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Lunch Talks with Lviv

A series of online discussions about Ukrainian intellectual life

winter term 2024/2025

The aim of these cross-border meetings is to gain a better understanding of current debates in the Ukrainian public sphere. What are the most important and controversial issues in Ukraine today? Whose voices are shaping the public sphere and whose are not? How is the ongoing war affecting the Ukrainian language? Why is the idea of decolonisation so central to so many Ukrainians, and what does it actually mean? What factors influence Ukrainian perceptions of Germany? How do Ukrainian writers and intellectuals imagine the post-war future of their country? By creating a space to learn about Ukraine from Ukrainians, this new format aims to provide a much-needed counterpoint to the widespread tendency towards Westsplaining.

We meet online for 60 minutes over lunch. Each session will be devoted to a selected book or essay by a Ukrainian author.

Lunch Talks with Lviv is a joint project of researchers from the Bielefeld University and the Ukrainian Catholic University of Lviv, and is open to students and staff from all faculties of both universities as well as to interested people from other places.

Co-curators in Bielefeld:

Kornelia Kończal (kornelia.konczal@uni-bielefeld.de) and Taras Romashchenko (taras.romashchenko@uni-bielefeld.de)

Co-curators in Lviv:

Volodymyr Sklokin (sklokin@ucu.edu.ua) and Bohdan Chuma (bohdan.chuma@ucu.edu.ua)

Programme

[Lunch Talks with Lviv #1](#)

21 October 2024, 12 p.m. CET

[The Global History of Ukraine. Book Launch with Yaroslav Hrytsak](#)

reading: Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Ukraine: The Forging of a Nation* (Public Affairs, 2024);
Ukrainian original: Ярослав Грицак, *Подолати минуле: Глобальна історія України* (Київ: Портал, 2021); translation into German: Yaroslav Hrytsak: *Ukraine. Biographie*

einer bedrängten Nation, translated from English by Karlheinz Dürr and Norbert Juraschitz (München: Beck 2024) [download](#)

chair: Kornelia Kończal (Bielefeld) and Taras Romashchenko (Bielefeld)

guiding questions:

How can a global perspective shape the narrative of Ukrainian history, and how might it challenge traditional national narratives? What role did 1914 play in the formation of Ukrainian national identity, and how did Ukraine evolve from an ethnic to a civic nation? How important is it for historians to balance national pride with critical reflection when writing about their own country's history?

[Lunch Talks with Lviv #2](#)

4 November 2024, 12 p.m. CET

[The Decolonization Debate](#)

reading: Andrew Kushnir, "Why Is Canadian Theatre So Russian Right Now?", Intermission Magazine, 2023. [download](#)

introduction: Oleksandr Pronkevych (Lviv)

chair: Taras Romashchenko (Bielefeld)

guiding questions: To what extent have German culture and humanities integrated Russian and Ukrainian cultural codes? Is the deconstruction of the Russian culture mentioned in the paper possible in Germany? How should we approach Russian culture in the West during the ongoing war? Is cancel culture applicable in this case? What main obstacles prevent Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian Studies from disseminating in Germany? How can we best promote them?

[Lunch Talks with Lviv #3](#)

18 November 2024, 12 p.m. CET

[Militarism and Pacifism across Europe](#)

reading: Volodymyr Yermolenko, Ukraine and the Borders of Europe, IWM Post, 2022, vol. 129 [download](#)

introduction: Volodymyr Sklokin (Lviv)

chair: Taras Romashchenko (Bielefeld)

guiding questions: How does Russia's war against Ukraine challenge and change European identity and values? What might be the role of warrior ethos in a new European identity? Is the idea of pacifism still relevant in the geopolitical reality of the 21st century?

Lunch Talks with Lviv #4

25 November 2024, 12 p.m. CET

The Language of War

reading: Oleksandr Mykhed, *The Language of War*, translated from Ukrainian by Maryna Gibson, Hanna Leliv, Abby Dewar (London: Penguin 2024), preface, chapters 1 and 2. [download](#)

introduction: Ostap Slyvynsky (Lviv)

chair: Kornelia Kończal (Bielefeld)

guiding questions: "Language becomes a weapon", Mykhed writes. How does language during war become a weapon of defense, but also a weapon of offense? How does Russian propaganda use words to distort the reality of an aggressive war? How can we recognize and counter manipulative terms? Why are they also often used uncritically by Western media? How does the "language of war" affect society and its culture (brutalization of speech, concreteness, unemotionality)?

Lunch Talks with Lviv #5

2 December 2024, 12 p.m. CET

Rethinking Russian-Ukrainian Relations

reading: Oksana Sabuschko: *Die längste Buchtour: Essay*, translated from Ukrainian by Alexander Kratochvil (Graz: Literaturverlag Droschl, 2022), chapter 1/Оксана Забужко, *Найдовша подорож* (Київ: Комора, 2022), *Замість передмови: Жінка з валізою*, с. 9-48. [download](#)

introduction: Sofiia Filonenko (Lviv)

chair: Kornelia Kończal (Bielefeld)

guiding questions: How has the communication of writers changed since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine? What can a writer do to help his/her country win if he/she speaks from a traumatized situation? Why did lies about the causes and end of World War II cause World War III? What is the role of the library (literature, art, cultural heritage) in wartime personally for an individual and as a weapon in the information war with Russia?

Lunch Talks with Lviv #6

16 December 2024, 12 p.m. CET

Diaries and Dreams of War. Book Launch with Bohdan Shumylovych

reading: Bohdan Shumylovych and Magdalena Zolkos (ed.), *Psychosocial and Cultural Perspectives on the War in Ukraine: Imprints and Dreamscapes* (London: Routledge, 2024), introduction. [download](#)

chair: Kornelia Kończal (Bielefeld) and Taras Romashchenko (Bielefeld)

Since the war initiated by neighboring states against Ukraine began in February, students from the Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv) have started keeping war diaries. The initiative soon expanded, attracting participants from other universities, institutions, and cities. The project, led by the Center for Urban History in cooperation with the UCU Department of Cultural Studies, encouraged students to document their observations, experiences, and emotions even before the academic process in Ukraine resumed. Initially, 50 students joined as contributors, and the number of "chroniclers" has grown to over 70. The group was supported by a cultural studies expert, a professional psychologist, and a philosophy teacher with a background in secular meditation. This interdisciplinary project, situated at the intersection of psychology, anthropology, history, philosophy, and art, held both academic significance and deep human value. The group ended up making diaries at the end of spring 2022, but the collection of dreams is still growing.

Agenda

In 2022, we realized that years from now, many of our wartime experiences, fears, and actions may fade into memory as we return to a semblance of normalcy. However, for future researchers, personal accounts of our daily lives and reflections from this turbulent time could become invaluable records. We encouraged keeping diaries to document personal thoughts, observations, and experiences. These diaries may serve not only as personal testimonies of the war but also as unique documents that may later be of interest to sociologists, historians, and other scholars. Beyond their potential academic value, articulating and recording these experiences—whether in writing, drawing, or verbal expression—has a therapeutic function, helping to process and alleviate the trauma we face during the war. An essential part of this project was also the collection of dreams, night visions, and fantasies. In the early 1980s, British psychoanalyst Gordon Lawrence coined the concept of "social dreaming" to describe dreams with recurring themes that reflect a collective consciousness, making them a useful tool for exploring community dynamics. Lawrence's idea was inspired by Charlotte Beradt's 1968 book, *The Third Reich of Dreams*. Beradt discovered that the dreams of her Jewish patients in pre-war Germany did not stem from their personal conflicts but were profoundly shaped by the oppressive social environment and anti-Semitic propaganda. As Robert Ley, head of the Nazi German Labour Front, once remarked, "The only

person in Germany who still leads a private life is someone who sleeps." In times of extreme oppression, sleep and dreams can become a form of resistance, revealing the collective experiences and traumas shared by society. This project aimed to capture these experiences, providing insight into how war permeated even the subconscious mind, transforming personal dreams into a reflection of a society under siege.

In 2024 the book "Psychosocial and Cultural Perspectives on the War in Ukraine Imprints and Dreamscapes" was published and it reflected on some aspects of the project undertaken since 2022.

<https://www.routledge.com/Psychosocial-and-Cultural-Perspectives-on-the-War-in-Ukraine-Imprints-and-Dreamscapes/Shumylovych-Zolkos/p/book/9781032582191>

For the seminar, we can read the Introduction and chapter 2 combined with any of the chapters by involved scholars.