

Ukrainian Fulbright Student Alumni Profiles

Olena Fedyuk

spent 2001-2002 getting an MA in Indigenous Nations Studies at the University of Kansas. Below is the description of the Program in her own words.

The Center for Indigenous Nations Studies (CINS) is an outstanding program at the University of Kansas. Unlike many academic programs in the U.S. it looks not only at Native Americans but at Indigenous peoples all around the world. When telling people that I majored in Indigenous Nations Studies, they always ask if I did my work in anthropology, history or sociology. CINS embraces a profoundly different approach, however. It is part of a quite new and hopefully growing tendency in academia in which instead of extrapolating about Indigenous peoples, scholars, who often themselves come from various Indigenous backgrounds, incorporate knowledge, philosophies, and values of their people into Western academic discourse. The program has four main tracks: General Studies, Museum Studies, Sovereignty Development, and Linguistics and Language Teaching. All students are required to take three core courses and a number of classes from each track. The core courses (Indigenous Peoples of the World, Issues Facing Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and Administrative Skills and Leadership) cover major issues of Indigenous peoples throughout the world. The course on the Americas involves lectures by professors from linguistics, education, literature, history, and anthropology, each of whom has two weeks to introduce major aspects of his or her discipline related to

Indigenous peoples. These classes help students to glimpse the general picture outside their fields of interest to better understand issues in their fields, and to relate them to policies towards Native peoples. Such seminars are particularly enriching because in addition to lectures each student brings to the discussion different perspectives from his or her field.

By combining diverse perspectives and points of view, CINS students explore the different situations of Indigenous peoples around the world and learn from the experiences of their fellow students and instructors. In many ways CINS is part of a network which connects Indigenous peoples of the world and supports them despite the regimes and political structures of the countries where they live. During the five years of its existence, CINS has established exchange programs with the University of Oulu (Finland) and Newcastle University (Australia) and is working on a conference project with a university in Peru. The exchange program allows teachers to visit and students to take classes in any of these universities. CINS is very open to international experience and has already hosted two Fulbright students (a Psychology student from the Czech Republic and me) and a visiting scholar from Japan. CINS works closely with Haskell Indian Nations University. Students from these two institutions can take courses at each other's programs. Haskell is a four-year college and CINS is viewed as a logical continuation on a Master's Degree level. CINS provides a wider range of international issues facing Indigenous peoples to the

experience offered by Haskell. I see CINS as one of the first examples of a new awareness in academia to include contributions of Indigenous scholars within the academic program. CINS students learn how to be active representatives of Indigenous peoples in Western society and how to help give them adequate representation in all aspects of modern life. Instead of using academia as an assimilation tool, CINS students learn to use and incorporate indigenous philosophies, ways of life, values and perspectives into the Western academy. As graduates working in their chosen fields (museum studies, federal law, rehabilitation programs for indigenous languages and literatures, history, education,

etc.) they are a voice for indigenous people. CINS student projects are often related to the needs of their communities or are aimed at improving policies regarding native peoples. Projects addressing language rehabilitation and rebirth, federal law, land and resource issues, respectful treatment of Native heritage in museums, repatriation questions, and education of a Native child help towards success in the Western world and to preserve self-respect and harmony within cultural values and its heritage. These projects are aimed at changing Western academic and professional worlds so that they will be ready to incorporate and acknowledge Indigenous peoples and their ways of life.

CINS curricula, teacher profiles, and fields of focus, can be viewed on the CINS home page:
www.ku.edu/~insp/index.shtml



Olena Fedyuk, A Fulbright Graduate Student (left), with two friends

Natalya Parfyonova

Natalya Parfyonova attended the State University of New York at New Paltz from 2002 to 2003, earning a Master's Degree in General Psychology. In her Fulbright report Natalya writes: "I expanded my knowledge of cognitive, social, and organizational psychology and psycholinguistics. As part of my thesis I designed and implemented a policy-capturing study that examined individual decision-making regarding procedural justice. The study focused on such rules of procedural justice as consistency, voice, opportunity for reconsideration, interpersonal sensitivity and expla-

nation provision."

Outside the classroom, Natalya served as an assistant to the coordinator of the first regional conference on disaster mental health. She also worked as a graduate intern in the Career Resource Center. As an assistant to Dr. Douglas Maynard, she helped design a study exploring the reasons for working part-time and measuring differences in overall and facet job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions between full-time and part-time workers. She plans to publish the findings of her thesis research in Ukraine and hopes to replicate her study with a sample of Ukrainian workers.



Natalya Partach

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In 2002, I received a Fulbright scholarship to study contemporary theories of literature at

the State University of New York at Albany that has over 17 thousand students. Its English Department in which I spent my Fulbright year offered a full range of courses in contemporary Literary Theory. I studied Intertextuality, Post-

Lacanian Psychoanalysis and Neo-Marxism, took a course on M. Foucault, Film Studies, and Surrealism, as well as the traditional American and British Literature discourse. I found the SUNY English department absolutely stimulating and encouraging students to pursue independent research. The professors were real non-conformists; they challenged students to think creatively. The interrelation of self-identity, vision, history, language and literature has created a totally new area of special interest for me. I undertook an independent research in Post-Lacanian Psychoanalysis during my last semester at the university. During summer vacation I worked in the archives of New York – Ukrainian Academy of Science (VUAN) and Shevchenko Scientific Society. I searched the documents of the MUR (Mystetskyi Ukrainskyi Rukh)

period that shed light onto Viktor Petrov-Domontovych life and works. His writings constituted my major interest in the Graduate School of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy with a plan to research this topic as a PhD. The materials gathered during my Fulbright year, as well as knowledge and skills obtained are very valuable for me. In my American life, the most exciting experience was sharing a house with international students. This was a super multicultural life. I stay in touch with my Spanish, French, Turkish, Japanese housemates. This added to my understanding of basic values.