

20th Century Europe Through Autobiography
 Spring 2021: HIST 32501 ~ MWF 9:30-10:20am ~ Forney Hall G124
 Hybrid Course: M & W in person, Friday online, unless otherwise specified

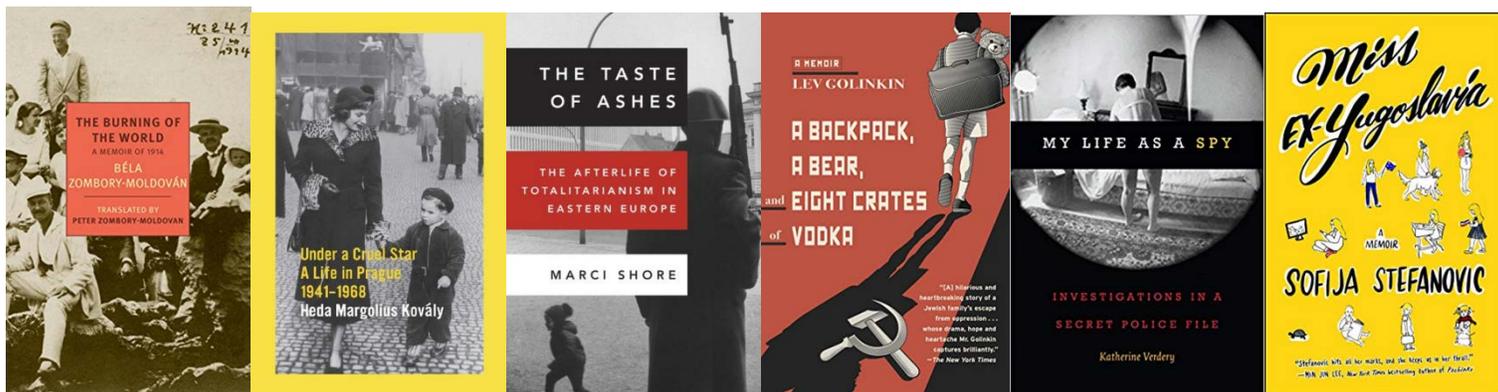
“*Bila jednom jedna zemlja (Once upon a time, there was a country)*”

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Office hours: W 2:30-4:30pm, or by appointment



How does the great global turn of events affect individual people? Why and how do they chose to write about their personal lives? How do they represent their personal experiences in 20th century Europe? In what ways can their autobiographies deepen our understanding of tumult, exuberance, despair, and everyday life in that place and time? This course uses a set of vibrant, gripping autobiographies written by authors who lived through profound turning points in 20th century European history to investigate both the story of Europe and its place in the world, as well as analyze the benefits and limitations of using personal narratives for understanding history. With a focus on central and eastern Europe, this course gives special attention to the history of intergroup relations (national, ethnic, religious, etc.), World War One, World War Two, nationalism, and communism, and dives deep into Post-Cold War stories of migration, refugeedom, globalization, and opening up the doors to the past with grim determination. Expect music & film to accompany our journey. Pack light.

Required Texts:

- Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World* (2014)
- Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star* (1986)
- Marci Shore, *The Taste of Ashes* (2013)
- Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy* (2018)
- Lev Golinkin, *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka* (2014)
- Sofija Stefanovic, *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia* (2018)
- All additional required readings and materials available on Brightspace, marked with a “B”

Course Requirements and Grading (400 points possible):

- I) Participation (50 points):** The success of a class, in trying times or otherwise, depends on your participation. This is especially true now, as I will be mainly be using active learning methods to keep us all engaged online and off in our hybrid class this semester. Let us be generous, courteous, and respectful of each other as we use these methods. We will alternate seeing each other “face-to-face”/f2f (M&W) and online (F). We will be using google docs and slides for discussion and collaborative work, the zoom chat box, and other means we find to work well, in addition to f2f discussion. The elegance of this method is that you will have complete notes from readings and discussions based on collaborative efforts saved in your drive, and your participation is easy to assess. You may wish to create a separate google drive for course materials, or a separate folder in an existing drive. Participation points will be calculated weekly, and displayed in Brightspace. All readings and other preparations listed on the syllabus for a class session are to be completed before that class session.
- II) 4 Reaction Logs (RLs) (100 points total, 25 points each):** These are concise (500 word, about 1 ½ pages) and reflective responses to the RL question based on the week’s readings, which you will find listed on the syllabus under the Friday entry. **Reaction Logs are due on Brightspace by 9am (9.00) on Fridays, exceptions noted in syllabus and on Brightspace.**
- III) Topical Research Essay and presentation (150 points):** You will each choose a topic of special interest from among those covered in this course, and write a 1200 word (about 5-page) research essay engaging with it. An important feature of this assignment will be to weigh representation of the topic in the autobiography or autobiographies that deal with it, versus examination of the topic in the historical scholarship. **Topics are due on Friday, 2/12. Papers are due on Friday, 4/23 by 9pm (21.00) on Brightspace.** You will present your research in class during **Week 15.** You will have 5-7 minutes to present your work. You will create 2 google slides for your presentation to share with the class. More information to follow.
- IV) Final Essay (100 points):** The final essay gives you a chance to reflect on what you have learned about 20th century European history from the autobiographies you read over the course of the semester in a 600 word (about 3-page) essay. You will consider the strengths and weaknesses of particular autobiographies and historical sources. More information to follow. **The final essay will be due on Monday, May 3rd at 9pm (21.00) on Brightspace.**

And you will learn how to pronounce all the names and places...

Schedule of Classes

- Week 1: **Course Introduction and Overview**
 W, 1/20: Carefully review syllabus on your own - No Class
 • Listen to an episode – any episode - of The Moth Radio Hour <https://themoth.org/radio-hour>
 F, 1/22: Discuss personal narratives
 • write and post a 1 page personal narrative: a story about you that you are willing to share
- Week 2: **“Autobiographies as individuals’ quests...to make sense of their lives”** [Stanislawski]
 M, 1/25: Michael Stanislawski, *Autobiographical Jews*, “Introduction” (B)
 W, 1/27: Marci Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. xi-3
 F, 1/29: Snapshot of 20th century European history through Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 4-14

Week 3: Peeling Back Layers

- M, 2/1: Arrival into Transition: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 15-81 – It was the 90s, man!
- W, 2/3: Ay, Romania: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 82-98 – Ideological excesses
 • Katherine Verdery, “The Etatization of Time in Ceaușescu’s Romania” (B)
- F, 2/5: Truth & Conscience: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 99-138 – Stalinism & De-Stalinization
 • **RL#1:** Do you find writing backwards into history as Shore does here an effective way to make sense of a life? To make sense of east central European history? Is it an advantage or disadvantage to be an outsider in writing the history of this European region?

Week 4: Dilemmas of Connecting to the Pre-Communist Past: Lost Neighbors

- M, 2/8: *Kaddish* in Poland: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 139-200 – Poles & Jews
- W, 2/10: Polish Jewish Politics: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 201-253 – Neighbors before & after
- F, 2/12: Moving Eastward: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 254-283 – Lands of the Double-Occupation
 • **Research topics due**

Week 5: Back to Europe! Zpět do Evropy!

- M, 2/15: Past & present meet: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 284-310 – the 2000s
- W, 2/17: **Reading Day, No Class**
- F, 2/19: EU expansion, travel, movement: Shore, *The Taste of Ashes*, pp. 311-358 – globalization

Week 6: War of Movement: World War One’s Eastern Front: focus on Kingdom of Hungary

- M, 2/22: Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World*, pp. vii-39 – Monarchy interrupted
 • ["Maps, Central Europe, and History"](#)
- W, 2/24: Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World*, pp. 40-103 – WWI on the eastern front
- F, 2/26: Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World*, pp. 104-138 –
 • **RL#2:** From the introduction, we know that this memoir covers just eight months from the outbreak of the war in fall 1914 through April 1915. Yet, the memoirist emerges as a lost, dislocated soul. Think about his representation of Monarchy and the war, the uncertainty and foreboding. Discuss the problem of nostalgia in this memoir, as it relates to history. How might this source be used in history writing?

Week 7: “Three forces carved the landscape of my life”

- M, 3/1: But first: Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent*, ch2 (B)
- W, 3/3: Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star*, pp. 5-51 – from war to postwar Czechoslovakia
- F, 3/5: Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star*, pp. 52-92 – hope is Red

Week 8: “People like Rudolf staked their lives on their convictions”

- M, 3/8: Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star*, pp.93-153 – Stalinism & the Slansky Affair
 • Gale Stokes, documents on the Purge Trials, *From Stalinism to Pluralism*, pp.66-77
- W, 3/10: Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star*, pp. 154-192 – Thaw & Crises of De-Stalinization
- F, 3/12: Milan Kundera in Stokes, “A nation which cannot take itself for granted,” pp.150-155 (B)

Week 9: “There’s nothing like reading your secret police file to make you wonder who you really are”

- M, 3/15: Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy*, pp. xi-29 – surveillance, research, and self
- W, 3/17: Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy*, pp. 33-109 – Romania as exception: 1970s

- F, 3/19: Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy*, pp.111-179 – in Ceaușescu’s Romania: 1980s
- Week 10: **Decoding**
- M, 3/22: Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy*, pp.181-191 – reading one’s secret police file
- W, 3/24: Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy*, pp. 277-297 – unifying the selves
- **RL#3:** Verdery’s autobiography, or “autoethnography,” offers us a rare opportunity to deeply explore identity creation, ruminate on the existence of separate selves, and consider the function of surveillance in the Romanian communist state. How does it differ from other autobiographies that we have read? Does it bring us close to understanding the history of that place and time? Is it a trustworthy historical source?
- F, 3/26: **No Class**
- Week 11: **Once Upon a Time there was a Country: Yugoslavia collapses, Yugoslavs migrate**
- M, 3/29: End of the Cold War, End of Yugoslavia
- Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent*, ch11 (**B**)
- W, 3/31: Sofija Stefanovic, *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia*, pp. 1-58 – girl in a collapsing world
- F, 4/2: Sofija Stefanovic, *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia*, pp. 59-112 – coming to terms with Australia
- Week 12: **Diaspora**
- M, 4/5: Sofija Stefanovic, *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia*, pp. 113-180 – Yugoslav diaspora
- Sofija Stefanovic on the Moth Radio Hour <https://themoth.org/storytellers/sofija-stefanovic>
- W, 4/7: Sofija Stefanovic, *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia*, pp.181-223 – between worlds
- F, 4/9: Sofija Stefanovic, *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia*, pp.225-254 – Miss Ex-Yugoslavia
- **RL#4:** How does one’s sense of self change through the experience of migration? Stefanovic even went back and forth between Belgrade and Australia several times. In what ways can you discern how this affected her sense of who she is?
- Week 13: **We are Leaving Mother Russia**
- M, 4/12: Lev Golinkin, *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka*, Part I – borders
- W, 4/14: Jewish Emigration from the Soviet Union
- Zvi Gitelman, "Native Land, Promised Land, Golden Land: Jewish Emigration from Russia and Ukraine" (**B**)
- F, 4/16: Lev Golinkin, *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka*, pp.100 -160 - refugee in Austria
- Week 14: **The Free Soviet Jewry Campaign & Its Surprisingly Local Variants**
- M, 4/19: Lev Golinkin, *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka*, pp.161 - 198 - HIAS & the JOINT
- Lev Golinkin speaks at HIAS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP3HMM71LKU&feature=emb_logo
- W, 4/21: Lev Golinkin, *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka*, pp. 199 – 248 - Boiler Up!
- F, 4/23: Lev Golinkin, *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka*, pp. 249 – 303 – finding one’s self
- **papers due at 9pm**
- Week 15: **Your Presentations: Autobiography and History:** M, 4/26 - F, 4/30

Final essay due on Monday, May 3rd at 9pm on Brightspace.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Protect Purdue Pledge

Being a part of the Boilermaker community means that each of us must take extraordinary steps to stay well and persistently protect each other, on campus and in the community. Accountable together, I pledge to take responsibility for my own health, the protection of others and help keep the Purdue community safe from spread of COVID-19 and other infections as identified and instructed by the university.

PROTECT PURDUE WEBSITE: <https://protect.purdue.edu/>

DISCLAIMER

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted on Brightspace once the course resumes or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Outside of class or office hours, communicate with your professor by email. State the reason for your email in the subject line (ex: "question about essay"). Include a full salutation (ex: "Dear Professor"), and closing with your full name (ex: "Sincerely, Eleanor Roosevelt"). Use full sentences, correct grammar, and punctuation. If you fail to follow this etiquette, I will not respond to your email. I will usually respond to your emails within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends.

CHEATING / PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. **You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials.** Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office. Please make sure that you are familiar with Purdue's academic integrity policies: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php>

GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused from classes for funeral leave and given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Purdue University is committed to providing equal access and equal opportunity to university courses, activities, and programs for students with disabilities. Students with documented disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity, such as learning, walking, or seeing, may qualify for academic adjustments and/or services. If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with me within the first three weeks of the semester in order to discuss any adjustments. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Disability Resource Center of any impairment/condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications. To request information about academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or services, please contact the

Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students, 830 Young Hall, (765) 494-1247 (V/TTY), drc@purdue.edu.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR POLICY

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any university facility or while participating in any university activity.