COURSE SYLLABUS

Nationalism, Populism and Ethnic Conflict Management in Eastern Europe

Instructor:

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4 Credits (8 ECTS Credits)
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Course Delivery

Although originally designed for in-person instruction, this course has been adapted for online delivery in view of Covid-19 restrictions. Rather than merely flip the course so that the in-person format is simply replicated online, we will deliver the course content on multiple platforms. In doing so, we will make extensive use of asynchronous content (pre-recorded video lectures and presentations as well as assorted video clips). This will be combined with one hour of synchronous engagement per seminar. Each seminar will feature one hour class discussion over Zoom, in which we will have free-form discussion, small break-out group exercises and simulated debates. Students will have access to the readings on Perusall, where they are encouraged to make in-text comments. We will also use Slack as a course online discussion forum where we can post content relevant to the course material.
Course Description

Although nationalism, populism and ethnic conflict are relevant to regions around the world, this course will focus on how these movements play out in Eurasia as the birthplace of the nation-state and multi-national empires that have shaped the modern scholarship on these topics. Eastern Europe is also notable for its storied history of ethnic conflict management. From the recognition of religious minorities under the Ottoman Empire and the protection of certain groups in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia to the modern interventions of NATO and the European Union in postcommunist Europe, western governments have a centuries-long history of attempting to resolve the tension between state power and popular movements using methods ranging from ethnic partition, military intervention and ethnic power-sharing to the granting of cultural or language rights—with varying degrees of success. The past century alone has borne witness to three major periods of political upheaval in region. Two of these—the fall of the Habsburg, Ottoman, German and Russian Empires at the end of World War I and the fall of the Soviet, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav socialist ethnofederations at the end of the Cold War—coincided with an upsurge of nationalist movements whose leaders sought to alter state borders or create new ones. In recent years, populist movements (combined with nationalism) have also emerged in Poland, Hungary, Russia, Macedonia, and Serbia—as popular discontent with neo-liberalism and technocratic governance under European institutions grows apace.

Given that Eurasia is currently grappling with many of the same kinds of conflicts of the interwar period, scholars would benefit from examining the historical record to learn which tools are most likely to succeed in resolving sectarian conflicts today. After World War I, the victorious Allied Powers redrew the political boundaries of Eastern Europe’s multinational empires and forever altered the fate of its peoples. To prevent ethnic retributions in the wake of this political settlement, the Allied Powers set up a system of minority protection under the League of Nations. In the end, the League failed to prevent the persecution of minorities in Poland, Hungary, Albania, and Romania in the 1920s and 1930s. Populism, then a nascent force in interwar Europe, was quickly diverted into fascism in several East European countries, followed by military revisionism and systemic war.

Questions of nationalism, populism and ethnic conflict reemerged in the 1990s after forty-five years of relative quiescence. Many of East European countries contained minority populations that had endured decades of economic or social discrimination. In the context of political transition, numerous self-identified nations and groups sought self-determination in response to ethnic fears or economic opportunities—in some cases leading to violence. To stabilize the region and prevent a tidal wave of East European migrants to the West, the US and West European governments worked closely with NATO, the EU, the UN, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to ameliorate sectarian tensions in the region. Today, the EU and NATO continue to search for solutions to ongoing conflicts in former Soviet
Republics of Ukraine and Georgia as well as the newly independent Balkans states of Kosovo and Macedonia. This course examines the successes and failures of Europe’s long history of conflict management to see whether lessons can be drawn from earlier periods of conflict management that can help policy makers forge a stable peace in affected countries today.

The goals of the course are to impart upon students both a theoretical and practical understanding of issues surrounding conflict management. The course begins with concepts and definitions of minorities, ethnic groups, and nations. We then consider how these fuel social movements by exploring the factors, actors and processes associated with the emergence of both nationalist and ethnic conflict, and more recently, populist movements. In subsequent weeks, we review the ways in which these movements have shaped states of the region as well as strategies undertaken by the international community to reduce tensions associated with these movements—in both historical and contemporary Europe. Third and finally, we assess the effectiveness of diverse strategies of conflict management utilized by policy makers to manage these tensions.

The overriding goal of the course is to give students the tools to analyze critically the origins of nationalist, ethnic and populist conflict and evaluate competing methods of resolving these struggles. We also interrogate the history of conflict management in the region to assess the record of success of these competing methods. The aim is to explore the intersection of theory and practice in order to impart to students the skills to devise strategies to overcome barriers to conflict management. This experience (intertwining theory and practice) will ideally suggest ways in which future security regimes can be designed to reduce existing conflicts while preventing the outbreak of new ones.

Aims

The course’s main aim is to provide students with a sound understanding of:

1) Theories of nationalism, populism, ethnic conflict and conflict management
2) The distinctions between nationalism and populism in rhetoric and policy
3) What makes third party conflict mediation successful
4) The origins, successes, and failures of European security regimes
5) The theory and practice of conflict management
6) How to code leader speeches holistically

Learning Outcomes

✓ Distinguish the causal logics of competing theories of ethnic conflict

✓ Identify the drivers of populism and nationalism

✓ Learn how to code leaders’ speeches using holistic grading
✓ Identify the origins and dynamics of specific cases of conflict
✓ Critically evaluate competing solutions for conflict management
✓ Offer policy recommendations for designing regional security regimes

Course Requirements

(1) Speech Coding (40%). Students will be trained to code a dataset of US governors’ speeches over the past two government terms. Students in another class last term have gathered the speeches and coded them for populism. Students in this course will contribute to the governors speech data by coding for nationalism and social Conservatism in political speeches. Together with students at Brigham Young University we aim to code four speeches per each 4 year governance cycle by each governor going back to at least 2014 (two cycles), where two people will independently code every speech. Once we have a completed set of coding, we will publish the dataset as a free resource to the general research community with credit given to all the coders. This exercise will offer invaluable research and data collection experience to all students involved. Students will be assigned two states per person which will make altogether 32 rubrics. The deadline for the first 16 rubrics submission is the end of week 6. The final coding to be delivered by the end of week 9.

(2) Class Participation (20%). Students are expected to attend all the seminars and participate in class discussions. They will also be expected to comment on the readings in Perusall, which can be accessed by clicking on the links to the readings on the course moodle page. Participating in Slack discussions, at least occasionally, will also count toward the participation grade.

(3) Team Presentations (20%). During the second half of the course, students will sign up to work together with the instructors to teach the seminar on the topic for that day. In practical terms, they will be asked to create and upload a video on a topic that we will agree upon ahead of time. The video should be no longer than twenty minutes in length and can be uploaded on the course moodle page so that all the students can watch it before our discussion session. This video will cover cases or topics that are either historical or contemporary, from any region of the world, that builds on one or more of the main themes of the seminar. (Each student team should consult with me jointly at least one week prior to the week of their presentation.)

(4) Final Exam (20%). Students will be given a take-home essay examination that tests their understanding of different theories of nationalism, ethnic conflict and populism, using case evidence in Eastern Europe as well as material covered in lectures and readings. Students will have 48 hours to complete the exam.
Schedule of synchronous sessions:

Monday: 17:30-18:30 (CET)
Tuesday: 09:00-10:00 (CET)

Communication with the instructor and TA:

Slack channel
Readings on Perusall

Below there are some additional sources that students can use to get an overview of some of the recent conflicts in Eurasia:


Documentary movies:

The Weight of Chains (Parts 1-3):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waEYQ46gH08
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNNG_mn_9DU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjNvBrj1f78

“We are all neighbours”:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uip50amKMdW

Ukraine - Europe's Forgotten War: Robin Hood Complex Official Documentary:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BXYZqgDelw

Parts of a Circle, The summary film:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3yuVOK96RE

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART ONE: NATIONALISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

Week 1. Introduction

January 11: Nations, Nationalism and the Nation-State


**Further Reading**


*January 12: Theories of Nationalism*


**Further Reading**


Eric Kaufmann. Complexity and Nationalism. Nations and Nationalism 23(1), 2017, 6-25

**Week 2. Ethnic Groups and Minorities**

**January 18: Ethnic Groups and Boundaries**


**Further Reading**


January 19: Minorities and Majorities


Further Reading


Week 3 - Training

Codings schedule:

January 25. Session 1 – Nationalism

Pre-class activity - Nationalism Coding Workshop on Moodle
Reading


*January 26. Session 2 – Social Conservatism*

Pre-class activity - Social Conservatism Coding Workshop on Moodle

Reading

George Lakoff. 2014. *Don't think of an elephant!: know your values and frame the debate*. Chapters 1, 7 and 8

*Week 4. Theories of Nationalist and Ethnic Conflict*

*February 1: Masses and Elites*


*Further Reading*


February 2: Ethnic Fears and Grievances


Further Reading


Week 5. Theories of Nationalist and Ethnic Conflict (continued)

February 8: Opportunism and Competition Theory


Further Reading


February 9: Bad Neighbors and Bad Neighborhoods


Further Reading


PART TWO: POPULISM

Week 6. Theories of Populism

February 15: Populism—A Framework of Analysis


Further Reading


February 16: Populism and Nationalism


Further Reading


Week 7. Populism and Nationalism in Interwar Europe

February 22: Populism, Peasantism and Fascism in Interwar Eastern Europe


Further reading


February 23: Populism and Nationalism in Contemporary Eastern Europe


Lenka Bustikova. 2014. „Revenge of the Radical Right,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 1-29.

Further reading


**PART THREE: ETHNIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

**Week 8. History of Ethnic Conflict Management**

*March 1: Conflict Management: Actors and Processes*


**Further Reading**


*March 2: Post-WWI Ethnic Conflict Management (League of Nations)*


**Further reading**


**Week 9. History of Ethnic Conflict Management (continued)**

**March 8: Post-WWII Ethnic Conflict Management (United Nations)**


**Further Reading**


March 9: Post-Cold War Ethnic Conflict Management (NATO/EU/OSCE)

Gerard Toal. 2017. Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus, chaps. 1, 2.


Further Reading


Yoshiko Herrera and Nicole Butkevich Kraus “Pride and Prejudice: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Xenophobia in Russia” Comparative Politics, 48, no. 3 (April 2016): 293-312.


Suny, pp. 127-160.


**Week 10. Competing Methods of Ethnic Conflict Management**

*March 15: Preventive Diplomacy and Conditionality*


**Further Reading**


March 16: Civic Engagement and Ethnic Reintegration


Further Reading


Week 11. Competing Methods of Conflict Management (continued)

March 22: Autonomy, Consociationalism and Induced Devolution


Further Reading


Şener Aktürk. 2011. „Regimes of Ethnicity Comparative Analysis of Germany, the Soviet Union/Post-Soviet Russia, and Turkey, World Politics, pp.115-64.

**March 23: Ethnic Partition**


**Further Reading**


**Week 12. Course Wrap-Up**

**March 29: The Future of Nationalism and (Ethno)populism**


Further reading


March 30. FINAL EXAM