From Empire to Independence: Eastern Europe from the late 18th century to WWII

This course explores the political, intellectual, social and cultural history of Eastern Europe from the late 18th century through World War II. Focusing on a number of issues such as nationalism and ethnic relations, economic and social modernization, and revolution, war, and the impact of Great Power politics, we will examine the transformation of the region from subject populations under Austro-Hungarian, Prussian, Russian, and/or Ottoman rule to independent nation states. We will also explore the experiences and contributions of diverse groups in these regions, including ethnic and religious minorities, the peasantry, women, and intellectual and cultural figures. We will then focus on World War I and the interwar period, examining the efforts of the newly independent countries to modernize and establish politically viable nation-states in the face of ethnic tension, economic depression, and the increasing influence of fascism and reactionary politics. A major theme of the course is the relationship of Eastern Europe to the broader idea of “Europe”—both as a geographical entity and political, historical and cultural construct.

Required Readings
Ivo Andrić, Bridge on the Drina (University of Chicago Press, 1977)
Jan Gross, Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland (Penguin, 2002)
Dezső Kosztolányi, Anna Edes (New Directions, 1991)

**all other readings will be available on e-reserve.

Class Participation and Attendance (15%)
This course is based on the belief that learning is a cooperative and interactive activity. You are expected to participate actively in class discussion; therefore it is essential that readings are completed prior to each class meeting. Expressing doubt or confusion about or asking for clarification on the readings are important and useful ways of contributing to the discussion, providing opportunities for critically evaluating the issues and materials under investigation. The evening prior to each class meeting students are required to post 2-3 questions about the readings on blackboard (these questions must be posted by 8 pm so that your colleagues will have ample time to read and reflect on them). You are exempt from three posts over the course of the semester.
You are allowed 3 unexcused absences. For classes missed beyond these 3, you are expected to write a 1-2 page evaluation of the readings.

**Midterm Exam (30%)** This will be an in-class exam covering key figures, terms, events, and ideas examined in class and in the readings up to this point.

**Take Home Final (40%).** 2-3 essay Questions.  
The final is due in my office on Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. (Rice 311)

**Book Reflections (15% total; 7.5 % each)**  
You are expected to write a 3-4 page book reflection of Anna Edes and Neighbors.  
Rather than a simple summary, you should write a critical analysis of the book in which you place it in its specific historical context and consider its relevance to broader themes and issues in East European history. The reflections will serve as springboards for class discussion. Due dates for the reflection papers are marked on the syllabus. You are exempt from posting reading questions on these dates.

**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>59% and below</td>
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Late assignments will be marked down 1/3 of a grade per day (B to B-). Extensions will be granted in cases of documented personal illness and family emergency.

**Honor Code** All work is governed by the Honor Code. Any student found cheating, plagiarizing, turning in another’s work as his/her own or otherwise violating the instructor’s explicit or implicit instructions will be subject to a hearing before the Student Honor Committee. To learn more about the code, please go to: http://www.oberlin.edu/students/life/rules-reg07-08/honorcode.pdf

**Services for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course please contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in G27 Peters Hall, ext. 58467.

**Week I**

**Sept 4: Course Introduction**

**Sept. 6: Defining Eastern Europe**

Maria Todorova *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford, 1997) chapter 2 “Balkans” as Self
Designation,” pp. 38-61 e-reserve

**Week II**

**Sept. 11: Development, Modernization, and Regional Identities**

**Sept. 13: Everyday Life in Ottoman Bosnia to the early 19th Century**

**Week III**

**Sept. 18: Enlightened Despotism in Partitioned Poland and the Habsburg Empire**

**Sept. 20: The Serbian Revolution and the Serbian State**
Jelavich, pp. 26-37; 53-67
Andric, *Bridge on the Drina*, chaps. 6-8

**Week IV**

**Sept. 25: The Greek Revolution and the Greek Kingdom**
Jelavich, pp. 38-52; 68-83

**Sept. 27: Constructing the Nation: Cultural Nationalism in Eastern Europe**

**Week V**

**Oct. 2: Uprisings and Revolutions**
Ivan Berend, “Uprisings and Reforms” pp. 89-119 e-reserve

Oct 4: The Romanian Revolution and the Romanian State
Jelavich, pp. 84-98; 114-127

Week VI

Oct. 9: The Eastern Question, the Crisis of the 1870s, and the Emergence of an Autonomous Bulgaria
Jelavich, pp. 128-169
Andric, chaps, 8-12

Oct. 11: Modernization and the Rise of Mass Politics
TBA

Week VII

Oct. 16: Ethnic Tensions in the Habsburg Empire
Jelavich, pp. 235-265
Andric, chaps 13-20

Oct. 18: Midterm Exam

Week VIII——Fall Recess

Week IX

Oct. 30: War, Revolution, and Peace
Andric, chaps 21-24

***Rather than focusing on a single country for each lecture, we will approach interwar Europe thematically and comparatively. For a brief overview of each country during the interwar period see the selections from R.J. Crampton, Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century and after on e-reserve. Please note that since I will be covering the history of each country during the interwar period in lecture, the Crampton readings are supplementary rather than required.
Nov. 1: Legitimating the State in interwar Eastern Europe
Cynthia Paces, “Religious Heroes for a Secular State: Commemorating Jan Hus and Saint Wenceslas in 1920s Czechoslovakia,” in Staging the Past, e-reserve

Week X

Nov. 6: Society in postwar Hungary
Dezső Kosztolányi, Anna Edes (entire book)
Book Reflection 1 due

Nov. 8: Ethnic Tensions and Regional Identities
Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, “The Plight of the Peasantry” e-reserve

Week XI

Nov. 13: Gender in Eastern Europe
or

Nov. 15: The Jews in Interwar Eastern Europe
Ezra Mendelsohn, “Poland” in The Jews in Central Europe Between the World Wars (Indiana, 1993) on e-reserve

Week XII

Nov. 20: No Class

Nov 22: Thanksgiving break
Week XIII

Nov. 27: The Rise of the Radical Right in Eastern Europe

Nov. 29: The Road to War

Week XIV

Dec. 4: World War II and the Holocaust
screening of Europa Europa

Dec. 6: World War II and the Holocaust
screening of Europa Europa and discussion

Week XV

Dec. 11: The Holocaust and Polish Memory
Jan Gross: Neighbors
Reading Reflection 2 due


Take Home Final due Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. (my office, Rice 311)