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PROFESSOR SHARES MOLDOVA RESEARCH, MEETS FORMER POLISH PRESIDENT

Dr. Judithanne Scourffield McLauchlan, associate professor of Political Science, recently presented her research about human rights on legal and judicial reform in Moldova at the European Society for Comparative Legal History Biennial Conference (ESCLH) in Gdansk, Poland. It was there that she also had the opportunity to meet former Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski and former Polish Constitutional Tribunal Justice Ewa Letowska.

“The ESCLH is the premier organization that brings together scholars of comparative legal history,” said McLauchlan, who served as a Fulbright scholar to the Republic of Moldova in 2010 and 2012, and returned to teach an Education Abroad course in 2013. McLauchlan began researching and collecting data while in Moldova. “The theme of this year’s conference was ‘Culture, Identity and Legal Instrumentalism,’ and, of course, my research regarding Moldova fit well within this theme.”

As the place where the first shots were fired during World War II—and the birthplace of the Solidarity movement that helped bring an end to the Community rule across Central Europe—Gdansk has a rich 1,000 year history and is a city situated at the intersection of cultures and nationalities.

“I find Moldova to be endlessly fascinating,” said McLauchlan, who described the landlocked country as a study of contrasts. “Moldova is torn between its Soviet past and its European future with an uncertain present, making it a profoundly interesting state to study.”

Her paper assesses the impact of decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights (EChTR) on legal and judicial reform in Moldova. She reviewed the court’s judgments and corresponding reports from 1997 through 2014, and also interviewed more than 25 lawyers, judges, and human rights advocates, including the president of the Supreme Court of Justice (and former judge on the European Court of Human Rights), the vice minister of justice of the Republic of Moldova, and the Moldovan government agent before the European Court of Human Rights.

“I hope my findings will offer insights into the constraints faced by the EChTR in implementing its decisions and the impact of the EChTR on national legal systems, as well as contribute to the conference...
focus on the issue of law as an instrument of transforming reality,” McLauchlan said.

“This underscores once again that Dr. Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan has, through her years of focused scholarship, become a leading international voice and expert on the import and role of Moldova in the complex puzzle of geopolitics” said Dr. Frank Biafora, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “As Dean, I also commend Judithanne for always seeking ways to provide meaningful and relevant opportunities for USFSP students to benefit from her leadership and primary research.”

Her trip is supported by a Faculty International Travel Grant from the USF System.

Read more about McLauchlan’s trip on her Moldova blog.
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