

What To Read About Ukraine Now: A Booklist

by Olha Aleksic
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Olha Aleksic, Jacyk Bibliographer for Ukrainian Collections at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, suggests the following titles for U.S. library patrons looking to learn more about the history of Ukraine and more recent events.



NONFICTION

Applebaum, Anne. *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*. Doubleday. 2017. 496p. ISBN 9780385538855. \$35; ISBN 9780804170888. pap. \$17.95

In 1929 Stalin launched his policy of agricultural collectivization. The result was a catastrophic famine, killing at least five million people. Applebaum argues that the death of more than three million Ukrainians in the Holodomor was not accidental but deliberate.

D'Anieri, Paul. *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War*. Cambridge Univ. Pr. 2019. 292p. ISBN 9781108713955. pap. \$29.99.

D'Anieri chronologically explores how Ukraine's separation from Russia in 1991 progressed to the 2014 war, arguing that the conflict worsened because of "the security dilemma," the impact of democratization on geopolitics, and the incompatible goals of a post-Cold War Europe. It also speaks to how the war fits into broader patterns of contemporary international conflict.

Khromeychuk, Olesya. *A Loss: The Story of a Dead Soldier Told by His Sister*. ibidem. 2021. 140p. ISBN 9783838215709. pap. \$22.

Khromeychuk, a historian of war, shares the story of her brother who was killed at the frontline in 2017 while serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, through a combination of personal memoir and essay.

Kurkov, Andreï. *Ukraine Diaries: Dispatches from Kiev*. Harvill Secker. 2014. 272p. tr. by Sam Taylor. ISBN 9781846559471. pap. \$18.95.

Kurkov's first-hand account describes what it is like to live through crisis, beginning on the first day of the pro-European protests in November 2013, and covering the violent clashes in the Maidan, the impeachment of Yanukovych, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the separatist uprisings in the east of Ukraine, as seen from his flat in Kyiv.

Kuzio, Taras. *Putin's War Against Ukraine: Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime*. CreateSpace. 2017. 492p. ISBN 9781543285864. pap. \$19.

Kuzio, a Canada-based British academic and expert in Ukrainian political, economic, and security affairs, starts with Russia's 2010 annexation of Crimea and war in the Donbas, and focuses on national identity as the root: specifically, Russia's refusal to view Ukrainians as a separate people and to recognize the sovereignty and borders of Ukraine. Kuzio's text is based on fieldwork in Russian-speaking eastern and southern Ukraine and the Donbas combat zone.

Magocsi, Paul R. [Ukraine: An Illustrated History](#). Univ. of Washington Pr. 2007. 352p. ISBN 9780295987231. \$95; ISBN 9781442627567. pap. \$50.

Magocsi, chair of Ukrainian studies at the University of Toronto, frames a readable historical survey of the country with historical maps, photographs, line drawings, portraits, and reproductions of books and works of art. He emphasizes the multicultural nature of Ukraine, representing Russians, Poles, Jews, Crimean Tatars, Germans (including Mennonites), and Greeks, as well as ethnic Ukrainians.

Motyl, Alexander J. [Ukraine vs. Russia: Revolution, Democracy, and War; Selected Articles and Blogs, 2010–2016](#). Westphalia Pr. 2017. 600p. ISBN 9781633915138. pap. \$21.99.

Motyl, professor of political science at Rutgers University–Newark who specializes in Ukraine, Russia, and the USSR, offers in-depth analysis and running commentary on current events and historical controversies in Russia and Ukraine. Motyl discusses politics, society, culture, economics, history, language, and memory and how they relate to the Russo-Ukrainian War and to Western understanding and misunderstanding.

Plokyh, Serhii. [The Frontline: Essays on Ukraine’s Past and Present](#). Harvard Ukrainian Research Inst.: Harvard Univ. Pr. 2021. 416p. ISBN 9780674268821. \$64.

Historian Plokyh examines Ukraine’s complex relations with Russia and the West, the Holodomor and World War II, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and Ukraine’s contribution to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Plokyh, Serhii. [The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine](#). Basic. 2015. 432p. ISBN 9780465050918. \$29.99; ISBN 9781541675643. pap. \$19.99.

Plokyh explains the long history of turmoil over Ukraine’s sovereignty, from the Romans and Ottomans to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, considering Ukraine through the lens of major historical figures.

Sonevytsky, Maria. [Wild Music: Sound and Sovereignty in Ukraine](#). Wesleyan Univ. Pr. 2019. 288p. ISBN 9780819579164. pap. \$27.95.

Sonevytsky tracks vernacular Ukrainian discourse on “wildness” in popular music during the decade of Ukrainian political history bracketed by two revolutions. She assesses how music from the Eurovision Song Contest to reality TV, from Indigenous radio to the revolution stage exhibit, reimagined Ukrainian tradition and culture.

Ukraine in Histories and Stories: Essays by Ukrainian Intellectuals. *ibidem*. 2020. 304p. ed. by Volodymyr Yermolenko. ISBN 9783838214566. pap. \$25.

Contemporary Ukrainian writers, historians, philosophers, political analysts, and opinion leaders reflect on Ukraine history, analyze the present, and share their life stories.

Yekelchyk, Serhy. Ukraine: What Everyone Needs To Know. Oxford Univ. Pr. 2nd ed. 2020. 240p. ISBN 9780197532119. pap. \$18.95.

This title focuses on Ukraine's relations with the West, particularly the United States; crony capitalism; two rebellions; and why Russia reacted as it did; plus, what we know about alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; the factors behind Volodymyr Zelensky's election; and how the events leading to the impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump changed the Russia-Ukraine-U.S. relationship.

FICTION

Kurkov, Andreï. Grey Bees. Deep Vellum. Mar. 2022. 360p. tr. by Boris Dralyuk. ISBN 9781646051663. pap. \$15.95.

Little Starhorodivka, in Ukraine's Grey Zone between loyalist and separatist forces, has only two residents left: retired safety inspector turned beekeeper Sergey Sergeyich and Pashka, a frenemy from his schooldays. As spring approaches, Sergeyich takes his bees out of the Grey Zone to collect pollen, introducing him to combatants and civilians on both sides of the battle lines.

Zhadan, Serhiï. The Orphanage. Yale Univ. Pr. 2021. 336p. tr. by Reilly Costigan-Humes & Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler. ISBN 9780300243017. pap. \$18.

When hostile soldiers invade a neighboring city, Pasha sets out for the orphanage where his nephew Sasha lives, now in occupied territory, to rescue Sasha and bring him home.

POETRY

Words for War: New Poems from Ukraine. Academic Studies Pr. 2017. 242p. ed. by Oksana Maksymchuk & Max Rosochinsky. ISBN 9781618118615. pap. \$23.95.

These poems by authors from all over Ukraine take on themes of alienation, loss, dislocation, disability, justice, heroism, courage, resilience, generosity, and forgiveness.