

# **Politics of East Central Europe, POLI 236.001**

**Spring 2018**

**Woolen Gym 304-- T, Th 3:30-4:45pm**

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Office Hours: Thursday, 12:10 to 3:10 in Hamilton 301, or by appointment

## **Course Content and Goals**

This course is designed to present an overview of the politics of Eastern Europe from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the present day. We will discuss the region's efforts to achieve independence and establish cohesive nations before and after WWI, the turmoil and lasting effects of WWII, the inescapably political experiences of the people trapped behind the Iron Curtain for over forty years, the hope and promise of the revolutions of 1989, and the Eastern European countries' attempts to establish new identities in post-communist Europe. Throughout the course, we will be drawing parallels between contemporary and historical political events throughout the region. Besides educating students about an area of the world that they may not be familiar with, this course is intended to provide students with the historical knowledge necessary for understanding what has happened and is happening in the region, help them learn how to independently assess the merits of various political ideologies, and allow them to practice analyzing politicians' actions and current events. Consequently, this course will consist primarily of interactive lectures, short student presentations, and large group discussions.

## Books

Thomas W. Simons, *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World*, 2nd Edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

Heda Margolius Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941-1968* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

Gale Stokes, *From Stalinism to Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration After Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

To find material that used to be on the CNN web site, use the Wayback Machine at: <http://www.archive.org/web/web.php> (I'll show you how to use this in class)

## Readings + Other Assignments

While there may be occasional homework assignments besides the assigned readings and short papers, the bulk of your homework in this class consists of reading things and then thinking about what you've read. Consequently, I expect you to actually do the readings. Lectures are designed with the expectation that you have read the assigned material **before** class begins. *You will not do well in this course unless you do the readings.*

You are responsible for being in class and for checking your UNC email *and* Sakai. I will not give you extensions or excuse you from missing assignments because you missed something that was said in lecture, sent via email, or posted on Sakai. The course website is on Sakai (<http://sakai.unc.edu>). I will use the course website to post the syllabus, lecture slides, and other course information in an easily accessible location, and you will be expected to post

assignments on Sakai throughout the semester. Please let me know immediately if you have any issues logging into the website. You are also responsible for learning about any homework assignments from a fellow student if you miss class. I may assign readings that are not on this syllabus; you are expected to keep track of and read those assignments, as well.

**I will not accept late homework assignments**, with the exception of the final draft of the final paper. For that assignment, if you turn it in late, then you will be docked 5 points from your paper grade for every day the paper is late, and I will not accept the final paper after the scheduled final exam scheduled for our class (4pm on Tuesday, May 1). The final paper will be due in class on the last day of class (Thursday, April 26); handing it to me after class on the last day of our course counts as being a day late and will result in a 5-point deduction.

## **Course Requirements**

1. Participation (10%). This consists of attendance, class conduct, homework, and regular participation. The map quiz (**Jan 18**) and short current event presentation (2 min + one discussion question; students will sign up at the start of the semester) also fall under this segment of the course requirements.

**Attendance and participation are required.** I will take attendance every day. If you are going to miss a class and want that absence to be excused, **you must contact me \*before\* class with a valid excuse and then provide written verification for your excuse (ie a doctor's note)**. I will not remind you to bring in the verification for your excuse; that is your responsibility. Even if you contact me before class with an excuse that I approve as valid, your absence will not be marked as excused until you present the necessary verification. **After**

**the first week of class, you are allowed 3 unexcused absences; every unexcused absence after that will automatically cause your participation grade to drop by half a letter grade (5 points).**

As mentioned in the “readings and homework” section of the syllabus, students are expected to come to class prepared (ie having read and thought about the readings & homework) and ready to **actively** participate. I will reiterate that in order to do this, you must read before class starts.

Do not expect an A just for showing up—regular attendance denotes average performance, which equates to a grade of 75% (C). Raising this grade hinges on demonstrating that you have both read and thought about the reading. The only way for you to do this is to actively participate. An easy way to do this is to come to class with prepared comments and/or questions relating to the week’s readings, the lectures, or to how current events reflect what we are studying in class. I will give you ample opportunities to participate in class.

One of the goals of this class is to give you a safe environment in which to speak so that you can practice analyzing political events and applying the theories we learn in class to real-world events. To this end, we will frequently engage in discussion. Guidelines we will follow to help foster meaningful discussion:

- Be respectful. Different opinions are healthy and welcome in the classroom. However, it is essential that we treat one another with respect. You do not have to agree with someone’s view, but you do have to be respectful. Disrespectful students may be asked to leave the classroom. Please take a look at UNC’s harassment policy if you

have questions

(<http://www.unc.edu/campus/policies/harassanddiscrim.pdf>)

- Speaking in front of groups can be intimidating to some students; it is my goal to ensure that this class is a comfortable space where everyone can participate. Our discussions will be most successful when all voices are heard. If speaking in front of the class makes you nervous, come talk to me so that we can figure out some strategies to help you earn points towards your participation grade.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions! Everyone has different areas of expertise, and some concepts may be more confusing to you than others. I will be of limited help to you if you don't speak up when you need clarification, and the discussion portions of the class will not work unless you participate.

2. Short response essays (10%). During the first half of the semester, you are responsible for writing two short (~350-500 words) reaction papers. The goal of the reaction papers is to help you connect the memoir we are reading, *Under a Cruel Star*, to topics and other readings we are discussing in class. Specific prompts for each reaction paper will be posted prior to their due date. The reaction papers are due at the start of class of the due date. You must submit a hard copy and submit on Sakai. Late submissions **will not** be accepted.

3. Pop quizzes/reading questions (10%). There will be 4 of these due throughout the semester. Your lowest score will automatically be dropped.

4. Midterm (25%). The midterm will be on **Tuesday, March 6**, and it will consist mainly of short answer questions and essay questions. It will be closed book, and it will take place in class. You do not need to bring paper or a blue book.

5. Final (45%). The final will be on **Tuesday, May 1, at 4pm**. It will consist mainly of short answer questions and essay questions. You do not need to bring paper or a blue book. One of the essay questions will be a take-home question on a country of your choice that is due the last day of class (**Thursday, April 26**). For the take-home essay question you will need to write approximately 10 pages, and this portion of the exam will count for 20% of your overall grade in the course. There will be periodic due dates throughout the semester for different parts of your paper, and meeting these due dates counts for part of your paper grade. These due dates exist to help you write a strong paper that addresses the prompt and is finished on time. The rest of the final will take place during the regularly scheduled time for finals for this class period (May 1 at 4pm).

## **Honor Code**

It is expected that all work you do in this course will be original work not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course, unless this is done with the prior permission of all instructors involved. All work for this course falls under the University's Honor Code; the student's signature on her/his work confirms that the Code rules were respected. All work must be your own – plagiarism, cheating, and related violations will not be tolerated. For more information on the honor code, please visit <http://instrument.unc.edu/>.

Familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism in order to make sure that you avoid it. Plagiarism is defined as deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise. Take the library's tutorial at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/> and ask me if you have any questions.

## **Questions**

If you have questions about the course, please come see me after class or during office hours. Please email me if you absolutely cannot come to office hours. Some questions may not be easily resolved by email, but we can set up another time to meet if necessary. Please do communicate with me early if you have any challenges that impact your performance in this course; I will not be able to help you if you do not ask for help.

## **Rescheduling Exams**

If you have to miss class on the day of an exam or wish to reschedule an exam, then you must write and explain **beforehand** in all but the most unusual circumstances. If you are going to miss an exam for an event you know about well in advance, please come speak to me early in the semester (ie in first week or two of class) so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Please note that I cannot allow you to take the final on a different day or at a different time without the Dean's approval; therefore, contact the Dean if you have a conflict with the time of the final and need to change it.

## **Conduct in Class + Additional Info**

Feel free to bring your laptops to class—if you do, however, I expect you to use them for activity related to this course. Playing on the Internet during class is highly disrespectful to people who are trying to pay attention. I may not call you out for being on Facebook during class, but I will notice, and it will affect your final grade. You may not have your laptops open during any sort of student presentation. If, during the course of the semester, I see that the laptops are acting as more of a distraction than a help, I reserve the right to restrict their usage.

Do not use your cell phone during class. I can tell when you're using it. Don't do it.

If you are going to spend class time playing on your computer or your phone, then please respect your classmates, use one of your unexcused absences, and do not come to class.

I will not respond to emails asking questions whose answers are on this syllabus. This saves both my time and yours; it is quicker for you to read a syllabus than it is for you to write me an email and wait for my reply.

I will not respond to emails after 8pm on the day before exams.

As a general rule, I will not email you your grades, nor will I discuss your grades with you within 24 hours of handing graded assignments back. That being said, if you have questions about my comments on your assignments, I am happy to talk to you. If you want me to regrade something, you will need to write a few (at least 3) paragraphs responding specifically to my written comments and explaining why you feel you deserve a higher grade.

## **Course Schedule**

**Jan 11**—Go over syllabus

### **The Interwar Period**

**Jan 16**—Go over Simons Chapters 1 & 2, example current event  
Have read Simons Chs 1 & 2 (pp. 1-37; 37 pages of reading)

### **WWII, Communists Come to Power**

**Jan 18**—\*\*\*Map Quiz\*\*\* and discuss Simons Ch. 3  
Have read Simons Ch. 3 (pp. 38-57; 19 pages of reading)



## High Stalinism

**Jan 23**— Discuss Simons Ch. 4

Have read Simons Ch. 4 (pp. 58-84; 26pp of reading)

## Recap of Interwar, WWII, Early & High Stalinism

**Jan 25**— Discuss primary documents

Have read:

1. Kovaly, pp. 5-51 (46pp)
2. Stokes, *The Stalinist Moment: Yalta*, pp. 19-32 (13pp)
  - a. The Yalta Negotiations
  - b. Poland at the Teheran Conference
  - c. The Percentages Agreement, Winston S. Churchill, October 9., 1944
3. The Katyn massacre (use the Wayback Machine):  
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/01/spotlight/index.html>
4. The Oder-Neisse Line and the expulsion of the Germans (use the Wayback Machine):  
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/02/spotlight/>

**Jan 30**—Discuss primary documents

Have read:

1. Kovaly, 52-125 (73pp—don't worry, it's a quick read)
2. Stokes, *Stalinists*, pp. 43-56, and *The Purge Trials*, pp. 66-77 (a total of 24pp).
  - a. The Case for Stalinism
  - b. Czeslaw Milosz, "Ketman" (1951) from *The Captive Mind*.
  - c. The Trial of Laszlo Rajk (1949)
  - d. The Slansky Trial

## **De-Stalinization, the Hungarian Revolution**

**Feb 1**—Discuss Simons Ch. 5, \*\*\*Kovaly Paper #1 Due\*\*\*

Have read:

1. Simons Ch. 5 (pp. 85-105; 20 pp of reading)
2. 2 super short articles on Polish/Russian relations:
  - a. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40775355>
  - b. <http://tass.com/politics/981023>
3. “Orban Invokes 1956 Hungarian Uprising to Resist EU Empire Building,” Andrew Byrne, Oct 23, 2016. (3pp)
4. “Hungary’s New Wave of anti-Orbán Activists,” Lili Bayer, Oct 23, 2017. (7pp)

**Feb 6**—Discuss primary documents, radio story

Have read:

1. Kovaly, 126-168 (42pp)
2. Stokes, 11 pp.
  - a. Imre Nagy, “Reform Communism,” (1955-56) from *On Communism*, pp. 82-87
  - b. Leszek Kolakowski, “The Debate of the Clerks,” (1957) from *Toward a Marxist Humanism*, pp. 139-143

Have listened to:

1. The 99% Invisible episode “Tunnel 57” (runtime 21min):  
<http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/tunnel-57/>

## **Reform Efforts, Prague Spring**

**Feb 8**—Discuss Simons Ch. 6, Poggioli

Have read:

1. Simons Ch 6 (pp. 106-142; 36pp of reading)
2. Poggioli piece:  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93720234>

**Feb 13**—Discuss primary documents, the ‘Putin Doctrine’

Have read:

1. The Prague Spring and The Brezhnev Doctrine, 7pp
  - a. Ludvik Vaculik, “Two Thousand Words,” (1968), pp. 126-130
  - b. Leonid Brezhnev, “The Brezhnev Doctrine” (1968), pp. 131-134.
2. Phone call between Brezhnev and Dubcek (use the Wayback Machine):  
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/14/documents/call/>
3. Timothy Garton-Ash piece:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/opinion/sunday/protecting-russians-in-ukraine-has-deadly-consequences.html>
4. Kovaly, 169-192 (23pp)

### **Normalization, Goulash Communism**

**Feb 15**—Discuss Simons Ch. 7, article from *The Guardian*, \*\*\***Kovaly**

**Paper #2 Due\*\*\***

Have read:

1. Simons Ch. 7 (pp. 143-170; 27pp of reading)
2. <http://www.dw.com/en/refugee-crisis-not-the-same-values-in-east-and-west/a-19102868>

**Feb 20**—Discuss primary documents, Poland articles & radio story

Have read:

1. Stokes (12pp):
  - a. Vaclav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless” (1979), pp. 168-174
  - b. Gyorgy Konrad, “Antipolitics” (1984), pp. 175-180
2. Charter 77 Declaration (use the Wayback Machine):  
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/19/documents/charter.77/>

\*\*\***See 3 more on next page\*\*\***

3. Article:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/13/how-poland-became-a-breeding-ground-for-europes-far-right/?utm\\_term=.280b1ecfa47a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/13/how-poland-became-a-breeding-ground-for-europes-far-right/?utm_term=.280b1ecfa47a)

4. Article: [https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/10/opinion/europe-western-values-poland.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/10/opinion/europe-western-values-poland.html?_r=0)

5. Have listened to the following *This American Life* story (runtime 26min): <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/453/nemeses?act=1#play>

## Solidarity

**Feb 22**—Discuss Simons Ch. 8, 4 news articles

Have read:

1. Simons Ch. 8 (pp. 171-198; 27pp of reading)
2. Article on Romania: <https://euobserver.com/justice/140417>
3. Article on Germany:  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/12/26/a-german-nursing-home-tries-a-novel-form-of-dementia-therapy-re-creating-a-vanished-era-for-its-patients/?utm\\_term=.e4562e5052c0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/12/26/a-german-nursing-home-tries-a-novel-form-of-dementia-therapy-re-creating-a-vanished-era-for-its-patients/?utm_term=.e4562e5052c0)
4. Article on Hungary & Poland:  
<https://euobserver.com/political/140484>

**Feb 27**—Discuss primary documents, article

Have read (30pp):

1. Stokes, pp. 204-214; 224-231 (The Gdansk Agreement, Solidarity's Program, Jaruzelski Declares Martial Law, Letter from Gdansk Prison, A Solidarity Government Takes Power) (17pp total)
2. Article on the Dimensions of European Politics—see next page for specific page numbers...

Skip the “New Politics” section (pp. 164 & 165) and the “Issue Bundling” section (bottom of p. 168-most of p. 169); no need to read the appendices, etc. (so you’ll be reading about 13pp):

<http://www.unc.edu/~gwm/unc.edu/assets/doc/marks.hooghe.edwards.nelson.party%20competition%20and%20european%20integration%20in%20the%20east%20and%20westpdf.pdf>

**Homework:** email in review questions—if you email them by 5pm, Wednesday, February 28, I’ll make sure we talk about them on the 1st

**Mar 1—** Review for Midterm  
Come with questions!

**Mar 6—\*\*\*Midterm\*\*\***

**Mar 8--**Watch *Lives of Others, Barbara, or Good Bye, Lenin!*

**Mar 13-15—**No class; Spring Break

### **The Fall of Communism**

**Mar 20—**Discuss Simons Ch. 9, go over midterms  
Have read Simons Ch. 9, pp. 199-225 (26pp)

**Mar 22—**Revolutions of 1989  
Have read: News articles (TBA)

### **Transitioning out of Communism**

**Mar 27—**Discuss *Europe Undivided*, Intro & Ch. 1  
Have read *Europe Undivided*, Intro & Ch. 1 (pp. 1-25)

**Mar 29**—Discuss *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 2

Have read *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 2 (pp. 25-62) (37pp)

**Apr 3**—Discuss *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 3

Have read *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 3 (pp. 64-80) (16pp)

**Apr 5**— Discuss *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 5

Have read *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 5 (pp. 105-139) (34pp)

--\*Due date for emailing me your country and the proposed topic of your final paper\*

### **Enlargement of the European Union**

**Apr 10**— Discuss *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 8

Have read *Europe Undivided*, Ch. 8 (pp. 223-256) (33pp)

### **Citizen Engagement**

**Apr 12**— Political Participation

Have read: Ceka, selection from “The Perils of Political Competition: Explaining Participation and Trust in Political Parties in Eastern Europe”

--\*Due date for the introduction for your final paper\*

### **Ethnicity and Minorities**

**Apr 17**— Breakup of Yugoslavia

Have read:

1. <http://europe.unc.edu/teach/ces-produced/ethnic-conflict-in-yugoslavia-teaching-module/breakup-of-yugoslavia/>
2. Summary of “The Myth of Ethnic War,” Gagnon

**Apr 19—** Roma in Europe

--\*Due date for the outline or preliminary draft of your final paper\*--

Have read:

1. Roma FAQs
2. “‘Condemned to Rootlessness and Unable to Budge’: Roma, Migration Panics, and Internment in the Habsburg Empire, Tara Zahra (25pp)
3. Vermeersch, *The Romani Movement: Minority Politics and Ethnic Mobilization in Contemporary Europe*, Chapter 1 (33pp)

**Apr 24—** Roma in Europe, part 2

Have read:

1. Pick any **four** articles you want from here:  
<http://www.errc.org/news-and-events-public-announcements>
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/26/world/europe/un-united-nations-kosovo-roma-lead-poisoning.html>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/08/roma-artists-launch-art-cultural-centre-institute-berlin>
4. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nazis-roma-acceptance\\_us\\_5893c6a4e4b0c1284f252321](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nazis-roma-acceptance_us_5893c6a4e4b0c1284f252321)

**Apr 26—**Last Day! **\*\*\*Paper Due\*\*\***, Review

**Final Exam: \*\*\*Tuesday, May 1, 4pm\*\*\*** (in our regular classroom)