

Nations and Nationalism in South-Eastern Europe

This course gives an introduction to the modern history and culture of South-Eastern Europe. The area covered is roughly that of the Balkan Peninsula, including the territory of the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Greece. This is a region of contrasts and divisions; the meeting point of Europe and Asia, eastern and western Christianity, Christianity and Islam. Its relatively small area is characterised by great difference and diversity: in geography, religion, language, architecture, customs - even cuisine. State policies have emphasised difference and diversity in the modern Balkans, with nationalist movements contributing to the break-up of the region's two great empires - the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman - and the establishment of independent states claiming to represent the peninsula's nations. This process, begun in the nineteenth century, has continued with the recent disintegration of Yugoslavia and its reconstitution into yet more 'nation-states'.

The course concentrates on the linked questions of national identity and nationalism in South-Eastern Europe. In form broadly thematic and interdisciplinary it is slightly different from a conventional history course. The intention is not to offer an all-encompassing survey of the region during the last two centuries. Instead, through a broadly chronological but thematic approach South-Eastern Europe is treated as a whole, and only then looked at in terms of specific state and national histories. The thread running through the course is the way in which the states of the region have manipulated and shaped the identities, primarily the ethnic identities, of the people of the region to serve their own interests, often through the use of nationalist ideologies. We will focus on the ways ideas of the nation have been created, communicated, used and abused in this area, and on some of the consequences, not just for South-Eastern Europe but for Europe as a whole. At the same time, we will draw attention to competing or cross-cutting ideas, ideologies and influences, challenging the assumption that the nation has always been the most important factor in people's lives.

PRELIMINARY READING

Recommended Background Reading:

Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London, 2000)

Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans* (2 vols. Cambridge, 1983)

L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York, 1959; reissued London, 2000)

Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A history of the Balkans, 1804-1945* (London, 1999)

R. J. Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War* (London, 2002)

Peter F. Sugar & Ivo J. Lederer (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (2nd ed., Seattle, 1994)

Title: Nations and Nationalism in South-Eastern Europe
Course Code: SEHI6007
Course-unit value: 1.0
Level: Intermediate

Availability: tbc
Open to: All second and final year undergraduates
Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites

Course leader: Bojan Aleksov, Room 423, SSEES Taviton Street

Aims: The aim of the course is to give the student a framework for understanding modern South-Eastern European history and culture, and a grasp of the complexities of national identity and nationalism. Students with an interest in a specific country will be able to set that subject against a broader Balkan (and European) background.

Objectives: By the end of the course, you will have acquired:

1. Enhanced ability to understand and to appreciate how people have existed, acted and thought in the past in the context of the complexity and diversity of historical situations, events and intellectual outlooks.
 2. Enhanced ability to use and evaluate texts and other source materials both critically and empathetically, as well as appreciating the limits and challenges of the extant record. The critical evaluation of texts should include an understanding of the questions which historians ask and why they do so. By the end of the course students will have read and mastered a wide selection of historical works drawn from the historiography on this period.
 3. Enhanced ability to frame an argument in a sustained manner both orally and in writing. Arguments should be structured, coherent, relevant, and concise, and should take into account all aspects of a given problem.
 4. Enhanced generic skills: these may be defined as –
 - (i) self-direction and self-discipline
 - (ii) independence of mind, and initiative
 - (iii) the ability to work with others and to have respect for the reasoned views of others
 - (iv) the ability to identify, gather, deploy and organize evidence, data and information; and familiarity with appropriate means of achieving this
 - (v) analytical ability and the capacity to consider and solve problems, including complex problems
 - (vi) structure, clarity and fluency of expression, both written and oral
 - (vii) intellectual maturity and integrity
 - (viii) empathy and imaginative insight
 - (ix) ability to organize time, work and personal resources to optimal effect.
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Teaching & Learning Methods:

Number of Hours:

Lectures

20 hours

Classes

10 hours

Private Study

approximately 250 hours (although this will vary

according to individual needs)

Assessment:

Coursework: Two essays of 2,500 words each, with full bibliography and footnotes, to be submitted according to a fixed deadline. The aggregate mark for the two essays will count for 25% of the total mark for the course. Suggestions for essay topics are given but students are recommended to come up with original ones, which then have to be discussed and agreed with the lecturer. Each essay must include a bibliography of works actually read and citations indicating the sources of direct quotations and paraphrased passages.

Examination: A three-hour written examination of twelve questions, of which three must be answered. All questions carry equal weight and the aggregate mark counts for 75% of the total mark for this course.

AFFILIATE STUDENTS:

See regulations posted elsewhere.

100% fulfilment of coursework is required by the final departmental deadline for the successful completion of this course.