

The Politics of History in Contemporary East Central Europe

Course syllabus

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Course description:

The course aims at giving the students a profound knowledge of the most disputable topics in post-communists states nation-building process in East Central Europe. How much do we know about the resent past of the region, called by Timothy Snyder the “Bloodlands”? Do we know in which way the past has been used by the politicians and intellectuals of the region and beyond before and after 1989? How much has politics of history influenced identity construction in the respectful countries after collapse of communist regimes? We will answer these questions while focusing on how history has been used and abused in different political and intellectual projects in East Central Europe since the 1980s. Our task will be to understand the nature of “memory wars” in Ukraine; impact of the past on contemporary relations between Poland and Ukraine, Poland and Germany, Czech Republic and Germany; and impact of the identity/memory/history politics on internal political struggles and identity constructions in the respectful countries in terms of EU accession process (Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary).

The course is divided into four parts. The first part is dedicated to theoretical issues and explores general context of contemporary memory politics in Europe. The second one focuses on Central European discourse of 1980s. The third part deals with new historical narratives in Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Ukraine. The last part is based on analysis of how the countries dealt with the recent past through lustration and through identity politics within accession process before and after 2004.

Course requirements

The course consists of 11 lectures and seminars, an excursion to sites of memory in Kyiv and two-day student presentations. It is expected that students will attend all classes and prepare a short presentation on class reading assignments. Students’ active participation in each discussion will be graded.

At the end of the second week students will have to submit a short paper (10 pages) on the relevant to our course topic, which has to be chosen during the first week and approved by lecturer. Finally, during the last two days of the classes each student will make 20-minute presentation based on her/his papers.

Grades

Grades will be assigned according to the following breakdown:

Class participation	40%
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Research paper	40 %	Due to 20 th of August
Presentation	20%	Due on the last two days of classes

Class topics and required readings:

Aug 6	Past/ memory / politics of history: how societies use and abuse history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paul Connerton</i> How Societies Remember. – Cambridge University Press, 2008. – P. 6-40. • <i>David Lowenthal</i> The Past is a Foreign Country. – Cambridge University Press, 2003. – P. 185-259. • <i>Pierre Nora</i> General Introduction: Between Memory and History // Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Vol. 1: Conflicts and Divisions / ed. by Peirre Nora. – NY: Columbia Press, 1996. P. 1-20.
Aug 7	Remembering Europe's 20 th century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jeremy Black</i> Using history. – Oxford University Press, 2005. • <i>Jan-Werner Muller</i> Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory // Memory and power in post-war Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past / ed. by J.-W. Muller. – Cambridge University Press, 2004. – P. 1-35 • <i>Tony Judt</i> The past is another country: myth and memory in post-war Europe // Memory and power in post-war Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past / ed. by J.-W. Muller. – Cambridge University Press, 2004. – P. 157-183.
Aug 8	What kind of Europe: rediscovering Central Europe in 1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tony Judt</i> Postwar: a history of Europe since 1945. – London: the Penguin Press, 2005. – P. 559-663; 701-776
Aug 9	Revolutions of 1989 and return to Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daedalus - Winter 1990 : Eastern Europe...Central Europe...Europe - Vol. 119, No. 1
Aug 10	Identity politics of newly independent states: Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maciej Górny</i> From the Splendid Past into the Unknown Future: Historical Studies in Poland after 1989 // Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe / ed. by S. Antohi, B. Trencsényi and P. Apor. – Budapest: CEU press, 2007. – P. 101-148 • <i>Aleks Szczerbiak</i> Old and New Divisions in Polish Politics: Polish Parties' Electoral Strategies and Bases of Support // Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 55, No. 5 (Jul., 2003), pp. 729-746 • <i>Grigore Pop-Eleches</i> Historical Legacies and Post-Communist Regime Change // The Journal of Politics, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Nov., 2007), pp. 908-926
Aug 13	Identity politics of newly independent states: Czech Republic and Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pavel Kolář, Michal Kopeček</i> A Difficult Quest for New Paradigms: Czech Historiography After 1989 // Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe / ed. by S. Antohi, B. Trencsényi and P. Apor. – Budapest: CEU press,

		<p>2007. – P. 173-234</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zora Hlavičková</i> Wedged Between National and Trans-National History: Slovak Historiography in the 1990s // Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe / ed. by S. Antohi, B. Trencsényi and P. Apor. – Budapest: CEU press, 2007. – P. 249-295 • <i>Lily Gardner Feldman</i>, The Principle and Practice of 'Reconciliation' in German Foreign Policy: Relations with France, Israel, Poland and the Czech Republic // International Affairs, Vol. 75, No. 2(Apr., 1999), pp. 333-356
Aug 14	Identity politics of newly independent states: Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Balázs Trencsényi, Péter Apor</i> Fine-Tuning the Polyphonic Past: Hungarian Historical Writing in the 1990s // Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe / ed. by S. Antohi, B. Trencsényi and P. Apor. – Budapest: CEU press, 2007. – P. 1-75 • <i>Kenneth E. Foote, Attila Tóth, Anett Árvay</i>, Hungary after 1989: Inscribing a New Past on Place // Geographical Review, Vol. 90, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), pp. 301-334
Aug 15	Identity politics of newly independent states: Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Laboratory of Transnational History Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography / ed. by G. Kasianov and Ph. Ther. – Budapest: CEU Press, 2009. – P. 7-116; 211-286 • <i>Timothy Snyder</i> Memory and power in post-war Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past / ed. by J.-W. Muller. – Cambridge University Press, 2004. – P. 39-58
Aug 16	Identity politics of newly independent states: Ukraine	<p>Excursion to sites of memory in Kyiv</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mykola Riabchuk</i> Ukraine: the not-so-unexpected nation // Eurozine. – 2005-04-04 • <i>Tatiana Zhurzhenko</i> The geopolitics of memory // Eurozine. – 2007-05-10 • <i>Timofiy Havryliv</i> Literary perspectives: Ukraine. Longing for the novel // Eurozine. – 2007-06-28
Aug 17	Dealing with the recent past: lustration and its results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aleks Szczerbiak</i> Dealing with the Communist Past or the Politics of the Present? Lustration in Post-Communist Poland // Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Jun., 2002), pp. 553-572 • <i>Helga A. Welsh</i> Dealing with the Communist past: Central and East European Experiences after 1990 // Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 48, No. 3 (May, 1996), pp. 413-428 • <i>Kieran Williams</i> <i>Brigid Fowler and Aleks Szczerbiak</i> Explaining lustration in Central Europe: a 'post-communist politics' approach // Democratization, 2005, 12: 1, pp. 22 -43 • <i>Natalia Letki</i> Lustration and Democratisation in

		<p>East-Central Europe // Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Jun., 2002), pp. 529-552</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Timothy Garton Ash</i> Trials, purges and history lessons: treating a difficult past in post-communist Europe // Memory and power in post-war Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past / ed. by J.-W. Muller. – Cambridge University Press, 2004. – P. 265-281
Aug 20	Identity politics and accession process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Milada Anna Vachudova</i> Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. – P. 1-61, 81-138, 223-260.
Aug 21	Identity politics after 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aleksander Smolar</i> Poland: Radicals in power // Eurozine. – 2006-09-28 • <i>Alexei Miller</i> Historical Policy: Eastern European Convolutions in the 21st Century // A Challenge from the Past / http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/print/number/A-Challenge-from-the-Past-15431 • <i>Andriy Shevchenko, David Van Reybrouck</i> Splitting up? The re-nationalization of Europe // Eurozine – 2011-03-14 • <i>Danuta Glondys, Arne Ruth</i> Breaking the bonds of national mythology. Memory and European citizenship // Eurozine. – 2011-03-14 • <i>Gabor Halmai</i> Towards an illiberal democracy. Hungary's new constitution // Eurozine – 2012-01-25 • <i>Jacques Rupnik</i> Populism in Eastern Central Europe // Eurozine. – 2007-09-10
Aug 22	Course wrap-up	Student presentations
Aug 23	Course wrap-up	Student presentations and final discussion