

Recent Political History of Central and Eastern Europe

Tom Junes, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences

Course outline and objectives

The course covers the region of Central and Eastern Europe from the emergence of nation-states in the late 19th century to the present. It focuses on various historical processes that led the region from empire to nation-states to European integration while experiencing wars, economic crises, authoritarianism, ethnic cleansing and genocide, but also various attempts at modernisation and democratisation.

The course aims to enable critical reflection about the political trajectory of the countries in the region from today's perspective of European integration, the continuing significance of nationalism, the rise of populism, and the return of geopolitics and war.

Consisting of 15 thematic sessions, the course will be spread over two semesters. Sessions require reading and preparation beforehand with short presentations based on the general reading and the main questions as well as focused discussions of two selected texts (articles or book excerpts) per session.

The final grade will be based on an evaluation of active course participation (60%) and a term paper (40%) of approximately 5,000 words.

The course will be held online with sessions taking place every two weeks. Questions and problems to guide the respective presentations for the thematic sessions will be communicated beforehand. The texts for the selected readings below may be subject to change.

Recommended literature for general reading:

Connelly, John. 2020. *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Crampton, R. J. 1997. *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century and After*. London: Routledge.

Rothschild, Joseph, and Nancy M. Wingfield. 2008. *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bottoni, Stefano. 2017. *Long Awaited West: Eastern Europe since 1944*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Feinberg, Melissa. 2022. *Communism in Eastern Europe*. New York: Routledge.

Session themes with selected readings:

1. Imagining Central and Eastern Europe

Berend, Ivan T. 2005. 'What Is Central and Eastern Europe?' *European Journal of Social Theory* 8 (4): 401–16.

Excerpt from: Todorova, Maria. 2009. *Imagining the Balkans*. New York: Oxford University

Press.

2. National ‘awakenings’ and mass politics

Excerpt from: Porter, Brian. 2002. *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Excerpt from: Glenny, Misha. 2018. *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-2012*. London: Granta.

3. War and the end of empire

Excerpt from: Judson, Pieter M. 2016. *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Excerpt from: Gerwarth, Robert. 2019. *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

4. Challenges of nation-building

Excerpt from: Mazower, Mark. 2000. *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century*. New York: Vintage Books.

Kopeček, Michal. 2019. ‘Czechoslovak Interwar Democracy and Its Critical Introspections’. *Journal of Modern European History* 17 (1): 7–15.

5. Between communism and fascism

Excerpt from: Snyder, Timothy. 2012. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books.

Levy, Carl. 1999. ‘Fascism, National Socialism and Conservatives in Europe, 1914-1945: Issues for Comparativists’. *Contemporary European History* 8 (1): 97–126.

6. Total war and genocide

Sage, Steven F. 2017. ‘The Holocaust in Bulgaria: Rescuing History from “Rescue”’. *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 31 (2): 139–45.

Excerpt from: Gildea, Robert, and Ismee Tames, eds. 2020. *Fighters across Frontiers: Transnational Resistance in Europe, 1936-48*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

7. Stalinism and a Europe divided

Excerpt from: Smith, Stephen Anthony, ed. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Perović, Jeronim. 2007. ‘The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence’. *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9 (2): 32–63.

8. Varieties of ‘real socialism’

Excerpt from: Anderson, Sheldon R. 2001. *A Cold War in the Soviet Bloc: Polish-East German Relations: 1945-1962*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Excerpt from: Verdery, Katherine. 1995. *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and*

Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania. Berkeley: University of California Press.

9. Crises and reform

Excerpt from: Smith, Stephen Anthony, ed. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Excerpt from: Smith, Stephen Anthony, ed. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

10. Eastern Europe and the world

Excerpt from: Romano, Angela, and Federico Romero, eds. 2022. *European Socialist Regimes' Fateful Engagement with the West: National Strategies in the Long 1970s*. London: Routledge.

Excerpt from: Mark, James, Bogdan C. Iacob, Tobias Rupperecht, and Ljubica Spaskovska. 2019. *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press.

11. 1989 and the 'return to Europe'

Betts, Paul. 2019. '1989 At Thirty: A Recast Legacy'. *Past & Present* 244 (1): 271–305.

Excerpt from: Kotkin, Stephen, and Jan Tomasz Gross. 2010. *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*. New York: Modern Library.

12. Democratisation and neoliberalism

Excerpt from: Ther, Philipp. 2016. *Europe since 1989: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bielasiak, Jack. 2010. 'The Paradox of Solidarity's Legacy: Contested Values in Poland's Transitional Politics'. *Nationalities Papers* 38 (1): 41–58.

13. Euro-Atlantic Integration

Excerpt from: Sarotte, Mary Elise. 2021. *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Excerpt from: Vachudova, Milada Anna. 2006. *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

14. Civil societies and mass protests

Bernhard, Michael. 2020. 'What Do We Know about Civil Society and Regime Change Thirty Years after 1989?' *East European Politics* 36 (3): 341–62.

Excerpt from: Beissinger, Mark R. 2002. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press.

15. Illiberalism and war

Cianetti, Licia, James Dawson, and Seán Hanley, eds. 2020. *Rethinking 'democratic Backsliding' in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge.

Excerpt from: Marples, David R., ed. 2022. *The War in Ukraine's Donbas: Origins, Contexts, and the Future*. Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press.