Introduction

This course explores the interaction among nationalism, culture, and politics in twentieth-century Spain and Yugoslavia. Special attention is paid to the politics of late state-building, the rise of competing nationalisms, civil wars and their legacies, dictatorship, collective memories, democratic transition (Spain), and state collapse (Yugoslavia). We will study these issues by integrating sociological and historical material with literary works and visual materials (feature and documentary films). The course has a comparative focus not only in a thematic sense—combining Spain and Yugoslavia—but also from a disciplinary perspective, combining sociology and history with literary approaches and the study of culture.

The twentieth-century histories of Spain and Yugoslavia parallel each other in important ways. Both countries were historically on the political-economic (not only geographic) periphery of Europe. Both are nation-states whose unity has long been undermined by competing nationalisms that cut across complicated political cleavages. Both countries lived through a violent civil war—Spain in 1936-39, Yugoslavia in 1941-45—that led to long-term dictatorial regimes identified with a single authoritarian leader (Spain’s Franco and Yugoslavia’s Tito). In both countries, the legitimacy of the regime was rooted in the figure of the charismatic leader with the result that the leader’s death led to a legitimacy crisis and, ultimately, to a democratic transition (Spain) or state dissolution (Yugoslavia). In both cases, authoritarian rule managed temporarily to suppress the tensions that had led to civil war without resolving the historical traumas and collective memories of different political factions and ethnic groups. As a result, in both societies the end of the dictatorship resulted in a dramatic “return of the repressed,” albeit with very different consequences.

These differences between Spain and Yugoslavia make the comparison of similarities and differences between the two countries exceedingly interesting. Thus, whereas Franco was a right-wing dictator, first identified with fascism and later with anti-communist traditionalism, Tito became the champion of anti-Stalinism, “national communism,” and socialist self-management. A second important difference concerns the contrast between Spain’s unitary state and Yugoslavia’s socialist federalism. Thirdly,
Spain’s transition to democracy was relatively successful while Yugoslavia’s post-dictatorial trajectory was disastrous. Spain today is a prosperous nation-state with a functioning democracy in constitutional monarchy; Yugoslavia, after years of internal violence and external intervention, has ceased to exist as a unified state, while most of its former republics are still struggling to enter the European Union. Why did two societies that shared many historical similarities end up following such different paths? This central question will be explored through an analysis of the long-term historical legacies of state and nation-building, civil wars, the dictatorial regimes that were established in their aftermath, and the clash between official regime ideologies and collective memories.

In addition to this central question, throughout the course we will explore a series of issues with practical implications for peace and conflict resolution in politically divided and ethnically plural societies. What are the deeper historical causes of collective violence in plural societies? What kinds of institutional arrangements provide incentives for violent versus peaceful conflict resolution? For example, what were the institutional consequences of communist ethno-federalism and constitutional clauses on “self-determination” in unintentionally fostering nationalism in Yugoslavia’s constituent federal republics? Exploring questions such as these will lead us to consider a wide range of underlying issues, including: (1) the role of alternative forms of state decentralization or asymmetrical federalism in diffusing conflicts in post-Franco Spain and, by implication, in other “state-nations” (a term recently coined by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan to refer to states with strong, territorially-based regional, ethnic, or national groups that resist assimilation into a state-wide identity but nevertheless express allegiance to the state); (2) the role of generational memory and different interpretations of the civil war as reflected in political discourse, literary works, feature films, and documentaries in framing the discourse about violence, trauma, and collective memory; (3) representations of (past) collective violence and their reception by audiences in both countries; (4) the role of external geopolitical factors in providing incentives for peaceful versus violent politics (e.g., European Community in the case of Spain; the role of the international recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia in Yugoslavia’s dissolution) (5) the legacy of war crimes and different nationalist narratives that have emerged in former Yugoslav republics; (6) the role of international institutions, particularly the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague in creating the conditions for coming to terms with the legacy of collective violence; (7) the debate about collective memory, in particular the controversy surrounding the law of historical memory in Spain that purported to address the asymmetry in the treatment of victims of the civil war (the reburial of victims on the Republican side) and the reception of that law by different political and cultural forces in Spain.

**Required Books**


**Note:** All other readings can be found on the designated Blackboard site for this class under the heading “course documents.”
Course requirements and regulations:

- Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Any unexcused absence over 2 will lower the participation grade by 5% (i.e., half a letter grade).
- Active class participation.
- Email and Blackboard will be the preferred medium for announcements, questions, and assignments.
- Students are expected to have **read the assigned texts** by the day indicated on the syllabus and be prepared to participate in class discussion. **Response papers**, when assigned, need to be **brought to class and handed in**.
- Students are expected to attend all out-of-class **film and documentary screenings** (scheduled for **Sundays, 8.00 p.m.**). For those unable to attend the scheduled showings, all videos and DVDs will be placed on reserve in the library and, where possible, uploaded to or linked to from Blackboard.
- **Three papers**: a midterm paper (5-6pp), a second paper (6-7pp), and a final paper (8-10pp.)

Evaluation

The final class grade will be broken down as follows:

- Attendance and participation: 15%
- Response papers: 20%
- Midterm paper (5-6pages): 15%
- Second paper (6-7pages): 20%
- Final paper (8-10 pages): 30%

Honor Code

This course and all its assignments are covered by the Oberlin College honor code. This means, most importantly, that—unless otherwise indicated—you are to produce your own work and honor the rules and conventions of scholarly quotation, attribution, and citation. While you are allowed to ask advice and help from librarians and official writing tutors, you are, in the end, to submit work produced by you. Some assignments may be collaborative in nature; those will be clearly identified as such. Any case of (suspected) plagiarism will be reported to the Honors Committee. For more details, see [http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/](http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: What is Nationalism?

Tues 2/4 Introduction to the course and syllabus

Thurs 2/6 Nationalism (1)

Week Two: Nationalism and Culture


Tues 2/11 Nationalism (2)
Thurs 2/13 Cultural Nationalism
• Response Paper 1

Week Three: Contested Nationhood: State and Nation-Building in Spain

Sunday 2/16: [Film] *The Spanish Civil War*, episodes 3&4

Tues 2/18 Contested Nationhood, Language, and Nationalism

Thurs 2/20 Spanish (lack of) unity and cultural identity
• Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *The Spaniards in their History*, pp. 119-137; 177-180; 192-199; 202-203.
• Response Paper 2

Week Four: From Empires to Nations in the South Slavic Lands: A literary account


Tues 2/25 Introduction to the Yugoslav Lands

Thurs 2/27 The Imperial Legacy and the South Slavs

Week Five: The Civil War in Spain

Sunday 3/2: [Film] *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (aka Death of Yugoslavia; BBC, N. Fraser, 1995), ep. 1-2.
Tues 3/4      Introduction to the Spanish Civil War

- The Second Spanish Republic and the Civil War

Thurs 3/6    Literature and Politics in the Civil War

- Selection of pro-Nationalist literature from Kenwood, The Spanish Civil War.
- **Response Paper 3**

Week Six: Contested Nationhood: Nation-Building in Interwar Yugoslavia


Tues 3/11    Evolution of the Yugoslav Idea


Thurs 3/13   Small Nation Nationalisms in Multinational State: Three literary views

- Rebecca West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, pp.83-88.

Week Seven: From Occupation and Civil War to Socialist Yugoslavism

Sunday 3/16: [Film] Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation, episodes 5-6. **First Paper Due**

Tues 3/18    The Yugoslav Civil War


Thurs 3/20   Socialist Yugoslavism and Supranational Yugoslav Culture

- Wachtel, Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation, pp. 128-172.

****SPRING BREAK, March 22-29****
Week Eight: Leaders, Dictators, Regimes: Franco and Tito

Tues 4/1  Tito, Titoism, Yugoslavism
- Wachtel, Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation, pp. 172-197.

Thurs 4/3  Francoism

Week Nine: Civil wars through culture and representation: From Francoism to the Transition

Sunday 4/6:  [Film]  The Lost Children of Francoism  (Montse Armengou & Ricard Belis, 2002)

Tues 4/8  Representations of the Civil War: Francoism
- Discuss Lost Children

Thurs 4/10  The Civil War as Collective Insanity: Historical Memory and the Spanish Transition
- Aguilar, Memory and Amnesia, pp. 149-152, 162-166, 183-196, 208-211, 260-264, 265-270)
- Response Paper 4

Week Ten:  Breaking the Pact of Silence

Sunday 4/13:  [Film]  Vacas (Julio Medem, 1992)

Tues 4/15  The Basque Problem: National Identifications, Violence, etc.
- Discuss Vacas.
- Javier Cercas, Soldiers of Salamis, pp. 1-150

Thurs 4/17  Reconciliation and Memory through Storytelling or Law: Developments since 2000
- Javier Cercas, Soldiers of Salamis, pp. 150-224.
Week Eleven: Collective Memory and the Unraveling of Yugoslav Identity


Tues 4/22 Yugoslavism and Collective Memory:
- Discussion of Underground

Thurs 4/24 The Fragmentation and Unravelling of the Yugoslav Narrative
- Wachtel, Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation, pp. 197-245.

Week Twelve: The Road to Civil War in Yugoslavia

Sunday 4/27: [Film] No Man’s Land (Danis Tanović, 2002). Second paper (6-7 pp.) due

Tues 4/29 Institutional Causes of Yugoslav Dissolution

Thurs 5/1 Yugoslavia. Leaders, Ideologies, Breakup
- Discussion of No Man’s Land

Week Thirteen: From nation-state to international justice: Yugoslavia and Spain in broader context

Sun 5/4: Milosevic on Trial (Michael Christoffersen; documentary 69 minutes).
1-page proposal for final paper due

Tues 5/6 War Crimes and International Justice:
- Discussion of Milosevic on Trial
Thurs 5/8  Spain: The Transition and the Specter of International justice
  ●  Readings TBA

Final project (8-10pp.) due: Friday, May 16, 9 p.m.

FILMOGRAPHY FOR FINAL PROJECT: SPAIN

Documentaries
Armengou/Belis, *The Lost Children of Francoism*
Armengou/Belis, *Las fosas del silencio*
Armengou/Belis, *Memòria per llei*
Camino, *La vieja memoria*
Camino, *Los niños de Rusia*
Terrón, *Los campos del silencio*

Feature Films
Erice, *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973)
Zambrano, *La voz dormida* (2011)

FILMOGRAPHY FOR FINAL PROJECT: YUGOSLAVIA

Documentaries
Selection from *The Independent for the Truth* (B92 Radio-TV station, Belgrade, 2007)  
(Collection of 10 DVDs with more than twenty documentary films on the period of war in Yugoslavia, war crimes, the evolution of the Milosevic regime in Serbia, the transition to democracy, and dealing with a difficult past).

  *Vukovar: Final Cut* (Janko Baljak, 2006)
  *Cinema Komunisto* (Mila Turajlić, 2010)

Feature Films
*Occupation in 26 pictures* (Lordan Zafranović, 1978)
*Hey Babu Riba* (Jovica Aćin, 1985)
*Tito and me* (Goran Marković, 1992)
*Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (Srdjan Dragojevic, 1996)
*Turneja* (The Tour; Goran Marković, 2008)