



FACULTY-LED  
STUDY ABROAD

## KIIS Slavic Europe Summer 2021

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### ENG 290/GWS 470 Topics: Women Writers in Times of Terror

**Professor:** Dr. Beth Crachiolo

Email: [crachiolob@berea.edu](mailto:crachiolob@berea.edu)

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

*Syllabus subject to change*

#### **Course description:**

This cross-listed course will explore women's writing (poetry and prose) in Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine and in Nazi-controlled Poland. The goal is to consider women's writing alongside the historical/ political events and trends that contributed to producing women's artistic identity, as well as how women represent negotiate (gendered) art under politically unstable times. This course will function like a seminar, with students responsible for discussion facilitation. Students will write daily literature/site responses in the form of a reading journal and/or blog, from which they will draw a short paper OR creative work.

*From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an "Iron Curtain" has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia; all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow.*

*Winston Churchill*

*"Sinews of Peace," 1946*

Churchill's "Iron Curtain" generally afforded no view into the USSR from the West and no view into the West from the USSR. We knew very little about one another; our governments told us that we were enemies. However, when the USSR fell in 1991, we discovered that, actually, we were curious about one another. In the decades that followed, we met, talked, and read one another's literature. That's what this course is designed to do.

In the beginning of the program, we are specifically exploring Ukrainian women's voices as the *locus* for two concurrent cultural phenomena: that the Ukrainian language was suppressed under Soviet rule (not for the first time) and that women's experience with the Soviet regime was gendered, *in spite of* communist discourse about equality between genders. We'll be looking for how women negotiated, constructed, represented, and displayed their identities as Ukrainian women in the face of Soviet erasure.

In Poland, the central theme will be the German occupation and Auschwitz as experienced and understood by Polish women, both as (sometimes forgotten) prisoners and as the unwilling hosts of

Nazi atrocities. The construction and negotiation of gender can be highly charged even in the best of times; under the sort of duress that Poland endured, women suffered the same oppressions that men suffered and, at the same time, were victimized in gender specific ways. One of the most notable things about modern Poland is that Poland has survived. It's been invaded, traded, and wiped off the map, but Poland (as an idea if not as a set of geopolitical boundaries) has always existed. We will explore Polish women's experiences under Nazi occupation.

This is not a course about history. This is a course about gendered identity, artistic expression, and voice. For that reason, we will explore the cities of L'viv and Krakow to read their architecture, their leftovers from Soviet and/or Nazi domination, and their contemporary energy.

### **Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:**

#### KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

#### Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

### **Course Policies**

Every class has to have a set of rules; what follows are mine. If you have questions about any of these policies, please don't hesitate to ask.

**Attendance:** Attendance to *all* class meetings and excursions is mandatory! KIIS policy is as follows: "KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. ***Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness.*** Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons."

That will be the policy of this class. A single absence will lower your final course grade by one whole letter; anyone who misses two or more classes will not pass the course. Three late arrivals to class will be counted as an absence. If you are late for an excursion, we will leave without you, and you will be

counted absent. There will be a sign-in sheet at every class meeting (including excursions); please be sure you sign in.

**Evaluation:** The grading for this class will be on a 4-point scale. Grade equivalents are as follows:

A = 4.0

B = 3.0

C = 2.0

D = 1.0

F = 0

This is what grades mean:

A = consistently outstanding work

B = above average, less than consistently outstanding

**C = average, competent work; meets all requirements of the course**

D = less than average; does not meet significant course requirements

F = failure to meet significant course requirements; failure to turn in work; 2 or more absences

I will average your grades together, and assign final grades according to the following scale:

3.65 – 4.0 = A

2.65 – 3.64 = B

1.65 – 2.64 = C

0.65 – 1.64 = D

0.64 or lower = F

Please note: I do not “fudge” grades. One of the reasons I have this scale is so that my cut-off points for grades are exactly the same for each student. If you receive a 3.64, the grade is B+, and that is not negotiable.

**Class participation:** Of the expectations of this course, this is the easiest grade. Class participation consists of these elements: keeping up with the reading; engagement with course material; productive discussion participation. You will be taking turns facilitating discussion, so you’ll want to be productive for the sake of your colleagues. Come to all classes prepared!

**Facilitating discussions:** On the first day of class and when we go on excursions, I’ll head up our time. The rest of our sessions will be seminars, which means that students will facilitate discussion. We’ll spend some time on our first day making a discussion schedule. Please remember that I’ll be very happy to help you prepare for running a discussion.

### **Disability Accommodation**

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, [maria.canning@wku.edu](mailto:maria.canning@wku.edu), to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation,

excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, [haley.mctaggart@wku.edu](mailto:haley.mctaggart@wku.edu), if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

### **Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment**

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson (270-745-5398 / [andrea.anderson@wku.edu](mailto:andrea.anderson@wku.edu)) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / [michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto:michael.crowe@wku.edu)) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / [joshua.hayes@wku.edu](mailto:joshua.hayes@wku.edu)). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eoo/brochure2019update.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.