

American political science professor Nicolai N. Petro to lecture in the political science department

The Center for East-Central Europe of the Department of Political and Social Science is glad to announce that a specialist on Russia and Ukraine, Professor Petro, is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Bologna. He is here to write a book about how an appreciation of classical Greek tragedy can help to resolve some of the world's most intransigent political problems.

Nicolai N. Petro is currently Full Professor of Political Science at the University of Rhode Island (USA), where he previously held the Silvia-Chandley Professorship of Peace Studies and Nonviolence. Professor Petro focuses attention on political culture and symbols and how they affect social transformation. His regional areas of expertise are Russia and Ukraine.

His many awards include two Fulbright awards (one to Russia and one to Ukraine), a Council on Foreign Relations Fellowship, and research awards from the Foreign Policy Research Institute, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies in Washington, D.C., and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

In addition to his scholarly writings (available on his web site www.petro.net), he has written for publications such as *The American Interest*, *International New York Times*, *The Guardian* (UK), *Christian Science Monitor*, *Kyiv Post*, *Moscow Times*, *The Nation*, *The National Interest*, *Russia in Global Affairs*, *World Politics Review*, and the *Yale Journal of International Affairs*.

He was briefly involved in policy-making, serving as Special Assistant for Policy in the U.S. State Department under U.S. president George H.W. Bush. This exposure to policy making, combined with a stay in Ukraine from 2013-2014, and several years of teaching political theory, eventually led him to connect classical studies and current politics.

His current project, *The Tragedy of Ukraine: What Classical Greek Tragedy Can Teach Us About Conflict Resolution* will be his ninth book. It challenges much of the conventional wisdom about Ukraine by arguing that the roots of the crisis there are to be found in the attitude of the state to “the Other Ukraine”—the third of the population that regards its own Russian cultural identity as compatible with a Ukrainian civic identity. The reluctance of the state to recognize them as a legitimate part of the Ukrainian nation lies at the heart of a tragic cycle that has entangled Ukrainian politics for decades. Since entrenched conflicts of this sort are as much problems of the heart as they are institutional problems, classical Greek tragedy can be therapeutic by inducing a change of heart (*catharsis*) in order to create a more just society.

During his term as a Visiting Fellow here in Bologna, professor Petro is also scheduled to speak to the political science department about "Ukraine and the Prospects for Peace" on April 23rd.