Comparative Diasporas (NATI 5510)
Winter 2017

Michael L. Miller
Nationalism Studies Program
Central European University

Coined to describe the Jewish dispersion in the ancient Near East, the Greek term "diaspora" has traditionally referred to the historical exile and displacement of the Jewish people. The term was subsequently applied to the Greek and Armenian dispersions, which – together with the Jewish dispersion – are often called the "classical diasporas." In recent decades, however, the meaning of "diaspora" has been expanded to refer to migrant, refugee and émigré populations that have left their places of origin – either forcibly or voluntarily – and come to constitute a group defined primarily in relation to its historic "homeland." We now hear of African, Indian, Sikh, Chinese, Korean, South Asian, Irish, Turkish, Alevi, Kurdish, Ukrainian, Russian, Tibetan, Palestinian, Croatian, Serbian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Haitian, and even Israeli diasporas. This course will begin with an exploration of the Jewish diaspora, asking to what extent this archetypical diaspora serves as a useful analytical category and framework for understanding the migrations and displacements of modern times. The course will examine certain diasporic models – e.g., trading diasporas, victim diasporas, cultural diasporas – with the aim of understanding the role they play in nation-building and group-formation, as well as the impact they have on identity politics and foreign policy "at home" and "abroad." In addition to the individual diasporas and themes treated in the readings, students will give class presentations exploring additional diasporic communities and/or theoretical issues related to the field of Diaspora Studies. These presentation may serve as the basis for the required term paper.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss competing theories of diaspora
- Employ theories of diaspora to understand migrations and displacements of modern times
- Employ theories of diaspora to understand national-building and group-formation
- Develop critical reading skills

Requirements: All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, all students are required to give a 20-minute class presentation, examining a diasporic community or theoretical issues related to the field of Diaspora Studies. This presentation may serve as the basis for the mandatory 10-12 page research paper.

Class Participation: 10%
Article Presentation: 20%
Research Presentation: 20%
Research Paper (10-12 pages): 50% Due date: April 10, 2017

Class 1: Introduction
January 16
Class 2:  What is Diaspora?
January 23


Recommended:


Class 3:  Diaspora and Exile
January 30


Psalms 137: 1-6

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah, 28A

Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 7, Chap. 2; Book 18, Chap. 46

Moshe Ibn Ezra, "Songs of Wandering"

Recommended:


Class 4:  Trading Diasporas, Mobilized Diasporas
February 13

Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 4-39 (Chapter 4: Mercury's Sandals: The Jews and Other Nomads)

**Recommended:**


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**Class 5: The Armenian Diaspora**

February 20


**Recommended:**


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**Class 6: The African Diaspora**

February 20


**Recommended:**


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**Class 7: Diaspora Lobbying – Long-Distance Nationalism**  
February 27


"Greek-American Lobby":  
[http://ahiworld.org/about-ahi/ahi-history.html](http://ahiworld.org/about-ahi/ahi-history.html)  
[http://ahepa.org/dotnetnuke/](http://ahepa.org/dotnetnuke/)

"Armenian-American Lobby":  

"Israeli-American Lobby":  

**Recommended:**


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**Class 8: Diaspora Tourism**  
March 6


Birthright Israel
Birthright Armenia

Birthright Unplugged
http://www.birthrightunplugged.org/

Reconnect Hungary
http://reconnecthungary.org/

Recommended:


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**Class 9: Diaspora – Homeland Relations I**

March 13


Recommended:


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**Class 10: Diaspora – Homeland Relations II**

March 20

The A. B. Yehoshua Controversy (2006)

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**Class 11-12: Student Presentations [double class]**

March 27