

## THE FALL AND RISE OF THE POLISH NATION, 1648-1921

This course charts the changing meanings of 'Poland' and 'Polish' over an extended period, the protracted decline and fall of one 'Polish' state and the extended struggle to resurrect another, as well as the social and cultural transformations affecting the people who were at various times considered to constitute the 'Polish nation'. It does so in the context of changing Jewish, 'Lithuanian' and 'Ruthenian/Ukrainian' identities, whose threads intertwined with, and were later painfully disentangled from, those of 'Poland'.

The course begins with an exploration of the ethnically and religiously variegated 'Commonwealth of the Two Nations, Polish and Lithuanian', at the zenith of its prestige and territorial extent in 1648. It then analyses the impact of seven disastrous decades of warfare, paying special attention to the confessional and national identities of the Commonwealth's citizens, especially the role of 'Sarmatian' culture. Calls for reform gathered strength from about 1730, including the reconsideration and reconfiguration of the idea of the nation, to include, ultimately, all inhabitants of the Commonwealth. Before this vision could be effected, the Commonwealth had been partitioned. The implications for 'Poland' of armed efforts to resurrect the state, the debate on the peasantry, as well as the efforts undertaken to protect and encourage the spread of Polish culture, and to shape and inculcate a national memory, will be the focus of the next part of the course. The failure of the uprising of 1863-64 soon led to further reconfigurations of the nation in an age of rapid population growth and industrialization. In the harsh world of pseudo-Darwinian competition between nations, and faced with the siren calls of internationalist socialism, the 'modernization' of a population into a self-conscious 'nation' seemed more necessary than ever to many nationalists. The final part of the course examines the ideologies and programmes of Polish political groupings, notably the National Democrats and the Socialists, on the eve of the First World War and the struggle to achieve them in the course of Poland's resurrection in 1914-21.

### PRELIMINARY READING

#### **Recommended Textbook**

Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, expanded 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

#### **Other Recommended Reading**

Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003, paperback edn 2004)

Jerzy Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Piotr Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland 1795-1918* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1974)

The stage at Łazienki Palace and Gardens, Warsaw



**Title: The Fall and Rise of the Polish Nation, 1648-1921**

**Course Code: SEHI2008**

**Course-unit value: 1.0**

**Level: Advanced**

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**Availability: 2009-10**

**Open to: All second- and final-year undergraduates**

**Prerequisites: All participants should normally have passed a full Intermediate Level course in History**

**Course leader: Richard Butterwick, Room 524, SSEES Taverton Street**

**Other participants:**

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**Aims:**

1. To introduce students to the history of the lands that now make up Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and most of Ukraine, until the early twentieth century.
2. To consider civic and ethnic concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' within this historical context.

**Objectives: By the end of the course, you should 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. In particular, students should consider how people in the past have evaluated the times in which they were living.
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 literary and historical works.
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.
5. A body of historical knowledge relating to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to 1795 as well as the territories that formerly constituted it, from the Partitions until the early twentieth century. This knowledge will relate not only to the facts of history but also to broader concepts and explanatory tools.

**Teaching & Learning Methods:**

**Number of Hours:**

Classes

40 hours

Private Study

Approximately 260 hours (although this will vary according to individual needs)

**Assessment:**

***Coursework:*** Two essays of 2500 words, with full bibliography and footnotes, to be submitted according to a fixed deadline.

***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 the course.

**AFFILIATE STUDENTS:**

See regulations posted elsewhere.

**100% fulfillment of coursework is required for the successful completion of this course. If this requirement is not met by the final departmental deadline, it will normally lead to you being debarred from the examination and the course being marked as incomplete on your final degree transcript.**