

*International Conference*

# RELIGION AND WAR IN UKRAINE

The Political,  
the Public, and  
the Possible

March 14th-16th, 2024

Telus 134 - Telus International Centre  
University of Alberta  
11104 87 Ave NW - Edmonton

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Session: Religious Organizations and  
Peacemaking, Part I

1:30PM MST, March 16, 2024

## Religious actors and creating a culture of dialogue during war

Tetiana Kalenychenko, Executive Director of the NGO Center for European Strategic Analytics, and Catherine Wanner, Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies at The Pennsylvania State University

This presentation presents research based on over five years of fieldwork focusing on restorative practices and peacebuilding initiatives in Ukraine. Field data consists of accounts by religious actors from different denominations who have joined interconfessional groups to talk about points of contention, ethical dilemmas, and possible areas of cooperation. Their accounts provide a sense of lived religion in Ukraine, reveal intra- and inter-religious dynamics, and shed light on how religious actors might help intervene to reduce or resolve social tensions. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated polarization, vastly complicating cooperation. By understanding the constraints and competing aspirations among denominations, it is possible to analyze the potential future role of religious organizations in the post-war recovery period.

Tetiana Kalenychenko holds a PhD in Sociology of Religion from National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in Kyiv, Ukraine and received training in peacebuilding at the Mirovna Academia in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is the Executive Director of the NGO Center for European Strategic Analytics and co-founder of Dialogue in Action, an NGO involved in conflict mediation and community building in Ukraine. She works in the field of conflict analysis and management, peacekeeping, and restorative practices with many international organizations (OSCE, UNDP, USAID, MCC, USIP, and others). She conducts academic research based on fieldwork as a dialogue facilitator and trainer in peacekeeping initiatives in Ukraine. She has been working "on the ground" in the front zones for many years and brings expertise in the role of religious groups in conflict mediation and community building.

Catherine Wanner is a historical anthropologist and Professor of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies at The Pennsylvania State University. Using ethnographic and archival methods, her research centers on the politics of religion and increasingly on conflict mediation, ecocide, and trauma healing. Her two most recent publications are *Everyday Religiosity and the Politics of Belonging in Ukraine* (Cornell, 2022), which won two book prizes, and an edited volume, *Dispossession: Anthropological Perspectives on Russia's War Against Ukraine* (Routledge, 2024). She is currently writing a book entitled, *Ecocide, Animals, and Empathy after the Russian Invasion of Ukraine*. In 2020 she was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Prize from the Association for the Study of Eastern Christianity and in 2023 she received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Association of Women in Slavic Studies. She is the Petro Jacyk Distinguished Fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute for 2023-24.