

Spring 2023 Syllabus

Nationalism, Central Europe and the Russia-Ukraine War

The idea of Central Europe, which originally had a strong German affiliation, is historically linked with the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On a 21st-century map, Central Europe is made up of Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and western Ukraine. After WW II most of Central Europe became a strategic part of the external Soviet empire, and all Central European countries experienced political oppression, economic underdevelopment, and social stagnation. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary contributed to the final collapse of communist ideology in 1989-90 and collectively embarked on the path leading to full integration with the European Union. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, however, changed the political perspective of Central European countries.

Each student is required to prepare 1 presentation on a topic proposed by the instructor. The topics may be modified after consultations with the instructor. The presentation (PowerPoint or other) should last ca 15 minutes.

3. Midterm task: essay outline: 0-10 points

A 500-700 word outline of the final essay, with a preliminary bibliography and a list of sources. Essay topics should be consulted with the instructor. The outlines should be submitted by midterm.

4. Final essay: 0-50 points.

A 4,000 – 5,000-word essay, focused on Central Europe (including Western Ukraine) in international or regional perspectives. Nevertheless, it is also possible to analyze internal political/social issues of a Central European country in a historical context. The final essays should be submitted by the end of April.

Proposed topics (plus updated information on the Russian invasion of Ukraine):

1. Defining Central Europe – what are various definitions of Central Europe? Where is the “starting point” of Central European identity? How has the concept of Central Europe changed over the years? Who may define himself/herself as a Central European citizen?
2. Central Europe and Its Political and Cultural Significance before the 19th Century. The Role of Kingdoms and Principalities in Shaping the Regional Tradition – part 1
3. Central Europe and Its Political and Cultural Significance before the 19th Century. The Role of Kingdoms and Principalities in Shaping the Regional Tradition – part 2
4. The Process of Building National and Regional Identities in the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – part 1 (Western Ukraine vs. Eastern Ukraine)
5. The Process of Building National and Regional Identities in the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire –

