COURSE SYLLABUS

INTERPRETING CONTEMPORARY NATIONALISM IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Instructors:
Florian Bieber; Rory Archer; Dario Brentin

Nationalism Studies
Central European University
Spring 2019
MA
# Credits (# ECTS Credits)
Course e-learning site:
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description
This course will explore different aspects of nationalism in Southeastern Europe. Focusing on former Yugoslavia, the course will also include case studies and discussions on other countries of the Balkans. Following a historical introduction, the class will mostly consider different aspects of nationalism in the social and political development of the past 30 years, ranging from causes of the wars in former Yugoslavia to the role of religion, gender, popular culture, political economy, Europeanisation and democratisation. As a 2-credit course, it is designed to first discuss each aspect on a theoretical and general level, followed by specific cases studies drawn from the region. The purpose of the course is to advance the student’s knowledge of Southeastern Europe and to apply different aspects of nationalism studies to this region. The focus on Southeastern Europe is not to suggest that the reason constitute a particularity or even exception in understanding nationalism. Phenomena discussed in class will be applicable to other countries and regions around the world.

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

- Engage critically with different theories of nationalism and ethnic conflict;
- Understand the dissolution process of Yugoslavia;
- Be familiar with nationalism in Southeastern Europe, in particular in former Yugoslavia;
- Engage with different disciplinary approaches to the study of nationalism

Course Requirements
Students are expected to be present and participate in the classes. Required readings will be assigned for each class.
Every student has to introduce one book to class. At least one book is available for review for each session. Students are expected to present the book in a short presentation (approx. 15 min.) and a handout, detailing the main argument and offering a critical analysis (including: main hypothesis, key arguments, structure of the argument, notable information, what might surprise the reader, specific comments and finally a critical examination of the arguments and questions for discussion).

The main requirement is a seminar paper (4,000-6,000 words, ca. 15-20 pages, double-spaced with footnotes). The paper can focus on any aspect covered in the course. The paper can either focus on more theoretical aspects and develop them further, or apply the theories to a particular case (or several). Students are encouraged to examine a case other than the country of origin. Before starting to write the paper, the topic has to be agreed upon with the course instructors.

Grading will be based on participation in class (10 %), the hand-out and presentation of the book (30 %), as well as the final paper (60 %).

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

1. **Introduction. Historical Background (Florian Bieber, Rory Archer, Dario Brentin)**
   Besides an overview over the topics to be discussed during the course, the class will briefly examine some of the main trends in the development of nationalism in Southeastern Europe from the 19th century to the end of World War Two. The two key aspects are the revolutionary aspect of the nationalist movements towards the multinational empires of the region, as well as the nature of the newly emerging nation states in the region.

   **Mandatory Readings**

   **Suggested Readings**

   **Books for Review**


2. Nationalism in the Communism Era (Florian Bieber)

The class will examine the role of nationalism under communist rule. The focus of the class will be both the theoretical stance of Communism towards nationalism and the reality in a number of cases. In a number of cases, nationalism served as a supplementary legitimizing tool for communists regimes in their attempt to bolster declining support. Particular examples under discussion include Romanian nationalism in the Ceauşecu era, as well as the period of national revival in Bulgaria.

**Mandatory Readings**


**Suggested Readings**


**Books for Review**


3. Myths and Symbols (Dario Brentin)

The importance of myths and symbols has been well documents in national movements. The class shall study the reevaluation of national histories and the creation of myths and symbols
in the Post-Communist period. The key examples here are the use of the legacy of World War 2 in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia.

Mandatory Readings


Suggested Readings

- Kolsto, Pal (ed.), Myths and Boundaries in South-east Europe (London: Hurst, 2005)

Books for Review

- Julie Mertus, Kosovo How Myths and Truths Started a War (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1999)

4. Nationalism from above (Dario Brentin)

As a flexible ideology, nationalism has numerous ways of expressing itself. Scholars have advanced different interpretations to the origins of nationalist movements. Some have argued that these movements were largely shaped by cultural, academic and political elites, while others have sought to emphasis the existence of strong nationalist sentiments among the population prior to mobilization from elites. This class will focus on “from above” perspectives.

Mandatory Readings


Suggested Readings

Books for Review

5. Nationalism from below (Rory Archer)
This class continues discussions from the previous class regarding expressions of nationalism shifting the focusing to nationalisms manifesting “from below”. In particular, it addresses nationalist mobilisation in Yugoslavia in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Mandatory Readings

Suggested Readings

Books for Review

6. The Causes of Yugoslavia’s Disintegration & Ethnic War (Rory Archer)
The disintegration of Yugoslavia has been explained by a number of different theories. Each of them relates differently to the role of nationalism in the country. Here the different theories and core controversies will be examined. The varying approaches largely follow from the discussions in the previous class on theories of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

**Mandatory Readings**

**Suggested Readings**

**Books for Review**

7. **Gender and Nationalism (Rory Archer)**
This class will examine the links between gender, nationalism and politics, focusing on issues such as wartime sexual violence, the cult of masculinity of nationalist movements and contemporary LGBT movements.

**Mandatory Readings**

**Suggested Readings**


Book for Review
- Elissa Helms, Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).

8. Religion and Nationalism (Rory Archer)
This class will look at nationalism from the perspective of church/mosque-nation relations. Topics of discussion will include the core role of religion in defining a number of Balkan national movements and the tensions between the often universalistic orientation of religions and the ethnic/national focus of churches/mosques.

Mandatory Readings

Suggested Readings

Books for Review

9. Nationalism and Popular Culture (Dario Brentin)
This class will focus on the intersection of nationalism, identity formations and popular culture. It links the themes and theories from earlier sessions to explore contemporary material culture and socio-cultural phenomena in Southeastern Europe. Topics of discussion involve the development of popular culture and leisure practices under state socialism and controversies surrounding it during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s and after.

Mandatory Readings


Suggested Readings


Books for Review

- Catherine Baker, Sounds of the Borderland. Popular music, war and nationalism in Croatia since 1991 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

10. Democracy, Social Movements and Nationalism (Dario Brentin)

This class will study the recent wave of (anti-)social movements in Southeastern Europe demanding democratic improvements, protesting corruption and privatisation of the commons, while also looking at conservative and right-wing countermovements.

Mandatory Readings


Suggested Readings
11. Responding to Nationalism: Post-Conflict Intervention & Transitional Justice (Florian Bieber)

In continuation with the previous class, this class will examine the connection between international relations and nationalism in the post-conflict phase. The focus will be on Bosnia and Herzegovina and to a lesser degree on Kosovo. The concluding class will also summarize the different aspects of contemporary nationalism and contemplate on the role nationalism might play in the region in the future. In addition, Southeastern Europe shall be placed in the context of Europe and the roles nationalism plays elsewhere on the continent.

Mandatory Readings


Suggested Readings


Books for Review

- Christopher Bennett, Bosnia’s Paralysed Peace (London: Hurst, 2016).
- Cvete Koneska, After Ethnic Conflict. Policy-Making in Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)

12. New Nationalism, Stabilitocracy and Authoritarianism (Florian Bieber)

This class will discuss the rise and salience of extreme right-wing politics in the contemporary Balkans exploring the significance of the legacy of war during 1990s and the interrelationship between democratic consolidation, economic reform and crisis, EU integration and new nationalism.

*Mandatory Readings*


*Suggested Readings*


*Books for Review*