

Historical Methods: 1989 in Eastern Europe

(History 300.005/ver. 4.1)

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Office Hours

T 1:30-3:00

or by appointment

Introduction

This course provides history majors with an introduction to the techniques of the historian, including the reading of historical texts, research methods, historiography (the history of history), the various analytical frameworks used by historians today, and the writing of analytical historical prose. We will attack all of these goals by focusing on the history of one particular moment—the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and its immediate aftermath, including the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

This class is a seminar, which means that you must come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings or other assignments. A seminar works best when each participant is a contributor. I have very high expectations of each student in the class because this course is your preparation for the more difficult work that will come later in your 300 and 400 level history courses. If you aren't carrying your weight, it will be apparent to everyone in class and to you when you receive your grades.

Special Features of the Course

The first special feature of this course we will be using the research and bibliographic plug-in for the Firefox web browser called *Zotero* (<http://zotero.org>). Zotero allows you to save, annotate, and share citations, notes, and other material from the Internet in real time. Zotero is a free, open source product developed here at the Center for History and New Media here at Mason and is rapidly replacing older and less agile bibliographic software products. You can, for instance, produce a complete bibliography with Zotero in about five minutes. Zotero works in other browsers in a standalone mode, but is best used with Firefox. It's up to you which version you use.

The second special feature is a focus on digital history. We will spend a fair amount of time learning to maximize the available digital resources, but also to think critically about digital sources, their uses, and how we can use digital tools to get at information in ways we can't in the analog world.

The third is not part of the course, but is connected to the course. During the winter break I will be leading a two-week study abroad course – [The Great Cities of East Central Europe](#) – that takes us to Prague, Vienna, and Budapest to examine the ways that national identities are constructed in public space. The events of 1989 will play an important role in what we learn about in Europe. Please consider enrolling in this exciting course.

Weekly Pattern of Activity

Each week will follow a generally similar pattern. You must complete a set of assigned readings or tasks *before class* and come to class prepared to discuss the questions I pose to you about those readings or tasks. Our class meets just once a week (Thursdays) and you will be expected to post a weekly entry into your research blog no later than midnight on the Tuesday before class, thereby giving everyone in class a chance to read your blog entry before coming to class. That way, we will all arrive in class knowing at least something about what each person thought about the assignments. A glance at the grading scheme (below) shows that one-third of your grade in the course is predicated on participation, either in person or online.

We will spend much of our class time discussing what you read or did. The rest of the time will be devoted to the analysis of different historical sources I provide, the presentation of work in progress, or, later in the semester, the presentation of your final work.

Grading

Grades in this class will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	20%
Blog entries	10%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Draft of final essay	20%
Final essay	35%

Required Readings

I have only ordered four books for the course, but we will be reading many more articles and primary sources. All of the books are in the University bookstore (and can also be purchased from various online vendors for attractive prices). All four of these books are mandatory:

Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*
 Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*
 Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism*
 Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*

Assignments

Every week you will be expected to post to our class blog, and I will provide you with a fair amount of guidance on what sorts of contributions I will expect from you with regard to these postings.

You will produce an annotated bibliography for the research essay that you are writing, using *Zotero*.

Last, but not least, you will write a research paper that is between 12-15 pages in length.

- A first (and complete) draft of this essay is due on **November 20 at 5:00 pm**.
- The final essay is due on the last day of class (at the beginning of class, not after).
- **Late first drafts and/or essays will not be accepted** and will receive an "F", which means you are almost certain to fail the class if you hand in your draft or your final paper late. Why am I so firm on these deadlines? It is because I need time to give

your essays the attention they deserve in the grading process. So, I must have them in my hands in plenty of time. And, if you don't get your drafts in on time, you won't have enough time to revise them.

The drafts and the final essays will be graded using the following criteria:

1. Construction of an original historical thesis;
2. Use of primary sources in support of the thesis statement;
3. The degree to which the work is situated appropriately in the existing literature of secondary sources, produced by historians as well as scholars in other disciplines (depending on your topic);
4. The synthesis of diverse sources and the sophistication of the historical analysis;
5. How well the work is linked to larger political, social, and cultural issues appropriate to the topic;
6. How well knowledge and skills acquired in other disciplinary contexts (where applicable) is integrated into the work;
7. The organization of the presentation and the quality of the written narrative.

You will also make a 10-minute oral presentation of your work during one of the last class periods. Your presentations will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. The degree to which you present your work in a clear and organized manner;
2. Your ability to handle questions from the audience;
3. How well you complete the presentation's essential elements within the allotted time;
4. How well you engage and maintain the audience's attention.

The grade for your oral presentation will be factored into the grade for the final essay. The writing assignments for this course help to complete the writing intensive requirements for the History major.

Annotated Bibliography

This semester you need to produce an annotated bibliography for your final essay. This annotated bibliography is due on **November 5**. I'll give you a handout on the annotated bibliography as we get closer to the due date.

Writing Intensive/Scholarly Inquiry

In addition to satisfying the history department's requirement for all majors, this course satisfies two university standards. History 300 fulfills the general education [writing intensive](#) (WI) requirement. It also is designated as a [scholarly inquiry](#) course.

The Lawyers' Chorus

Attendance: Because this is a seminar, I place a high premium on arriving on time. Unlike a lecture course, where you can slip in late, in a seminar, it is the height of bad manners to show up while someone else is speaking, disturbing his or her train of thought. Please extend the same courtesy to others that you would expect when you are the one speaking. Also, because class participation is a substantial portion of your grade, you should plan to attend each and every class this semester. How can you participate if you aren't in class?

ADA: Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me to make necessary accommodations (before February 15 please). Students should present appropriate verification from the Disability Resource Center.

Medical and other excuses: Every semester someone is forced to miss the due date for an assignment either as the result of an illness or a family emergency. If you find yourself in this situation, fairness to all students in the class requires the proper documentation, without which your excuses will not be accepted. If you need to know more about this process consult me as soon as the emergency is taken care of.

Plagiarism and cheating: In a word, don't. I refer every case of suspected cheating and plagiarism to the Honor Committee, so do us both a favor and just say no. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating, please see me.

Consumption: In my classes drink is permitted, but food and tobacco products of all kinds are prohibited. If you must chew, whether food or tobacco, do it before you arrive or after you leave.

Cell phones: Why do I even have to say this? Please turn off your phone or set it to vibrate before you come to class. And if you take a call in class (it's happened), I will penalize you severely in that all important class participation grade. If your phone is your only access point to the Internet, let me know that so I won't give you the evil eye when you get it out to log on and search for something.

Laptops: I am not one of those professors who bans laptops from class (see my blog post on this: <http://edwired.org/?p=587>). In fact, I encourage you to bring your laptop to class. But if you are clearly checked out (Anyone? Anyone? Bueller?) to Instagram, YouTube, AIM, League of Legends, or wherever, expect me to call on you.

Course Schedule

September 3 – Class introduction

Using Zotero, Learning to love JSTOR and other aggregators
Before the first class, read: Roger Zelazny, "The Game of Blood and Dust," available in print in *Science Fiction: Contemporary Mythology*, Patricia Warrick, Martin Harry Greenberg, and Joseph Olander, eds. (New York: Harper & Row, 1978): 441-45. [Online here](#).

September 10 – Overview of the Events of 1989

Reading a primary source.
 First, read Robert Darnton, "The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History," (New York: Vintage Books, 1985): 75-106 (provided on 9/3).
 Then, examine the following and write an interpretation of at least two sources from the list below and at least one from the [1989 website](#) in your research blog:
 - [How does the form of the personal account influence content?](#)
 - [Tear Down This Wall](#)

- [High Noon June 4, 1989](#)
- [Ceaucescu's Last Speech](#) [Watch video linked under Related Files]
- [GDP in Eastern Europe, 198-1989](#)
- [Anarchist Pamphlet](#)

September 17 – Read Stokes, *Walls Came Tumbling Down*

Questions:

- What is the author's argument?
- What sources does he use to build his argument?
- What are his conclusions?

Primary sources: maps

- [45 Years is Enough!](#)
- [Radiation Contamination After the Chernobyl Disaster](#)
- [Bosnia and Hercegovina](#)
- [Washington, The Beautiful Capital of the Nation](#)
- [Peters Map](#) (contrast by looking at a Mercator Projection)

September 24 – Read Kenney, *Carnival of Revolution*

Questions:

- What is the author's argument?
- How is his argument different from what you read in Stokes?
- What sources does he use to build his argument?
- What sources does he rely on that Stokes does not?
- What are his conclusions?
- How do his conclusions differ from what you read in Stokes?

Primary sources: Images

- [Ready to Fight](#)
- [Tessek Valasztani](#)
- [Polish Voting Rights](#)
- [The Butcher Shop, Warsaw](#)
- [Behind the Wall](#) (a new collection at Fenwick Library)
- [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA)
- [Europeana](#)

October 1 – No class. I'm at a conference in Switzerland

Use this time to finalize your topic ideas. Have at least two.

October 8 – Read Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land*

Questions:

- What is the author's argument?
- How is her argument different from what you find in Stokes/Kenny?
- What kinds of sources does she use that the others do not?
- What are her conclusions and how are they different?

Primary sources: Newspapers/Magazines

- [ProQuest Historical Newspapers](#)
- [Times Digital Archive](#) (ends 1985)
- [Newspaper Source Plus](#)
- [Economist Historical Archive](#)
- [Foreign Broadcast Information Service](#)

October 15 – Read Ash, *The Magic Lantern*

Questions:

- What is the author's argument?
- How is his argument different from what you find in the first three books?
- What kinds of sources does he use that the others do not?
- What are his conclusions and how are they different?

Primary Sources: Personal Accounts

- Find a personal narrative – a blog, a book, a magazine story, summarize it in under 250 words in your research blog, then assess its strengths and weaknesses.

October 22 – Read articles as assigned

Primary Sources: Government Documents

- [EUROPA](#) (Documents of the European Union)
- [National Security Archive](#)
- [Cold War International History Project](#)

October 29 – Presenting your plan/class critique

November 5 – Primary Sources as assigned.

Annotated Bibliographies Due

November 12 – Individual Appointments/Research Consultation

November 19 – Individual Appointments/Research Consultation

– First Drafts Due on November 20. No exceptions!

November 26 – No class. Thanksgiving.

December 3 – Final Presentations.

December 10 – Final Presentations

Class Party

Final papers due at the start of class. No Exceptions

Pronunciation Guide

You should try your best to pronounce all the names and local terms that come up during the semester. Here is a rough guide to the pronunciation of the letters/sounds that may be unfamiliar to you.

Albanian

ë	e, as in <i>germ</i>
ç	c, as in <i>cello</i>
dh	th, as in <i>that</i>
gj	dj, as in <i>adjust</i>
j	y, as in <i>yes</i>
nj	ny, as in <i>canyon</i>
rr	trilled as in Spanish
x	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
xh	dg, as in <i>edge</i>
zh	z, as in <i>azure</i>

Bulgarian/Macedonian

See: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/bulgarian.htm>

Czech/Slovak/Slovenian

c	ts as in <i>cats</i>
č	ch, as in <i>reach</i>
cz	ch, as in <i>chicken</i>
d'	dj, as in <i>bridge</i>
ě	i+e, each vocalized
ň	n as in <i>new</i>
ou	long o, as in <i>road</i>
ř	r+z, each vocalized, but together
š	sh, as in <i>she</i>
ů	oo, as in <i>zoo</i>
ž	s, as in <i>pleasure</i>

German

ö	oe – a close equivalent in English is the u in <i>shun</i>
ü	ue – a close equivalent in English is <i>ruin</i>

Hungarian

c	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
cs	ch, as in <i>change</i>
é	ay, as in <i>say</i>
gy	dg, as in <i>lodge</i>
ö	u, as in <i>curve</i>
ó	o, as in <i>joke</i>
ő	oo, as in <i>zoo</i>
s	sh, as in <i>she</i>
ss	sh+sh, each vocalized (Tessék=tesh shayk)
sz	s, as in <i>seven</i>
ü, ű	ew, as in <i>few</i> , the second longer than the first

Polish

c	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
ć	ch, as in <i>change</i>
ch	h, as in <i>hard</i>
cz	ch, as in <i>church</i>
dz	as in English, as in <i>red zone</i>
dzi	j, as in <i>jeep</i>
g	always hard, as in <i>get</i>
ł	w, as in <i>won</i>
ń	ni, as in <i>onion</i>
ó	oo, as in <i>foot</i> , not as in <i>zoo</i>
rz	hard zh, as with ż (see below)
sz	hard sh, as in <i>shot</i>
szch	both, as in <i>frensh cheese</i>
ś	sh, as in <i>shoe</i>
w	v, as in <i>village</i>
ź, ż	soft z, as in <i>Zhivago</i> —ż is harder

Serbian/Croatian

c	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
č	hard ch, as in <i>church</i>
ć	soft ch, as in <i>cheese</i>
dž	j, as in <i>June</i>
đ	dj, sort of like <i>jam</i>
j	y, as in <i>yacht</i>
lj	l, as in <i>lure</i>
nj	like the Spanish ñ
r	trilled as in Spanish
š	sh, as in <i>sheep</i>
ž	zh, as in <i>measure</i>

For the Serbian alphabet, see: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/serbo-croat.htm>