REES 201: Introduction to Eastern Europe
Spring 2009
103 Bevier Hall, MW 2-3:20 p.m.

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Course Overview
This interdisciplinary course introduces students to key issues in the study of Eastern (Central) Europe in the modern period, including not only history and politics, but culture, economics, literature, music, cinema and daily life. As an interdisciplinary course, guest speakers from a variety of departments will present on issues of particular importance in their various fields. Likewise, reading assignments will include multiple genres from a number of fields, including textbooks, scholarly analyses, first-person narratives, journalistic accounts, and literature, as well as art, music and films. By the end of the semester students should have a general familiarity with the history, culture and politics of the region as a whole, as well as a deeper understanding of crucial historical and cultural developments within individual countries in the region. You should also be better equipped to assess the quality of sources and develop an enhanced understanding of research methods. In particular, you will learn how qualitative approaches, such as the ethnographic interview, can be used to effectively document regional cultures.

Course Compass site
Log on to the course Compass site at compass.illinois.edu. Readings, assignments, handouts, announcements, grades, and extra credit opportunities will be regularly updated on Compass.

Required Reading
The following books are required and available at the Illini Union Bookstore:
- Slavenka Drakulić, Café Europa (Penguin, 1997)
- Jan Gross, Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz (Random House, 2006)
- Mark Mazower, The Balkans: A Short History (Modern Library, 2000)

Additional readings will be available on Compass the folder entitled “Course Readings.” An updated schedule of reading assignments will be maintained on Compass.

Course Requirements
- Class participation (includes attendance, class participation, and quizzes) 25%
- Three Map Quizzes (in class on Feb. 2, Feb. 23, and Apr. 22) 5%
- Wikipedia review (due Feb. 25) 10%
- Ethnographic interview (due Apr. 15) 20%
- Mid-term exam (in class on Mar. 16) 20%
- Final exam (Friday, May 8, 1:30-4:30 p.m.) 20%

Grade
Attendance and Participation
Attendance at lectures and participation in class discussions are essential components of this course. Many of the lectures by guest speakers are on topics not covered in the readings. Since the exams incorporate these lectures, it is important that you attend and take careful notes. In addition, each class period will contain time for discussion. Lack of participation will be noted and will affect the participation grade. Contact one of the instructors as soon as possible in the case of a planned or unplanned absence.

Quizzes
Expect occasional in-class quizzes on the readings. These will become more frequent if it appears students need extra incentives to keep up with the reading.

Wikipedia Review Assignment
Wikipedia is an extremely convenient and valuable—albeit controversial and potentially misleading—source of information. You will choose a topic relevant to this class and compare the information provided in a Wikipedia entry to at least two other reference works, evaluating its accuracy, relevance to current scholarship, and treatment of controversial issues. Due Feb. 25.

Ethnographic Interview
For this assignment, each student will interview an East European relative, friend, or acquaintance about an issue relevant to this course. Feel free to contact one of the instructors for ideas and/or advice about whom to interview. This assignment will be completed in stages, including choosing an informant, writing interview questions, recording the interview, transcribing a key element of the discussion, and submitting an essay relating your informant’s experience to themes from this course. The final project is due on April 15.

Mid-term Exam
There will be an in-class mid-term exam on Monday, Mar. 16. The exam will cover lectures, films and readings up to that point in class.

Final Exam
The final exam will cover material not previously covered by the mid-term exam, including lectures, films, and readings. Friday, May 8, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Students with Disabilities
If you have questions about participation, exams, or assignments due to any sort of disability, please contact us as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation from DRES.

Extra Credit
Announcements will be made throughout the semester about various events which students can attend for extra credit. Each event is worth up to one percentage point of the course. See the Compass site for instructions on submitting response papers. Maximum extra credit for the semester is 3.3 points, or 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e., B+ becomes A-).

Late Assignments
All assignments are to be completed on time. Unless proper documentation is provided and/or advance permission granted, assignments will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late.

This course fulfills a General Education requirement in Social Science.
Course Schedule (see Compass for updates)

Wed., Jan 21: Introduction

Mon., Jan 26: Language, Literature, and Forgery in Nation-Building in Eastern Europe
Lecturer: David Cooper, Slavic Languages and Literature

Wed., Jan 28: The question of backwardness in Eastern Europe
Lecturer: Maria Todorova, History

Mon., Feb 2: The origins of ethnic conflict in the Balkans
Lecturer: Judith Pintar, Sociology

Map Quiz 1: Pre-WWI Europe

Wed., Feb 4: The Development of Romanian Nationalism, 1830-1914
Lecturer: Keith Hitchins, History

Mon., Feb 9: World War I and its Aftermath
Lecturer: Rob Whiting, Geography

Wed., Feb 11: Jews in Eastern Europe in the Interwar Period
Lecturer: Dmitry Tartakovskiy (History)

Mon., Feb 16: The Nazi Holocaust
Lecturer: Peter Fritzsch, History

Wed., Feb 18: The Rise of Fascism in Interwar Eastern Europe
Lecturer: Zsuzsa Magdo, History

Mon., Feb 23: WWII and the Origins of the Cold War
Lecturer: Mark Schrad (Political Science)

Map Quiz 2: The Communist Bloc

Wed., Feb 25: Post-War Eastern Europe
Tracie Wilson (REEEC)


Mon., Mar. 2: Yugoslavia: A multi-national state or a nation-state in the making?
Lecturer: Fedja Buric, History

Wed., Mar 4: Polish writers at home and abroad
Lecturer: George Gasyna, Slavic Languages and Literature

Mon., Mar 9: Religion and Music under Communism
Lecturers: Nelly Matova, Ethnomusicology and Sharyl Corrado, History

Lecturer: Tracie Wilson, REEEC

Ethnographic Interview Proposal due.
Mon., Mar 16: Midterm Exam

Tues., Mar 17, 7 p.m. (location TBA)

Weds., Mar 18: The fall of the Berlin Wall
Lecturer: Jess Kamm, History

March 21-29: Spring Break

Mon., Mar 30: The Break-up of Yugoslavia: Beyond the Blame
Lecturer: Fedja Buric, History

Weds. Apr 1: The fall of Communism in Eastern Europe
Lecturer: Carol Leff, Political Science

Mon., Apr 6: “Whose is this Song?”

Tues., Apr. 7, 7 p.m. (location TBA)
Romanian Film: “4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days,” http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1032846/

Weds., Apr. 8: Communist Prisons and Post-Communist Romanian Discourse
Lecturer: Oana Popescu-Sandu, Comparative Literatures

Mon., Apr 13:
TBA

Weds., Apr. 15:
TBA
Ethnographic Interview due.

Mon., Apr 20: The Question of Kosovo (to be confirmed)
Lecturer: Eda Dheremi, Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese

Weds., Apr 22: Environmentalism and social movements in Eastern Europe
Lecturer: Tracie Wilson, REEEE
Map Quiz 3: Eastern Europe today

Mon., Apr 27: Eastern Europe and the European Union
Lecture: Andrew Asher Sociology

Weds. Apr 29: Jews and Gypsies: Everybody’s Other
Lecturer: Tracie Wilson, REEEE

Mon., May 4: Gender and Nationalism Today
Lecturer: Tracie Wilson, REEEE

Weds., May 6: Discussion and Exam Review

Fri., May 8, 1:30-4:30 p.m.: Final Exam