

HI215 History of Modernities in Eastern Europe

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Office Hours: Tuesday (17.30-19.00) and Thursday (17.30-19.00) or by appointment

Course Description

The course should serve as an introduction to the key issues of the modern intellectual, social, and cultural history of the region broadly defined as Europe's East. It will provide a broad overview of the East European reactions to the challenges of modernity. In the initial phase, these range from the incorporation of regional agrarian economies into emerging European capitalist modernity in the 16th century, to the continent-wide repercussions of the French Revolution. They then take in the contested modernizing agendas of imperial reform, the demands of modern nation-building, and the largescale transformations wrought by fascist and communist regimes in the twentieth century. As the concept of Eastern Europe itself appeared on the mental "map of civilization" in the time of the Enlightenment, we will discuss how the contested understanding of "modernity" and "backwardness" shaped the mental geography of the region. The course will explore the key competing modernizing visions and policies in the region, highlighting the role of

intellectual transfers, adaptation, and revision of general developmental paradigms. We cover the broad ideological spectrum, from utopian socialism, agrarian populism, and Marxism to liberalism and conservatism, and consider the emergence of right-wing authoritarian nationalism in the region. We will also analyze how the East European experiences of predominantly peasant societies and of the “new Soviet society” influenced global concepts of developmental pathways. The course will introduce postmodern and postcolonial critiques of East European modernities.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Accommodations

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section

3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support

is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin may not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Assessment

Every student is expected:

- to read texts listed as the main readings and take active part in the discussions in classroom;
- to write a mid-semester response paper to a text selected from the list of readings (1000 words long);
- to make a presentation during one of sessions (group presentations are allowed);

- to write an end of semester essay (4000 words long).

Assignments

The mid-term written assignment is a response paper to a text selected from the list of further readings (1000 words long).

At the end of the course students are expected to write an essay (4000 words long). The final essay can be based on a small research project undertaken and presented during the semester. Students should choose the topic of their final paper and discuss it with the instructor.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students will receive feedback for their course work during and at the end of the semester.

Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

The final grade will be based on the assessment of
classroom preparation and participation – 30 % of final grade;
seminar presentation – 20 % of final grade;
response paper – 20 % of final grade;
end of semester essay - 30% of final grade.

Schedule

1 and 3 September

Sessions 1-2. Introduction to the course. *Modern* Eastern/East Central Europe: spatial and temporal orientation

"The Past, Present, and Future of Comparative History in East Central Europe and Beyond, Roundtable Discussion, 22 June 2021," *East Central Europe* 2021 (2021): 328–344;

Maciej Janowski, Constantin Iordachi, and Balázs Trencsényi, "Why Bother About Historical

Regions? Debates Over Central Europe in Hungary, Poland and Romania," in: *East Central Europe*, 1-2 (2005): 5-58;

Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, "Mental Maps: The Cognitive Mapping of the Continent as an Object of Research of European History," 2013; <https://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/mental-maps/frithjof-benjamin-schenk-mental-maps-the-cognitive-mapping-of-the-continent-as-an-object-of-research-of-european-history>

8 and 10 September.

Sessions 3-4. Tradition, modernity and modernization: a brief conceptual overview.

Multiple modernities

S.N. Eisenstadt, *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities: A Collection of Essays* (Brill 2003), 1-32, 535-560;

Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge 2000), 91-129.

15 September.

Sessions 5. The metaphor/challenge of "backwardness" in Eastern Europe

Tomasz Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge 2014), selected chapters

Further readings:

Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World: the Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000)

Jerzy Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe. Nineteenth-Century Polish Approaches to Western Civilization* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1999)

17 September.

Session 6. European Enlightenment and the making of Eastern Europe

Maciej Janowski, "'Multiple *Sonderwegs*': The Specificity of Historical Development of East Central Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century (Introductory Remarks)," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 111 (2015): 5-27;

Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (1994), 1-16.

22 September

Sessions 7. Local Enlightenments: redefining the concept in East European context

Teodora Shek Brnardić "The Enlightenment in Eastern Europe: Between Regional Typology and Particular Micro-history," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 13/3 (2006): 411-435;

Richard Butterwick, "What is Enlightenment (*oświecenie*)? Some Polish Answers," *Central Europe* 3/1 (2005): 19-37.

Further readings:

Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1994), 51-70 (ch. 1: "The Enlightenment East and West: a Comparative Perspective on the Ideological Origins of the Balkan Political Traditions");

Andrzej Walicki, *The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood. Polish Political Thought from Noble Republicanism to Tadeusz Kosciuszko* (Notre Dame 1989), 63-87.

24 September.

Session 8. Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*). Reform and traditional society

Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881* (University of Pennsylvania 2005), 47-57 (Chapter 4. Hasidim, Mitnagdim and Maskilim);

Gershon D. Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century. A Genealogy of*

Modernity (Berkeley 2004), 1-31.

Further readings:

Dovid Katz, *Words on Fire. The Unfinished Story of Yiddish* (New York 2004), 173-223 (chapter 7: "Westernization and Language");

Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl. A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton 2014);

Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Imperial Russian Empire* (Bloomington 2009), 67-113 (chapter 3: "Reading: From Sacred Duty to Leisure Time"), 141-164 (chapter 6: "Cultural Performance: The People of the Book and the Spoken Word");

29 September.

Session 9. Enlightened absolutism and its imperial mythologies in the Europe's East

Zenon Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy. Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate 1760s-1830s* (Cambridge, Mass. 1988), 237-298 (chapter 7: "Ukrainian Society Adjusts to the Imperial Order");

Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia. History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford 2010), 1-62 (Introduction; chapter 1: "Inventing Galicia. The Josephine Enlightenment and the Partitions of Poland").

1 October

Session 10. Urban public sphere as modernity

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, UK 1989), 31-43;

Maciej Janowski, "Warsaw and Its Intelligentsia: Urban Space and Social Change, 1750-1831," in *Acta Poloniae Historica* 100 (2009): 57-77.

6 and 8 October

Sessions 11-12. Nationalism as modernity? Nineteenth-century ideological frameworks: romanticism and positivism

Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and the Public Sphere," in Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (eds.), *Private and Public in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (Chicago 1997), 75-102;

Péter Hanák, "A National Compensation for Backwardness," *Studies in East European Thought* Vol. 46, No. ½ (1994): 33-45;

Jan Surman, "The Contexts of Early Polish Positivisms, 1840s-1900s," *The Worlds of Positivism. A Global Intellectual History, 1770-1930* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 239-272;

Roman Szporluk, "Thoughts about Change: Ernest Gellner and the History of Nationalism," in *The State of the Nation. Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. by John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23-39.

Further readings:

Faith Hillis, "Modernist Visions and Mass Politics in Late Imperial Kiev," in J.C.Behrends and M.Kohlrausch (eds.), *Races to Modernity. Metropolitan Aspirations in Central Europe, 1890-1940* (Budapest 2014), 49-71;

Pavel Tereshkovich, "Diverse Roads to Diverse Modernity: The Social Resources of the Early Nationalisms in Belarus and Lithuania," *Interstitio. East European review of Historical Anthropology* vol. 2, no. 1 (2008): 77-97;

Andriy Zayarnyuk, "On the Possibility of Peasant Intellectuals: The Case of the Ukrainians in Habsburg Galicia" in *Social History* 39:1 (2014): 56-82.

13 and 15 October

Sessions 13-14. Nineteenth-century East European populism as agrarian alternative?

Peter Hanak, "The Anti-Capitalist Ideology of the Populists," in Joseph Held (ed.), *Populism in Eastern Europe. Racism, Nationalism, and Society* (Boulder: East European Monographs), 145-161;

Balazs Trencsenyi et al (eds), *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 469-483 (chapter "Agrarian Populism: An East Central European local tradition?");

Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 222-267 (chapter "Populist Ideologies").

Further readings:

Andrzej Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists* (Notre Dame 1988), selected chapters.

Andriy Zayarnyuk and Ostap Sereda, *The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Ukraine. The Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2023), 66-98 (chapter 3: "Joining with People").

27 October.

Sessions 15. Uneven development and East European Marxism in the early Twentieth Century

Helen C. Scott and Paul Le Blanc, "Introduction to Rosa Luxemburg," in *Socialism or Barbarism. The Selected Writings of Rosa Luxemburg* (London 2010), 9-36;

Balazs Trencsenyi et al (eds), *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*,

vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 446-468 (chapter "Socialism and underdevelopment");

Further readings:

Leopold Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Cambridge 1955), selected chapters;

Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw's Generation Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (Yale University Press 2006), selected chapters;

Timothy Snyder, *Nationalism, Marxism and Modern Central Europe. A Biography of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872-1905)* (Cambridge 1997), selected chapters.

29 October

Session 16. Fin de siècle modernist culture in Europe's East

Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (Princeton 2014), 63-97, 147-178.

3 and 5 November

Session 17 and 18. Totalitarian engagements with modernity (1920s and 40s). Social Darwinism, integral nationalism and fascism

Marta Petreu, *An Infamous Past. E.M.Cioran and the Rise of Fascism in Romania* (Chicago 2005), 145-174;

Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York 2010), selected chapters;

Oleksandr Zaitsev, "Ukrainian Integral Nationalism in Quest of a" Special Path"(1920s-1930s)." *Russian Politics & Law* 51, no. 5 (2013): 11-32.

10 and 12 November

Sessions 19 and 20. Soviet modernity: totalitarian, revisionist, and postcolonial approaches

Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Retrospect: A Personal View," *Slavic Review* Vol. 67, No. 3 (2008): 682-704

Botakoz Kassymbekova, "Humans as Territory: Forced Resettlement and the Making of Soviet Tajikistan, 1920–38," *Central Asian Survey* 30:3-4 (2011): 349-370;

Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 106-145.

Further Readings:

Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism* (Berkeley 1991), selected chapters;

Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton

University Press, 1996), selected chapters;

Aleksander Etkind, *Internal Colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge 2011), selected chapters.

17 and 19 November

Sessions 21 and 22. National communism, Soviet internationalism, and nation-making

Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca 2001), 1-27;

Olena Palko, "Ukrainian National Communism: Challenging History." *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 22, no. 1 (2014): 27-48.

Further readings:

Myroslav Shkandrij, *Modernists, Marxists, and the Nation: The Ukrainian Literary*

Discussion of the 1920s (Edmonton 1992), selected chapters;

Stephen Velychenko, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red: The Ukrainian Marxist*

Critique of Russian Communist Rule in Ukraine, 1918-1925 (Toronto 2015), selected chapters.

24 November

Sessions 23. Soviet modernity, authorities, and dissent after Stalin

Simone Attilio Bellezza, *The Shore of Expectations. A Cultural Study of the Shistdesiatnyky*, (Edmonton-Toronto: CIUS Press, 2019), selected chapters;

Katherine Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia. Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society 1949-56* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 44-73;

26 November

Session 24. Modernity and feminism in Eastern Europe

Solomea Pavlychko, "Progress on hold : the conservative faces of women in Ukraine," in *Post-Soviet women: from the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge UP, 1997), 219-234;

Miglena Todorova, *Unequal Under Socialism. Race, Women and Transnationalism in Bulgaria* (University of Toronto Press, 2021), 56-75 (chapter 2).

1 December

Sessions 25. Atomic modernities and the Chornobyl catastrophe

Planned invited speakers: Kate Brown and Tetiana Perga

T.Hundorova, *The post-Chornobyl library: Ukrainian literary postmodernism of the 1990s* (Boston 2019), part 1;

Anna Veronika Wendland, "Nuclearizing Ukraine - Ukrainizing the Atom. Soviet Nuclear Technopolitics, Crisis, and Resilience on the Imperial Periphery," *Cahiers du Monde russe* vol. 60, 2-3 (2019): 335-367.

3 and 8 December.

Session 26 and 27. Between colonial and postcolonial: colonial ambivalence of East Central Europe

Dorota Kołodziejczyk and Siegfried Huigen, "East Central Europe between the Colonial and the Postcolonial: A Critical Introduction," in *East Central Europe between the Colonial and the Postcolonial in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan 2023), 1-34.

8 and 10 December

Sessions 27 and 28. Post-Soviet modernities reconsidered: postmodern and postcolonial critiques and their opponents

S.Chari, K.Verdery, "Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009): 6-

34;

Ola Hnatiuk, "Nativists vs. Westernizers: Problems of Cultural Identity in Ukrainian Literature of the 1990s." *The Slavic and East European Journal* (2006): 434-451;

Vladimir Ryzhkovskyi, "On Occidentalism, Russo-Centrism, and the (Im)Possibility of Decolonization," *New Europe College Yearbook 2022-2023* (July 2024): 35-64.

Essay Deadlines

The deadline for a mid-semester response paper is **26 October, 2026**.

The deadline for the end of semester essay for graduating students is **4 December, 2026**

The deadline for the end of semester essay is **18 December, 2026**.

Grades Submission

Mid-semester response paper grades are due **30 October, 2026**.

Final grades for graduating students are due **11 December, 2026**.

Final grades for all students are due on **1 January, 2027**.

Library and Book Purchase Policies

Most of the readings will be uploaded in electronic format in the Google Classroom. Some other texts will be available in the library reserve collection.