Road map

for international students of Odesa Polytechnic State University

Maksym Kunitsyn

# 1 The Ukrainian state

## 1.1 Ukrainian state

Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe. Its territory is 603,549 square kilometers. In terms of territory, it ranks second after Russia among European countries.

On August 24, 1991, Ukraine declared independence. The full name of the country is the Republic of Ukraine. The capital is Kyiv.

Since 2014, Ukraine has been a parliamentary-presidential republic. The head of state is the president. The president is elected for five years. The Government of Ukraine is the Cabinet of Ministers. The head of the Cabinet of Ministers is the Prime Minister.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine is the legislative power of the country. The Verkhovna Rada consists of 450 deputies.

The population of Ukraine (as of October 1, 2014) is 45 million 455 thousand 65 people. Currently, 31 million 329 thousand 453 people live in cities. In addition, 14 million 125 thousand 612 people live in villages.

More than 130 nationalities live in Ukraine. The main population is Ukrainian (80%). In addition, Russians (17%), Armenians, Belarusians, Crimean Tatars, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, and others also live in Ukraine.

## 1.2 The state language is Ukrainian

Ukraine is a secular state. The country’s Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Muslims, Jews, etc., live in Ukraine. The vast majority of the population (over 88%) are Christians.

Ukraine includes 24 oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (annexed by Russia in 2014). Ukraine is divided into five regions  — Western, Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Central Ukraine.

There are 459 cities in Ukraine.

Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro are cities with a population of more than 1 million.

**It is interesting!**

There are many ancient cities in Ukraine. The oldest cities of Ukraine:

* The town of Belgorod-Dniester (Thira)  — the date of the VI century BC.
* The town of Kiliya (Achilles)  — the date of origin of the VII century BC.
* The city of Kyiv is 482 years old.
* The city of Korosten is 1310 years old.
* The city of Uzhhorod is 1122 years old.
* The city of Poltava is 1114 years old.
* The town of Khotyn is 1113 years old.
* The town of Romney is 1113 years old.
* The city of Chernihiv is 1108 years old.
* The town of Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky is 1108 years old.
1. In 2008, Ukraine became a member of the World Trade Organization.
2. According to the International Charcoal and Steel Institute ranking, Ukrainian metallurgy was in 7th place among 63 countries, the primary metal producers.
3. For the last 15 years, Ukraine has been a stable member of the ten largest arms-producing countries.
4. In Ukraine, about 30 million hectares of arable land. Is it a lot or a little? For comparison: Germany, Italy, and England, taken together, have arable land of only 26 million hectares.

# 2 State symbols of Ukraine

## 2.1 State symbols of Ukraine

Every state has state symbols. For example, Ukraine has its state symbols: coat of arms, flag, anthem.

Coat of arms of Ukraine  — Golden Trident on a blue background. Trident - an ancient sign. It was often used by people who lived by the sea. For example, in Greco-Roman culture, the trident symbolized the power of the ancient Greek god of the sea Poseidon (Neptune). Scientists and historians believe that the trident represents the trinity of the world  — the unity of earth, water, and air.

The flag of Ukraine consists of blue and yellow stripes. Blue symbolizes a clear, peaceful sky, yellow  — a wheat field. Thus, the flag of Ukraine is a symbol of peace, work, beauty, and wealth of the native land.

An exciting story of the creation of the anthem of Ukraine. In 1862, the Ukrainian poet Pavlo Chubynsky wrote, "Ukraine is not dead and glory and freedom." The poems were very popular because they called on Ukrainians to fight for independence. In 1865, the music for the lyrics was written by the Ukrainian composer Mykhailo Verbitsky. This song became the anthem of Ukraine.

**It is interesting!**

* The word "hymn" comes from the Greek language, meaning "song of praise."
* The word "herb" comes from the German language, means "sign of the state, city."

## 2.2 Symbols of Odessa

The coat of arms of Odessa is a red shield. On the shield is a silver anchor. Golden city crown on top. Under the crown of the Golden Star. What does the coat of arms of Odessa mean? The red shield symbolizes the struggle for access to the Black Sea, and the red color symbolizes courage.

The silver anchor has been the emblem of the city of Odessa since April 22, 1798. The anchor is a symbol of the city  — the port. The Golden Star symbolizes the status of a "hero city," which Odessa received for heroism during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. The Golden Crown symbolizes wealth and prosperity.

The flag of Odessa consists of stripes of red, white, and yellow. Red means  — the heroism of the people of Odessa, white  — their pure soul, golden-yellow  — the wealth and prosperity of Odessa. The symbols of Odessa mean that Odessa is a cheerful European city, which has always had the spirit of freedom, equality, and brotherhood.

# 3 Geography of Ukraine

Ukraine is located in Eastern Europe. It covers an area from west to East for 1316 kilometers, from north to south  — for 893 kilometers. The area of Ukraine is 603,700 square kilometers. Belarus borders Ukraine to the north, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary to the west, Romania, Moldova to the southwest, and Russia to the east.

In the south, the territory of Ukraine is washed by the Black and Azov Seas. Most of Ukraine is a plain (95%) with beautiful fertile land  — chernozem. On the territory of Ukraine, there are mountains, forests, steppes.

There are mountains in the west of Ukraine - the Ukrainian Carpathians, and in the south  — the Crimean mountains. The highest peak in the Ukrainian Carpathians is Hoverla. Its height is 2061 meters. And the highest mountain of the Crimean mountains is Roman-Kosh. Its height is 1545 meters.

There are 71 thousand rivers on the territory of Ukraine. The main rivers of Ukraine are the Danube, the Dnieper, the Dniester, the Pivdenniy Bug, and the Severskiy Donets. The largest of them are the Danube and the Dnieper.

There are more than 3,000 lakes in Ukraine. Synevir  — the deepest lake. Its area is 700 square meters, and its depth is 20 meters. Lake Yalpug is the second largest lake in Europe. Its length is 39 km, width up to 5 km, depth  — 6 meters.

Seas, rivers, lakes are transport routes, water resources, and sources of hydropower.

Ukraine has many minerals: coal, oil, gas, uranium, iron, manganese, titanium, mercury, gold, silver, copper, sulfur, chalk, etc.

The climate in Ukraine is moderately continental. The average temperature in July is from +18 to +24 degrees. And in winter, the average January temperature is from +2 to -8 degrees. Odesa is located in the south of Ukraine, so it is not very cold here in winter and often very hot in summer. But in the Carpathians, winter is snowy, so many tourists spend the winter in the Carpathians.

**It is interesting!**

* The word "Ukraine" means the country  — the land where Ukrainians live.
* The Dnieper is a symbol of Ukraine. Slavutych is the poetic name of the Dnieper. The length of the Dnieper is 2201 kilometers. It is the third-largest river in Europe after the Volga and the Danube. The Dnieper is one of the 27 most significant rivers in the world.
* On the banks of the Danube are many major European cities: Vienna – Austria, Belgrade – Serbia, Budapest – Hungary, Bratislava – Slovakia, Munich – Bavaria, Regensburg – Germany, Ruse – Bulgaria, Braila – Romania.
* The fauna of Ukraine is 28 thousand species of animals.

## 3.1 Famous Ukrainians

### Ukrainian geographer (1809 – 1868)

Yegor Kovalevsky is a well-known Ukrainian geographer, traveler, geologist, diplomat, researcher, and writer. He was born in a small Ukrainian village in the Kharkiv region. From childhood, he loved to read books about travel, geographical discoveries.

In 1828, Yegor Kovalevsky graduated from Kharkiv University and began working in the Department of Mining. In 1830 he went to Siberia to look for gold. In Siberia, Kovalevsky taught Egyptian engineers mining.

In 1837, at the request of the Montenegrin government, he explored natural resources. As a result, Yegor Kovalevsky gave the first geographical description of Montenegro and made maps of this country.

In 1839 he went to Central Asia, and in 1847  — to Egypt. In Egypt, he was the first geographer to explore the Nile basin and give a geographical description.

From Egypt, he went to Sudan, Ethiopia. His book "Journey to Inner Africa" contains many interesting and valuable information about the nature and population of Egypt, Sudan, and Western Ethiopia.

His book "Journey to China" provided valuable geographical information about this country.

# 4 Folk symbols of Ukraine

## 4.1 Folk symbols of Ukraine

In ancient times, symbols were of great importance in the life of the people. There are many legends and songs about folk symbols. They have been preserved in various rituals and traditions. Each country has its folk symbols.

The Ukrainian people also have national symbols. Example:

* Viburnum  — a symbol of beauty and tenderness of the girl.
* Willow  — a symbol of spring, water, the awakening of nature. They say: "Where there is water, there is a willow," "Without a willow and a viburnum, there is no Ukraine."
* Oak  — a symbol of strength, longevity. Mothers embroidered oak leaves on their sons’ shirts so that the child would be solid and sturdy.
* The stork symbolizes new life and love. It is a favorite bird of Ukrainians. From ancient times, Ukrainians believed that storks bring children to homes where a happy family lives.

## 4.2 Bread and salt on a towel

Bread and salt on a towel is an ancient Slavic symbol that means the hospitality of the Ukrainian people. The most expensive guests always greeted bread and salt on a towel.

A person served bread and salt breaks off a piece of bread, dips it in salt, and then eats it.

"Bread and salt for your home!"  — so the guests told the hosts. Bread is a symbol of life, the leading food of Ukrainians.

Loaf  — around bread  — the Slavs are also a symbol of the sun. The solar form of a cow is a symbol of wealth, happiness, and fertility.

"A house without towels is like a family without children," people say. So towels have always been a decoration of the Ukrainian house.

In Ukraine, the towel has long been essential in everyday life and many folk rites, especially in preparation for the wedding. The ancestors of Ukrainians believed that the girl should embroider 40 towels herself (herself) before the wedding. Only her relatives, women, could help her.

The color on the towels matters, so red means love, so this color was on wedding towels. Black symbolizes sadness, brutal female fate. Green means life, rebirth, yellow  — the color of the sun and health, blue  — the color of joy.

Towels are kept and passed down from generation to generation as a family heirloom. A beautiful embroidered and bright towel is still valued by the people today! Ukrainians believe that a towel is a mascot to bring prosperity and peace to the family.

**It is interesting!**

The ancestors of Ukrainians believed that the girl should embroider 40 towels herself (herself) before the wedding. Only female relatives could help her. Now everything is much easier. The girl embroiders five towels:

* Hand-towel. The bride herself embroidered it. It is the largest and most beautiful towel. The bride’s mother handed it to the groom after the courtship, confirming her consent to the marriage.
* Towel under your feet. Newlyweds stand on it in the registry office or the church. It is the most critical towel at the wedding because there is a tradition: which of the young people will be the first to stand on the towel, so be the main one in the family.
* Union towel. They tie the hands of the newlyweds in the church or registry office  — a symbol of unity, family happiness.
* Blessed (parental) towel for the icon. The tradition of blessing the young is still alive today.
* Bread towel. A wedding loaf is placed on it. After the wedding, the parents meet the newlyweds with a wedding loaf.

# 5 Kyiv is the capital of Ukraine

The capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, is located on the hills on the banks of the Dnieper River. Kyiv is one of the most beautiful cities not only in Ukraine but also in Europe.

It is a beautiful city that can be loved for life. And what a beautiful and expansive Dnieper! From such beauty  — breathtaking!

Kyiv is an ancient city. The date of its foundation is 482 years.

In the ancient chronicle "The Tale of Past Years," there is a legend about the founding of the city of Kyiv: three brothers Kyi, Shchek, Khoriv, and their sister Lybid settled in the mountains above the Dnieper. The brothers built a city, and in the older brother’s name, they named it Kyiv, i.e., the city of Kyiv.

In 882, Kyiv became the capital of the first Russian state, Kievan Rus, which was the largest state in the ninth  — eleventh centuries in Europe.

Ancient architectural monuments of Kievan Rus have been preserved in Kyiv.

The Golden Gate was the main entrance to the city. They were built in 1037. At the top was a Christian Church. It was created so that everyone knew that Kyiv was a Christian city in Russia. There were more than 400 churches in the town.

St. Sophia Cathedral is the oldest church. It was built in the XI century. In 1037, the cathedral opened the first library in Kievan Rus.

In 1990, St. Sophia Cathedral was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Kyiv Pechersk Lavra is located on high hills above the Dnieper River. The Lavra originated in the XI century. Its construction lasted nine centuries.

The Kyiv Pechersk Lavra was a spiritual, cultural, and educational center because schools, libraries were opened here, chroniclers and icon painters worked, translators translated foreign books into old Slavonic. The Lavra was known in Kievan Rus and Poland, Armenia, Byzantium, Bulgaria, and other countries.

Ancient Kyiv was an international trade center. As a result, archaeologists have found Arab and Byzantine coins, coins of the ancient cities of Kafa, Bukhara, Damascus, Samarkand, Baghdad, gold and silver jewelry from the East.

Kyiv traded with Central Asia, the Northern Black Sea region, the Caucasus, Iran, and Byzantium. The proverb "Language will bring you to Kyiv" has survived to this day. She says that the main trade routes led to the city.

Modern Kyiv is a vast city. Its area is 836 square kilometers. The population of Kyiv is about 3 million people.

The main street of Kyiv is Khreshchatyk. She is about 150 years old. Khreshchatyk is a business card of Kyiv. Khreshchatyk is the most crowded street.

And the most beautiful square in Kyiv is Independence Square. It is a traditional place where festivals, concerts, festivities take place.

Kyiv is a center of culture, science, and education. There are 98 universities in the city, so we can say that Kyiv is a student city. The capital has 68 museums, 116 cinemas, and three film studios. In addition, there are 60 parks in the city.

Do you like theater? But the people of Kyiv are real theatergoers. There are 33 theaters in Kyiv. The Taras Shevchenko Kyiv Opera and Ballet Theater is known all over the world. His opera and ballet performances have been admired in France and Canada, Belgium and Switzerland, Denmark and Egypt, Lebanon and Brazil, Japan and China, the United States and Portugal, India, and Spain.

Kyiv metro is the most convenient and cheapest mode of transport. The subway opened on November 6, 1960. There are currently 52 stations in the metro. Their length is 69,648 kilometers. Arsenalnaya station is the deepest in the world. It is located at a depth of 105.5 meters. The metro carries 1 million 330 thousand passengers and 485 million 690 thousand in one day in a year.

The Kyiv metro has a beautiful design. In 2012, the Golden Gate station was included in the 22 most beautiful metro stations in Europe (according to the British newspaper Daily Telegraph).

Kyiv is a beautiful city! But, as people say, it is better to see once than to hear a hundred times.

**It is interesting!**

* All football fans of the world know Dynamo Kyiv football club. Dynamo Club was founded on May 13, 1927. On July 17, 1928, the first football match with the Odessa team "Dynamo." The game ended with a score of 2:2.
* All football fans know Ukrainian football players Oleg Blokhin, Igor Belanov, Andriy Shevchenko, Oleksandr Zavarov, Oleg Gusev, Artem Milevsky, Andriy Yarmolenko. Have you heard of these players?
* Did you know that the world boxing champion, in the past a professional boxer, "Honorary" and "Lifetime" world boxing champion Vitaliy Volodymyrovych Klitschko is now the mayor of Kyiv, an adviser to the president?

# 7 Holidays in Ukraine

## 7.1 Holidays in Ukraine

How many holidays are celebrated during the year?

There are many beautiful holidays in Ukraine. In addition, there are official public holidays  — these are non-working holidays. These days, government organizations are not working.

What is this holiday?

August 24  — Independence Day of Ukraine. On August 24, 1991, Ukraine declared independence.

June 28 is the Day of the Constitution of Ukraine. On June 28, 1996, Ukraine adopted a new constitution.

October 14  — Day of the Defender of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks.

Who are the Cossacks? The Cossacks are the heroes of Ukraine who fought for the freedom and independence of Ukraine in the 16th and 17th centuries. Traditionally, festivals and sports, and patriotic competitions are held in many cities on this holiday. In schools, in thematic lessons, students are told about the heroes of the Cossacks, and the girls greet all the boys as future defenders of the Motherland and give them gifts.

March 8  — International Women’s Day. This holiday was established in 1910 at an international conference in Copenhagen as a day of solidarity, friendship, and unity of women worldwide in the struggle for economic, political, and social rights.

March 8 is a spring women’s holiday. On this day, all men give all women  — mothers and grandmothers, sisters and brides, girlfriends and teachers  — flowers and gifts, telling them that they are the most beautiful, most caring, most tender.

May 1 in Ukraine celebrates the holiday of Spring and Labor. Initially, this holiday was political and was called the Day of International Workers’ Solidarity.

On May 1, 1886, Chicago workers demonstrated. They wanted their wages raised, and the working day was 8 hours. Police began firing on workers. May 1 was called the Day of Solidarity of Workers around the World in memory of the fallen workers. Today this holiday is celebrated in 142 countries.

May 9  — Victory Day over Nazi Germany. Victory Day is a memory of those who liberated the world from fascism. In this war, Ukraine lost more than 5 million people.

In each city, there are monuments to the fallen defenders of the Motherland. For example, in Odessa, the Taras Shevchenko Park on the Walk of Fame is a memorial to the Unknown Sailor. Every year on May 9, residents of Odessa bring flowers here in memory of the fallen defenders of the Motherland.

## 7.2 New Year

Everyone loves this fun winter holiday. The tradition of celebrating the New Year on the night of December 31 to January 1 and decorating houses and the city with Christmas trees came from the era of Emperor Peter I.

Earlier, the New Year began on September 1. But in 1699, Emperor Peter I ordered to celebrate the New Year, as in Europe, because he wanted the rapprochement of the Russian Empire with Europe.

The tradition of celebrating the New Year from December 31 to January 1 has taken root. Then, at midnight, fireworks are set off on the streets of cities, and everyone wishes each other a Happy New Year.

The New Year holiday is called a "winter fairy tale" because the main streets and squares of the city, shop windows, schools, and houses are decorated with beautiful Christmas trees. Santa Claus and Snow Maiden are the main characters of the New Year’s holiday. And what New Year without a Christmas tree and gifts ?! That is why a Christmas tree and a gift are the main attributes of this merry holiday.

And the New Year is called a family holiday. On New Year’s Eve, the whole family gathers at the festive table. People say: "As you celebrate the New Year, so you will live all year!". Therefore, everyone is happy on New Year’s Eve, and the holiday table should be generous and delicious. Then, precisely at midnight, everyone raises glasses of champagne, greets each other, and says: "Happy New Year! With new happiness!".

Traditionally, the President of Ukraine speaks on television at midnight. He wishes everyone a Happy New Year!

**It is interesting!**

* Mother’s Day is celebrated in Ukraine on the last Sunday of May. This holiday was first celebrated in 1910 in America, and in 1918 Mother’s Day was celebrated in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Germany. In 1928  — in Canada.
* Teacher’s day is celebrated on the first Sunday in October.
* November 17 in Ukraine marks Student’s Day.
* September 1 is the Day of Knowledge in Ukraine.