

**EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE BALKANS:
FROM EMPIRES TO NATION STATES
HIST 233 – FALL 2018**

Instructor: Michał J. Wilczewski, PhD

E-mail: mwilcz5@uic.edu

Office Hours: UH 916, Mondays 12pm-1pm, Tuesdays 11am-12pm or by appt.

Class Time: T, Th 9:30-10:45, Lincoln Hall 312

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Long before an “Iron Curtain” descended upon what we now call East-Central Europe and the Balkans, the region was dominated by historic kingdoms, principalities, and duchies. As centuries passed, these once-powerful medieval states gave way to the massive German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires. But by 1918, after the First World War, the empires collapsed and, in their shadows, were born fledgling nation-states. Providing a social, cultural, and political history of East-Central Europe and the Balkans, this course surveys the region’s transition from imperial to national rule. Though the course focuses on the 19th and 20th centuries, we will first consider the medieval legacy of the region before looking at the structures of imperial dominance in Eastern Europe. From there, we will focus on the First World War, the dissolution of empires and the rise of nation-states, the Second World War, and the eras of state socialism and post-socialism. Additional topics include nationalism and nation-building, the failure of interwar democracies, the reform and collapse of Communism, and the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

We will begin the course considering what historian Larry Wolff has called the “invention of Eastern Europe.” What does it mean to study this region and how has it been imagined, in both historical and literary writing, over time? Moreover, what is Eastern Europe, what is Central Europe, and what are the Balkans? Are these sorts of regional distinctions meaningful in a post-socialist world? Is there something characteristically different about the East? Is the region fully European?

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina*

Imre Kertész, *Fatelessness*

Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*

There is no textbook for this course, though you may want to consult the following:

Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-2011*

Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*

Philip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe: From Prehistory to Postcommunism*

Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History*

Joseph Rothschild and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*

Piotr Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard and are marked in the course schedule below. Books are available for purchase in the UIC Bookstore, though they are all easily available from other vendors. Please complete readings prior to class and come prepared to discuss them. In addition to large class discussions, we will occasionally divide into small groups to analyze some readings more closely. Please also feel free to bring articles that you think are interesting to discuss in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND METHODS OF EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated on the quality of their performance on the following required assignments:

- Map and Reading Quizzes (15%) – see course schedule for quiz dates
- First Paper (25%) – **due September 27, 2018**
- Second Paper (25%) – **due October 25, 2018**
- Third Paper (25%) – **due November 29, 2018**
- Attendance and Participation (10%)

GRADES: Students' final grades will be rendered according to the following:

A = 90% – 100%

B = 80% – 89%

C = 70% – 79%

D = 60% – 69%

F = 0% – 59%

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. **Plagiarism:** Please make sure you understand the definition of plagiarism. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. If you take words from any source, you must use quotation marks and acknowledge the sources with proper citations. Even when you use your own words, but have borrowed an idea from another source, you must reference it. Presenting someone else's work as your own can result in the disqualification of your work and a failing grade for this class. It can also result in suspension from the University. This is a very serious offense and should be treated that way. If you are ever unsure of whether you are at risk of plagiarizing, please ask. Students are required to produce original work for each assignment for this course. Reusing parts of papers written for this or other courses is considered self-plagiarism and will also result in the disqualification of that assignment.
2. **Blackboard and SafeAssign:** This course will require that students access Blackboard (uic.blackboard.com) to read additional readings. Please make sure that you have access to Blackboard from the beginning of the semester. If for

some reason you do not, please write to the instructor immediately. All papers must be submitted electronically through SafeAssign via Blackboard before the beginning of the class on the due date **AND** turned in in hard copy in class.

3. **Late Papers:** Late papers drop one letter grade per day after the deadline. An A becomes a B, then a C, and so on. If you cannot complete the assignment on time and need an extension, please contact the instructor ahead of the due date.
4. **Quizzes:** Five quizzes will be administered in this class. The first is an in-class map quiz that serves to familiarize students with the geography and culture of the region. The remaining four will be based on previous lectures and readings. Please check the schedule below for dates quizzes will be administered.
5. **Cell Phones:** Please come to class on time with cell phones set to silent and stored away. Please refrain from texting or reading text messages during class. Such behavior is extremely disruptive for both you and those around you. Students who are active on their phones **will** be called out in class. Continued use of your phone will result in being counted as absent for the day.
6. **Use of Technology:** The use of computers to take notes during lecture is permitted **ONLY** if students have the self-discipline to stay off various websites and messaging applications. Again, this is distracting to those around you. Please do not abuse this privilege. Students who are found surfing the internet during class will not be able to use their laptops in the future. Those who wish to record lectures must receive permission to do so from the instructor first. This refers only to audio recordings; video recordings are not allowed.
7. **Common Courtesy:** Students are expected to respect, though certainly not always agree with, others' ideas, interpretations, and comments. Healthy and respectful debate is expected and encouraged. Students are also expected to respect the diversity of their classmates. Everyone is encouraged to help create and sustain a healthy, safe, and productive learning environment. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and other sort of disruptive and abusive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who regularly come in late, leave to take phone calls, chat with their neighbors during lecture, and are otherwise disrespectful will also have their participation grade severely diminished.
8. **Attendance and Participation:** Regular attendance and thoughtful participation are crucial if students want to perform well in this class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class meeting. Students are allowed a maximum of **TWO** unexcused absences before their grade is negatively affected. An absence will only be excused if proper documentation is provided. Students who will be absent due to religious observances should communicate their absence with the instructor ahead of time. Students are responsible for any work and announcements that they may miss during their absence.
9. **E-mailing the Instructor:** Please make sure that your e-mails to the instructor are written carefully and completely with a greeting, message, and signature that identifies yourself. You should use this as an opportunity to building your professional communication skills.

- 10. Office Hours:** The instructor is available to meet with students during office hours. Please feel free to stop by. If you cannot attend the scheduled office hours, students can also ask to make an appointment to meet. Office hours are an excellent time to discuss paper drafts, your performance in the class, or to clarify any additional questions you may have. Students who want to go over drafts of their papers must meet with the instructor in person; paper drafts will not be reviewed over e-mail.
- 11. Students with Disabilities:** The University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535 (VP/Relay) and consult the following: <http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations>.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

This course outline is tentative and subject to change during the semester. Students are responsible for all changes announced in class.

Week 1 – Reading:	Larry Wolff, <i>Inventing Eastern Europe</i> , 1-16; Bram Stoker, <i>Dracula</i> , 1-11; Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe,” <i>New York Review of Books</i> vol. 31, 7 (1984): 33-38, (Blackboard); Ivo Andric, <i>The Bridge on the Drina</i> , 13-27
August 28	Course Introduction
August 30	What’s in a Name?: Placing and Peopling East-Central Europe and the Balkans; Map Quiz Practice Guide Distributed.
Week 2 – Reading:	Donald Quataert, <i>The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922</i> , excerpts (Blackboard); Continue <i>The Bridge on the Drina</i>
September 4	The Early Slavs and their Medieval Heritage
September 6	The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans, Map Quiz.
Week 3 – Reading:	Continue <i>The Bridge on the Drina</i>
September 11	Balkan Society under the Ottomans
September 13	The Consolidation of the Austrian Empire and the End of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1620-1795
Week 4 – Reading:	Jan Słomka, <i>From Serfdom to Self-Government</i> , excerpts; Finish

The Bridge on the Drina

- September 18** The People Rise: Nationalism in the 19th Century and the Challenge to Imperial Rule
- September 20** **Discussion of Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina*; Paper #1 Prompts Distributed**
- Week 5 – Reading:** Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End*, 1-15; Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, 3-23 (Blackboard)
- September 25** The Road to Sarajevo: The Congress of Berlin and the Balkan Wars
- September 27** All Quiet on the Eastern Front?: World War I and the Dissolution of Empires, **PAPER #1 DUE ON SAFEASSIGN AND IN CLASS.**
- Week 6 – Reading:** Philip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe*, 95-125 (Blackboard); Begin Imre Kertész, *Fatelessness*
- October 2** The Rocky Road of Independence: Interwar Eastern Europe and the Creation of Yugoslavia; **Reading Quiz #1**
- October 4** Democracy and its Discontents Part I: Poland and Czechoslovakia in the Interwar Period
- Week 7 – Reading:** Isaac Bashevis Singer, *A Day of Pleasure*, excerpts; Sholem Aleichem, “Chava,” in *Tevye the Dairyman*, 69-82, Ezra Mendelsohn, “Interwar Poland: Good for the Jews or Bad for the Jews?” (Blackboard); Continue *Fatelessness*
- October 9** The Jewish Question: Jews and Gentiles in East-Central Europe; **Reading Quiz #2**
- October 11** The Bloodlands: Eastern Europe during World War II
- Week 8 – Reading:** Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (excerpts) (Blackboard); Continue *Fatelessness*
- October 16** The Holocaust in Poland and Hungary
- October 18** **Discussion of Imre Kertész, *Fatelessness*; Paper #2 Prompts Distributed**
- Week 9 – Reading:**
- October 23** Film Screening: “1945”

- October 25** Finish “1945” and Discuss, **PAPER #2 DUE ON SAFEASSIGN AND IN CLASS**
- Week 10 – Reading:** Jakub Berman, “The Case for Stalinism” and “The Slánsky Trial,” (Blackboard); Begin Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*
- October 30** The People’s Republics: The Rise of Communism in East-Central Europe and the Balkans, 1945-1956
- November 1** The National Roads to Socialism: The Revolutions of 1956 in Poland and Hungary and the Early Reform Era
- Week 11 – Reading:** Patrick Hyder Patterson, “Risky Business: What Was Really Being Sold in the Department Stores of Socialist Eastern Europe?” and Ludvík Vaculík, “Two Thousand Words to Workers, Farmers, Scientists, Artists, and Everyone,” (Blackboard); Continue *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*
- November 6** “Socialism with a Human Face:” The Prague Spring of 1968 and the Limits of Reform in Czechoslovakia; **Film Screening: “Oratorio for Prague”**
- November 8** Communism Unwrapped: Consumption and Modernity in Socialist Eastern Europe, **Reading Quiz #3**
- Week 12 – Reading:** “K.O.R.’s Appeal to Society,” and “Pope John Paul II Speaks on Victory Square in Warsaw,” “Charter 77,” and Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of ’89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague*, 25-60 (Blackboard); Continue *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*
- November 13** Dissent: The Early Years of Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia
- November 15** The End and the Beginning: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, **Reading Quiz #4**
- Week 13 – Reading:** Finish *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*
- November 20** Discussion of Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*, Paper #3 Prompts Distributed
- November 22** Thanksgiving – NO CLASS

Week 14 – Reading: Marci Shore, “It was only a Small Revolution,” in *The Taste of Ashes: The Afterlife of Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe*, 51-68; Slavenka Drakulić, “How Women Survived Post-Communism (And Didn’t Laugh)” (Blackboard)

November 27 Democracy and its Discontents II: Post-Socialism and the Transition to Capitalism

November 29 The Return of the Balkan Question: Nationalism, Violence, and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia; **PAPER #3 DUE ON SAFEASSIGN AND IN CLASS**

Week 15 - Reading: Haris Silajdžić, “Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Blackboard)

December 4 **Film Screening: “We Are All Neighbors”**
December 6 East-Central Europe and the Balkans Today