

Fall 2025

HIST 33505: Nationalism and Socialism in East Central Europe (11443)

## Nationalism & Socialism in East Central Europe



### Course Description

The lands between Germany and Russia continue to be a laboratory for political ideas and ambitions. From the collapse of four dynastic empires following World War One and establishment of national states, through the cataclysmic geopolitical and demographic transformations of World Two, from the Cold War era rule of Soviet-style regimes through their demise, the transition to market economies, expansion of the European Union and current challenges, political and social forces have fostered experimentation with nationalism and socialism, along with forms of fascism, communism, populism and democracy. How do people live their everyday lives in this tumultuous environment? How are they affected by large-scale developments? We will pay special attention to intergroup and individual/state relations, migration, survival, modernization, and dissent using a captivating range of sources to explore these fateful questions.

[www.mapofeurope.com](http://www.mapofeurope.com)

### Texts

- Péter Apor, *Backyard Revolution*. Cornell University Press, 2025.
- Ivan Berend, *Decades of Crisis*. University of California Press, 1998.
- Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV*. Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*. West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 2019.
- István Deák, *Europe on Trial*. Westview Press, 2015.
- Theodora Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins*. Cornell University Press, 2021.
- Bettina Fabos, et al, *Proud and Torn: A Visual Memoir of Hungarian History*. proudandtorn.org.
- Melissa Feinberg, *Communism in Eastern Europe*. Routledge, 2022.
- Hanák Peter, *The Garden and the Workshop*. NJ, Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*. Berghahn Books, 2005.
- Jana Juránová and Agneša Kalinová, translators Julia Sherwood and Peter Sherwood, *My Seven Lives*. West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 2021.
- Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*. University of Washington Press, 2002.
- Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent*. New York, Vintage Books, 1998.
- Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires*. Routledge, 2000.
- Joseph Rothschild, *A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Michael Stanislawski, *A Murder in Lemberg*. NJ, Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*. Columbia University Press, 1999.

### *Course Objectives*

By the end of the course, students will have:

- 1) Gained a deeper understanding of the patterns and processes, ruptures and continuities in the historical narrative of the region between Germany and Russia which have shaped today's politics, ideas, ambitions, and its relations with the rest of the world;
- 2) Explored how historical study connects us to other people, places, and times;
- 3) Used primary and secondary source evidence to analyze fundamental problems in East Central European history;
- 4) Engaged in an environment of open inquiry to exchange ideas and interpretations of problems in East Central European history, especially including geopolitical and demographic change, and how ordinary people have coped with large-scale developments with the understanding that history is a multidimensional conversation;
- 5) Opened up to empathetic study of largely unfamiliar peoples and places and learned how to pronounce them!

### *Course Requirements and Grade Evaluation*

This is an overview of the assignments you will complete over the course of the semester by assignment type. Grades will be calculated by assignment type, whose relative weights are listed below.

**1) Reading Questions (RQs): 20%**

You will engage thoughtfully with many of the readings through a google doc set of questions. You will answer one of the questions on the document. Each answer receives one point. Points will be updated weekly on Brightspace. You are expected to reach a minimum of 12 points. A maximum of 15 points is possible.

**2) Short written assignments and class activities: 20%**

You will complete short written in-class exercises through the quiz tool on Brightspace, as well as group work using google slides. These writing exercises and activities are due in class. Each answer receives one point. Points will be calculated based on the number of in-class writing exercises and activities we complete over the course of the semester.

**3) Four Short Essays: 45%**

You will write four short (2-3 double-spaced pages, or 500-750 words) essays in class which provide a thoughtful response to a prompt based on a section of the course. You may use your notes from your readings. The essays shall adhere to the following format: double-spaced, one-inch margins, in 12-point Times New Roman font, paginated.

**4) My Seven Lives: 15%**

*My Seven Lives* is the vivacious and gripping memoir of Agneša Kalinová (1924-2014) tracing her improbable journey through multiple regimes over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will be reading bit by relevant bit during the semester, toward the goal of your grand finale project featuring objects that illuminate episodes in her story.

### **Grade scale:**

**A** = 94-100; **A-** = 90-92; **B+** = 88-89; **B** = 83-87; **B-** = 80-82; **C+** = 78-79; **C** = 73-77; **C-** = 70-72; **D+** = 68-69; **D** = 63-67; **D-** = 60-62; **F** = 0-59

### **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY**

- In this class, I encourage you to exercise your rights to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to discuss and express any view relevant to subject matter introduced by me (the instructor) or other class members, at appropriate times and places within the structure of the

course. (Of course, we cannot lose sight of our course progress, so sometimes discussions will need to continue informally after class or in office hours.) You will be held responsible for learning the content of this course, but you remain free to take reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. As we examine a range of competing ideas over the course of the semester, you are each encouraged to engage vigorously with the material, while being respectful of each other and the instructor. I urge you to speak your mind, listen attentively to others, explore ideas and arguments, play devil's advocate, and engage in civil but robust discussions. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, unwise, immoral or wrong-headed, I encourage you to engage them with the proper currency of intellectual discourse – reasons, evidence, and arguments. No relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds. Your course grade will be based upon your academic performance, and not upon opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

- While our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or positions are out of bounds in our discussions and assignments, disruptive or disorderly behavior (including threats or harassment) is strictly prohibited. Such behavior will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students, in accordance with Purdue University policy.