Roster of Candidates for Polish Studies Board Elections

Discussion published by Keely Stauter-Halsted on Saturday, October 29, 2022

Dear PSA Members -

In the coming week, we will hold elections for 3 three-year positions on the Polish Studies Association Board. I have pasted below the professional biographies of the seven candidates running for these open positions and will circulate ballots to registered members of PSA. If you have not had a chance to renew your membership for this year, you can go to https://polishstudiesassociation.org/membership/ to do so. (Membership also provides admittance to the PSA reception to be held at the Palmer House in Chicago the evening of Thursday, November 10.)

Below are the professional biographies of our seven candidates for Board positions. Let me know if you have any questions about this (stauterh@uic.edu).

Keely Stauter-Halsted, PSA President

PSA Board Elections – Roster of Candidates

**Natalia Jarska**, PhD, is a historian and Assistant Professor at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History (Polish Academy of Sciences), and post-doc in the project “Expert Turn. Expertise in authoritarian societies. Human sciences in the socialist countries of East-Central Europe” (Czech Science Foundation). Her research interests include women’s and gender history, history of sexuality, and labor history under state socialism. She works mainly on Polish history, but in comparative and transnational perspectives. In 2020-2021, she was a visiting researcher at the Complutense University in Madrid, with a project entitled “Women's movement between national dictatorships and international agenda: comparing International Women's Year (1975) in Spain and Poland”. Her recent publications include “Marriage, gender and demographic change: Managing fertility in state-socialist Poland”, *Slavic Review* 81(1) 2022 (with Agata Ignaciuk) and “The Struggle for Marital Equality Beyond Cold War Political Divides: Transnational Relationships Between Polish and Spanish Women Lawyers in the 1960s and 1970s,” *European Review of History* [forthcoming]. Currently, she is preparing a book about social history of marriage in postwar Poland. I am interested in serving on the PSA Board because I greatly appreciate its mission to promote studies on Poland across academic disciplines. I would like to contribute to its work, aiming to strengthen the exchange, networking and visibility of scholars of this field.

**Mark Keck-Szajbel.** Dr. Mark Keck-Szajbel is an academic research fellow at the
Center for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies (European University Viadrina, Frankfurt Oder, Germany). He received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in 2012 with his dissertation on open borders in the East bloc, 1972-1989. Along with students, he has also made an exhibition on the same theme, which is currently at the Museum Utopie und Alltag in Eisenhüttenstadt, Germany. He also travels frequently with his students and has held numerous summer schools open to international students and guests. He is also a co-editor (with Joachim Häberlen and Kate Mahoney) of “The Politics of Authenticity: Countercultures and Radical Movements across the Iron Curtain, 1968-1989.” He sits on the editorial board of Pol-Int, an internet site that connects academics in Polish, English and German. He is currently creating a project intended as a documentary film based on the transformation of the so-called “Black Triangle” on the border between Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. This area was considered to be an environmental catastrophe in the 1980s and has since turned into a favorite tourist area for hikers, bikers, and skiers. Mark Keck-Szajbel lives on the border to Poland, is a father of two tri-lingual children, and is an avid mountain biker.

Karolina May-Chu is assistant professor of German at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). The main focus of her research is Polish-German literary and cultural relations. Currently, she is completing her first monograph, which examines cosmopolitan reimaginations of Polish and German borderlands in literature after 1989, e.g., in works by Olga Tokarczuk, Inga Iwasiów, and Sabrina Janesch. She is also preparing a special issue on German-Polish Borderlands in Contemporary Literature and Culture, which is based on a panel series she co-organized at the German Studies Association (GSA) annual meeting in 2019. Her scholarship draws on research in world literary studies, cosmopolitanism, and border studies and seeks to advance transnational approaches in the study of literatures and cultures.

She is also engaged in questions of pedagogy, for example as co-coordinator of the interdisciplinary Teaching Network at the GSA, and as member of the editorial team of Grenzenlos Deutsch: An Inclusive Curriculum for the German Classroom (an open-access online textbook for beginning learners of German). If given the opportunity to serve on the board of the PSA, I would help promote transnational and interdisciplinary scholarship in Polish Studies, e.g., by proposing conference panels and forging connections with other professional organizations. I also hope to advance conversations on pedagogy and outreach by organizing workshops or roundtables where we can exchange ideas and share experiences.
Piotr Puchalski. I am an assistant professor of modern history at the Pedagogical University of Kraków, offering courses in the history of Poland, social and economic history, history of colonial empires, international relations, and contemporary tourism. I hold a PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My research to date has been about interwar Poland in a global colonial framework, with a focus on the ways in which the Polish state adjusted its overseas policies to the changing world order. I have previously published in the *Historical Journal* and the *Journal of Modern European History*. My first book is *Poland in a Colonial World Order: Adjustments and Aspirations, 1918-1939* (Routledge, 2022), and I have also contributed to the edited volume *The World Beyond the West: Perspectives from Eastern Europe* (Berghahn Books, 2022). My next project deals with Poland’s post-1939 colonial entanglements, both during World War II and the communist period. In addition to regular tasks, I would like to help the PSA in reaching out to scholars based in Poland and continuing a fruitful trans-Atlantic cooperation.

Robert Pyrah. I’m Robert Pyrah (Dr), currently a Research Fellow at Oxford Brookes University and a member of Wolfson College at the University of Oxford in the UK, counting over 10 years’ research, teaching and lecturing and supervising experience (including Doctoral level) in various roles at the University of Oxford. My main focus is the Polish perspective on the history of Lviv, formerly Lwów, 20th C. – present, on which I am completing a monograph. Recent publications include the co-edited volume *Lviv and Wrocław, Cities in Parallel?* (CEU Press, 2020) and on the Polish minority in Lviv today, in *Ab Imperio* (2017). I’ve jointly authored and run a large, collaborative research project on ‘Sub-cultures as integrative forces’, also at the University of Oxford, with collaborative workshops I designed taking place to involve local scholars in Krakow and Lviv. I currently co-host the provocative and high-profile multi-platform podcast on illiberal politics in Poland and beyond called ‘Pseudoscience, Fake News – and how to fight back’, featuring Timothy Garton Ash and other regional experts. I’d love to take on this role as a passionate advocate of Polish Studies being at its best when truly synergistic, drawing on networks of scholarship within and beyond East-Central Europe. My earlier background in Austrian Studies also drives this interest in comparative and collaborative ways of seeing our field. This is something I have a track record of promoting and fostering (through research projects, workshops and more). As someone who is always inspired by good ideas, fruitful conversations and connections, I would do my best to be a good citizen in our field, advocating for a joined-up, open conversation leading where possible to cooperation between scholars across disciplines and geographies. Plus, I'm in the UK, so you get another addition to the transatlantic
nexus! More details here: https://oxfordbrookes.academia.edu/RobertPyrah

**Agata Tumilowicz-Mazur.** My name is Agata Tumilowicz-Mazur, I’m a scholar and creative nonfiction writer. I received my PhD in Comparative Literature from New York University where I wrote a dissertation on the living link between archive and performance. My thesis focused on cases of post-1968 alternative theater across Eastern and Western Europe. In my personal essays, I pose a critical look at Polish culture and heritage, the here and now, and the politics of remembering. I am especially invested in writing stories highlighting the complex histories and heritage of Lower Silesia. My writing appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail, Apofenie, The Theatre Times, Culture.pl* and elsewhere. Serving on the PSA Board would be an amazing opportunity for me to support the creation of Polish scholarship and proliferation of Polish culture in North America. Moreover, I feel that my independent and unaffiliated, creative outlook could benefit the organization and give balance to the academic voices on the Board.

**Nikolas Weyland.** Nikolas Weyland is a Ph.D. Candidate at Harvard University. He graduated with a B.A. in History and Government from Cornell University in 2020 and is starting his third year of the History Ph.D. program at Harvard. He specializes in the 19th and 20th century history of Central Europe, with a particular focus on nationalism and migration in Germany and Poland. His dissertation will investigate the experiences of Polish-speaking migrants and their families in Germany’s Ruhr region during the first half of the 20th century. This dissertation project will focus, in particular, on German state officials’ treatment of these migrants, commonly called *Ruhrpolen*, and the social and political activities that these newcomers to the Ruhr engaged in between 1890 and 1955. His Polish language training, which he began in the fall of 2020, has included intensive courses at the University of Pittsburgh’s Summer Language Institute and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Nikolas Weyland is interested in serving on the Polish Studies Association board because he wants to develop closer ties with scholars of Polish culture and engage with the latest, most innovative academic discussions taking place in Polish studies.