



CEES Seminar Series

**ALENA GRAY ANISKIEWICZ, PH.D.**

**“ROMANTICS, REBELS, AND RAPPERS: HOW  
POLISH HIP-HOP REMIXES THE PAST”**

**FRIDAY,  
JANUARY 30,  
2026**

**12:00 PM**

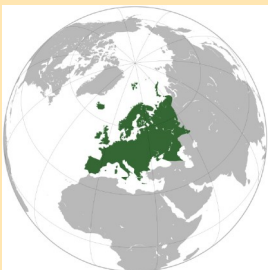
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Asked about the nineteenth-century Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz, the Polish rapper Doniu suggested, “If Mickiewicz was alive today, he’d be a good rhymet.” Starting from this claim, I explore how Polish rappers engage the texts and narratives of their nation’s past – “remixing” history to speak to the present. From the rapper Peja’s reinterpretation of Mickiewicz’s “The Great Improvisation,” through the many musical memorials to the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, to Dorota Masłowska’s colorful critique of contemporary society, Polish hip-hop offers a valuable lens through which to approach (and teach) the complexities of Polish culture – one that encourages us to debate conceptions of “Polishness” and consider the writing (and rewriting) of national history and identity. In addition to introducing these hip-hop histories and offering a portrait of a nation constantly “sampling” its past, this talk will consider how these creative and evolving narratives might be engaged in teaching Polish culture to American students.



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**Alena Aniskiewicz** is an Assistant Professor in the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities (CISAH). She teaches courses throughout MSU’s Integrated Arts and Humanities (IAH) curriculum, for which she received the Fintz Award for Teaching Excellence in the Arts and Humanities in 2023. Alena holds a Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of Michigan, where she also was a Postdoctoral

Research Fellow at the Institute for the Humanities. Her research explores Polish popular culture, literary history, and cultural heritage. Her writing on Eastern European culture has been published by the Journal of Popular Music Studies, Culture.pl, The Mercurian: A Theatrical Translation Review, Cosmopolitan Review, and the Seattle Opera. She is currently working on a book on Polish hip hop and the nation’s poetic tradition.