

# THE UNIVERSITY OF «KIEV-MOHYLA ACADEMY»

## **Ukrhainan Literature of the XX Century: Run into the Accident of the Totalitarism**

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### **Course Objectives:**

*Ukrhainan Literature of the XX Century:Run into the Accident of the Totalitarianism* is an introductory course on one of the most dramatic period of the history of Ukrainian Literature, i.e. the XX century. The course explores the features of Ukrainian modernism, totalitarian literature, oeuvres of shistdesyatnyks (generation of the 60-s), and high modernism of the 80-90-ies.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- identify and compare the features of modernism in the Ukrainian literature of the 20-ies of the XX century;
- measure totalitarian character of the Ukrainian literature in the 30-ies – 70-ies;
- identify and analyze the features of totalitarian discourse in the modern world literature and arts;
- identify and discuss the postcolonial discourse of the modern Ukrainian literature.

### **Lectures and Readings**

Lectures will run for 1 hour 20 minutes every day. In order to see the connection between different arts (painting, sculpture, architecture) some lecture hours will be devoted to visiting the museums and tours around the city.

Reading materials for this course will be copied by a professor. It will be the texts by the prominent Ukrainian writers of each period of the XX century: modernist poems of the 20-ies, samples of the social realism and high modernism of the 60-ies and the 80-ies.

## Course description

It is hard to find Ukrainian literature on the world literature map. This is rather common situation with other literatures of the post-colonial countries. Gifted writers from Ukraine very often became Russian writers and created the empire culture. It is true for the XIX century, and for the 20-ies of the XX century. What is important, that they did not stay at the margins of the literary process, but formed its very heart. We can mention Mykola Gogol, Anna Ahmatova, Mykhailo Zoschenko, Mikhailo Bulgakov, Illia Ilf and Yevhen Petrov, Yuri Olesha, Eduard Bagritsky, Mykhailo Svetlov, and many-many others. Again, it is not our peculiarity. Many famous writers from “brother republics” also wrote in Russian – i.e. Moldovian Ion Drutse, Belorussian Vasil Bykov, Kirgiz Chingiz Aytmatov, Abhasian Fazil Iskander, Georgian Bulat Okudjava, Korean Anatoly Kim, etc. We could recall English literatures as well. Michael Ondaatje and Salman Rushdi and some other representatives of the previously colonized by the Great Britain countries are the first rate stars together with England-originated authors.

Such export of talents is common place when we treat literature in terms of the post-colonial discourse.

An additional fatal blow was that at the end of the XIX – the beginning of the XX centuries most of the prominent Ukrainian writers i.e. Ivan Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, Mykhaylo Kotsyubynsky died.

And in spite of all these objective and subjective facts the 20-ies of the XX century in the Ukrainian literature appeared to be incredibly fruitful and diverse. A lot of new names enriched literature; each one had the outstanding fait – extremely outstanding for a young person. All of them were really young – mostly the same age with the century. Many of these poets, drama and fiction authors had not good education (since they spent their youth in the entrenchments of the I World War and Civil War), didn't know traditions of the XIX century Ukrainian literature well, but they were gifted, inspired, eager to create new, European, modern literature.

It is interesting, that these mention above three epithets did stay tropes, since everyone gave these epithets his/her own sense, and it was impossible to come to common understanding in what they were trying to express. (Maybe, it was the explanation of incredible number of literary groups and organizations, fantastic popularity of such genres as manifestation and program in the 20-ies of the XX century). However, in spite of such a lack of agreement those young people gave birth to really new, European, modern literature. During our course we'll talk about this literature, we'll read and discuss English translations, we'll see Ukrainian modern Arts in the Museums and modern architecture in the streets of

Kyiv, we'll trace the dominances in socio-political situation, which allowed this great phenomenon to appear.

This phenomenon is appeared to be great partly because it lasted only for one decade, then it was destroyed in absolutely brutal way: the pictures and the books were burnt, sculptures were broken, the most bright writers and artists were arrested and killed. The other way to destroy the remnants of new literature was the "creative method" of socialist realism implanted in the Soviet Union by the party and governmental decrees.

A lot was told about this cultural phenomenon on the both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Nevertheless, in the cloudburst of negative explanations and definitions a very important quality of this literature's phenomenon has dissolved: i.e. its popularity among the contemporaries and its vitality even after the Soviet Union, which gave it birth, collapsed. Socialist realism did not simply destroy modern Ukrainian literature, but built another one instead. The numbers of copies of this new literature reached beyond the clouds, some of these books became the best beloved by millions of readers till the end of their days.

We shall read samples of social realist books, we'll analyze the reasons of their popularity and those "viruses" of dehumanization of the society, which were implemented into these works. We also shall try to discover and understand presence of the social realism features in the today's Western cultures, in particular, in American culture.

For half a century any other book written beyond the bounds of socialist realism could not appear. However this was not the most horrible thing. The main catastrophe was that up to beginning of the 80-ies in Ukraine there was no writer, who was grown up beyond the traditions of this "creative method". Thus, the literature resurrection was extremely hard – the writers had to overcome colonial and totalitarian syndromes, create new traditions or apply to the modernist traditions of the 20-ies, actually they had to study what their predecessors were able to perform, study Western literature, which appeared during the years of the "iron curtain", and their main task was to create a new language.

The generation of the 80-ies is one of the brightest in the history of Ukrainian literature, because these young people had managed to overcome those barriers and came to a reader with the new word. They were called avant-gardists, and they really had a lot of avant-garde features in their works. They tried to be postmodernists, but mostly stayed in the traditions of modernism of the 20-ies, or – not so many of them – created their works in aesthetics of absurd, in traditions of Ionesco and Becket, adapted to the post-soviet realities. Existential motives were also quiet influential.

The Ukrainian writers of the XX century are not translated yet into English. Still, after the end of this course, we'll be able to imagine the starting point, from which the literature of the new age has started for the future. It does not rid of totalitarian and colonial heritage. It is not the burden, which is easy to rid of. Totalitarianism is a kind of disease, which traces unstable health state for a long time, and it is easier to protect then to treat.

It concerns not only Ukrainian literature. Totalitarianism is widely spread phenomenon in the world. Any society whatever democratic and rich can not be guaranteed from it. So any culture is not guaranteed from being transformed into this or that variant of socialist realism – doesn't matter how to label it. Ukrainian experience can really help to foresee these symptoms beforehand.

### **Course requirements:**

The course will be conducted in lectures, seminars and tours. During the lectures the professor will be presenting the brief outlook on certain period of the Ukrainian literature. The students will read the works of the prominent representatives of the period and discuss them at the seminars. Some hours will be devoted to the tours to museums and around the city.

Students will be asked to write two papers, to analyze several works of the Ukrainian writers: one essay at the end of the first week, and the other one at the end of the second week. By the end of the course students are supposed to prepare presentation about the most impressive writer or fact of the XX century Ukrainian literature.

### **Grades**

Grades will be assigned according to the following breakdown:

Class participation	20%	
Essay 1 (modernism of the 20 <sup>th</sup> ) Week 2	20%	Due at start of
Essay 2 (social realism)	20%	Due at start of Week 3
Presentation	40%	Due on last day of

### Class topics and required readings:

Aug 6	The Ukrainian literature. It's beginning and the main periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tale of Ihor's campaign. \ The Ukrainian poets. 1189 – 1962. University of Toronto, 1963. – pp. 3-20.</li> <li>• Taras Shevchenko. The Prophet. \ The Ukrainian poets. 1189 – 1962. University of Toronto, 1963. – pp. 106.</li> </ul>
Aug 7	Ancient Kyiv. Architecture and paintings. Tour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Aug 8	The beginning of the XX century. Revolution and the Civil War. Shouted Renaissance.	<p>Modern Ukrainian short stories / Edited, with a pref., by George S. N. Luckyj. - Parallel text ed. - [Littleton, Colo.] : Ukrainian Academic Press, 1973. - 228 p. ; 24 cm. - Ukrainian and English.</p> <p>The Pious Woman / by Vasyl Stefanyk. The News / by Vasyl Stefanyk. A Stone Cross / by by Vasyl Stefanyk. A Strange Episode / by Volodymyr Vynnychenko. Cedar Wood will Grow / by Mykhaylo Jatskiv. The Problem of Bread / by Valerian Pidmohyl'ny. My Being / by Mykola Khvylovy. Black Night / by Hryhorij Kosynka. A Boat in the Sea / by Yuriy Janovsky. A Sea Story / by Yevhen Hutsalo. White Flowers / by Mykola Vinhranovsky. My Father Decided to Plant Orchards / by Valeriy Shevchuk. The Cobbler / by Valerij Shevchuk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Aug 9	The Grate Literary Discussion of the 25-28 <sup>th</sup> . P.Tychyna, Y.Pluzhnyk, M.Khvyliovy, V.Pidmohyl'ny, M.Kulish, O.Dovzhenko.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pavlo Tychyna, «Two Poems»</li> <li>• Pavlo Tychyna. Sunny Clarinets. \ The Ukrainian poets. 1189 – 1962. University of Toronto, 1963. – pp. 316</li> <li>• Pidmohyl'ny V. A Little Touch of Drama / Valerian Pidmohyl'ny ; translated from Ukrainian by George S. N. and Moira Luckyj ; with introduction by George Shevelov. - Littleton : Ukrainian Academic Press, 1972. - 191 p. - (Ukrainian Classics in Translation ; no. 1).</li> <li>• Khvylovy M. My self (Romantica)// Stories from the Ukraine / M. Khvylovy ; transl. by G.S.N. Luckyj. -New York : Philosophical Library, 1960. - p. 31 – 55.</li> <li>• Khvylovy M. The cultural renaissance in Ukraine : polemical pamphlets, 1925-1926 / Mykola Khvylovy ; translated, edited, and introduced by Myroslav Shkandrij. - Edmonton : Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1986. - xi, 266 p.. - (The Canadian library in Ukrainian studies). - Includes bibliographical references and index.</li> <li>• Myroslav Shkandrij. From Modernists to Marxists. Literary Organizations, 1917 – 1925. // Modernists, Marxists and the Nation. – Edmonton, 1992. – pp. 19 – 52.</li> </ul>
Aug 10	The Ukrainian modernism in painting and architecture. Tour.	
Aug 13	Forbiddance of a fairy-tale. Destructing of the literary groups and organizations. The I Congress of Soviet writers. The Union of the Soviet Writers and the only creative method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George S.N. Luckyj. The Formation of the Writer's Union. April, 1932 – August, 1934. // Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine. 1917 - 1934. – Duke University Press – Durham and London, 1990. – pp.203 – 230.</li> </ul>

	of the Soviet literature.	
Aug 14	Socialist realism in other Arts. Tour.	•
Aug 15	The war literature	•
Aug 16	Oles Honchar: conscious devotion to the method	• Honchar O. Man and Arms : a novel / O. Honchar. - K. : Dnipro Publishers, 1985. - 362 p. - Пер. зукр.
Aug 17	War and post-war aesthetics. Tour.	•
Aug 20	“Renovation of socialist realism.” The 60 <sup>th</sup> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drach I. Orchard Lamps / by Ivan Drach ; ed. and introduced by S. Kunitz with woodcuts by J. Hnizdovsky ; tr. by D. Halpert ... [at all]. -New York : Sheep Meadow Press, 1978. -71 p. : ill.</li> <li>• Mykola Vinhranovsky. White Flowers. // Modern Ukrainian Short Stories. – Englewood, Colorado, 1995. – p.187 -204.</li> </ul>
Aug 21	Jumping over the heads. Spiral returning to traditions of the 20 <sup>th</sup> . The 80 <sup>th</sup> .	<p>Modern Ukrainian short stories / Edited, with a pref., by George S. N. Luckyj. - Parallel text ed. - [Littleton, Colo.] : Ukrainian Academic Press, 1973. - 228 p. ; 24 cm. - Ukrainian and English.</p> <p>The Pious Woman / by Vasyl Stefanyk. The News / by Vasyl Stefanyk. A Stone Cross / by by Vasyl Stefanyk. A Strange Episode / by Volodymyr Vynnychenko. Cedar Wood will Grow / by Mykhaylo Jatskiv. The Problem of Bread / by Valerian Pidmohylny. My Being / by Mykola Khvylovy. Black Night / by Hryhorij Kosynka. A Boat in the Sea / by Yuriy Janovsky. A Sea Story / by Yevhen Hutsalo. White Flowers / by Mykola Vinhranovsky. My Father Decided to Plant Orchards / by Valeriy Shevchuk. The Cobbler / by Valerij Shevchuk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Aug 22	High modernism in the Ukrainian literature. I.Rymaruk, V.Herasymyuk, Y. Andrukhovych V.Dibrova, O.Lysheha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volodymyr Dibrova, «Birthday»</li> <li>• Yuri Andrukhovych, «India»</li> <li>• Lysheha O. The Selected Poems of Oleh Lysheha / translated by J. Brasfield. - Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1999. - 121 p. - (Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies).</li> <li>• Andrukhovych Y. Recreations / Y. Andrukhovych ; translated M. Pavlyshyn. - Edmonton, Toronto : Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1998. - 132 p. ill.</li> </ul>
Aug 23	Course wrap-up	Students presentations