religious communities were marked by totalitarian violence and forced adaptation. Yet across confessional divisions, the Church in Ukraine has remained one of the most trusted institutions of the post-Soviet period and an important part of civil society, as seen during the last two Ukrainian revolutions and, today, in the Churches' broad support for Ukraine's sovereignty and democratic European choice. For this reason, rethinking the traumas of the totalitarian past and clarifying the contemporary role of the Church could help shape both state policy and the future agenda of religious communities. Such reflection may prove valuable not only in Ukraine, but far beyond it.

Tatiana Vagramenko

History Declassified: Secret Police Archives, Soviet Afterlives, and Memory Wars in Ukraine

This presentation offers an overview of the *History Declassified* project, which explores how the Soviet security services monitored and policed religion, conducted covert operations, and built hidden architectures of control that shaped everyday life during the Cold War. Drawing on KGB archives, the project approaches these materials not simply as documents of repression, but as systems of power that can be read critically, mapped,





and reinterpreted through a digital research environment. Alongside Soviet state archives, the presentation also introduces a quieter archival world beyond official control: religious community archives preserved under surveillance in private homes, copied by hand, carried across borders, and rebuilt after confiscation. Fragile yet enduring, these collections sustained belief and continuity where the state sought erasure, while preserving alternative ways of documenting, remembering, and claiming history. By bringing these archival worlds into dialogue, *History Declassified* reveals both the mechanisms of authoritarian control and the enduring capacity to resist it.

Catherine Wanner

New Perspectives from Ukraine on the Social and Political Role of Religion in Governance

An unusual and unexpected situation has emerged in Ukraine: there are two officially recognized Orthodox Churches serving one people living in a single state. Both Orthodox Churches are architects of issues spanning from public policy to historical narratives. Combined with the tragedy of war, the unusual religious landscape that has emerged in Ukraine has inspired the attention and involvement of multiple external actors, who often use religion to influence geopolitical alliances. The populace has responded as well in novel ways to becoming the focus of tensions within global Orthodoxy and disputes over balancing minority rights. This places Ukraine at the forefront of many developing trends in European cultural politics and the shifting role of religion in governance.

Olga Zaitseva-Hertz

Remixing Tradition: AI-Generated Folk Aesthetics and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Ukraine

This paper examines a recent wave of Ukrainian AI-generated fantasy videos featuring pseudo-folk songs as a form of self-fashioned folklore emerging during Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. While "fakelore" has historically been associated with imposed folklorization and the simplification of cultural identities, these works mobilize a consciously artificial, technologically mediated folk aesthetic to articulate a modern, sovereign Ukrainian identity distinct from Russian cultural models. Drawing on ethnomusicological and media analysis, the paper argues that AI-driven pseudo-folk is used to reconfigure traditions into a forward-looking practice of cultural self-definition shaped by digital circulation and prefigured by earlier contemporary artists such as ONUKA.

Olesia Zhytkova

Sexual Corruption in Ukrainian Higher Education: Evidence, Narratives, Wartime Dynamics, and Policy Implications

"Sexual Corruption in Ukrainian Higher Education" project aims to analyse perceptions and prevalence of sexual corruption in Ukrainian higher education institutions, interconnections between war and sexual corruption, and the role of Russian propaganda in utilising sexual corruption narratives. Based on focus groups, interviews, archival and media materials, and secondary sources, the research also contributes to the development of evidence-based solutions and policies for educational institutions and authorities in the EU and Ukraine.

Participants

Alim Aliev is Deputy Director General of the Ukrainian institute, the founder of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar literary project *Crimean Fig*. Human rights defender, curator of educational and cultural projects, researcher, and essayist. Member of PEN Ukraine, co-founder of Crimea SOS NGO. Co-author of *Mustafa Dzhemilev. Unbreakable* about the Crimean Tatars leader, author of essays about Crimea, Crimean Tatars, Ukrainian identity during the war in Ukrainian and international publications. Aliev is the initiator of the digital museum on the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, "Tamırlar." He worked as a program director of the Crimean House and a media and communications consultant of the expert company pro.mova. Participant and speaker of Ukrainian delegations in the Council of Europe, European Parliament, OSCE, UN Security Council, and other political institutions. Awarded the Order of Merit, by the President of Ukraine in 2020. His professional activity is focused on the topics of Ukrainian civil society and multiculturalism, development of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar studies abroad, occupied Crimea and the Crimean Tatar people, decolonization, freedom of speech, and international representation of contemporary Ukrainian culture.

Julia Buyskykh is an anthropologist with a PhD (candidate of sciences) in Ethnology from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and co-founder of the NGO "The Centre for Applied Anthropology" (Kyiv). She has held numerous fellowships in Poland (University of Warsaw, Polish Academy of Sciences, German Historical Institute Warsaw) in 2014-2016, 2022, and 2024-

2025, as well as in Germany and Ireland. She was a Fulbright scholar at Pennsylvania State University (2019-2020). Her research focuses on lived religion (Orthodoxy and Catholicism) in Ukraine and Poland, inter-confessional relationships, pilgrimages, memory studies, borderlands, and ethics and empathy in ethnographic research. She is currently writing her second PhD dissertation in Anthropology in the Study of Religions Department at University College Cork, Ireland. Her book "To the West of the Bug: Diaries from the Borderlands" (in Ukrainian) was shortlisted for the Yuri Shevelyov Award (2024) from PEN Ukraine for the Best Collected Work of Non-Fiction Essays.

Bozena Cierlik is a lecturer in Modern Polish and East Central European history at UCC. Her research focuses on challenging Western centred frameworks in study of societies and culture by positioning ECE as central to global debates, linking historical interpretation to social justice, global citizenship, and sustainable development. Her research conceptualises security and societal resilience as a dynamic process through which communities redefine identity, institutional practices, and everyday social life in response to challenges. She was an EC expert evaluator in Framework Programs – Challenges of EU enlargement, Access to digital collections of cultural and scientific content and User Centred Design. Latest publication: *Polish and Irish struggles for self-determination. Living near dragons*, Cambridge Scholars 2020; "Polish students in University College Cork after the Second World War" (in *Understanding Ireland. Essays on History, Culture and Polish-Irish Ties*), Wydawnictwo







KUL 2023 and “Dziedzictwo polityczne de Valery – neutralność w polityce zagranicznej Irlandii, in M. Dworski and M. Wallner (eds.), *Irlandia de Valery. Wizja i rzeczywistość*, Wydawnictwo Arcana 2025.

Andrew Cottey is Professor and EU Jean Monnet Chair in the Department of Government and Politics, University College Cork. He is a leading expert on European security, including NATO and EU foreign policy. The third edition of his book *Security in 21st Century Europe* was published by Bloomsbury Academic in May 2025. His work has been published in leading journals such as *International Affairs*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *Contemporary Security Policy*, *European Security*, *European Foreign Affairs Review* and *Journal of Strategic Studies*. Prof. Cottey has been a NATO Research Fellow, a Research Associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a Visiting Researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and Chair of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) Standing Committee on International Affairs.

Dr. Andriy Kohut is Director of the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine and Stuart Ramsey Tompkins Visiting Professor at the University of Alberta (2025-2026). He holds a Ph.D. in History from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and an M.A. from Ivan Franko Lviv National University. In 2022, he suspended his Fulbright

Fellowship at Stanford University following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Dr. Kohut has published numerous scholarly articles and edited collections from declassified KGB archives. His research interests include Soviet deportations, the Holodomor, communist secret services, memory politics, and cultural diplomacy.

Donnacha Ó Beacháin is Professor of Politics at Dublin City University. He is the author of several books, including *From Partition to Brexit: The Irish Government and Northern Ireland*, which was awarded the Political Studies Association of Ireland’s Book of the Year Prize. Professor Ó Beacháin’s most recent book is *Unfinished Empire: Russian Imperialism in Ukraine and the Near Abroad*.

Roman Nazarenko is a scholar of religion specialising in Islam and Christian–Muslim relations. He is Director of the Institute of Religion and Society at the Ukrainian Catholic University and a Senior Lecturer at the National Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine. He also teaches at Kyiv-Mohyla Business School and UCU Business School, where he has developed a course to support Ukrainian entrepreneurs, IT professionals, businesses, and public institutions in working with partners from the Arab world. He is an expert on interreligious dialogue and reconciliation, with more than ten years of professional experience in this field. He is also a consultant-analyst and

coach on intercultural collaboration and effective communication in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA region) partnership for business environments and government agencies. He is the author of publications and lectures on the MENA region, religion in the modern world, and business communication in the Middle East, as well as the books *Astonishing Islam* and *Pandemia and the Renaissance of World Religions*. He is currently completing a new book, *Strategic Communications in the Arab World*.

Olha Oseredchuk, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences (PhD in History), is the Head of the Project Office of the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies, and Professor at the Department of Practical Psychology and Mental Health, Institute of Law, Psychology and Innovative Education, Lviv Polytechnic National University. She has over 16 years of experience in the field of higher education and academic development. Formerly Chair of the National Expert Council, Trainer and Expert of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA), and Expert of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. Her research focuses on adult education, particularly learning and reintegration of veterans, as well as teaching excellence and professional development of educators. She has extensive experience as a trainer in leadership and management development programs for both public and private sector institutions. Olha is the author of the course “Improving Teaching Excellence” at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and a participant in numerous international projects under Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, focused on digital transformation, innovation, and academic capacity building.

Natasha Ryzhova is a PhD researcher in Applied Linguistics at University College Cork, where she began her doctoral studies in October 2024 with the support of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences Excellence Scholarship. She previously completed an MA in Global Cultures and Languages at UCC, graduating with First Class Honours. As a trilingual researcher working across English, Ukrainian, and Russian, she brings an interdisciplinary background in language teaching, migration studies, and qualitative research. Alongside her research, she has over 15 years of experience in language education and currently works in both higher education and adult language teaching in Ireland. Her broader research interests include language and forced migration, linguistic inequality, language policy, and the role of language in shaping access, inclusion, and social participation.

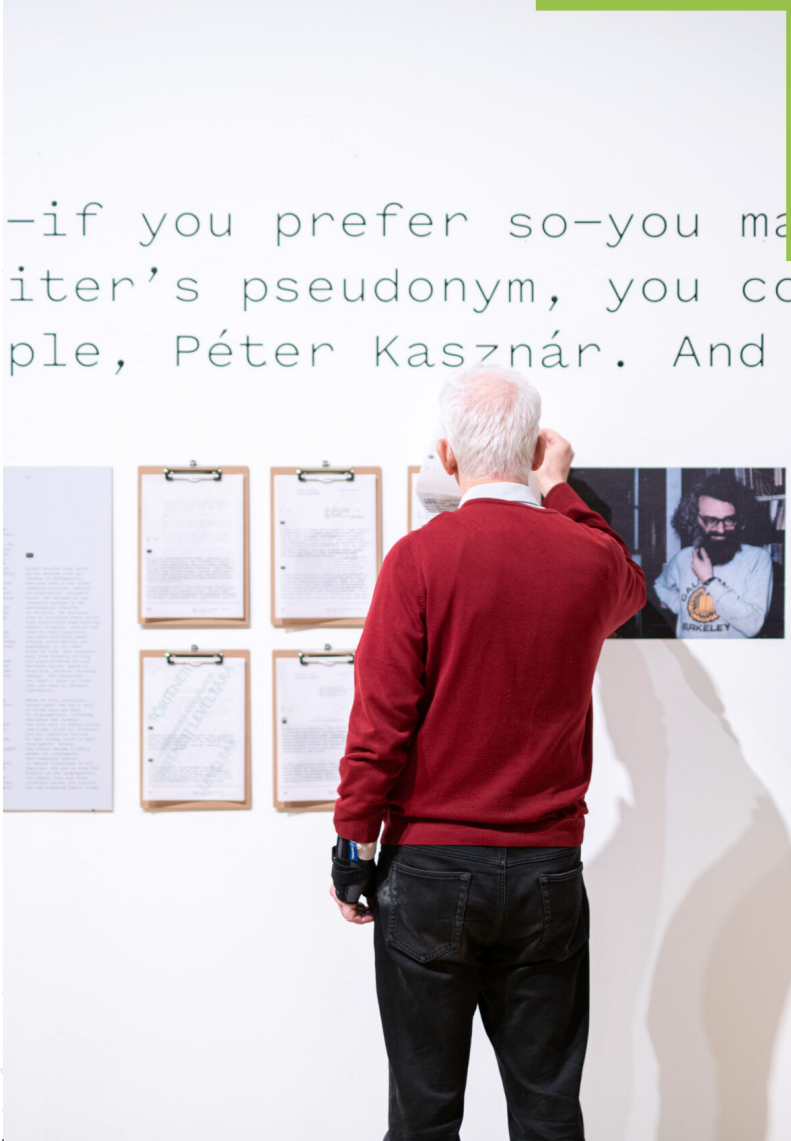
Barbara Siller is a Senior Lecturer and the Head of

Department of German, University College Cork. She is the Action Chair of the EU-COST-Action “Literary multilingualism and social transformations in superdiverse societies” (CA24137). Barbara is also the co-convenor of the research cluster *Rethinking Spatial Humanities*. Her research interests include literary multilingualism, transgenerational narratives and memory, temporalities in literature, and literary topographies. Selected publications include: „eine[...] fragwürdige Übersetzung ohne Original“: Narrative Rekontextualisierungen und Übersetzungen von Erinnerung in Katja Petrowskajas *Vielleicht Esther* (forthcoming, De Gruyter 2026); “Complex Temporalities, Poetic Niches, and Insular Moments. The Poetry of Sepp Mall” (Arcadia, 59/2024); Multidirektionale Erinnerungsnarrative und gendersensible Erzählperspektiven in Sabine Grubers Roman *Stillbach oder Die Sehnsucht* (Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner-Archiv, 41/2022), Contaminated Soulscapes and Landscapes in Maja Haderlap’s *Engel des Vergessens/Angel of Oblivion* (New German Critique 47.1/2020).

Iryna Stavynska is a Ukrainian folklorist currently based in Ireland and an affiliated researcher with UCC Study of Religions Department. She holds an MA in Folklore from the University of Oregon (USA), and a BA in Japanese language and culture from Kyiv National Linguistic University (Ukraine). Her research interests include the intersection between folklore, popular culture, and supernatural belief, and the folklore of Ukrainian resistance. She is a recipient of multiple grants and awards, including Fulbright, Irish Research Council, and Japanese government (MEXT) scholarships and awards.

Catherine Wanner is a historical anthropologist and the Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies at the Pennsylvania State University. Her research centers on the politics of religion and increasingly on conflict mediation, ecocide, and trauma healing. She is the author of several books on Ukraine, most recently *Everyday Religiosity and the Politics of Belonging in Ukraine* (Cornell, 2022) and editor of *Dispossession: Anthropological Perspectives on Russia’s War Against Ukraine* (Routledge, 2024). She is currently writing a book entitled “*Ecocide, Animals, and Empathy After the Russian Invasion of Ukraine.*”

Oleh Turiy is Vice Rector for Strategic Cooperation, Associate Professor of Church History and Director of the Institute of Church History at the Ukrainian Catholic University. From 2003 to 2020, he also served as acting Head of the Department of Church History, Ukrainian Catholic University. He studied



at the Department of History (1981–1986) and in the graduate program (1990–1992) at Ivan Franko State University of Lviv; in December 1994, he defended his doctoral dissertation, “The Greek Catholic Church in the Social and Political Life of Galicia, 1848–1867,” before the special council of the Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He completed research fellowships in Vienna (1993, 1995), Przemyśl (1994), Eichstätt (1997), Ottawa (2008), Edmonton (2009), Mainz (2014), Würzburg (2015), and Notre Dame (USA, 2018). Visiting lecturer at the Universities of Innsbruck and Jagiellonian, associate research fellow at the Leibniz Institute for Eastern and Southeastern European Studies (Regensburg) and the Institute for Church and Cultural History of Germans in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe (Tübingen).

Olga Zaitseva-Herz is an ethnomusicologist, musicologist, and composer whose research focuses on Ukrainian music, popular culture, and sound in contexts of war and displacement. She received her PhD from the University of Alberta (Canada) and has held research and teaching positions in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Her current work examines the role of music in the Russo-Ukrainian war, with particular attention to

AI-generated songs, digital circulation, and emerging forms of mediated folklore. She is especially interested in how contemporary musical practices contribute to processes of cultural self-definition and the reimagining of tradition. She is currently affiliated with Think Space Ukraine at the University of Regensburg and is also active as a composer and performer.

Olesia Zhytkova has a PhD in History. She leads the EU-funded postdoctoral project entitled “Sexual Corruption in Ukrainian Higher Education” at the Anti-corruption Research Centre & Business School, Dublin City University. She has authored over 10 journal articles and over 30 conference papers and media articles. Dr Zhytkova’s research interests include the study of corruption, contemporary history and politics of Eastern Europe, the study of religions (Orthodox Church in 20-21 centuries, religion in the USSR and Soviet repressions), war and conflict studies (the cultural and religious background to the current Russian-Ukrainian war, civil conflict in Belarus). Dr Zhytkova is a Committee Member of the Irish Association for Russian, Central and East European Studies. She had received three “Research Ireland Supplemental Grant for Displaced Researchers” awards.





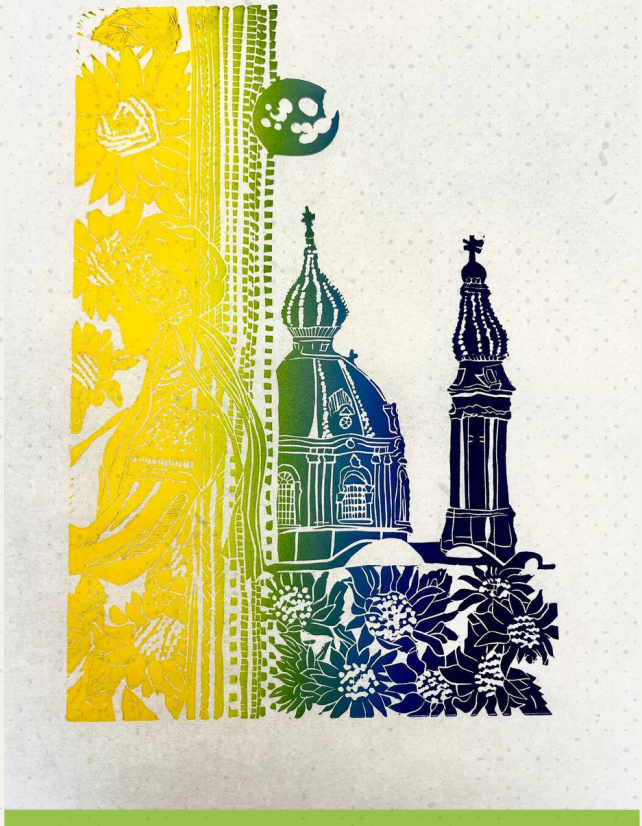
Artwork on the following pages is by **Viktorija Kondratieva**

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Pg 22: "Motanka" 2025

Above: "Triptych: the land of spirits " 2025

Back Cover: "Sunflowers" 2023



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