

# NEWSLETTER

Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange



## A Super-Duper Souvenir

Restoring Bulgaria's Wetlands  
A Global Teaching Community

The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission board consists of ten members, five American citizens and five Bulgarian citizens. They represent the major areas of state and public activity: government, education, the arts, and business. The Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Bulgaria and the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria serve as honorary chairpersons of the Commission and appoint the regular board members. The board members during Spring 2022 included:

### Honorary Chairs

#### Professor Nikolai Denkov

Bulgarian Minister of Education and Science

#### Herro Mustafa

Ambassador of the United States to Bulgaria

#### Chair

#### Radostina Chaprazova

Country Director, Arete Youth Foundation

#### Treasurer

#### Brent LaRosa

Cultural and Educational Affairs Officer,  
US Embassy in Bulgaria

### US Members of the Board

#### Richard T. Ewing, Jr.

President, American College of Sofia

#### Eric Halsey\*

Managing Director, Halsey Company

#### Sarah Perrine\*

Executive Director, Trust for Social Achievement

#### Jeff Weinshenker

Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Bulgaria

### BG Members of the Board

#### Karina Angelieva

Deputy Minister of of Innovation and Growth

#### Professor Svetla Danova\*

Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, BAS

#### Professor Guenka Petrova

Deputy Minister of Education and Science

#### Tzvetomir Todorov\*

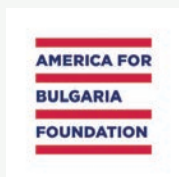
Managing Director,  
Bulgarian American Management Company

*\*Fulbright alumni*

#### Cover photo:

US Fulbrighters and Bulgarian mentors  
at the Wrap Up Seminar in Burgas

***Fulbright Bulgaria thanks its sponsors for their support:***





## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*What a long, strange year it's been! This spring, just as our grantees were at last able to cautiously shift from online classes to in-person teaching, the Fulbright community in Bulgaria, Europe and the globe was stunned and outraged by the invasion of Ukraine. Our hearts go out to all those affected by this terrible war, and we salute all*

*Fulbrighters and partner organizations who immediately sprang into action and found ways to help those affected by the conflict. Many of our current US and Bulgarian grantees and alumni have contributed time, money and expertise to relief efforts over the past months – we would especially like to thank our partners from the language center Mejduchasie, who created an online platform that has allowed dozens of Fulbrighters to teach English and Bulgarian language to Ukrainian children and adults online. We are proud to be part of such a caring and committed community!*

*Given the tragic events unfolding in Europe, it was truly a blessing that we were able to come together as a group this spring at a number of in-person events. The Spring Wrap Up seminar, complete with a musical ode to the joys of online teaching and a whole lot of amazing dance moves, was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our US grantees this past year. Congratulations to all of you for a job very well done in difficult circumstances! The Pre-Departure Orientation for Bulgarian AY22-23 grantees also attracted more than 50 Fulbright alumni, who came to meet their new colleagues and wish them well. In such dark times, the support and friendship of the Fulbright family is a true beacon of hope – we trust you can catch at least a glimmer of this light in the following pages.*

Angela

### Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange

12 Vitosha Blvd, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  
Tel: +359 2 981 85 67 | Fax: +359 2 988 45 17  
fulbright@fulbright.bg | www.fulbright.bg

## CONTENTS



### 02 FEATURE Ajde na Horo

### 04 NEWS 2022 Pre-Departure Orientation



### 06 NEWS A Global Teaching Community

### 08 FOCUS ON US GRANTEE Ryan Crehan

### 10 FOCUS ON BG GRANTEE Javor Gardev

### 12 BG AND US GRANTEES Academic Year 2022-2023



### 16 FOCUS ON US ALUMNA Dr. Yanjun Yan

### 20 FOCUS ON BG ALUMNA Elitsa Pavlova

### 22 ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS Academic Year 2021-2022

# Ajde na Horo:

## The Burgas Wrap-Up Seminar for U.S. Fulbright Grantees

By Sophia Kleinsasser



**The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission hosted its Wrap-Up Seminar for U.S. Grantees from Thursday, June 9, through Sunday, June 12, in Burgas. After a year that was quite the roller coaster ride, and in spite of the unseasonably wet weather, it was a weekend to remember.**

Attendees enjoyed a variety of presentations in different formats, including musical performances, game show quizzes and experimental films, alongside the traditional narrative summary of grantees' time in Bulgaria. It is clear that even though the pandemic certainly changed what has been possible to achieve, our scholars, students and fellows possess the resilience and creativity to keep the spirit of mutual exchange alive.

The seminar was officially opened by Executive Director Angela Rodel and kicked off with entertaining and

thought-provoking presentations by Fulbright scholars Aaron Kleist, Alexandra White, Rebecca Singer, Mariofanna Milanova, Matthew Brunwasser, as well as Specialists Mira Niagolova and Sonia Hirt. Fulbright student researcher Christopher Harper also gave an overview of his upcoming research in Bulgaria.

Julia Mishkova and Maria Cheresheva, representing the Association of European Journalists – Bulgaria, conducted a media literacy training workshop for secondary school teachers and

principals attending the wrap-up. Our partner schools are located across the country, serving students in 24 cities and small and large towns, and some of them have hosted Fulbright grantees for over a decade now. This year, we bid farewell and a happy retirement to long-time mentor teachers Lyudmila Hvalabogova-Johnston (FLS Geo Milev, Dobrich) and Tatyana Baycheva (FLS Ezarh Josif, Razgrad), and also to school principals Tsvetanka Shterionova (FLS Aleko Konstantinov, Pravets) and Penka Nenkova (FLS Petar Bogdan, Montana).





**Dr. Aaron Kleist, US Fulbright Scholar at Plovdiv University**

Friday afternoon and Saturday morning were filled with the inspiring words of our Fulbright | America for Bulgaria English Teaching Assistants (ETAs).

This ever-growing program reaches students at the middle, secondary and university levels of education, who have access to a native speaker in their English classes as well as during various extracurricular activities. ETAs have been involved in the BEST Foundation tournaments, Bulgarian National English Spelling Bee and Creative Writing Competition, also volunteering with the Trust for Social Achievement and a joint volunteer teaching initiative between Fulbright Bulgaria and Mejduchasie benefitting Ukrainian refugees.

For the first time this year, two 12th-grade students from Zahariy Stovanov Foreign Language School in Sliven were invited to our wrap-up seminar to present their reflections about the ETA program and its impact on them. Special thanks go to our other sponsors Contour Global, Asarel Medet, Foundation Lachezar Tsotsorkov, Opticoelectron and the Bulgarian Memory Foundation for supporting the program over the years.



**Farewell to ETA Mentor Teacher Lucy Hvalabogova**



**Sophia Brewer-Thompson, Gabrovo**

Finally, Desislava Taliokova, Executive Director of the America for Bulgaria Foundation, gave a speech thanking all our grantees for their wonderful work that they continue to do. After her closing remarks, a reception followed where everyone showed off their impressive horo skills, singing voices and other talents. What better testament to the real connections made during this unusual year could there be than us holding hands, dancing in time with the unique rhythms of Bulgarian folk music?

# New Acquaintances and Old Friends:

## The 2022 Pre-Departure Orientation and Summer Party for Bulgarian Grantees

By Maria Kostova

On June 22, 2022, the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission held its annual pre-departure orientation for Bulgarian scholars, students and professionals. Hosted by the modern Launchee Space, the meeting was partially hybrid, predominantly in-person, and provided sign language translation for our grantees from the Listen Up foundation in Bulgaria.

This year the Bulgarian Fulbright program is sending a record number of twenty Bulgarian grantees to top US universities, research institutions and NGOs for educational and professional exchange. Five graduate students in the fields of law, history, journalism, and materials science will pursue their degree programs at Harvard University, Georgia Technological Institute, Missouri State University and Florida State University; three PhD students will conduct their non-degree research at University of Maryland – College Park, City University of New York, and Carnegie Mellon University. Seven visiting scholars in food science, Slavic literature, engineering, computational linguistics, nuclear physics, mathematics, and musicology will undertake research and teaching in several renowned US universities such as North Carolina State University, University of Chicago, University of Western Carolina, Indiana University – Bloomington, Argonne National Laboratory, University of Miami, and the University of Rochester. Three Civil Society scholars will be able to pursue their interests in



Program Officer Maria Kostova and ED Angela Rodel welcome new Fulbrighters



Bulgarian grantees ask questions and share experiences





Visiting Researcher Gabriel Georgiev greets his new colleagues

good governance, development of sign language education, and fact-checking at institutions such as the International Economic Development Council, Gallaudet University, and the Poynter Institute. This bright cohort also includes two professionals in the fields of sustainable development and agricultural policies, who will perfect their career skills through the Hubert Humphrey program.

The orientation session opened with a cordial welcome from Fulbright Bulgaria Executive Director Angela Rodel, who congratulated the grantees on their successful admissions and affiliations, and briefly outlined the program terms. The participants and the Fulbright staff had a moment to introduce themselves to one another, glad for the chance to put faces to names.

Program Officer Maria Kostova presented the Fulbright program procedures and visa-related steps, while Financial Officer Anastassia Miteva detailed the payment terms. Our illustrious resource persons, BG and US alumni and grantees – Kate Ruprecht, Rebecca Singer, Tsvetelina Bayraktarova, Iva and Bilyana Manovi, Verginiya Micheva and Milena Kuleva – shared their advice on cultural adaptation, academic progress, accommodation and transportation, safety and travelling. As the orientation came to a close amid questions, answers, comments and laughter, the sense of confidence grew in the audience.

The newly created community feeling was reinforced by the Fulbright Summer Party, which was attended by over 80 Fulbright BG and US alumni, grantees, and partners. This wonderful opportunity for Bulgarian-based Fulbrighters to meet the new cohort and to revive in-person communication with old friends and colleagues after the pandemic was much appreciated by all attendees. We wish great success and an unforgettable Fulbright experience to our Bulgarian grantees in the US!



US Scholar Rebecca Singer offers tips



Visiting Researcher Alumna Bilyana Manova shares advice

# A Global Teaching Community:

## Kent State University Welcomes the FTEA Media Literacy Cohort 2021-22

By Sophia Kleinsasser

**In February and March of 2022, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission sent a group of secondary school teachers to the United States as part of the Media Literacy cohort under the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program.**



**Dr. Vladimira Teneva makes a general academic presentation at Kent State**

The FTEA Program is sponsored by ECA and managed by IREX. The Commission recruits and selects the Bulgarian candidates and organizes their pre-departure orientation. Daniel Simeonov from Neofit Rilski School in Aglen, Irina Grudeva from the Konstantin Fotinov Vocational School of Electrical Engineering and Electronics in Burgas, and Vladimira Teneva, Ph.D., from Dr. Ivan Seliminski Middle School in Sliven arrived at Kent State University, Ohio – along with over 40 other participants from a dozen countries across Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe and Central Asia – for an intensive, six-week professional development course in media literacy and critical thinking skills. Throughout the course, there were many opportunities for cultural exchange and people-to-people diplomacy; the cohort was also able to observe, co-teach, and share their expertise in U.S. secondary schools.



**Vladimira Teneva shares traditional Bulgarian dress and customs**

According to Vladimira Teneva, being an FTEA offers “a different point of view on the US educational and school system in particular, having myself been involved in academic seminars, field experience and social and cultural activities. The best part of the program for me is the opportunity to learn from professionals worldwide and the collaboration with teachers during the field experience. I learned a lot about educational tools and general



There is no better feeling than being understood and sharing a common understanding of the world with other human beings. This Fulbright program gave me this exact opportunity and I am so grateful about that."

academics that I could apply in my classroom as both a teacher and a school leader."

Daniel Simeonov says: "One of the most important things that I will take with me is the sense of community with the teachers from the other countries that we were able to build during our stay at Kent State. These professional connections that I made are for life and some of them are going to be lifelong friendships. There is no better feeling than being understood and sharing a common understanding of the world with other human beings. This Fulbright program gave me this exact opportunity and I am so grateful about that. Education is the simple answer to all the burning questions of our reality – and to be able to contribute to its progression is immensely fulfilling."

The Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange is proud to welcome back our teachers, who join the growing community of FTEA alumni that continue to promote the values, critical skills and innovative methods developed during their stay at Kent State.



Daniel Simeonov at the College of Education, Health and Human Services at KSU



Vladimira Teneva, Daniel Simeonov and Irina Grudeva at Kent State University



Daniel Simeonov and colleagues at Kent State University





Stoyan Mihov (WWF Bulgaria) explaining a river restoration project

# Bulgaria's Wetlands –

## Conservation, Restoration and Endless Fascination

By Ryan Crehan, AY2021-22 US Scholar to Bulgaria

**A cold north wind is blowing across the expanse of Atanasovska Lake as winter holds on along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria just a bit longer. A group of Bulgarian and Albanian scientists scan the shallow waters for birds feeding in this critically important wetland.**

Even on a blustery day, shell duck, common redshank, dunlin, avocet and other shorebirds are easy to spot. The birds silently move through the shallow waters, seemingly unaware that Bulgaria's fourth-largest city lies so close. As I look up from my binoculars, it's easy to lose track of an individual bird among the vast shallow water. Atanasovsko Lake, a shallow, saline wetland, hosts an astonishing 334 bird species, the most of any place in Bulgaria and one-fourth of the species from all of Europe. And it isn't only the number of species; 1.5 million individual birds stop during migration to feed and rest in the wetland. The

conservation value of this wetland is immense, but the conservation challenges are large as well.

As a Fulbright Scholar, my time in Bulgaria is focused on wetlands, the sometimes-overlooked and mistreated ecosystems. Like nearly every country in the world, many wetlands of Bulgaria have been ditched, drained and diked. In places, wetlands have been filled, essentially disappearing from the landscape completely. And with the destruction of wetlands, the many functions and values of these places are lost. While the reduction of wildlife habitat is a clear effect, the

removal of wetlands also means a loss of the power of wetlands to clean our rivers, lakes and seas of pollutants, to reduce flooding of our towns and cities and to support fishing by providing nurseries for fisheries. But here in Bulgaria, there is inspiring work to restore these wetlands and rebuild their value for wildlife, water quality, flood protection and more.

Today I am meeting with the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation to learn of their vital work to restore and manage wetlands along the Black Sea, including Atanasovska Lake and Pomorie Lake. A delegation of Albanian scientists is here as well to learn of the challenges of wetland conservation adjacent to a busy port city. A walk beside the Pomorie Lake wetland shows the incredible uniqueness and importance of these places for both wildlife and



people. Along with tremendous bird diversity, there is a salt extraction operation located within the wetland and visitors come to experience the traditional, therapeutic mud of this unique place. Unfortunately, the wetland can be negatively affected by surrounding roads and agricultural land that impact its salinity and biology. The Bulgarian scientists work collaboratively with stakeholders for the health and well-being of all components of the wetland and those that depend on it.

In addition to the values previously mentioned, these wetlands draw not only birds but also human visitors to see the birds. The Poda Nature Conservation Centre welcomes visitors to another bird hotspot with educational displays, trails and blinds to provide access without disturbing the birds. The wetlands are providing not only wildlife and water quality value but also an economic benefit to the area through ecotourism. The Burgas wetlands appear to serve as ambassadors for all wetlands and wetland conservation for local residents and far-flung visitors, an important role in building support for conservation.

From the Black Sea coast, I travel to one of the great rivers of Europe, the Danube. Forming most of the northern border of Bulgaria, the world's most international river (19 countries in its watershed) provides complex challenges for conservationists. The river has been affected by many activities over the last centuries, including dams that alter the flow of water and sediment, dikes that cut off the river from its floodplain and dredging for shipping that change how the river flows. But as with the Black Sea wetlands, fascinating work along the river has been implemented by my host institution, WWF Bulgaria, in collaboration with numerous other organizations, government agencies and local residents to restore floodplain wetlands. Working with

local residents, government agencies and other interested parties, wetland hydrology has been restored to several sites, benefiting fish and wildlife as well as nearby communities.

Belene Island is the largest Danube River island in Bulgaria and the site of a major wetland restoration project. The island has a complicated history that includes an active prison and tall dikes that prevent the river from flooding as it once did. The wetlands that once dominated the island were cut off from the floodwater and drained of their wetland values. Restoration work has reawakened wetlands on the island by reconnecting these wetlands to the river. By re-establishing the hydrology, a myriad of wildlife species, including the iconic Dalmatian pelican, have returned to the site. Project partners manage the water to the wetland, build nesting platforms for the pelicans and ensure project success. Stoyan Mihov, freshwater project manager for WWF Bulgaria, explains to me the history of the project as we count pelicans beginning to nest. Though the pelicans are back, the Danube River floodwaters have yet to return to the wetland this spring, a stark reminder of restoration in a changing climate on a managed river.

From Belene, we travel to additional restoration projects to assess successes, challenges and the use of adaptive management strategies. As a wetland scientist and restoration practitioner in the United States, it has been fascinating to learn from my Bulgarian counterparts as they diligently work to restore these crucial ecosystems to the landscape. Like any restoration project, the hurdles are not only biological and physical but also political and cultural. The goal of my Fulbright scholarship has been to learn of the challenges to wetland restoration in the country and to collaborate on future projects in an effort to benefit both the work here and my work at home. Though there are many impediments to implementing wetland restoration projects in any place, the critical work of Bulgarian conservationists is inspiring.

As the sun begins to set over the vast expanse of Danube River plains, my colleague Stoyan and I try and imagine what it looked like when the river could run free and the great plains were wetlands filled with birds and fish. Though much has changed, restoration provides the chance to make these places flourish again.



**Ryan Crehan and Stoyan Mihov at wetland restoration site**

# The Freedom We Demand for Ourselves

Interview by Diana Milkova



Javor Gardev in Chicago

**"I did not have a script before I left for the US," Javor Gardev said. The renowned theater and film director was a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at Northwestern University in AY 2021-22, working on a project entitled "Symbolic Manipulation and Its Opponents: Archetypal Plots and Performative Tactics."**

## What inspired you to apply for Fulbright?

The decision was actually very quick and easy. I applied during the first Covid-19 quarantine; I had previously attended a presentation of the Fulbright program at New Bulgarian University, and when this major interruption took place, I decided to apply for a Fulbright grant and use this gap period to catch up on my academic explorations.

After I won the scholarship, I got placed at Northwestern University in Chicago, which offers an interdisciplinary approach, central to my specific research. Moreover,

this university provided me with a spectacular library database which is in fact interstate, meaning that you can borrow any book from any other university in that network, and better still, any member can access a newly published book online upon its very publication.

## Did you have a "script" before you left for the US?

No, not at all. Even when I do have a script, I only use it as a path for improvisation. This was not the first time I let circumstances surprise me. I don't usually have any preconceived expectations about how events should occur. I didn't have any issues adapting

to the environment culturally, either. I had, of course, been to the US a number of times prior to this program, so I had had some experience. In all honesty, this is a country which offers a universal chance for all people to adapt culturally.

## How was the academic environment different?

Bulgarian academia is really quite closed. In recent years that has changed a bit, but at its core the academic environment feels encapsulated. Administration-wise the processes at American universities are easier compared to European higher education systems, if only due to the fact that they all are in the same country. Another specific component of my academic experience was that I pursued my research at a more advanced stage of study, and therefore I did not have to take courses and attend classes. I had a very flexible timetable, but at the same time there were requirements about integrative participation in my host institution. My topic deals not only with the arts, but also with all public studies related to mass communication.

## What challenges did you encounter?

The most fundamental question I addressed to myself was whether I was able to work in scientific isolation. The research I was doing involved primarily my own focus and diligence. I could, of course, use multiple sources, but the extent to which I could make use of all those materials was up to me. Paradoxical as it may sound, Covid posed a threat to people's



mental health due to social isolation, and it was a test for me, too. At the same time, it showed me completely different aspects of my personality as well as skills I had not known existed in me. It helped me enhance my powers of concentration which I hadn't been able to do for years, if not for decades. While working on my own at Northwestern University, at no point did I feel isolated. On the contrary, I was very much part of a network of other universities, as well as fellow theater and film directors. I therefore had a pretty intensive theater life, too.

**As a theater director who has worked extensively in Europe, how do you see your role after the Russian invasion of Ukraine?**

For me this question is not about roles so much as it is about self-identification: who we are and how we define our stance. This decision is forced by necessity, and in that sense the war in Ukraine changed a lot about myself, about my positions, which were a lot more diplomatic before the outbreak of this conflict and are now in favor of harder diplomacy. This confrontation is in effect a clash of our conceptions about the world and what society is in itself. The feeling that individual sovereignty has been steamrolled, that personal inviolability has been transgressed in a radically violent way, juxtaposes the values of these societies, giving prevalence to individual versus collective sovereignty to which each individual's sovereignty can fall victim. In this conflict between intuitions about the world, one has to define clearly for oneself where they stand and what level of freedom they demand for themselves.

**How will the war change art?**

It will change it in all possible ways because art always adapts to circumstances and societies. Yet now things are different, as new matters have emerged that need



Reenactment of the famous Phil Collins photograph

immediate attention. I experience the effect of these pertinent questions as a member of the European Film Academy, where a debate has been held about whether to boycott Russian films across international festivals, and this is an ongoing discussion. I imagine there will be a buffer period at least until the war is over when this question will trigger sharp reactions. This should not be transformed into a radical attitude towards artefacts which existed before and which were created by people who have nothing to do with this war. The classics are timeless and are invaluable in that they validate the cultural memory of mankind. So, yes, art will change a lot, there will be a lot of reflection about what happened, a lot of works will be dedicated to the war, and these things are only natural.

**To what extent can art have any impact on the course of events?**

Too little, if any. I do not have any illusions in that respect. In the past, in closed societies, art played a much more significant socio-political part. Whenever a society is censured, this does not make art more emancipated, but rather attributes to it an all-important role because the other major channels of communication are unavailable. There is not such a need at present, with theater being but one of many sources of information and

entertainment. This is, of course, valid for all other types of art, too. In this line of thought, in Russia theater and cinema will have an increasingly more significant impact because it is through art that certain content can sneak in, which is forbidden in all other media of expression; it can sneak in illegally, through the back door. Art can have an indirect impact via encoded meanings which can be transmitted and sieved through the bars of limitations. In free societies, however – and I hope ours will remain free – communication will go through the main channels, and art has to look for its place just as it has always done.

**Your directing portfolio is broad, ranging from Shakespeare to Albee and from Zifit to La Rondine. Any new directions?**

It is indeed broad because I am not subject to genre limitations but rather take different opportunities to create art. I see this as finding the resources to produce meaning in certain areas. In that sense, the means of various forms of art have never been a problem for me. It is possible to master a craft; the hard part is to find what drives you to study, explore or display. I don't know what will trigger my interest next because for me the possibilities for improvisation are much more important than plans, and this is what keeps me motivated and curious.

# U.S. Fulbright Grantees

## Academic Year 2022-2023

### U.S. GRANTEES

#### SCHOLARS

##### Matthew Cronin

**Field of Specialization:** Law  
**Home Institution:** U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** American University in Bulgaria and Sofia University, Sofia

##### Dr. Tanya Ivanova-Sullivan

**Field of Specialization:** Linguistics  
**Home Institution:** University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** Sofia University, Sofia

##### Charles Murdock Lucas

**Field of Specialization:** Theater  
**Home Institution:** San Diego State University, San Diego, CA  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** Sofia Puppet Theatre and National Academy of Arts, Sofia

##### Dr. Virginia O'Keefe

**Field of Specialization:** Public Health  
**Home Institution:** The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** Trust for Social Achievement, Sofia

##### David Sandson

**Field of Specialization:** Communications  
**Home Institution:** US Department of the Air Force, Washington, DC  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** Sofia University and Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia

##### Dr. Natalia Velikova

**Field of Specialization:** Business  
**Home Institution:** Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** University of Food Technologies, Plovdiv

#### GRADUATE STUDENTS

##### Ryan Grieser

**Field of Specialization:** Music  
**Project Title:** Digitally Preserving the Folklore and Melodies of Traditional Bulgarian Chordophones  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, and Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv

##### Elizabeth Meshel

**Field of Specialization:** Archaeology  
**Project Title:** Comparing Funder and Institutional Heritage Conservation Priorities in Bulgaria  
**Host Institution in Bulgaria:** Balkan Heritage Foundation, Sofia

#### ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTS

##### Finlay Adamson

**Field of Specialization:** World Politics, Anthropology  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Varna, Bulgaria

##### Amanda Adinolfi

**Field of Specialization:** International Relations  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Galabovo, Bulgaria

##### Dante Ankney

**Field of Specialization:** Journalism, Wilderness Studies  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

##### Forough Askarirad

**Field of Specialization:** Psychology, Global Affairs  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Sofia, Bulgaria

##### Sophia Brewer-Thompson

**Field of Specialization:** Religion & Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Montana, Bulgaria

##### Rosasharn Brown

**Field of Specialization:** English, International Affairs  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Burgas, Bulgaria

##### Anne Bruebach

**Field of Specialization:** Elementary Education, Teaching English as a Second Language  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Sofia, Bulgaria

##### Aeriel Burtley

**Field of Specialization:** Political Science, International Relations, Communications  
**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Sofia, Bulgaria



# U.S. Fulbright Grantees

## Academic Year 2022-2023

### Olivia Cashman

**Field of Specialization:** Visual Media Arts Production

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Varna, Bulgaria

### Andrea Childs

**Field of Specialization:** English and Creative Writing, English Education, French

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Razgrad, Bulgaria

### Katie Cones

**Field of Specialization:** Mathematics, Classics, Computer Science

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Dimitrovgrad, Bulgaria

### Jack Corby

**Field of Specialization:** Policy Studies, Political Science

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Kardzhali, Bulgaria

### Benjamin Custer

**Field of Specialization:** Communication

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

### Grace Evans

**Field of Specialization:** Organismal Biology and Ecology

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

### Ashlyn Freemyer

**Field of Specialization:** English, Philosophy

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Yambol, Bulgaria

### Hannah Gilson

**Field of Specialization:** Political Science and Economics

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Silistra, Bulgaria

### Sonja Haakonsen

**Field of Specialization:** International Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

### Courtney Haubert

**Field of Specialization:** Philosophy and Psychology

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Gabrovo, Bulgaria

### Kadia King

**Field of Specialization:** Political Science

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Burgas, Bulgaria

### Ana Klicic

**Field of Specialization:** Education

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Gotse Delchev, Bulgaria

### Ekaterina Kovatsenko

**Field of Specialization:**

Bioengineering, Chemistry

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Ruse, Bulgaria

### Charlotte Kramer

**Field of Specialization:** General Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Ruse, Bulgaria

### Alexander Levine

**Field of Specialization:** History

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Shumen, Bulgaria

### Brianna Lopez

**Field of Specialization:** Psychological Science, Women and Gender Studies, Philosophy

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Lovech, Bulgaria

### Julia Lynch

**Field of Specialization:** Finance, Legal Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Dobrich, Bulgaria

### Camilla Martinez

**Field of Specialization:** Theatre Design, English

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Smolyan, Bulgaria

### Anna McIntyre

**Field of Specialization:** English and Secondary Education, Philosophy

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

### Pilar Monfiletto

**Field of Specialization:** Social Work

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Sofia, Bulgaria

### Pearl Morttey

**Field of Specialization:** International Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Sofia, Bulgaria

# Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees

Academic Year 2022-2023

## Hannah Petersen

**Field of Specialization:** Social Work, Music, Theatre

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Dobrich, Bulgaria

## Devon Rancourt

**Field of Specialization:** History and Slavic Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Pernik, Bulgaria

## Morgan Rowe

**Field of Specialization:** Political Science, English

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

## Grace Shevchenko

**Field of Specialization:** International Politics, Diplomatic Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Haskovo, Bulgaria

## Michael Smith

**Field of Specialization:** Communication

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Kyustendil, Bulgaria

## Tessa Stolz

**Field of Specialization:** Psychology, Anthropology

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Sliven, Bulgaria

## Sofia Syed

**Field of Specialization:** Philosophy, Russian Studies and European Studies

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

## Emil Zakarian

**Field of Specialization:** Economics and Public Policy, Political Science

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Pravets, Bulgaria

## Nimra Zubair

**Field of Specialization:** Public Administration, Political Science

**Project Title:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Panagyurishte, Bulgaria

## BG GRANTEES

### GRADUATE STUDENTS

## Maria-Magdalena Markova

**Field of Specialization:** Law

**Host Institution:** Harvard University, Law School

**Degree:** LLM

## Alexander Leshev

**Field of Specialization:** Law

**Host Institution:** Harvard University, Law School

**Degree:** LLM

## Trayana Kaleycheva

**Field of Specialization:** Media and Communications

**Host Institution:** Florida State University, School of Communications

**Degree:** Master of Arts

## Boris Alexandrov

**Field of Specialization:** History

**Host Institution:** Missouri State University, Graduate School

**Degree:** Master of Arts

## Botyo Dimitrov

**Field of Specialization:** Materials Science

**Host Institution:** Georgia Institute of Technology, Graduate School

**Degree:** Master of Science

## VISITING RESEARCHERS

## Gabriel Georgiev

**Field of Specialization:** Aerospace Engineering

**Project Title:** Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Aerodynamics

**Home Institution:** Technical University, Sofia

**Host Institution:** University of Maryland, College Park

## Desislava Nikolova

**Field of Specialization:** Data Science

**Project Title:** Human Action Recognition for Pose-based Attention

**Home Institution:** Technical University, Sofia

**Host Institution:** Carnegie Mellon University, The Robotics Institute

## Sevar Ivanov

**Field of Specialization:** Cultural Economics

**Project Title:** Financial Policy of the State Cultural Institutes in Bulgaria in the Performing Arts

**Home Institution:** University of National and World Economy, Sofia

**Host Institution:** City University of New York, Baruch College



# Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees

Academic Year 2022-2023

## VISITING SCHOLARS

### Vesela Chalova-Zhekova

**Field of Specialization:** Food Science

**Project Title:** Protein Mediated Encapsulation of Biologically Active Substances

**Home Institution:** University of Food Technologies, Plovdiv

**Host Institution:** North Carolina State University

### Ivan Landzhev

**Field of Specialization:** Slavic Literature

**Project Title:** Artist vs Preacher: Tolstoy's Poetics of Self-Overcoming

**Home Institution:** Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

**Host Institution:** University of Chicago

### Vladislav Slavov

**Field of Specialization:** Engineering (Education)

**Project Title:** Ethical Principles on AI in Education/PBL

**Home Institution:** Technical University, Sofia

**Host Institution:** University of Western Carolina

### Todor Lazarov

**Field of Specialization:**

Computational Linguistics

**Project Title:** Domain Specific Corpus Annotation

**Home Institution:** New Bulgarian University

**Host Institution:** Indiana University-Bloomington

### Stefan Lalkovski

**Field of Specialization:** Nuclear Physics

**Project Title:** Nuclear Data for Astrophysics and Applications

**Home Institution:** Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

**Host Institution:** Argonne National Laboratory, IL

### Alexander Petkov

**Field of Specialization:** Mathematics

**Project Title:** String Theory and Related Geometries

**Home Institution:** Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

**Host Institution:** University of Miami, Institute of Mathematical Sciences of the Americas

### Milena Bozhikova

**Field of Specialization:** Musicology

**Project Title:** Research of the Archive of Boris Kremenliev

**Home Institution:** Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

**Host Institution:** University of Rochester

## CIVIL SOCIETY RESEARCHERS

### Rumyana Grozeva

**Field of Specialization:** Economic Development

**Project Title:** Paving New Paths for Development and Sustainability

**Home Institution:** Regional Economic Development Agency of Stara Zagora

**Host Institution:** International Economic Development Council, Washington DC

### Hristina Katsipidu

**Field of Specialization:** Sign Language

**Project Title:** Building Bridges of Deaf Leaders of Tomorrow

**Home Institution:** Listen Up Foundation

**Host Institution:** Gallaudet University, Washington DC

### Kristina Hristova

**Field of Specialization:** Journalism

**Project Title:** Civil Society's Active Involvement Against the Disinformation Campaigns

**Home Institution:** Factcheck.bg

**Host Institution:** Poynter Institute, St. Petersburg FL

## HUBERT HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIPS

### Ana Bachurova

**Field of Specialization:** Sustainable Development

**Home Institution:** European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

**Host Institution:** University of California- Davis

### Konstantina Kalaydzhieva

**Field of Specialization:** Economic Development

**Home Institution:** Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of Bulgaria

**Host Institution:** Michigan State University

# Super-Duper Souvenir

By Dr. Yanjun Yan, AY2021-22 US Scholar to Bulgaria

**“What do you think of Bulgaria?” is probably the first question that a new visitor to Bulgaria will be asked. Before my trip to Sofia in August 2021, I did some research on Bulgaria, which piqued my interest, but I wouldn’t say that I knew the country well.**



From left: Tasho Tashev, Dean of English Language Faculty of Engineering (ELFE); Ivo Draganov, Associate Professor in the Department of Radio Communications and Video and ELFE; Ivan Kralov, the Rector of Technical University of Sofia; and Yanjun Yan from Western Carolina University



Yanjun Yan in the classroom

I did resonate with the “accelerated learning” theory proposed by a famous Bulgarian educator, Dr. Georgi Lozanov (1926-2012), whom I got to know from the online Bulgarian language and culture course offered by the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission to prepare us for our visits. At that time, I didn’t anticipate that the word “accelerated” would be relevant to me, but I fully agreed with his “suggestopedia” approach to create a safe and supportive environment for students to “learn through doing.” Dr. Lozanov’s idea was very well aligned with my intended Fulbright teaching/ research combo project at the Technical University of Sofia (TU-Sofia) to study the effectiveness of Project-Based-Learning (PBL) pedagogy in Bulgaria. I planned to offer a PBL course at TU-Sofia and analyze student perceptions prior to the course, as well as their post-course experiences. Beyond PBL, I was also interested in incorporating vertical integration among students from different years, as well as encouraging potential collaboration with people outside of the class, as these pedagogies had been found effective for my students at Western Carolina University (WCU).

After I landed in Sofia in early August, although the fall semester would not start until several weeks later, there were quite a few preparation steps that needed to be done, such as ordering the lab kits from abroad, preparing the internet connection, software,



and facilities in the classroom, and adapting the course plan to best suit the demography and local culture. Those few weeks in summer were quite hectic for me and a couple of colleagues, although the campus was mostly quiet without the students there yet. Once the semester started and the students were back, the campus came back to life. A dozen students from all four years enrolled so that we could try vertical integration, although there were more juniors and seniors than freshmen and sophomores.

In Fall 2021, TU-Sofia shortened their lecturing period from fifteen weeks to thirteen weeks for the first time, which created some pressure for both faculty and students. For a typical TU-Sofia course, after the lecturing portion and the winter holiday break, there would be one more month in January 2022 until the exam time. However, since I needed to leave Sofia in late December 2021, I told the students to finish their projects and demonstrate them to me before I left. Unexpectedly, the word “accelerated” in Dr. Lozanov’s theory turned out to be jarringly true for me.

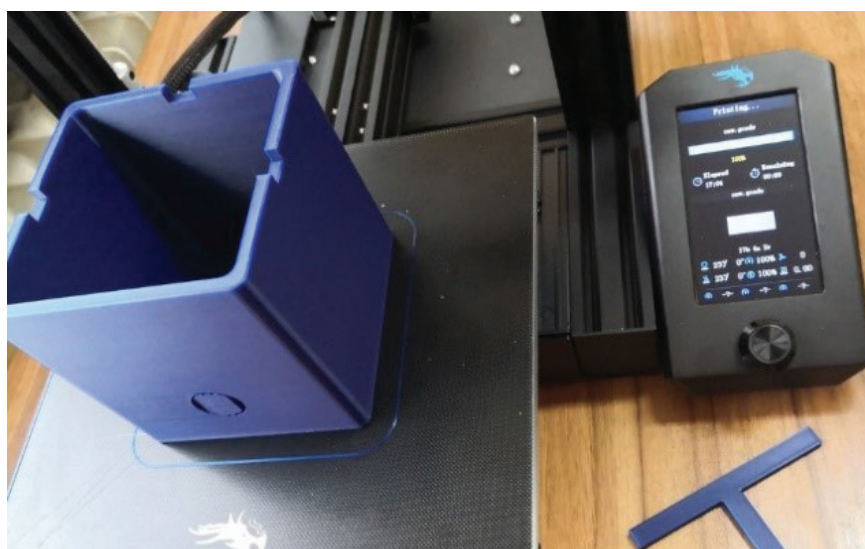
On top of the shortened semester, about four weeks into it in late October, we needed to move all courses online, given nationwide pandemic control measures. TU-Sofia further condensed the course schedules after moving courses online. We had anticipated this possibility of going online and had prepared enough Arduino kits for each student to borrow so that they could still have hands-on experiences at home. Still, it was not as easy to do things at home as when we were in the classroom. For the final project, the students teamed up and each group borrowed another Touchboard kit. If the students could stay on campus, they would learn to use the 3D printer from start to finish,

but I had to 3D-print the parts that the groups designed for them to pick up. I made videos of how the designs got printed and shared the videos with the students to show them what to expect if they were operating the 3D printer. The new Arduino kits were provided by TU-Sofia, and the purchases of the Touchboard kits and the 3D printer were sponsored by the Fulbright Project Grant. All their support was very much appreciated.

Despite all the challenges, or perhaps exactly because of these challenges which gave me an opportunity to interact with my Bulgarian students and colleagues under such conditions, the word resilience often popped in my head. The students in my class were busy with other required courses. The fact that they signed up for my course was a sign that they wanted to learn extra content. I found the Bulgarian students to be independent. They tried not to bother me with questions, although I told them time and again that questions were very welcome. Once we got to know each other, they opened up and became comfortable sharing ideas. Whenever they finished a task, such as using the

Arduino board to control an LED string to be in a certain lighting pattern, they were excited and never shy to help each other out. After the courses went online, the students proposed using the Discord app for class discussions, which made our connections closer than using email or the Moodle online learning management system. Later, for the group project, I set up text and voice channels in Discord for each group, giving them team-specific suggestions.

The final project was the culmination of the course where the students would apply what they had learned and challenge themselves to use a new Touchboard on their own based on what they knew. They were encouraged to be creative and 3D-model some parts to be used in their projects. The topic of the project was inspired by the very question I had been searching for an answer to: “What do you think of Bulgaria?” Similarly, I was curious to know “What do you think of America?” The students were asked to design a super-duper souvenir that could tell the stories of both Bulgarian and American cultures in the most entertaining and interactive way.



A printed part for the project and the assembled system

When the students brainstormed to generate ideas for the project, I was impressed by their Bulgarian pride. There are so many things that Bulgarians can be very proud of, such as nature, culture, history, and people. Many of these ideas would not materialize in the students' projects, given the limited time and resources, but hearing about them helped me to know more about Bulgaria (here is my blog post on the summary of those ideas <https://yan.wcu.edu/bulgaria/bulgarian-pride/>). For the part about American culture, although I had been originally hoping to have students from both TU-Sofia and WCU collaborate, the project time at TU-Sofia happened after the semester at WCU had ended, so the schedules would not match up. Instead, I asked another Fulbright Scholar in Sofia in Fall 2021, Dr. Cris Scarboro, and his family, to offer some suggestions on the students' ideas. The students were grouped into four teams based on my recommendation and their preference. All four teams had generated many good ideas on the project, and two teams finished their projects before I left Sofia and demonstrated them to me. I kept the projects in the classroom. The videos of the students answering my questions during their demonstration and some photos they took to show the progression of their projects are posted at <https://yan.wcu.edu/eppvi/>.

The first finished project started out with a grand idea to showcase water because there are very rich hot spring mineral water resources in Bulgaria, and the book *To Chicago and Back*, by Bulgarian author Aleko Konstantinov, made Niagara Falls famous in Bulgaria. The students wanted to create a flowing water cycle, preferably



Student group working on their project

with a waterfall. The team spent many days designing, building, and programming. They built a wooden box with a door and a knob as the base for the top basin, and the electronics were housed inside. They used a plastic water pipe to transport the water between the top and bottom water basins. The top basin was 3D-printed with a spigot to create that waterfall effect, although it looked like a fountain. They used a relay to draw the needed current from an external battery to drive the water pump instead of draining the battery of the board. Lastly, they added a water level sensor to control the flowing or stopping of the water cycle and chose a Christmas song to be played by the Touchboard while the water was flowing. Building the tangible parts of the project kept them busy, but the hardest part was programming, although it was not too visible. The students enjoyed the teamwork and all the laughter they shared while working on the project. They chose a team name, "Seek Higher Things" in English or "Ascende Superius" in Greek. I am confident that they will do many great things in their futures.

The second finished project was to present the three top representative cultural elements from each country. The team chose the Bulgarian rose, a martenitsa, and the Seven Rila Lakes for Bulgaria, and American comfort food, American football, and the Golden Gate Bridge for America. They placed a printed image or an object representing each element on a cut-out map of each country, respectively, and used black conductive paint to fill a circle in front of each object as the touching area. The black circles were connected with the corresponding pins on the Touchboard so that when people touched any black dot in front of an element, their touch would trigger a voice introduction of that element. The introduction of each element was compiled by the students in text and then converted to voice using an app. The drawing of the conductive paint lines sounded straightforward, but it required great care and patience, as any overspill might connect two separate lines unintendedly. Most cultural elements were represented by a cut-out image in

color, but the rose was 3D-printed in white filament, and the students hand-painted it in pink with a color fading effect. They chose their team's name as "The Supremes," as it was the name of a powerful witch they had seen in a movie, and they were just as transformative.

I collected student feedback before and after the course to measure any changes in their opinions about PBL, and the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission collected anonymous course evaluations. I was glad to hear some comments, such as "I really loved this course, especially Dr. Yan's motivation and excitement in teaching. Dr. Yan truly did put gasoline on my already burning passion and ambitions about building a career in the field of engineering" and "The three most important things I learned in this course were not to be afraid to try new things and experiment, Arduino language structure, and to use all of our resources to the max." We have submitted a full paper about my trip and the course to this year's ASEE (American Society of Engineering Education) annual conference.



Student groups after their project demonstrations to Yanjun Yan

All the work mentioned above was accomplished thanks to many people. Not only were the Bulgarian students amazing, but many colleagues at TU-Sofia were also unsung heroes. The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission truly made all the Fulbrighters feel like a big family, and I was fully supported on any idea I might have. My colleagues at WCU also shouldered my responsibilities while I was away. My family strongly supported me, and they had a good time in Bulgaria and Europe, too.

My Bulgarian students used to ask me if they needed to make the projects small enough that I could take them back to the States, since they were souvenirs. I said that I could reproduce them, and their copies would be kept at TU-Sofia, so the dimensions would not be a restriction. For me, the super-duper souvenir was the cherished memory of seeing the students flourish, getting to know all the amazing people, and experiencing the best of Bulgaria. This memory will never fade, and I am truly grateful for all who helped me to make this journey.



Some visitors with project 1



Some visitors with project 2



# Science & the Big Apple:

## A Bulgarian Fulbright Scholar at Lenox Hill Hospital, NYC

By Elitsa Pavlova, AY2021-2022 Bulgarian Scholar to the US



Fulbrighters in front of the John Harvard monument, Harvard University Cambridge, MA (left to right: Iglika Atanassova, Polina Petkova, Elitsa Pavlova)

My name is Elitsa Pavlova, and I teach and research in the field of Biophysics at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. It is an honor and a privilege to share my experience as a part of the Fulbright family. I was a Visiting Scholar at the Endocrine Research Laboratory of the Gerald J. Friedman Diabetes Institute, Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. It was a time full of surprises and a great motivator for my professional and academic development.

I applied for the Fulbright scholarship but had no expectations - the number of applicants each

year is tremendous and the competition is very stiff. It was such a fantastic opportunity- to work and live in the US for an extensive period of time, enough to finish and elaborate on a serious scientific project and enough to get to know the country's culture, specificities and visit so many exciting spots as a tourist. So, the first surprise was being selected as a visiting scholar.

The second surprise was my host laboratory in the heart of Manhattan, led by Dr. Dimitar Avtanski. The team was international, with the best professionals and lab equipment.

My colleagues supported me at each step of my project; I have advanced my skills in cell biology (my primary specialization) and cancer. We tested how a specific substance called resistan affects the oxidation processes and the transition of normal, healthy cells into cancerous ones. I evaluated a set of basic biomarkers, proving that the effect of the substance is not due to a known cell-damaging mechanism. I touched on other research topics beyond my primary one as well, which has broadened my scientific interests. The highly positive and non-stressful atmosphere in the lab

with access to expensive materials were very important for the working process. We also enjoyed time together beyond work – we went on excursions, celebrated birthdays, and created stable connections.

The third surprise was NYC. I arrived at the beginning of August 2021 and left in mid-January 2022. I experienced three seasons there, as well as Hurricane Ida, and visited the city's impressive museums, zoos and parks, as well as skyscrapers and lots of other sightseeing locations. I even saw the US Open Championship! I also visited and was a guest in the various neighborhoods of the city, which was another kind of experience. I have to mention that I have travelled intensively around the world and did not expect anything new, but NYC was a total surprise. In NYC, diversity is a must, an everyday routine, a mixture of the entire modern world and various cultures.

I also spent time visiting Boston, MA, and Washington, DC. There I had an incredible time sightseeing and meeting other Fulbrighters and people from around the world. We had the chance to be guests at the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington, DC, where we joined a wine tasting, and also had the opportunity to vote in the Bulgarian elections in Boston. This was the next surprise: that American cities are so different. Their architecture and spirit differ so much; in fact, this single country covers half a continent, so a person needs months or even years to get to know the beauty and the diversity of its nature and landscape, the various cities, their people and lifestyle.

## Being a Fulbrighter means being a cultural ambassador for your country.

Being a Fulbrighter means being a cultural ambassador for your country. The community organizes so many activities for us. I met scholars and students from all over the world who work in various fields, and we exchanged many ideas. I broadened my outlook on further international collaborations. I would like to specially thank both the Bulgarian and American teams for their support, professionalism, extreme precision and personal attention during the fellowship process.

Thank you, FULBRIGHT, for this wonderful opportunity and experience!



A favorite view of the Big Apple





For the first time, a collection of philosophical essays by the founder of pragmatism and semiotics C. S. Peirce was published in Bulgarian. Fulbright alumnus Dr. **Aleksandar Feodorov** (Visiting Researcher, 2019, Indiana University) selected and translated 15 of Peirce's most important texts. The book was launched at the American Corner of Sofia Library on May 3 with the kind support of the publisher Lyuben Kozarev (Editor-in-Chief of Iztok-Zapad) and Fulbright ED Angela Rodel. Fellow Fulbright alumnus Professor Ivan Mladenov also contributed with reflection on Peirce. Dr. Feodorov shared his motivation to translate Peirce, the difficulties he had to overcome in the process, as well as with the curious story of Peirce's visit to Bulgaria during his 1870 European trip when the great American philosopher decided to test the Black Sea's saltiness by tasting it. The Bulgarian edition of *Selected Writings of Charles S. Peirce* promises to be an extremely influential publication for years to come. The publication was published with the generous support of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission and the Charles S. Peirce Society.



Professor **Lyubima Despotova-Toleva** (Fulbright Visiting Scholar, 2006, University of Illinois) and her team at the Plovdiv Medical University won an OMNIA grant to develop PhD programs in palliative care and geriatrics in Bulgarian and English. With this, she and her team will fill the existing significant gap in the third level of education of Bulgarian physicians. All the educational materials are ready, while electronic interactive content and online lectures are currently being prepared. The final step before the programs are launched is accreditation by the National Agency for Accreditation and Evaluation. We keep our fingers crossed for this valuable undertaking!

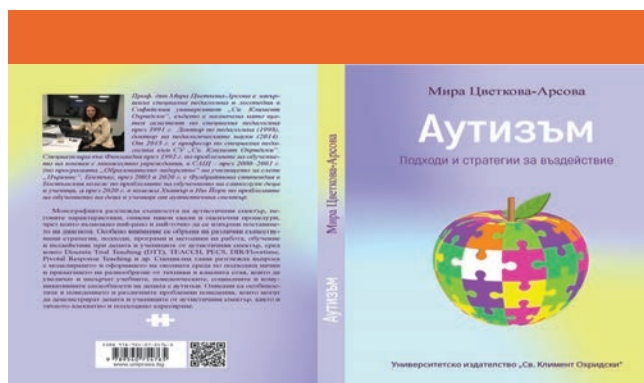


Dr. **Iskren Ivanov** (Fulbright Visiting Scholar, 2020, University of Texas at Austin) recently published his book *Pandemics Among Nations*. The work addresses "the geopolitical puzzle of the post-pandemic world order and seeks to explain how the decline of unipolarity remastered Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard. History has come to the point where international realities no longer correspond to the structure of the unipolar world. Conflicts between nations emerge as the United States and China seek to reshape the balance of power. In such a world, the United States is bound to cheat the Art of War of China, while Beijing is destined to rewrite the illiberal end of history." We are convinced Dr. Ivanov's viewpoint will be valuable in the fast-changing international relations environment.





Professor **Maya Tcholakova** (Fulbright Visiting Scholar, 2018-2019, University of Central Florida) wrote a monograph entitled *Cultural Humility*, which was published by the publisher of the University of Sofia St. Kliment Ohridski in May of this year. The monograph is the result of her Fulbright research on the concept of cultural humility. Introduced for the first time in Bulgaria, this concept is presented with the idea of stimulating a debate on the intercultural aspects of education in social pedagogy and social activities.



Professor **Mira Tzvetkova-Arsova** (Fulbright Visiting Scholar, 2020, Hunter College) published her book *Autism: Approaches and Strategies for Effective Intervention* with Sofia University Press in the summer of 2022. Professor Tzvetkova-Arsova began the book during her Fulbright research visit to Hunter College, NYC, and finished it later in Bulgaria with support from a Fulbright Alumni Grant. The book cover was designed by Kristiana Arsova – Mira's daughter, who is studying graphic design in Bulgaria. The back cover of the book shows Mira having a class at Hunter College, NYC. Congratulations for this important contribution to supporting autistic people!



**Martina Novakova** (AY2021-22 Graduate Student at New York University) shares her exciting experience in her MA program in Theater: "In Spring 2022 I was part of the class of Professor Anna Deavere Smith, the creator of verbatim theatre who revolutionized contemporary theatre. Professpr Smith was also the reason I decided to apply for the Fulbright scholarship in the first place. The course was called One Person Show and we presented one 3-5 min show every week. For our final exam, which was open for the general audience, I created the piece 'The Homecoming,' a show about catastrophe and how people look at it. In the talkback, Professor Smith asked the audience the question I was posing with my work: Is war happening far away from us? Her recognition, feedback and advice are some of the most valuable I have received in my career so far. I'm currently working on the

piece and hope I'll be able to present it in Bulgaria next year. I also had the pleasure of delivering a speech at the Fulbright Awards Dinner, held annually by One to World at the Plaza Hotel. I shared my experience as a volunteer teacher at public schools in New York, as part of the Global Classroom program. Furthermore, I discussed my work as a theatre maker and a teaching artist and shared my thoughts about the importance of being socially engaged and thinking critically from a young age.



**Gene Berryhill** (Fulbright Scholar, National Academy of Arts, AY 2016-2017) wrote two historical fiction books, both published on Amazon and containing Gene's exceptional artwork. *Mystery in the Gallo Mountains* is a laconic fictional story about an American family of mixed blood who struggle to survive the trials and hardships of the early 1900s. The clan of five travel from Eastern Tennessee to Western New Mexico, striving to hold on and stay alive together as hunter-gatherers. For poor folk after the Great Depression, this is not a unique saga, as many lamented and rejoiced through similar situations but the people of this tale live through untold, strange and ultimately tragic circumstances. *Vandora's Flight* is a sequel to *Mystery in the Gallo Mountains*, and delves into the continuing escapades and hardships of the family described in the first book.



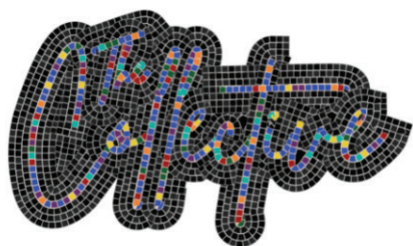
Over the past year, **Edward Morgan** (Fulbright Scholar, New Bulgarian University, AY 2018-2019) directed several productions including his own play *So You Can Look Ahead* at Lamar University in Texas; *Three Viewpoints at Next in Milwaukee*; and *Up Close (But Not Too Close!)* with **John McGivern**, an Emmy-award winning comedian and storyteller at Northern Lights Theatre in the Potawatomi Casino in Milwaukee. He has also been awarded another Fulbright grant for 2022-2023, using theatre and creative writing to teach upper-level English and to help train English teachers in Kyrgyzstan.



thematic entries. The Encyclopedia has a distinct focus on international human rights law but at the same time is enriched by approaches from the broader social, sciences making it a truly unique and multi-disciplinary resource.

**Brian Farrell** (Fulbright Scholar, Sofia University, AY 2012-2013) authored the article "Habeas Corpus" for the recently launched Elgar Encyclopedia of Human Rights. The *Elgar Encyclopedia of Human Rights* is the most comprehensive reference work in the field of international human rights protection. Comprising over 340 entries, presented alphabetically, and available online and in print, the Encyclopedia addresses the full range of themes associated with the study and practice of human rights in the modern world. The topics range from substantive human rights to the relevant institutions, legal documents, conceptual and procedural issues of international law and a wide variety of





SHIFTING THE PARADIGM FOR CRITICAL MUSICIANS

**Danielle Nutting** (Fulbright Student, Union of Bulgarian Composers, AY 2019-2020) together with a flutist colleague started an online publication that manifests a mosaic of musical identity, comprising authentic and underrecognized voices in their field.

The Collective (<https://thecollectiveis.us/>) is an alternative space for diverse musicians to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively about systemic issues in music and society. In forming The Collective, they wanted to create a space for critical thinking to thrive, where people can engage in meaningful, intelligent, and transformative conversations about the world and the role of art in our society.



**Dr. Jasmin Vassileva** (Fulbright Scholar, Bulgarian Addictions Institute, AY 2020-2021), who came to Bulgaria to work on a cross-cultural adaptation and development of novel neuroscience-informed psychoeducational interventions for substance use disorders, published numerous articles in her field of expertise in AY 2020-2021, including in leading journals such as *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *The European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, and *The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, among others.



Though it might seem as modern as Samuel Beckett, Joseph Conrad, and Vladimir Nabokov, translingual writing - texts by authors using more than one language or a language other than their primary one - has an ancient pedigree.

*The Routledge Handbook of Literary Translingualism*, co-edited by **Steven G. Kellman** (Distinguished Chair in American Literature, Sofia University, AY 2000-2001) aims to provide a comprehensive overview of translingual literature in a wide variety of languages throughout the world, from ancient to modern times. The volume includes sections on translingual genres - with chapters on memoir, poetry, fiction, drama, and cinema; ancient, medieval, and modern translingualism; global perspectives - chapters overseeing European, African, and Asian languages. Featuring scholars from a variety of disciplines, this interdisciplinary and pioneering Handbook will advance current scholarship of the permutations of languages among authors throughout time.



12 Vitosha Blvd, 5th floor  
1000 Sofia, Bulgaria



Tel: +359 2 981 85 67



Fax: +359 2 988 45 17



[fulbright@fulbright.bg](mailto:fulbright@fulbright.bg)



[www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg)