

Nationalism in East Central Europe 1900-2000

(History 312/ver. 6.4)

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Introduction

This course takes us through an investigation of nationalism in its East European context from the end of the 19th century to the present. During the semester we will consider developments in the history of this region and its peoples in a variety of spheres—political, international, cultural, and economic. Because our work will be regional in focus and because East Central Europe is a very diverse region, much of what we do will be focused on the big picture. Nationalism and its many and varied manifestations in the region will be the thread that helps us to bind this diverse region together.

The course is divided, roughly, into four large sections. The first of these introduces you to the region and takes us through the founding of the independent states that populate the map of East Central Europe today. The second section of the course is devoted to trying to understand how it was that the Holocaust happened in East Central Europe over and beyond the role that the German state played in that tragedy. The third section focuses on the communist period – from the initial popularity of the communist regimes through their eventual stagnation and decline. The final section of the course focuses on the collapse of the communist regimes beginning in 1989 and on the aftermath of that rather surprising event.

Learning Goals

I hope that by the end of the semester you will have gained a more in-depth understanding of several topics of great importance for the history of East Central Europe: nationalism, how multi-national states work (or don't work), the importance of international meddling in the history of East Central Europe, and the intersection of culture and politics. Finally, I hope you will emerge from the course more adept at writing historically.

Assigned Materials

In addition to the books listed below, there will be several additional reading assignments (articles on reserve, websites, etc.). The books assigned for the course are all in the University Bookstore and all are available online at a discount over what the Bookstore charges (in most cases). You will need all of these books because we will be discussing them in detail in class at various points in the semester. If you plan to buy them during the semester instead of all at once, be advised that the Bookstore begins returning their inventory after the add/drop deadline. Not having these books in hand in plenty of time to read them will have a significant downward effect on your grade in the course.

The books assigned are:

Jan Gross, *Neighbors*

Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*

Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism*

Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*

I also strongly recommend purchasing a general overview of the history of East Central Europe. There are at least a dozen such books out there and each will give you a reasonable overview of the essential facts of the history of this often complicated place.

Assignments

During the semester you will have two types of assignments. The first of these is to complete all of the readings assigned in the class schedule (see below) and to come to class prepared to discuss these readings. The second is to complete three papers – two brief analytical essays of between 3 and 5 pages, and one essay drawing on two of the films assigned.

In addition to these assignments, there will be a mid-term examination (October 10) and a final examination (December 17 @ 7:30 am).

Grading

Your grade for the semester will be based upon the following criteria:

Class participation	25%
Midterm Examination	15%
Analytical Essays (combined)	30%
Film Essay	5%
Final Exam	25%

Writing Assignments

Analytical Essays: For the first essay you should discuss the problematic relationship between “nation building” and “state building” in East Central Europe from the late 19th century to 1939. This essay is due on **February 27** via email. For the second essay, you may write on any topic that appeals to you. However, you must discuss your topic with me prior to commencing the writing process. I will not accept any essays that I have not approved. The second essay is due on the last day of class (**May 3**). Both essays should display a careful investigation of the scholarly literature on your topic. Footnotes and bibliography should be in Chicago style.

Film Essay: The film essay is different from what you might be used to. I do not want a film review. Instead, I want you to select one moment in each of two different films that in some way extended or deepened your understanding of the history of East Central Europe as we have dealt with it in this course. Describe the two moments and then discuss how they (a) deepened your understanding, and (b) how they are related to one another. In short, this essay is as much about your learning as it is about the films or the history. The essay should be between 3 and 5 pages in length. The film essay is due the last day of class (**May 3**). I will

also accept a short (i.e., under 5 minutes) film instead of a standard essay. If you want to do the film instead of the essay, you must consult with me in advance.

Course Policies (please read them all)

Attendance: I place a high premium on arriving on time. 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 3 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.

Laptops: I am not one of that growing legion of 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 Facebook, YouTube, AIM, League of Legends, or wherever, expect me to call on you.

Class Schedule

Note: I have listed readings by week rather than by day. This means I will expect you to have completed these readings by Monday so that you will be prepared to discuss them on any of the two days of that week. The general pattern I'm going to follow during the semester is lecture on Monday, discussion on Wednesday, but you should not count on that. All of the films are available either from me, the library, or via various streaming services.

Week of January 23: Class introduction

Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and High Cultures"; Eric Hobsbawm, "The Nation as Invented Tradition"; Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities" (I'll email these). Read all three essay excerpts. You will be assigned one of these selections and expected to be able to discuss it in detail on Wednesday.

Week of January 30: The Nineteenth Century Background

Wednesday: Read: Wingfield essay (via email). Be prepared to discuss in class.
Film options: *Colonel Redl* (A), *The Illusionist* (A)

Week of February 6: New States in East Central Europe

*** No Wednesday. I'm in Cleveland ***

Film options: *Closely Watched Trains* (CS)

Week of February 13: The Sharp Right Turn/War in East Central Europe

Wednesday: Discussion of primary sources (via email)

Film options: *Divided We Fall* (CS), *Shop on Main Street* (CS), *Ashes and Diamonds* (P), *Želary* (CS), *Dark Blue World* (CS)

Week of February 20: The Holocaust in East Central Europe

Jan Gross, *Neighbors* (entire book)

Wednesday: Discussion of *Neighbors* and articles on *Neighbors* (on reserve)

Film Options: *Divided We Fall* (CS), *Once We Were Neighbors* (H), and on World War II in Poland, *A Generation*, *Kanal*, and *Ashes and Diamonds*

Week of February 27

*** No class Monday – I'm at a board meeting in New York ***

*** Wednesday, March 1 – Midterm exam. ***

Week of March 6: Communist Takeovers

Monday: Discussion of Hedda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*

Wednesday: Discussion of Wilma Iggers, "Milada Horáková" in *Women of Prague* (via email)

Week of March 13 – Spring Break

Week of March 20: Stalinism

Wednesday: Discussion of David Crowley, "Warsaw's Shops, Stalinism and the Thaw," in Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds. *Style and Socialism. Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (via email)

Film Options: *When Father Was Away on Business* (Y), *Underground* (Y), *Budapest Tales* (H), *Recsk 1950-1953* (H)

Week of March 27: Reform and Revolt 1956-1968

Wednesday: Mark Allen Svede, "All You Need is Lovebeads: Latvia's Hippies Undress for Success," in Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds. *Style and Socialism. Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (via email)

Film Options: *The Promise* (G), *Man of Iron* (P), *Man of Marble* (P)

Week of April 3: The Decline of Socialism

Monday: Documentary Film - *Oratorio for Prague*

Wednesday: Discussion of the [Declaration of Charter 77](#) and the [Czechoslovak Anti-Charter](#).

Film Options: *Canary Season* (BG), *Slogans* (AL)

Week of April 10: The Death of Socialism

Wednesday: Discussion of [An Emerging Environmental Movement, Is Poland Lost, Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, Europe as a Common Home](#)

Film Options: *Kolya* (CS), *Goodbye Lenin* (G), *The Lives of Others* (G), *Man of Iron* (P), *Man of Marble* (P)

Week of April 17: 1989—The Year of Miracles

Wednesday: Discussion of Stokes, *Walls Came Tumbling Down* to page 167

Film Options: *Kolya* (CS), *Goodbye Lenin* (G), *The Lives of Others* (G)

Week of April 24: The World's Worst Hangover 1990-2000

Stokes, 168-217

Wednesday: Discussion of Stokes

Film Options: *Fuse* (B), *Grbavica: Land of My Dreams* (B), *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (Y), *No Man's Land* (S), *Before the Rain* (M); *Children Underground* (R), *White* (P), *I Love Budapest* (H), *School of the Senses* (H), *Casting* (S), *Goodbye Lenin* (G), *The Wounds* (S), *Witnesses* (C), *Loving Glances* (S), *Tirana Year Zero* (AL), *Mirage* (M), *Something Like Happiness* (CZ), *Anatema* (AL), *Up and Down* (CZ), *Ryna* (R), *Human Heart Explodes* (M), *Czech Dream* (CZ)

Week of May 1

Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land* and Stokes, 218-60

Monday: Discussion of Rosenberg

Film Options: *Zabrada* (SL), *Fuse* (B), *Grbavica: Land of My Dreams* (B), *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (Y), *No Man's Land* (S), *Before the Rain* (M); *Children Underground* (R), *White* (P), *I Love Budapest* (H), *School of the Senses* (H), *Casting* (S), *Goodbye Lenin* (G), *The Wounds* (S), *Witnesses* (C), *Loving Glances* (S), *Tirana Year Zero* (AL), *Mirage* (M), *Something Like Happiness* (CZ), *Anatema* (AL), *Up and Down* (CZ), *Ryna* (R), *Human Heart Explodes* (M), *Czech Dream* (CZ)

Film Key: (Origin and/or subject matter)

A=Austrian

AL=Albanian

B=Bosnian

BG=Bulgarian
 C=Croatian
 CS=Czech, Slovak, Czechoslovak
 H=Hungary
 M=Macedonian
 P=Polish
 R=Romanian
 S=Serbian
 SL=Slovak
 US=American
 Y=Yugoslavian (i.e., pre-1992)

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

Bulgarian/Macedonian

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

Czech/Slovak/Slovenian

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

German

ö	oe – a close equivalent in English is the u in shun
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ü ue – a close equivalent in English is ruin

Hungarian

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

Polish

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

Serbian/Croatian

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

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