



Modern Eastern Europe and the Balkans (mid-19th century to the present)

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

HIST 4523 Section 201

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Contact Information

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Course Description

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, East-Central Europe and the Balkans have been portrayed as areas of virulent ethnic conflict, political instability, and economic underdevelopment. Because of such perceptions, the territory sandwiched between the German and Russian Empires and later NATO and the USSR made this borderland unique in Europe. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, all the USSR supported socialist systems in the region collapsed. Many countries adopted liberal, democratic governments, based in part on the “democracies” of Western Europe. The new “national” governments, in order to establish legitimacy and show cultural connections to the West, began an active program to distance themselves from the Russian legacy and the Eastern European stereotype. To a certain extent this process has worked since many states have joined both NATO and the European Union, including three “laggards” of the Balkans: Croatia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

It seems that the entire region is well on its way to “joining Europe.” But is this an accurate depiction? Have the countries of East-Central Europe been able to shed the Eastern European stereotype for a renewed Central European identity? This course will analyze the origins of some of the regional conflicts and challenge some common historical misperceptions. We will examine and question the major influences on the people and politics of the area, the historic and shifting divisions in Europe, and the role of communism in the shaping of states and societies. The course looks at the history of the people of East-Central Europe in the last 250 or so years, tracing the origins of ethnic and religious diversity, the role of historic “memory” in fueling modern crises, and the evolution of national and political consciousness.

We will begin with the national “awakening” of some of the groups, living in four multi-national empires. From there we will examine the new states carved out of the region after various wars and expansions/contractions and how these states eventually became authoritarian in the 1920s and 30s. Afterward, we will move on to World War II and the destruction of the Jewish population by the Nazis and their regional allies. From here we will discuss the legacy of World War II, the rise of communism, reform, the Revolutions of 1989, the collapse of Yugoslavia, and the recent expansion of NATO and the European Union.

Beyond presenting a narrative of events, this course is meant to stimulate discussion of historical issues, while challenging preconceived notions or prejudices in an environment of respect for those with differing perspectives. It will also give you a better understanding of the historian's craft by making you interpret history. You will develop and sharpen your analytical and writing skills through these exercises.

Student Participation

Students will be held personally responsible for their own education. I am a harsh taskmaster and do not accept excuses that tend to be pervasive in today's society. You are adults, and with age comes responsibility for your own actions or lack thereof. Active student participation in learning (which includes careful reading of ALL assignments, classroom engagement, attentive note taking, and participation in discussions), the maintenance of a weekly study schedule, the completion of ALL assignments in a timely manner, adequate preparation for exams, and, when necessary, individual post-exam consultation with the instructor, are essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the course. However, if you turn in all assignments, pass your exams, and participate in discussions, you are not guaranteed a "good grade". A is a designation for superior work, and B for good work. If your work ethic, written work, and test taking efforts are merely satisfactory, you will EARN a C. The bare minimum earns a D.

Textbooks

Required Reading:

- 1) R. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century—and after*, 2 ed. (Routledge, 1997), 0415164222
- 2) Gerasimos Augustinos (ed.), *The national idea in Eastern Europe* (Toronto: DC Heath and Co., 1996), 0669396265
- 3) Ian Armour, *A history of Eastern Europe, 1740-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 0340760406
- 4) Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 1994), 0804723141 (or paperback version)

(recommended) Peter Sugar and Ivo Lederer (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, 1994 ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 0295973420

Academic Integrity, Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Notice: Understand the following – it applies to all assignments, including drafts of papers. If you in any instance "cut and paste" from any internet source without citing that source (plagiarism) or use unapproved internet sources, you will fail the assignment in question. Depending on the severity of the offense, the professor reserves the right to employ any or all university sanctioned disciplinary actions, of which I will pursue prosecution to its furthest extent. I will drop you from the course and report the incident to the Student Affairs and any other office as per the university's policy.

Grading

In the past, I've used a number of different assignments to evaluate student learning and retention. However, this semester I am employing assignments and evaluation as my mentors evaluated me, which held me accountable for my own performance.

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Exams (2) 20% each. Take home essays.	40%
Analytical book review of Wolff (1200 words)	10%
Active participation and attendance (includes pop-quizzes and in-class assignments)	20%
12-page research paper on an instructor approved topic	30%

Final Grade	Percentage
A	90% plus
B	80 – 89.9%
C	70 – 79.9%
D	60 – 69.9%
F	Less than 60%

There will be two take home essay exams, which I will provide the questions a week before the due date. They will be fairly broad questions, in which the students will be expected to make connections among empires, states, peoples, and events. You will be expected to use outside sources, not just your textbooks and class notes to answer these question, and to cite them properly. **DO NOT USE WIKI SOURCES OR UNAPPROVED WEBSITES!** Books, articles, and vetted academic internet sources are okay. And waiting to the last minute is a recipe for failure. I would do one question a day, and then spend a day editing your answers. This is what happens in the professional world, and thus you will gain valuable “after college” experience with this exercise.

The book review may be a new exercise to some in the class. This is **NOT a book report**. Reviews are critiques of books in which the reviewer briefly describes the main thesis and the points the author uses to prove the argument. Once this is done, the reviewer critiques the book (is the argument believable, well researched, persuasive, well written). Does the author fulfill his or her stated or implied purpose? Is the argument subtle or ham-fisted? I will provide a “how to” sheet with a barebones description of how to do a short academic review. I suggest you use review essays from an academic journal (such as the *American Historical Review*) to get a feel for what they are meant to do. Now you might be asking

yourself, “why do I have do this? I don’t intend to be a professional historian [or] I won’t ever take another course in this department.” Every academic field requires such critical exercises; furthermore, you may take a position after college in which the boss wants you to critique something in writing. This review will give you practice doing a formal critique. We will spend class time talking about and practicing analytical writing and the book review itself.

The book you will review is the Wolff book on how the West “imagined” and “invented” Eastern Europe. It is an intellectual history and can be difficult in places, but challenges are expected in university. I suggest you read the book carefully, because we will be discussing it in class in the first half of the course. Early work is encouraged. The review will be due, without exception, no later than March 22 at the beginning of class. No late work will be accepted.

Discussion is an essential part of the course; therefore, all students are expected to attend class and participate actively. Learning requires active engagement from each student. To ensure that you have read the assignments, a **summary** of your readings will be due at the beginning of each class, in which those particular works are discussed. Intellectual engagement with the material can occur only if class members are present. Poor attendance will affect your grade in two ways:

1) If you are absent, you will not earn any points for discussion or participation on that day, hence you lower your discussion/participation grade.

2) **More than three (3) unexcused absences in the regular lecture will result in a letter grade reduction for the course.** Each absence thereafter will again lower the final grade one letter. Seven unexcused absences will result in an automatic ‘F’ for the course. The instructor has the sole right to determine the validity of any excuses for absence. In general, only medical problems severe enough to require a doctor’s care, pre-approved college events, or emergencies qualify as legitimate excuses (proof must be provided).

If you can’t commit, there’s no reason to take the course.

The course schedule is divided into daily topics. The readings for that day must be completed before that day’s discussion.

Extra Credit

I do NOT offer extra credit. DON’T ASK.

Make Up Work/Tests

I will only allow make up work if there is a legitimate excuse for missing a scheduled exam. I have the sole discretion in determining whether or not an absence is excused. University functions approved by the administration will be excused **WITH documentation**. Other reasons must be documented in some acceptable form or fashion (proof) must be presented.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I use MSU’s D2L program to post documents or give assignments. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication between student and professor. In the first week, I will post the syllabus and the terms for the course. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. I will put a few required readings on D2L (see schedule below) during the semester.

Online Computer Requirements

It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. *Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!

Institutional and COVID Policies

In general, the class policies concerning COVID are those implemented by MSU Texas and are subject to change as university policy changes. Please check university policies throughout the semester. Below are listed some of the things you should be aware of.

- 1) This is a face-to-face course. I will NOT be livestreaming the course unless a student tests positive or must go into quarantine due to exposure by an infected individual. It is the student's responsibility to inform me, in writing (email is fine), of the situation. I will implement livestreaming within two class sessions to accommodate the sick or quarantined students.
- 2) Due to the policies on social distancing and attendance, seating charts and seat assignments will be used in this course. Each student must sit in a desk or chair with an affixed sticker allowing seating. That desk or chair cannot be moved for any reason and attendance will be taken by seating chart. Once you select a desk, you must sit in that desk and that desk alone throughout the semester.
- 3) Due to the possibility of a campus shut-down, the students are responsible for owning or having access to the necessary equipment and software to continue this course via distance learning. Below are the MINIMUM requirements as determined by the university.

HARDWARE:

PC Desktops and laptops (Use Windows' Operating System and PC Info to find your hardware information if you are unsure)

- a) Intel Core (i3, i5, i7) processors; 4th generation or newer
- b) 4 GB of RAM, 8 GB of RAM is highly recommended
- c) 256 GB SSD Storage
- d) Dual Band spectrum (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz) with 802.11ac or 802.11n

Mac desktops and laptops (Use Apple's About this Mac feature to find your hardware information)

- a) Intel Core (i3, i5, i7) processors; 4th generation or newer
- b) 4 GB of RAM, 8 GB of RAM is highly recommended
- c) 256 GB SSD Storage
- d) Dual Band spectrum (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz) with 802.11ac or 802.11n

PLEASE NOTE!!!: Chromebooks are not recommended, as they will not work with D2L. You have been warned now, so do NOT expect me to make accommodations if distance learning is implemented during the semester.

SOFTWARE:

Minimum Software requirements

Operating Systems:

- a) Windows 10 (1709)
- b) macOS 10.13 (High Sierra)

Web browsers:

- a) Internet Explorer 11 (Windows)
- b) Microsoft Edge
- c) Safari
- d) Firefox
- e) Chrome

Conferencing Software:

- a) Microsoft Teams
- b) Zoom Web Conferencing
- c) Skype for Business
- d) Web X

Other supported hardware and software options are located at <https://msutexas.edu/it/assets/files/basic-software-and-hardware-list.pdf>

- 4) If absence due to COVID infection or exposure occurs, it must be documented by the university. If you cannot make office hours, call during posted times only for immediate concerns. Otherwise, email or call to make a face-to-face or electronic meeting.
- 5) All documents relating to the course will be available on D2L. Check regularly.

Instructor Class Policies

Conduct: All students are expected to act as responsible adults. Any disruptions or distractions will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Below you will find general guidelines covering certain actions and/or behaviors that are to be avoided. As a general rule any behavior that disrupts the administration of this class will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from the time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request that the offending student leave the classroom. Furthermore, the professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student's semester total or remove the student from the course. **Arriving late is considered a distraction.** If arriving more than five (5) minutes late – DO NOT enter the classroom.

Electronic Devices, Texting, and Phones: The use of tape recorders, iPods, mp3s, or any other recording device in class is **prohibited**. It is imperative that you turn off phones, all other communication devices, and electronic equipment before entering the classroom. The use of a telephone or texting device for any reason is prohibited. *On the first offense the student will be penalized 20 points on her or his participation score for the week. The second offense will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom. The professor reserves the right to expel and administratively withdraw a student from the class upon the third offense.*

Laptops, Tablets, etc.: You must obtain permission from the professor to use laptops, tablets, and phones (or any other device capable of accessing the internet) in the classroom. Recent scholarship suggests that laptops and tablets are **major distractions** to fellow students and in general do not enhance learning and/or the classroom experience. Furthermore, there will be no surfing, texting, emailing, etc. in the classroom, unless I specifically ask the students to do so.

E-mail: Note that e-mail correspondence is the most effective and convenient way in which to communicate with me outside the classroom. The professor/student relationship is professional by nature and, accordingly, your e-mail correspondence should be constructed professionally. Again, **DO NOT send me messages via D2L; only use my regular email for correspondence.**

Attendance and your grade: This course is structured so that it is to the student's advantage to attend class regularly. From past experience, students who choose not to attend on a regular basis are not successful. I allow three, and only three unexcused absences. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty to your participation grade. If you have a total of nine unexcused absences, you will not be able to pass the course.

Withdrawals (Course Drop): The professor is NOT responsible for student withdrawals. The student is responsible for meeting all academic deadlines including withdrawal deadlines.

Services for Students with Disabilities: In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Student Disability Office](#).

Grade Appeal Process: Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week 1—Lingering Perceptions of Eastern Europe in the Western World and the Region’s Geography

Jan. 18—Wolff, 1-50

Week 2—Imperial States the 18th Century

Jan. 23—Armour, 1-60

Jan. 25—Wolff, 50-88

Week 3—Eastern European and the Ottoman Empires

Jan. 30—Amour, 61-10

Map quiz

Feb. 1—Wolff, 144-194

Tentative paper topic due at beginning of class

Week 4—The 19th Century and National Revolutions

Feb. 6—Armour, 61-104

Feb. 8—Wolff, 235-283

Week 5—Western Europe’s “Other”: Russia and Eastern Europe

Feb. 13—Wolff, 195-234

Feb. 15—Wolff, 284-331

Week 6— The Rise of the Nation-State and the Collapse of Multiethnic Empires

Feb. 20—Armour, 191-240

Feb. 22—Augustinos, 1-24

Week 7—World War I and Independence

Feb. 27—Armour, 241-258; Augustinos, 25-44; Crampton, 1-38

March 1—Wolff, 332-374
 * **Midterm exam due at beginning of class**

Week 8—Central and Eastern Europe: Experiments in Democracy

March 6—Crampton, 39-77

March 8—Crampton, 78-106; Augustinos, 44-65

Week 9—The Interwar Balkans and Ideology

March 20—Crampton, 107-151

March 22—Crampton, 152-176

* **Wolff book review due, beginning of class**

Week 10—World War II and the End of Democracy

March 27—Crampton, 179-239

March 29—Crampton, 240-254; Augustinos, 67-80

Week 11—Stalinism and Soviet Domination

April 3—Crampton, 255-303

April 5—Crampton, 307-341

Week 12—Dissent and socialist Regime Decay

April 10—Crampton, 345-390

April 12—Augustinos, 81-126

* **rough draft for research paper due at beginning of class April 12**

Week 13—The Fall of communism

April 17—Crampton, 391-418

April 19—Augustinos, 127-150

Week 14—Post-socialism

April 24—Crampton, 419-458

April 26—Augustinos, 155-199

Week 15—The Quest to Join NATO and the European Union

May 1—TBA

May 3—TBA

RESEARCH PAPER due by MAY 4 at 4pm.

Final Exam during Finals' Week.