

FM321 Screening the 90s - Politics, Memory and Film in the Post-Yugoslav Countries

Seminar Leader: Tamara Kolarić

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Course Times: Mon/Wed at 14:00-15:30 (room TBA); screening times Tuesdays from 18:00 (TBC)

Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits

Office Hours: Thursdays, 13:00-15:00 (location TBA)

Course Description

In this course, we will discuss the intersections between film and politics on the example of the 1990s conflicts in the newly independent states of the former Yugoslavia (following the country's breakup). The aim of the course is to explore the ways films entered dialogues around those conflicts (and broader political changes surrounding them) in order to ask the question: how can concepts central to political science – such as power, nation, sovereignty – help us interpret films, and how can films serve as a gateway to better understand politics? We will start by discussing the political narratives of the 1990s, observing how the past is told and retold and the different roles film played in shaping narratives about national history and who is included in the nation. Then, we will look at how the post-1990s cinema played a role in the collective remembrance: how are the '90s narrated in different countries through film? How are some of the consequences of the conflicts – trauma, PTSD, war crimes and related trials (ICTY), slowed-down processes of democratic, economic and social transition – processed through or embedded in the films, and what are the strategies (escapism, Yugonostalgia) that some films take in an attempt to re-tell the past and the present, moving away from the familiar stories and agendas? Finally, we will take a step back to look at how the 1990s in the region have been imagined from abroad: use the tools of social science (and its concepts, such as post-colonialism and Balkanization) to understand how cinema helped create a particular image of “the Balkans.” All course discussions will revolve around assigned readings and selected films which we will watch together – from award-winning festival favorites (Zvizdan/The High Sun, 2015; Dubina Dva/Depth Two, 2016) to those less-known outside of the domestic context.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the students will:

- become acquainted with the events surrounding the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, as well as their various interpretations by historians and political scientists;
- gain a basic insight into the concepts of collective and cultural memory;
- gain an understanding of the role cinema can play in the processes of nation-building and national memory, as well as become familiar with the specifics it played in the post-Yugoslav context;
- become equipped to think through key terms of political science using films as tools.

Requirements

Attendance

Attendance at all classes and film screenings is mandatory, as is active participation in class discussions and activities. There will be an attendance sheet for every session. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the missed material (and please note that any assignments that are due are still mandatory). More than two absences in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Late arrival counts as an absence. Please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Readings

All readings are mandatory and to be completed before class, as they will be the base for the class discussions. All texts are available in the shared Google Classroom folder, unless they are marked with a *, in which case they should be widely available online. No handbook or book purchase is required for the course. There is a possibility of some changes to the scheduled class readings. You will be notified of any changes made in class, and updated readings will be posted on Google Classroom.

Use of Laptops and Other Electronic Devices in Class

Use of laptops for taking notes in class is allowed. However, mobile phones are not allowed, and the use of other electronic devices (laptop, tablet) for purposes unrelated to the coursework will result in a 0-points participation grade for that particular session.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted through the shared Google Drive folder by the stated deadline (unless agreed otherwise). Please read the syllabus in detail and make sure you are familiar with all the submission deadlines.

Policy on Late Submission

All assignments need to be submitted by the deadline noted in the syllabus. From the Student handbook, adjusted: *assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays and other assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.*

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and intellectual engagements in their academic work. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Assessment

- Class participation and attendance (20%)

You are expected to do your readings and come to class prepared, actively participate in class debates and present your ideas and opinions.

- Class presentation on a national narrative of the '90s (20% - 10% presentation and 10% reading)

During Week 3, all students are expected to do a 15-minute presentation on the narrative of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the post-war period in one of the post-Yugoslav countries. Depending on the class size, the presentations will be done individually or in pairs, and we will agree on the schedule and division of countries in class in Week 2. **You will not be provided with the readings for the presentation**, but are expected to a) do your own research and b) **consult the course instructor during consultation hours for an obligatory session** on what and how to read in order to prepare for the presentation (please keep in mind that the incompleteness and messiness of the narratives are a part of the task, hence the assignment structure). You will also be expected to **circulate one reading for the whole class on the topic of your presentation**, so everyone in class could get some prior knowledge on the topic covered. **The deadline for the circulation of the reading is by 23:59 PM two days before the presentation** (meaning Saturday for the Monday presenters and Monday for the Wednesday ones). The presentation should be concise, informative – and interesting. covering the most important political developments and narratives in your country of choice. You are free to select the format yourself (e.g. if you would want to just talk, show a clip, do or not do a PPT etc.). We will discuss the details of the presentations in class.

- 1000-word film reflection paper (10%)

During the semester, you are expected to submit **on 1000-word paper reflecting on a film we've seen in class and its connection to the broader course topics**. You are free to connect the film to that week's class readings and discussion, or to any topic covered in class. You are also allowed to select a film that we won't be seeing together in class, or to write about a topic concerning any of the post-Yugoslav countries which we will not be discussing in class – but please contact the instructor about this ahead of writing the paper. The aim of the exercise is to get you to think on relevant political issues through cinema beyond what we do together, so don't focus on summarizing the film; rather – just as when writing position papers – focus on ideas and topics that the film evokes for you. **The film reflection paper is due on 23:59 PM on the Sunday before class (following that week's screening) and are to be submitted to the seminar leader via Google Drive.**

- Position papers (50%, 5 x 800 words)

In the course of the semester, each student expected to submit **5 short position papers on the class readings of their choice** (max. 800 words, 1,5 spaced, Times New Roman 12). **You must write one paper for each of the course segments (I – IV, see syllabus), and the last one can be on any topic from any part of the course.** Each paper is due on 23:59 PM on the evening before the class (Sunday before the Monday session, Tuesday before the Wednesday session), and is to be submitted to the seminar leader via Google Drive. **The papers should include only a brief summary of the points of that week's readings, and primarily engage in a debate with the texts: comment on the main idea, offer criticism or expansion, and connect the text to the wider material covered in class or offer an application of the author's ideas to a real-world example or situation.** If a video or a podcast is assigned as the week's mandatory material, the paper can also reflect on those materials.

If you are having trouble with expressing your ideas in writing coherently, please consult the Writing Center prior to submission.

Grade Breakdown

20% - participation in class discussions and regular attendance;

20% - in-class presentation (10% presentation + 10% readings);

10% - 1000-word film reflection paper;

50% - five 800-word position papers (5x10%) – one in each course section plus one on any topic of your choice;

Schedule

Please note that changes to the schedule, sessions and readings are possible.

PART I: NARRATING THE PRESENT (AND THE PAST)

Week 1: Introduction

Monday, January 27

Introduction to the course – Whose pasts, whose narratives?

- *Press freedom in Croatia: Hate speech and Hope for change. Report on the January 2018 Joint International Mission (JIM)*, 2018 – Not the most exciting reading, I know, but do pay attention to the interviews, as they set up the stage for our semester-long discussions.
- Foer, F. (2018). The Greatest World Cup Fairy Tale of All Time. Croatia's unlikely march through the tournament is like the story of a nation that managed to barely survive. *The Atlantic*, July 11, 2018. Accessible from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/07/croatia-england-world-cup/564992>

Tuesday, January 28 screening: Underground, Emir Kusturica, 1995.

Wednesday, January 29

The end of Yugoslavia (and what does it have to do with film?)

- Ramet, S. P. (2002). *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*. Boulder: Westview Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3220138>. Part I.
- Ramet, S. P. (2014). Disputes about the Dissolution of Yugoslavia and its Wake. In F. Beiber, R. Archer, & A. Galijaš (Eds.), *Debating the End of Yugoslavia* (pp. 39–53). Surrey: Ashgate.

Week 2: The politics of dissolution

Monday, February 3

Setting the basic terms (I): Nation and nationalism

- Brubaker, R. (1998). Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism. In J. A. Hall (Ed.), *The State of the Nation* (pp. 273–306). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Đurašković, S. (2014). Nation-building in Franjo Tuđman's Political Writings. *Croatian Political Science Review*, 51(5), 58–79.

Tuesday, February 4 screening: No screening this week (presentation preparations)

Wednesday, February 5

Setting the basic terms (II): Identity, belonging, othering

Readings TBA

Week 3: Patching together the narratives

Monday, February 10

"The Homeland War" (Croatia, Serbia) and the war in Bosnia

- student presentations, readings to be assigned and circulated by presenters;

Tuesday, February 11 film screening: No screening this week.

Wednesday, February 12

Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo

- student presentations, readings to be assigned and circulated by presenters;

Week 4: Media and narrative: Making up sides (film as an extension of official politics)

Monday, February 17

Are wars ever “ethnic”?

- Gagnon, V. P. J. (2004). *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (1st ed.). Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press. Selected pages (TBA)

Tuesday, February 18 film screening: This week we won't do a regular screening but will watch excerpts from two films: Vukovar, jedna priča (Vukovar, Poste Restante), Boro Drašković, 1994 and Vrijeme za... (Time for...), Oja Kodar, 1993.

Wednesday, February 19

Creating narratives top-down: Whose state, whose enemy?

- Thompson, M. (1999). *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina*. Luton: University of Luton Press.
- Đurić, I., & Zorić, V. (2009). Foreclosing the Other, Building the War: A Comparative Analysis of Croatian and Serbian Press Discourses During the Conflict in Croatia. In P. Kolstø (Ed.), *Media discourse and the Yugoslav conflicts: representations of self and other* (pp. 61–82). Surrey: Ashgate.

PART II: REMEMBERING

Week 5: Memory beyond the individual

Monday, February 24

Collective memory

- Olick, J. K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, V., & Levy, D. (2011). Introduction. In J. K. Olick, V. Vinitzky-Seroussi, & D. Levy (Eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader* (pp. 3–62). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tuesday, February 25 film screening: Aferim!, Radu Jude, 2015 (open screening in the Lecture Hall - TBC)

Wednesday, February 26

Cultural memory

- Erll, A. (2011). *Memory in Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Selected pages (TBA)
- Assmann, A. (2008). Canon and Archive. In A. Erll & A. Nünning (Eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. (pp. 97–107). Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Week 6: Memory as politics: Domestic and foreign actors (I) - ICTY

Monday, March 2

- Subotić, J. (2007). *Hijacked justice: domestic use of international norms*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1
- Lamont, C. K. (2010). *International Criminal Justice and the Politics of Compliance*. Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate - the entire Part I (I know it is a bit long...)

March 3 screening: Ordinary People, Vladimir Perišić, 2009

Wednesday, March 4

- Ristić, K. (2014). *Imaginary Trials: War Crime Trials and Memory in former Yugoslavia*. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag. Chapter 6
- Milanović, M. (2016). The Impact of the ICTY on the Former Yugoslavia: An Anticipatory Postmortem. *The American Journal of International Law*, 110(2), 233–259.

Week 7: Narrative evolution: Domestic and foreign actors (I) – Kosovo spotlight

Monday, March 9

- Instead of the usual assigned reading, go through the materials available on <https://kosovo.sense-agency.com/> and acquaint yourself with the documents/events. Make notes of the things you find the most interesting, as we shall discuss them in class.
- Buder, B. (2016). *Dubina dva (Depth Two)*. Film promo material.

Screening: Dubina Dva (Depth Two), Ognjen Glavonić, 2016 (open screening in the Lecture Hall - TBC)

Wednesday, March 11

Processing atrocities

Readings TBA

PART III: WHAT ELSE ARE FILMS TELLING US?

Week 8: The style-politics nexus (I)

Monday, March 16

Cinema – and war - as acts of (self-)Balkanization

- Todorova, M. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press (Updated ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>. Selected pages (TBA)
- Petrović, T. (2013). Europe's new colonialisms. *Belgrade Journal of Media and Communications*, 4, 109–125.

Tuesday, 17 screening: Bure baruta (Cabaret Balkan), Goran Paskaljević, 1998 (TBC)

Wednesday, March 18

Someone else is the East!

- Bakić-Hayden, M. (1995). Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia. *Slavic Review*, 54(4), 917–931.

Week 9: The style-politics nexus (II)

Monday, March 23

Cinema changes politics?

- Pavičić, J. (2010). 'Cinema of normalization': Changes of stylistic model in post-Yugoslav cinema after the 1990s. *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, 1(1), 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.1386/seec.1.1.43/1>
- Olick, J. K. (2003). What Does It Mean to Normalize the Past. In J. K. Olick (Ed.), *States of Memory: Continuity, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (pp. 259–288). Durham and London: Duke University Press. – One reading that is not on the former Yugoslavia, but do think about what it can tell you about other times and places.

Tuesday, March 24 screening: Svjedoci (Witnesses), Vinko Brešan, 2003 (TBC)

Wednesday, March 25

(Money) Politics changes cinema?

- Mitric, P. (2017). Between YU and the EU: The Europeanisation of the Serbian Film Policies. In N. Mingant, & C. Tirtaine (Eds.), *Reconceptualising Film Policies* (pp. 183-197). London: Routledge.

Week 10: The figure of the soldier: Hero or villain, both or neither?

Monday, March 30

- Car, V. (2008). Myths in Media Texts: how media in Croatia treats veterans and tycoons. *Medianali*, 2(4), 145–164.
- Dolenc, D. (2018). A Soldier's State? Veterans and the Welfare Regime in Croatia. *Anali Hrvatskog Politološkog Društva: Časopis Za Politologiju*, 14(1), 55–78. <https://doi.org/10.20901/an.14.03>
- Pavlaković, V. (2010). Croatia, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and General Gotovina as a Political Symbol. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62(10), 1707–1740. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2010.522426>

March 31 screening: Crnci (The Blacks), Zvonimir Jurić & Goran Dević, 2009

Wednesday, April 1

War and (perpetrator) trauma

- Jelača, D. (2016). *Dislocated Screen Memory: Narrating Trauma in Post-Yugoslav Cinema*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 1
- Alexander, J. C. (2004). Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma. In J. C. Alexander, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen, N. J. Smelser, & P. Sztompka (Eds.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press.

SPRING BREAK (April 6 – 13) – No class

Week 11: Transition and the disintegration of societal values / it's (not) the economy, stupid!

Monday, April 13

No class (Spring break)

Tuesday, April 14 screening: TBA (guest lecturer's choice)

Wednesday, April 15

Readings TBA (guest lecturer's choice).

Week 12: A dialogical take on memory (pitching an idea): Films dealing with, bypassing and assuming the past

Monday, April 20

Narrative templates and memory (the theoretical framework)

- Wertsch, J. V. (2009). Collective remembering. *Semiotica* (Vol. 2009). <https://doi.org/10.1515/SEMI.2009.009>
- Wertsch, J. V. (2013). Collective Memory and Narrative Templates. *Social Research*, 75(1), 133–156. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2008.0051>

Tuesday, April 21 screening: Muškarci ne plaču (Men Don't Cry), Alan Drljević, 2017 (TBC)

Wednesday, April 22

- Ristić, K. (2014). Imaginary Trials: War Crime Trials and Memory in former Yugoslavia. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitaetverlag. Chapter 5 (Bosnia)

PART III: (WHEN) ARE THE '90S OVER?

Week 13: Case observation: Vukovar

Monday, April 27

- Ashplant, T. G., Dawson, G., & Roper, M. (2000). The politics of war memory and commemoration. *Routledge studies in memory and narrative*. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?id=Q5JZh5e4jm0C>
- Cvikić, S., Živić, D., & Žanić, M. (1996). Vukovar 1991: Battle and Cultural Memory, 3.

Tuesday, April 28 screening: TBA (Zapamtite Vukovar or a related film)

Wednesday, April 29

- Banjeglav, T. (2016). The micro legacy of the ICTY in Croatia - a case study of Vukovar. In M. Fischer & O. Simić (Eds.), *Transitional Justice and Reconciliation: Lessons from the Balkans* (pp. 81–101). New York: Routledge.
- Croatia's Conflict-Ravaged Vukovar Tires of War Tourism. *Balkan Insight*. Available from: <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/11/15/croatias-conflict-ravaged-vukovar-tires-of-war-tourism-2/>

Week 14: The end?

Monday, May 4

Extra in-class screening: Projekcije (Projections), Zrinko Ogresta, 2013

May 5 screening: Zvizdan (The High Sun), Dalibor Matanić, 2015 (TBC)

Wednesday, May 6

Closing remarks

No readings.

COMPLETION WEEK (May 11 – 15) – no class