

Fulbright Ukraine & Institute of International Education Kyiv Office present a virtual event:

On the People and Histories of Borderlands: Polish-Ukrainian Palimpsest

*Julia Buyskykh, an anthropologist and Fulbright alumna, will share her research on lived religious experience in Polish-Ukrainian borderlands and present her book **To the West from The Bug River: Diaries from the Borderlands** (Publisher 21, 2023). This book can be described as anthropological reportage, deriving from the author's ethnographic fieldnotes and travel diaries written during her research in Poland between 2015 and 2018. Each chapter is a true story taken from the everyday life of people living in the administrative, confessional, ethnic, imagined, phantom borderlands. These stories reveal that the reality of daily life in local communities on the periphery is significantly more complicated than the official visions of national histories in neighboring states. The local inhabitants' multilayered and ambiguous memories of the Second World War and its aftermath often contradict official, state-produced national*

narratives of Ukraine and Poland. These memories reveal the asymmetries of power between these two states: their local intellectual elites and the clergy of various denominations on the one hand, and people living in local communities on the other. The voices of those people, their feelings, subtle hints, shades of emotions, memories, and silences constitute a thin, fragile fabric which encompasses their everyday life, often unseen from distant Kyiv and Warsaw. This makes the inhabitants of borderlands feel forgotten, marginalized and undervalued regardless of their ethnic, religious or national self-identification. This is a book about homecoming, reconciliation, healing, belonging, finding oneself, and learning to approach the perspective of others. The presentation will be accompanied by Fulbright Alumna Catherine Wanner's commentary (Professor of History, Anthropology and Religious Studies, Pennsylvania State University).



Speaker: **Julia Buyskykh, Ph.D. (candidate of sciences)** is a historian, anthropologist, and co-founder of an NGO, "The Centre for Applied Anthropology," in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Her research interests include lived religion (Orthodoxy and Catholicism) in Ukraine and Poland, inter-confessional relationships and ecumenical practices, pilgrimages, memories and borderlands studies, ethics, and empathy in qualitative research. She is writing her second Ph.D. thesis in Anthropology and Study of Religions at the University College Cork, Ireland. Julia Buyskykh had a post-doc at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw (2015 – 2016), and several research stays in Polish academic institutions (2014-2015, 2022). In 2017, she was a research fellow in the frames of the "Prisma-Ukraina – Research Network Eastern Europe" scheme at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, Germany. She spent the academic year of 2019-2020 at Pennsylvania State University as a Fulbright visiting scholar. She also was a Sanctuary Fellow at the University College Cork, Ireland (September 2022 – February 2023). For a year (1 April 2024 – 1 April 2025), she will be a guest researcher within the fellowship "Research Perspective Ukraine" at the German Historical Institute, Warsaw, and the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences.



Speaker: **Catherine Wanner, Ph.D.** is a Professor of History, Anthropology and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University.

She is a cultural anthropologist who does historically informed ethnographic research to explore how the shifting politics of religion and processes of secularization in the USSR have shaped social and cultural practices in everyday life in post-Soviet societies. Her interest in religion stems from earlier research she did on nationalism and historical memory in Ukraine and has since broadened to include how religion intersects with war, the politics of belonging, and migration. Catherine Wanner was a Fulbright U.S. Scholar to Ukraine 2019-2020 at Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv. 2023-24 Petro Jacyk Distinguished Fellow, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. Her most recent publications address the Russo-Ukrainian war and include the monograph *Everyday Religiosity and the Politics of Belonging in Ukraine* (Cornell, 2022; Routledge, 2024), and an edited volume, *Dispossession: Anthropological Perspectives on Russia's War Against Ukraine* (Routledge, 2024).



Moderator: **Jessica Zychowicz, Ph.D.** Director of Fulbright Ukraine & Institute of International Education Kyiv Office

Language: English