



Religion and War in Ukraine: The political, the public and the possible

March 14-16, 2024

*Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta
In cooperation with the
Working Group on Lived Religion in Eastern Europe and Eurasia*

“Religion and war in Ukraine: The political, the public, and the possible” is the first conference dedicated to the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war on religion in Ukraine since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Speakers explore the full range of experiences of a broad cross-section of religious groups in Ukraine and offer analyses of the role they might play in the aftermath of war.

Beginning with the hybrid war in Ukraine in 2014, and especially since the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, a parallel religious proxy war has unfolded. The war itself is a struggle over Ukraine’s sovereignty, political orientation, and geopolitical fate. Religion, as a critical marker of identity, heritage, and history, has been instrumentalized by all parties. Religion has served as a basis for nation-building and decolonization, state-building, and humanitarian relief. It has also been the source of social and political polarization. This international, interdisciplinary hybrid conference, “Religion and war in Ukraine: The political, the public, and the possible,” takes stock of the profound impact of war on religious life in Ukraine since the invasion and launches an international conversation about the role the range of religious groups in Ukraine – Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim—can play after the war. The conference will also include the opening of an exhibition, “Destroyed Temples of Ukraine.”

See the conference website here:

<https://app.groupize.com/e/international-conference-religion-war-in-ukraine>

Conference Program

BOHDAN BOCIURKIW MEMORIAL LECTURE AND RECEPTION

Thursday, March 14 | 7pm MST

Telus 134 - Telus International Centre
11104 87 Ave NW - Edmonton

Welcome: Heather Coleman, University of Alberta and
Catherine Wanner, Penn State University

Presentation: Dmytro Vovk (In person presentation)

Regulating my enemy's church: relations between the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in times of Russian aggression

In my lecture, I'll analyze legal measures implemented by the Ukrainian state to restrict the operation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church historically and ecclesiastically connected with the Moscow Patriarchate. I'll try to explain why these measures have been (are being) implemented and how they affect religion-state relations in Ukraine. While my main perspective is legal, I'll also aim to put the UOC case in the domestic and social political contexts, including identitarian developments. I'll argue that, while this conflict is often framed as a "religious freedom versus national security" case, it should also be considered as a part of a broader decolonization and de-Russification agenda, which is supported by Ukrainian society and pushed forward by the Ukrainian state, but, in the case of religion, might provoke human rights concerns.

Dmytro Vovk is currently a visiting professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York. Prior to 2022, Vovk was Director of the Center for the Rule of Law and Religion at the Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University in Ukraine, where he was also Professor of Law. Vovk is a preeminent expert on constitutional law, and has authored and edited numerous books and articles. He has submitted influential briefs to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, the Supreme Court of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian State Agency for Ethnic Policies and Freedom of Conscience, and policy papers on religion and forced displacement. He has served as a religious freedom advisor to several international institutions, including the UN Population Fund, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion of Belief, OSCE, and USAID. As a respected international religious freedom expert, he has been involved in interfaith dialogue and church-state relations in Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Balkan countries, and Ukraine.

The annual Bohdan Bociurkiw Memorial Lecture at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies features presentations by prominent scholars and political activists in the area of Ukrainian politics, history, and religion. Professor Bohdan R. Bociurkiw (1925-1998) was a prominent political scientist and a world-renowned specialist in the area of human rights, Soviet religious policy, and the history of Ukrainian churches. He began his academic career at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, where he taught at the Department of Political Science from 1956 to 1969. He went on to teach at Carleton University, where he remained until his retirement in 1992. A skilled organizer, Professor Bociurkiw helped found many academic and professional projects and institutions, including CIUS. The generous donation of his library and archive laid the foundations for the Research Program on Religion and Culture at the Institute.

Friday, March 15

Telus 134 - Telus International Centre
11104 87 Ave NW - Edmonton

9:00 Welcome

Xiaoting Li, Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta
Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Director, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta

9:15-12:30 Panel 1 THE ORTHODOX IMPASSE (Part I)

Chair: John-Paul Himka, University of Alberta

9:15 Olena Bohdan, "The labyrinth of politics, the mystery of faith: addressing Ukraine's Orthodox situation in state policy" (In person presentation)

This paper explores challenges that Ukraine faces in its Orthodox situation and discusses policies that might address these challenges effectively from a good governance perspective, with respect for the rule of law and human rights, while taking into consideration the tragic context of the attempted Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It explicates factors behind the complexity of the current Orthodox situation and shows that crucial factors are beyond religion: they are rooted in a number of secular problems, and therefore constructive policy solutions must address issues both within the religious sphere and beyond it.

Dr. Olena Bohdan is an expert in religious and ethnic affairs, democratization and well-being studies. She has taught social science courses in top Ukrainian universities for 15 years, mainly at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, which is also her alma mater for BA and PhD degrees in sociology. Olena Bohdan has extensive experience with civil society and government sectors. She served as the Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience from 2020 to 2022, having launched this agency in 2020 and directed it into a fully operational central government body despite the challenges of pandemic and Russian full-scale attack on Ukraine. During 2021–2022, Dr. Bohdan served as the Vice-Chair at the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (elected twice by secret ballot of member states).

9:35 Andriy Fert, "Decolonizing" the church: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate's responses to Ukrainian decolonization" (Zoom presentation)

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 sparked acute discussions about the place of the Russian cultural legacy in Ukrainian public space. There appears to be social consensus that toponyms and monuments connected to Russian imperial and Soviet history must be removed to further what Ukrainian authorities term "decolonization." Given how intertwined Ukrainian history and Orthodox Christianity are, it is hardly surprising that any discussions about coping with Russian colonial legacies involve the issue of the Church. These discussions mainly concern either the "Russian church" possessing national heritage sites, such as Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, or the Church spreading ideas of the so-called "Russian world." "Ecclesiastic decolonization" in public discourse encompasses banning the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate: UOC-MP) or rejecting the veneration of saints that are somehow linked to Russian imperial history. This paper explores how UOC-MP parishes respond to these discussions by adapting their religious

Andriy Fert is a PhD in history, he is a UNET non-resident fellow at the Zentrum für Osteuropa- und internationale Studien in Berlin. He is an expert on the interplay of religion and nationalism, secular martyrs, and the churches' role in memory politics, particularly as they pertain to inter-Orthodox conflict in Ukraine today. Fert also coordinates several educational projects for secondary school history teachers at the Ukrainian office of the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul Verband. Based in Kyiv.

9:55 Commentator: Heather Coleman, University of Alberta

Break 10:45-11:00

11:00-12:30 Panel 1 THE ORTHODOX IMPASSE (Part II)

Chair: Sean Patterson, University of Alberta

11:00 Nicholas Denysenko, “Orthodoxy and the war in Ukraine: Obstacles to unity and opportunities for healing” (In person presentation)

This presentation explores two dimensions of current fractures in the global Orthodox church. The first section reviews the issues leading to the separation of and enmity between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (previously under Moscow) and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Analysis of the current inertia preventing the global Orthodox Church from contributing to a resolution of the problem follows. The assessment of the obstacles to unity leads to a frank presentation on existing sources for the healing of divisions. The presentation explores the fundamental sources of healing and restoration in the New Testament that are ritualized in Orthodox liturgy as the optimal catalysts for resolution of the problem and initiating the process of healing.

Nicholas Denysenko is the Emil and Elfriede Jochum University Professor and Chair and Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University, USA. He previously taught at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where he served as director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute. He is a specialist in global Orthodoxy with a particular understanding of the dynamics of how conflicts within Orthodoxy in Ukraine play out in North American Orthodox denominations and parishes. Denysenko is an ordained deacon of the Orthodox Church in America since 2003. Denysenko specializes in Orthodox liturgical theology, ritual studies, and writes for an ecumenical audience. He is the author of *The Church’s Unholy War: Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine and Orthodoxy*, which complements his award-winning book *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation*.

11:20 Regina Elsner, “Theological (im)possibilities for reconciliation in Ukraine” (In person presentation)

Orthodoxy has been widely analyzed as a soft power actor in Russia’s war against Ukraine in particular and against the West in general. Political instrumentalization of religion is for sure a crucial topic in order to understand the role Orthodoxy played and plays in these conflicts. However, it can be assumed that there are theological paradigms enabling or restraining political instrumentalization for the purpose of war. The paper analyzes which theological concepts in Orthodoxy limit an active role of the churches in societal reconciliation and why the bold idea of Christianity as a peaceful religion should be assessed carefully.

Regina Elsner is a Catholic theologian and, as of April 2023, professor of Eastern Churches and Ecumenical Theology at the University of Münster, Germany. Previously, she utilized her expertise in Orthodoxy and the politics of religion in Russia and Ukraine as a researcher at the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS). Most importantly, she came to the academy after having gained extensive experience in the provision by faith-based organizations of humanitarian and other forms of aid as a project coordinator for Caritas Russia in St Petersburg. She is widely regarded as one of the world’s foremost experts on Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe, Orthodox social ethics and questions of peace ethics, and gender justice. To date she has carried out research in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia.

11:40 Commentator: Frank Sysyn, University of Alberta

Lunch break: 12:30-1:30

1:30-2:45 Panel 2 REACTING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR

Chair: Volodymyr Kravchenko, University of Alberta

1:30 Oleg Kyselov, "Celebrating Christmas as a political act: Church calendrical reform in Ukraine" (In person presentation)

The paper discusses the problem of Ukrainian churches switching from the Julian to the Gregorian and New Julian Gregorian church calendars, which means moving the celebration of Christmas from January 7 to December 24. The paper's analysis shows that the arguments made by supporters of the transition are predominantly political rather than religious. These arguments justify, first of all, the opposition of Ukrainian society to the Russian one, emphasizing Ukrainians as a part of European nations. The paper also examines the arguments that followed the laws of 2017 and 2023 that added Christmas on December 25 to the list of official state holidays and removed Christmas on January 7 from the same list, respectively. The analysis of public discussions and reactions to the change suggests that the date of Christmas has become more of a political issue than a religious one. Amidst war, religious problems are resolved in the context of national interests and in an instrumentalist way.

Oleg Kyselov is a senior research scientist at the H.S. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of Ukraine's National Academy of Sciences. He received his PhD in religious studies from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. His main interests include the sociology of religion, interfaith relations, and the history of religious studies. He is the author of *Fenomen ekumenizmu v suchasnomu khrystyanstvi* (Phenomenon of Ecumenism in Modern Christianity, 2009). He was one of the founders of the NGO *Workshop for the Academic Study of Religion*. He is the editor-in-chief of the annual journal *Relihieznavchi narysy* (Essays on Religious Studies). He was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Alabama in the USA in 2021-22 and remains there in the Department of Religious Studies as an Instructor.

1:55 Lidiya Lozova, "Social ethos of icons in Ukraine during wartime" (In person presentation)

In Orthodox tradition, the icon testifies to the reality of God's Incarnation in history and the image of God in each person. Although icons have a didactic quality, they are believed to be mystagogical, (leading the viewer towards the divine); theologically speaking, they show "heaven on earth" and are a prayer themselves. However, can icons also say something about "the earth" as such, meaning the social and political reality around them? Usually, it is said that the icon presents a social ethic not of this world. The current situation in Ukraine challenges this assumption. I explore the social ethos of icons and "icon like" images that refer to the war. I examine experimental icons (eg. Icons on Ammo Boxes), modern "sacred art", and secular artworks that function as social statements about the war using iconographic motifs. Finally, I consider social practices that involve icons and these images.

Lidiya Lozova is a British Academy Fellow in the Theology and Religion Department, University of Exeter, since the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Prior to that, Lozova defended her doctoral thesis in the History and Theory of Art History at the Modern Art Research Institute, Ukrainian National Academy of Art, in 2015 and was a researcher at the European Humanities Research Centre of the University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy on Christian theology, ecumenical relations, and civic peacebuilding. She also continues to work as a translator and editor at "Spirit and Letter" Research and Publishing Association (Kyiv). Her current research concerns the social ethos of Eastern Christian icons, specifically modern icons and icon-like images that appear during wartime in Ukraine. She is recognized as one of the finest and most promising young scholars working in the areas of iconography, Orthodox social ethos, and the encounter between traditional Orthodox spirituality and modernity.

2:15 Commentator: Marko Zivkovic, University of Alberta

Break: 2:45-3:00

3:00-4:30 KEYNOTE LECTURE

Chair: Catherine Wanner, Penn State University

Making War and Building Peace: The Crucial Roles of Religious Actors

Scott Appleby (Zoom presentation)

Russia's war on Ukraine has been both resisted and justified by religious authorities of the Eastern Christian tradition, including rival Orthodox patriarchs who hold competing views of "Holy Russia" and the moral legitimacy of the war. Other religious communities affected by the deadly conflict—including Baptists, Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, Jews and Mormons—have held protests, called for a ceasefire, and promoted peace talks.

What difference do religious actors make in a state's decisions to go to war and how it prosecutes and ends a war? Under what circumstances are religious actors capable of preventing deadly violence or turning the tide of social and political will? Drawing on the examples of modern cases of religious agency in both legitimating deadly conflict and building peace, the presentation will take the Russia-Ukraine war as its frame of reference in drawing lessons from the past

Scott Appleby is professor of history and the Marilyn Keough Dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame. Previously he directed Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. The author or editor of fifteen books, Appleby examines the ways religions and religiously inspired actors shape and are shaped by modern ideas, institutions, practices and conflicts. His publications include *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation*, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding*, and the five volumes of the *The Fundamentalism Project* (University of Chicago Press), which he edited with Martin E. Marty.

5:00-6.00pm Opening OF "DESTROYED TEMPLES OF UKRAINE" EXHIBIT AND RECEPTION

Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Director, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta
Ihor Poshyvailo, Director of the National Museum of Revolution of Dignity (Maidan Museum) and curator of the "Destroyed Temples of Ukraine" exhibit

Saturday, March 16

Telus 134 - Telus International Centre
11104 87 Ave NW - Edmonton

9:30-12:30 Panel 3 TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE (Part I)

Chair: Anna Olenenko, University of Alberta

9:30 Marina Sapritsky-Nahum, "The view from home and abroad: Jewish responses to Russia's war in Ukraine" (Zoom presentation)

This paper analyses how Russia's war in Ukraine has affected Ukrainian Jewish communities, the larger Russian-speaking Jewish population and the wider Jewish world. Religious communities have been paramount in creating communities of care in war torn Ukraine, but the current academic conversations on the topic have largely left out the role of minority ethno-religious groups and, specifically, Jewish

responses in and outside of Ukraine. This paper asks how Jewish people, communities and organisations have shaped and have been shaped by the ongoing trauma of war. Drawing on ongoing ethnographic fieldwork since March 2022, I argue that while the war has united the Jews of Ukraine with one another and the wider Ukrainian society, it has also divided the Russian-speaking Jewish population and changed the nature of support of transnational Jewish organisations whose initiatives to help ex-Soviet Jewry have been caught up in the politics of war.

Marina Sapritsky-Nahum is a social anthropologist and a visiting fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University College London (UCL) and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her area of expertise is Jewish life in contemporary Ukraine. She is the author of a forthcoming book, *Jewish Odesa: Negotiating Identities and Traditions in Contemporary Ukraine* (2024, Indiana University Press). She has published articles and chapters on the themes of home and diaspora, cosmopolitanism, religious adherence, philanthropy, and heritage travel. Her current research looks at the experiences of Ukrainian Jewish refugees in Europe and is part of the German Research Foundation (DFG) priority program “Jewish Cultural Heritage.”

9:50 Jacob Lassin, “The Orthodox internet and the extension of canonical territory” (In person presentation)

The question of canonical territory and jurisdiction is an essential issue in the governance of the Eastern Orthodox communion. This paper will address how Orthodox online media is used to extend the notion of canonical space around the globe increasing the influence and authority of various autocephalous Churches. This paper will address how Orthodoxy understands online media and its relationship with the physical boundaries of canonical territory and how it impacts ongoing ecclesial disputes through analysis of online media from the Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This paper will help to address the question: Does cyberspace have the potential to be sacred in Orthodoxy?

Jacob Lassin is Assistant Professor of Russian Regional and Cultural Studies at the **Air** University, Maxwell, Alabama. He was formerly a Teaching Fellow at the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies and a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Media, Journalism, and Film at Miami University of Ohio. Lassin received his PhD from Yale University in 2019. His area of expertise is the intersection of religion, politics, and new media in Ukraine, Russia and the former Soviet Union. He is an expert on the use of social media to build social movements. He is currently writing a book entitled, *Sacred Sites: Russian Orthodox Cultural Politics Online*, which explores how websites run by the Russian Orthodox Church and its allies work to reframe the national literary canon. He held Postdoctoral Fellowships at Arizona State University and Harvard University.

10:10 Commentator: John-Paul Himka, University of Alberta

Break 10:45-11:00

11:00-12:30 Panel 3 TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE (Part II)

Chair: David Marples, University of Alberta

11:00 Denys Brylov, “Between Ummah and nation: The impact of the Ukraine war on the Muslim community(s)” (In person presentation)

The Russian-Ukrainian war significantly aggravated a number of problems in the religious communities of the two countries, in particular, the issue of civil and religious identity and the correlation between them. This problem has become particularly acute in the Muslim communities of the two countries, given the alienated nature of the Muslim minorities of Russia and Ukraine from the Orthodox majority. Where is the boundary between patriotism, ethno-confessional nationalism, and religious solidarity? The article examines how Muslim communities in Russia and Ukraine address this problem at the level of behavioral strategies, theological and public discourse. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of the

concept of Jihad in Ukrainian and Russian Muslim communities, as well as to the issue of situational identity in the clash of interests of reference groups (religious and civil) to which Muslims in Ukraine and Russia simultaneously belong.

Denys Brylov is a senior researcher at the A. Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv) and a research fellow at the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (Berlin). He is considered the foremost specialist on Islam and Islamic education in Ukraine. His other areas of expertise include Sufi political activism, transnational Sufi movements, religious factors in conflicts, and religion and nationalism. He is a member of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine's commission on the state recognition of higher theological education diplomas, academic degrees, and titles issued by higher theological educational institutions. Brylov has authored some 70 publications in multiple languages and is the co-editor of *Sufism and the Islamic Spiritual Tradition: Texts, Institutions, Ideas, and Interpretations* (2015). In recognition of his expertise, he led a project funded by the United States Institute of Peace on interconfessional conflict in Ukraine after the 2022 Russian invasion.

11:20 Tatiana Vagramenko, "Endangered memory: Religious minorities' archives during war" (In person presentation)

The study provides ethnographic reflections on the lives of community archives during wartime in Ukraine, focusing on their role as tangible repositories of historical memory, particularly vulnerable amidst Russia's military aggression. I follow the story of several archives belonging to minority religious communities in Ukraine. Given their minority status and sometimes lack of official registration with state authorities, these communities fight on their own to protect their historical legacy, archives, their prayer houses and, at times, their very lives. The archives in the focus of this research were either relocated, smuggled, destroyed, stolen or, conversely, opened after several decades of being concealed from outsiders' eyes. What unite them all is their shared history deeply rooted in the Soviet past, a time marked by suppression, secrecy, and control. This legacy of secrecy and survival continues to shape the fate of these communities and their archives today.

The ongoing war bears the ghosts of the Soviet past, profoundly impacting the religious landscape in Ukraine and across the former Soviet region. Russia's aggression since 2014, with its major escalation since February 2022, ruptured post-Soviet religious alliances, fostering new identities and moral dilemmas. As most Protestant movements formed during the Soviet period, wartime disintegration prompts a painful reassessment of historical identities and memory. The process of rescuing, revising and re-narrating community archives reflects how historical narrative serves as a vital tool for processing the enduring Soviet legacy and navigating both historical and contemporary traumas of wartime Ukraine.

Tatiana Vagramenko is a social anthropologist and a religious studies scholar. She is currently a senior postdoctoral researcher at University College Cork and a principal investigator of the SFI-IRC Pathway-funded project "History Declassified: The KGB and the Religious Underground in Soviet Ukraine." Her work focuses on the anthropology of religion in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia and the complex history of the entanglement of religion with the Soviet secret police and its legacy in the post-communist context. She is a co-editor, with James Kapaló, of *Hidden Galleries: Material Religion in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe* (2020, Lit Verlag) and, with Nadezhda Beliakova, of *The Lives of Soviet Secret Agents: Religion and Police Surveillance in the USSR* (2024, Lexington Books). She received her PhD in anthropology from the National University of Ireland Maynooth.

11:40 Commentator: Indre Cuplinskas, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta

Lunch: 12:30-1:30

1:30-3:00 Panel 4 RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND PEACEMAKING (Part I)

Chair: Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, University of Alberta

1:30 Tetiana Kalenychenko (via Zoom) and Catherine Wanner (in person), “Creating a culture of dialogue during war”

This presentation presents research based on over five years of fieldwork focusing on restorative practices and peacebuilding initiatives in Ukraine. Field data consists of accounts by religious actors from different denominations who have joined interconfessional groups to talk about points of contention, ethical dilemmas, and possible areas of cooperation. Their accounts provide a sense of lived religion in Ukraine, reveal intra- and inter-religious dynamics, and shed light on how religious actors might help intervene to reduce or resolve social tensions. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated polarization, vastly complicating cooperation. By understanding the constraints and competing aspirations among denominations, it is possible to analyze the potential future role of religious organizations in the post-war recovery period.

Tetiana Kalenychenko holds a PhD in Sociology of Religion from National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in Kyiv, Ukraine and received training in peacebuilding at the Mirovna Academia in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is the Executive Director of the NGO Center for European Strategic Analytics and co-founder of Dialogue in Action, an NGO involved in conflict mediation and community building in Ukraine. She works in the field of conflict analysis and management, peacekeeping, and restorative practices with many international organizations (OSCE, UNDP, USAID, MCC, USIP, and others). She conducts academic research based on fieldwork as a dialogue facilitator and trainer in peacekeeping initiatives in Ukraine. She has been working "on the ground" in the front zones for many years and brings expertise in the role of religious groups in conflict mediation and community building.

Catherine Wanner is a historical anthropologist and Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies at The Pennsylvania State University. Using ethnographic and archival methods, her research centers on the politics of religion and increasingly on conflict mediation, ecocide, and trauma healing. Her two most recent publications are *Everyday Religiosity and the Politics of Belonging in Ukraine* (Cornell, 2022), which won two book prizes, and an edited volume, *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*. In 2020 she was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Prize from the Association for the Study of Eastern Christianity and in 2023 she received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Association of Women in Slavic Studies. She is the Petro Jacyk Distinguished Fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute for 2023-24.

1:50 Ihor Poshyvailo, “Identity war in Ukraine: Religion and culture on the battlefield”

(In person presentation)

During the 20 months of full-scale war several thousand cultural institutions, architectural, historical, and religious sites have been damaged and almost a thousand destroyed. The most numerous among them are religious buildings: temples, churches, mosques, and synagogues. In March 2022 the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (briefly HERI) was launched by the Maidan Museum and Tustan NGO to respond to this crisis, establishing a wide network of museums, archives, and libraries partnerships, coordinating its activities with the national and international governmental and NGO sectors. The Maidan Museum and HERI produced the exhibit "Destroyed Temples of Ukraine", telling emotional stories of the religious sites and communities impacted by the war. This presentation will focus on details of this exhibition's background, concept, and implementation.

Ihor Poshyvailo is Director of the National Museum of Revolution of Dignity (Maidan Museum) and curator of the "Destroyed Temples of Ukraine" exhibit. He holds a PhD in History (Ethnology) from the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Ex-chairman of the Museum Council at the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and the ICOM International Committee on Disaster Resilient Museums. When the full-scale Russian invasion started in February 2022 became initiator, co-founder and coordinator of the Heritage Emergency Response Initiative (HERI) and a member of the National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the War.

2:10 Commentator: Jeff Stepnisky, MacEwan University

Break 3:00-3:15

3:15-4:45 Panel 4 RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND PEACEMAKING (Part II)

Chair: Stephen Martin, King's University

3:15 Cyril Hovorun, "The World Council of Churches' peacemaking in Ukraine" (In person presentation)

The paper critically analyses the peacemaking initiatives of the World Council of Churches in Ukraine, from 2014 through our days. It argues that such initiatives are focused not so much on the results as the process of peacemaking. It criticises a tendency in the rhetoric of the WCC's leaders to put the victim and perpetrator of the war on the same footing, as well as the usage of the term "nationalism" in explaining the war. Finally, it addresses the most recent initiative of the WCC to bring to the same table the representatives of three churches: the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the still dependent on Moscow Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun is a Professor of Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism at the Stockholm School of Theology. Fr. Hovorun was previously a member of the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and has since become one of its foremost critics. He is the author of numerous publications on Orthodox political theology and church-state relations. He has taught theology at theological academies in Kyiv, Moscow, Minsk, the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy," and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. He was a research fellow at Yale and Columbia Universities, a visiting professor at the University of Münster and international fellow at Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life at the University of Alberta in Canada.

3:35 Pavlo Smytsnyuk, "The Holy See between neutrality and moral high ground: The conundrum of the war in Ukraine" (In person presentation)

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Pope Francis and other Vatican officials have expressed closeness to both Ukraine and Russia, and provoked criticism from both belligerent parties. My paper interprets the Holy See's position on the war in the context of its traditional neutrality and impartiality, as expressed in Article 24 of the Lateran Treaty of 1929. I argue that Francis articulates the Vatican's neutrality differently than did his European predecessors: the Pope is de-centering the West and promoting a vision of a multi-polar world, where countries such as China and Russia are seen as a counterbalance to NATO and the West. I conclude by outlining what effects such an understanding of neutrality can have for the prospects of Vatican mediation.

Pavlo Smytsnyuk is the Mary Seeger O'Boyle Associate Research Scholar at the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies and the Department of Religion at Princeton University since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He specializes in political theology and religious nationalism in Orthodox Christianity and has written extensively on the politicization of religion in the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine. He is currently writing a book on explicating the category of religion as an instrument of anti-colonial struggle. Prior to the invasion, he was the Director of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies and a Senior Lecturer at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine. He is a specialist on the intersection of theology, politics and ethics and has spearheaded several international-collaborative projects on Eastern Christian identity, religion, war, and peacebuilding.

3:55 Commentator: Frank Sysyn, University of Alberta

Break 4:45-5:00

5:00-6:00 CONCLUDING ROUNDTABLE

Chairs: Heather Coleman and Catherine Wanner

Sponsors:

- Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
- SSHRC Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- Kule Institute for Advanced Study
- University of St. Gallen Center for Governance and Culture in Europe --Working Group on Lived Religion
- Killam Research Fund (Research Connection Grant)
- Department of History, Classics, and Religion
- Emil & Elfriede Jochum Chair in Theology, Valparaiso University