

HI 260 – East-Central Europe from the Eighteenth Century to the Present  
Phillips 265  
MW 11:00-11:50

Prof. Chad Bryant  
Hamilton 468  
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Office hours: W 1:30-3:30

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Office hours: M 10:00-11:00;Th 1:00-2:00

This course follows the history of East-Central Europe from the eighteenth century to the present. Special emphasis will be given to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. The first third of the course discusses developments within the Habsburg monarchy, which, before its demise after World War I, stretched from present-day Poland to Bosnia and included twelve major nationalities. The second third examines the years from 1918 to 1945. The era began with the creation of “multinational nation-states.” It culminated with Soviet “liberation” from Nazi domination and the creation of nationally homogenous populations in East-Central Europe. The last third concentrates on the period of Communist rule in the region, which lasted until 1989. The course will conclude with a brief look at issues surrounding accession to the European Union.

Several questions will guide our survey of a region once called “Europe, but not Europe.” How do we explain the rise of nationalism and the many forms that it took in the region? How did industrializing societies and states attempt to organize—or sometimes even eliminate—ethnic, religious, and economic diversity? In what ways did Eastern Europeans adapt and react to liberal, socialist, nationalist, fascist, and communist ideologies imported from the outside? In other words, how did the forces of the modern world shape the region and its peoples? Was there a peculiarly “Eastern European” journey to the modern, industrialized world and, if so, how might we characterize that journey? What differentiates the “Eastern European” experience from that of the “West”? In what ways might the region’s history mirror our own?

Lectures will address these questions through an examination of general trends and individual case studies. Textbook readings will add background information necessary for understanding the lectures. They will also challenge the lectures by providing alternative interpretations of the region’s history. Other readings include a combination of secondary and primary sources such as manifestos, a novel, and a memoir. Many of our discussions will revolve around these reading assignments, which you should read with an historian’s eye for critical assessment and synthesis. I expect you to be active, both during the lectures and in recitation.

Recitation section times and locations:  
HI 600 Thursday 3:00-3:50 Peabody 217  
HI 601 Friday 10:00-10:50 Peabody 220  
HI 602 Friday 12:00-12:50 Bingham 217  
HI 603 Friday 1:00-1:50 Hamilton 423

**You must register for a recitation section and only attend that section.**

**Required Texts**

Sandor Marai, *The Rebels*

Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*

Carl Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*

Wladislaw Szpilman, *The Pianist*

These books will be available for purchase at the Ram's Head. The books will also be on reserve at the undergraduate library. The other readings will be available in the "assignments" folder on Sakai along with discussion questions to keep in mind while completing the reading.

The following textbooks will be placed on reserve for you to consult as the semester progresses:

Lonnie Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*

Robert Paul Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*

Garrison Walters, *The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945*

Joseph Rothschild and Nancy Wingfield, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East-Central Europe since World War II*

**Course Requirements and Percentage of Final Grade:**

Midterm Exam #1: 15%

Midterm Exam #2: 15%

Final Exam: 25%

Paper Assignment: 25%

Class Participation and In-Class Assignments: 20%

Participation is a vital component in determining your final grade. You are required to complete each session's reading assignment and to come to class with ideas, insights, and/or questions for the group. The success of the class depends upon everyone arriving prepared, remaining open to other's ideas, and offering arguments based upon a thorough understanding of the assignments and lectures. All written assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class. Missing class—whether lecture or recitation—will hurt your participation grade. You will be allowed only one excused absence from section during the semester. Thereafter any unexcused absence will result in an "F" for that day's section. We will require a written document, such as a note from Student Health Services, in order to excuse further absences. If you plan to miss a recitation section due to a religious observation, please provide written notice to your TA at least two weeks in advance. If absent, you are still responsible for that session's reading assignment and any quizzes, homework, or writing tasks that we assign that day. We reserve the right to quiz you about the readings assigned for lecture and recitation section. These quizzes will count toward your participation grade.

You will be required to write one 7-8 page paper which will address one of the main

themes of the course up to that point. These papers will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, November 12. Late papers will result in a lower grade for that assignment. For each day that the paper is late, the paper's letter grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade. (For example, a "B+" will become a "B".) Often we will also ask that you complete a short writing assignment that you will hand in at the beginning of your recitation section. These shorter papers will count toward your participation grade. These assignments will be posted on the announcements page on Sakai along with discussion questions for each recitation section.

We will have two midterms and a final. While portions of each exam will ask you to repeat factual information, the bulk of each exam will consist of an essay in which you, drawing from the lectures and readings, will make an argument about an historical issue. (The final exam will consist of two essays – one addressing themes in the last third of the course, a second addressing themes relating to the course as a whole.) There will also be a map quiz on Wednesday, August 28. We will post to the "assignments" folder on Sakai the two maps that you will be asked to study as well as the cities and countries that you should learn. .

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Remember that when writing, taking exams, or performing other assignments you are bound by the Honor Code. For details, see [www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html).

Please do not hesitate to come to either of us with questions, concerns, or requests for help. Professor Bryant will hold office hours in Hamilton 468 on Wednesdays from 1:30-3:30. John Robertson will hold office hours in Hamilton 503 from 12:00-1:00 on Mondays and 1:00-2:00 on Thursdays. You can also email us to schedule an appointment. Other sources of assistance are the Writing Center ([www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/)); Learning Disabilities Services ([www.unc.edu/depts/acadserv/lds.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/acadserv/lds.html)); Counseling and Wellness Services (<http://caps.unc.edu/>); and, of course, each other.

### **Class Schedule**

Assignments, announcements, and other information relating to the course will appear on Sakai as the semester progresses. Although we are eager to answer questions, you alone are responsible for knowing the information listed here and on the Sakai site.

#### **WEEK 1**

August 21: Introducing the course

August 22 and 23: Recitations

#### **WEEK 2**

August 26: Enlightened Absolutism and Joseph II's Empire  
Readings: Johnson, *Central Europe*, 98-100, 112-117

August 28: Conservatism, Liberalism, and Nationalism

Reading: Johnson, *Central Europe*, 118-134

**Map quiz**

August 29 and 30: Recitations

Readings:

“The Futility and Irrationality of Tolerance”

“The Emancipation of the Jews”

WEEK 3

September 2: Labor Day – no classes

September 4: The Revolutions of 1848 in Hungary and Bohemia

Reading: Palmer, *Revolution and the Reimposition of Order, 1848-1870*

September 5 and 6: Recitations

František Palacký, “Letter to the Provisional German National Assembly, 1848”

Lajos Kossuth, “Hungarian Declaration of Independence”

WEEK 4

September 9: Habsburg Politics in a New Key

Reading: Walters, “The Habsburg Empire, 1848-1914,” 58-75

September 11: Fin-de-siècle Budapest

September 12 and 13: Recitations

Reading: Selections from Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*

WEEK 5

September 16: Bohemia and its Nationalisms

September 18: Galicia and its Nationalisms

Reading: Johnson, *Central Europe*, 120-124

September 19 and 20 Recitations

Readings: Selections from Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* and Thomas Ort, *Art and Life in Modernist Prague: Karel Čapek and his Generation, 1911-1938*

WEEK 6

September 23: Transylvania and its Nationalisms

September 25: Review for midterm

**September 27: First midterm exam**

WEEK 7

September 30: World War I

Reading: Palmer, Colton, and Kramer, "The First World War," 657-679

October 2: The Establishment of Interwar Eastern European States

Readings: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 41-75

October 3 and 4: Recitations

Selections from Paul Latawski, ed., *The Reconstruction of Poland, 1914-1923*

Selections from Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919*

WEEK 8

October 7: Interwar Hungary

Reading: Johnson, *Central Europe*, 180-186

Joseph Rothschild, "Hungary"

October 9: Interwar Poland

Reading: Johnson, *Central Europe*, 173-180

Joseph Rothschild, "Poland"

October 10 and 11: Recitations

Readings: Sandor Marai, *The Rebels*

WEEK 9

October 14: Interwar Czechoslovakia

Joseph Rothschild, "Czechoslovakia"

October 16: The Origins of World War II

Robert Paxton and Julie Hessler, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, 329-354

October 19 – Fall break – no classes

WEEK 10

October 21- Ethnic Cleansing and the Holocaust

Reading: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 138-181

October 23: Ethnic Cleansing and the Holocaust, part II

October 24 and 25: Recitations

Wladislaw Szpilman, *The Pianist*

WEEK 11

October 28: Post-war Expulsions and Retribution

Reading: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 212-225, 229-237

October 30: Midterm review

**November 1 – Second midterm exam**

WEEK 11

November 4: The Origins of the Cold War

November 6: The Iron Curtain Falls

November 7 and 8: Recitations

Reading: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 250-285 + writing workshop; please bring rough drafts of your paper to recitation section

WEEK 12

November 12: Stalinism and the Death of Stalin

**7-8 page paper due**

November 14: Revolts and Repression: Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia

November 15 and 16: Recitations

Discussion of “Man of Marble”

WEEK 13

November 18: “Normalization” and the Rise of Dissent

Reading: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 361-380

November 19: The Fall of Communism in East-Central Europe

Reading: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 380-394

November 20 and 21: Recitations

Selections from Paula Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* and Vladimír Macura, *The Potato Bug and other Essays*

WEEK 14

November 25: Post-Communist East-Central Europe

Reading: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, ix-xv, 361-403

November 27, 28, 29 – **Thanksgiving break**

WEEK 15

December 2: Post-Communist Eastern Europe, II

Readings: BBC country profiles for Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary  
found at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country\\_profiles/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/)

December 4: Review for final exam

**Final exam: Friday, December 7 at 12:00 PM in our regular classroom**