

## **Recent Political History of Central and Eastern Europe**

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### Course outline and objectives

The course covers the region of Central and Eastern Europe from the emergence of nation-states in the late 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

The course is conceived as a seminar with a required active participation in the discussions. Following an introductory session, the course will be spread over two semesters and consists of 15 thematic sessions. Sessions require reading and preparation beforehand with short presentations of two selected texts (articles or book excerpts) per session and focused discussions based on the general reading and the main questions.

The final grade will be based on an evaluation of active course participation (60%) and a term paper (40%) of approximately 5,000 words. Course participants will present an outline of their respective papers at one of the sessions during the year.

The course will be held online with sessions taking place on a bi-weekly basis. Questions and texts to guide the thematic sessions will be communicated beforehand. The texts for the selected readings below may be subject to change with additional reading (short essays or press articles) also possible for some sessions.

### Recommended literature for general reading:

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

### Session themes with selected readings:

#### **1. Imagining Central and Eastern Europe**

Berend, Ivan. 2005. 'What Is Central and Eastern Europe?' *European Journal of Social Theory* 8 (4): 401–16.

*Excerpt from:* Wolff, Larry. *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020.

## **2. National ‘awakenings’ and mass politics**

*Excerpt from:* Porter-Szücs, Brian. *Poland in the Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

*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. 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:* Pons, Silvio. *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism, 1917-1991*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

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:* Radchenko, Sergey. *To Run the World: The Kremlin’s Cold War Bid for Global Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024.

*Excerpt from:* Rajak, Svetozar, Konstantina Botsiou, Eirini Karamouzi, and Euanthēs Chatzēvasileiou, eds. *The Balkans in the Cold War*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

## **8. Varieties of ‘real socialism’**

*Excerpt from:* Anderson, Sheldon. 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:* Feinberg, Melissa. 2022. *Communism in Eastern Europe*. New York: Routledge.

*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 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.

*Excerpt from:* Feffer, John. *Aftershock: A Journey into Eastern Europe's Broken Dreams*. London: Zed, 2017.

## **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. 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., ed. 2022. *The War in Ukraine's Donbas: Origins, Contexts, and the Future*. New York: Central European University Press.