Negotiating Identities Across Europe's Borders (Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania)

Instructors: Hana Cervinkova and Juliet Golden
Faculty of Education

Phone: tel./fax.: +48-71-358-2758

E-mail: iisce@dsw.edu.pl

Description:

Travelling through Europe, one is constantly confronted with memories of conflict and reconciliation in places that have experienced dramatic upheavals. The importance of dealing with Europe's conflict-ridden past has been recently brought to the fore by the awarding of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union for its work in "the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe." This course will help us understand the stakes for contemporary Europe and the complex events and historical roots leading to such recognition. It will take us to dynamic cities in the throes of change and also lead us off the beaten path to unexpected places that illustrate Europe's multicultural past, and enable us to grasp how global events (formation of nation states at the beginning of the 20th century, WWII, Cold War, the building of the European Union) transformed the lives of local communities. This intensive travelling course offers a unique opportunity to interact with different cultures and places on Europe's frontiers. In cities and in remote villages, students will encounter the dilemmas of European identities built on memories and current challenges of changing historical and socio-political conditions. Throughout the course, students will complete hands-on ethnographic assignments, which will culminate in an action research work as well as final research papers.

We will begin our course at the nexus of the border of today's Poland and Lithuania. We meet up in Vilnius where students will arrive from the United States, and after exploring key sites of memory in Lithuania's capital, we move by bus to the International Center for Dialogue in Sejny/Krasnogruda to learn how Lithuanian and Polish artists, activists and entrepreneurs try to build intercultural dialogue based on competing identities, conflicting memories and a legacy of ethnic cleansing. Continuing south along the border with today's Belarus, we visit the village of Krynki, an important multicultural trade town until the onset of WWII, and then move on to Kruszyniany, which holds an expected cultural treasure - the wooden mosque and Tatar cemetery dating back to the 18th century, which still serves as a spiritual center and burial grounds for the remnants of the Muslim population of today's Poland. The cultural, political and
spiritual landscape changes as we move southward toward Lublin, where we again consider how civil society plays a vital role in reconciliation and building democratic society. In Warsaw, Poland’s capital, we explore its historic center, completely rebuilt as a part of a national project in the post-WWII years. We will also consider how history is being taught today through new museum projects: The Warsaw Rising Museum and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Our trip ends in Wroclaw, where students will spend the majority of their semester abroad. Once a dynamic German metropolis almost totally annihilated during WWII, Wroclaw was later nearly entirely re-populated and rebuilt by Poles in the post-war era. This city too has had to reconcile with its turbulent past in an effort to construct contemporary visions of its identity as a place open and friendly to the outside. We will complicate official narratives by considering alternative interpretations based on readings and interactions with local experts and material culture.

The semester-long learning experience will include three weekend study trips: to Krakow, to Germany and to the Czech Republic. In the royal city of Krakow, once Poland’s capital, we will continue discussing the challenges of destroyed multicultural identities of Central Europe. Here, we will juxtapose the Polish national narrative embodied in the Royal Wawel Castle with the absence of the once flourishing Jewish life of the city focused in the neighborhood of Kazimierz. At a subsequent stop at the former Auschwitz/Birkenau Nazi Concentration Camp, we will consider the challenges of how to preserve and make accessible such places of memory so that they continue to be a contribution in debates about cultural plurality as a vital part of democratic societies in today’s united Europe. The study trip to Germany will include an exploration of Dresden, where debates are currently underway about how to appropriately commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Allied carpet-bombing of the city. In Berlin, we study Germany’s attempts to forge a new path of leadership while dealing with the ghosts of its Nazi and politically-divided past. Germany is a country increasingly defined by actually existing cultural pluralism (exemplified by the growing Muslim population), while at the same time facing an upsurge of extreme right wing political groups. We will meet with local NGOs and academic experts as well as visit key sites related to these themes. Our trip to the Czech Republic will begin in Prague before moving onto cities in northern Bohemia that epitomize the persisting challenges of inter-ethnic conflict in this part of Europe. Historically inhabited by ethnic Germans who were expelled after 1945, this area is now a test case for how the Czech Republic and other nations of Europe can integrate Roma populations into the life and economy of the continent.

**Learning Outcomes**

**After taking this course, the students will be able to:**

- analyze and discuss conflict and reconciliation in European history through case studies in four countries - Lithuania, Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic
- approach urgent historical and cultural issues through multidisciplinary perspectives
- read and analyze the surrounding material and cultural landscape, and apply knowledge to current debates about cultural pluralism as a key to participative democracy
- explore further the role of memorialization and public memory
- discuss Europe as a place of intercultural conflict and reconciliation
- engage in action research, turning new knowledge into practical social action
Requirements:

Student participation is key to the achievement of learning outcomes in this traveling seminar and will be measured by individual students' ability to demonstrate how their immediate experiences relate to theoretical concepts and themes outlined in course readings and covered in lectures and seminar sessions. Throughout the course, students will be working toward creating practical action research projects, which will reflect the processing of both the theoretical issues and practical experiences in the course. Using the internet, student will create a novel and rich presentation of their travels, which will also serve as a platform for discussion and exchange on issues of reconciliation and identity in the Central European context. Students will be required to prepare two oral presentations and three interim action research written assignments in the form of innovative and personal contributions to the student-driven program website Urban Labs Central Europe (www.urbanlabsce.eu). They will also be required to produce a final research paper (15 pages for undergraduate students; 25 pages for graduate students). The final research paper for IR capstone students should be 5000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, and references. Further guidelines are available at IR capstone webpage: http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/IR_capstone/.

Description of the Interim Assignments

Individual or pairs of students are asked to prepare assignments in the form of essays that should be amplified with visual material. We are looking for thoughtful projects that tell a story based on ideas (discussed in the class) through concrete places that we visited as a part of the travelling seminar. Each student has to produce three such assignments which will be placed on a publically accessible website www.urbanlabsce.eu. Each essay should be between 700 – 1500 words long accompanied by 3 - 8 pictures. We are open to other forms of digital storytelling and welcome students to discuss alternative ideas for contributions to Urban Labs Central Europe with us throughout the course.

Due dates:

- Assignments 1 - October 1, 2014
- Assignment 2 - October 27, 2014
- Assignment 3 - November 10, 2014

Presentations

Students will be asked to make two public presentations during the course of the seminar – the first presentation will take place in Lublin, Poland (September 19), the second one in Wroclaw at the end of the seminar (December 8). In the first presentation we ask students to address how complex issues tied to places of memory have informed efforts at reconciliation and the building of civil society along Poland's eastern borderland. Students are allowed to choose the form of the presentations, they can choose to present individually or as a group or groups. The second
presentation offers students an opportunity to present the outcome of their research work included in their final research paper. Each individual presentation should last no more than 10 minutes and will be done an open public format.

Course Grading

Final grades will be based on the following criteria:
- 3 interim assignments – 50 percent
- 2 presentations – 10 percent
- Final paper – 40 percent

Course Specific Policies on attendance, late work, make up work, examinations if outside normal class time, etc.

Students are required to attend all classes, site visits and field trips and contribute actively in all group-work projects. In their final papers, students must demonstrate their knowledge of class material, including readings and site visits. All assignments must be delivered by the program end date.

Academic Integrity

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort.

For more information and the complete policy, see http://academicintegrity.syr.edu

Disability-Related Accommodations

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services(ODS), http://disabilityservices.syr.edu, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Religious Observances Policy

SU religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/StudentServices/Enrollment/MyReligiousObservances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.
Guidelines for the final research paper

The final research paper should be 15 pages long for undergraduate students and 25 pages long for graduate students (Times New Roman, 12 Font, double-spaced). The final research paper for IR capstone students should be 5000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, and references. Further guidelines are available at IR capstone webpage: http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/IR_capstone/.

Topics:
Students should select one of the following topics:
1. Reconciliation and Identity on Europe’s Borderlands
2. Historical Memory in Current Politics and Society of Central Europe
3. Memory and the Rebirth of Civil Society
4. World Heritage in Politics and Society

RESEARCH QUESTION

After selecting their topic, students need to identify a specific question they wish to answer in their paper. In selecting your research question, please consider the feasibility of answering it within the scope of a semester paper (15 - 25 pages). Due Date: October 6, 2014

PROPOSAL/ABSTRACT/RESEARCH PLAN/BIBLIOGRAPHY

After selecting a topic and defining a research question, students will be asked to outline their planned research in a short proposal (2-3 pages), that will include a research plan and an initial bibliography. They need to describe what sources of information they are planning to analyze and what type of analysis they are planning to apply. The initial bibliography, which can include mandatory and recommended readings from the syllabus, should be amplified by further readings in consultation with instructors. Due Date: October 28, 2014

FIRST SUBMISSION

Students will present a progress update on the content of their first submission for group review on November 3, 2014 during class. Students will submit their first draft in order to receive feedback from instructors one week later. Due Dates: November 3, 2014; November 10, 2014

PRESENTATION and FINAL SUBMISSION

Students will present the outcomes of their research work. Each presentation should last no more than 10 minutes and will be done an open public format. Final papers due on the same day. Due Date: On December 8, 2014
**Part I – From Vilnius to Warsaw – September 10 – September 20, 2014**

**September 10 – September 13, 2014 – Vilnius**

**September 10**
18:25 – Arrival at Vilnius International Airport and transfer to Vilnius Pan Tadeusz Hotel
Naugarduko gatvė 76, Vilnius 03202, Lithuania
Phone: +370 5 233 3663

20:00 – Welcome dinner and brief introduction to Vilnius Program

**September 11**
10:30 – 14:00 – Walking tour through Jewish Vilnius with Ilya Lempertas, researcher, historian, editor and Vilnius travel guide specializing in Lithuanian Jewish history and Holocaust studies

Free afternoon and evening in Vilnius

**September 12**
10:00 – 11:00 – Guided visit to the Center of Tolerance at the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.  

11:00 – 12:00 – Walk to The Green House and short break

12:00 – 14:00 – Guided Visit to The Green House (The Holocaust Exposition) at the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.

Free afternoon and evening in Vilnius

**September 13**
9:00 – Check out of hotel, all baggage loaded on bus for departure to Poland.

10:00 – 11:00 – A guided tour the Museum to Genocide Victims located in the former headquarters of the KGB (State Security Police).

11:30 – 12:15 – A guided tour though the Memorial Complex of the Tuskulėnai Peace Park

12:15 – 14:00 – Break

14:00 – Depart Vilnius

14:30 – 16:15 – Guided visit to the Paneriai Memorial Site followed by a discussion of current plans to reconstruct the memorial.
16:30 – Depart for Poland
19:00 – Arrival at Krasnogruda/Sejny, Poland.

International Centre for Dialogue
Krasnogruda/Sejny

20:00 – Group Dinner and Free Evening

Required Readings


“Vilnius in Three Days,” an official publication prepared by Vilnius Tourist Information Centre and Tourism Division of Vilnius Municipal Government.

Recommended Readings


September 14 – September 17, 2014 – Sejny/Krasnogruda

September 14
9:00 – 13:00 – A look back at Vilnius from Poland

- Program and course overview
- Exploration of themes and ideas from readings and Vilnius
- Exploring photography and sites of memory

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

Free Afternoon

18:00 – Evening program with the Borderland Foundation

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


September 15
Full day program with the Borderland Foundation

Required Readings


September 16 9:00 – 13:00 – Memory, Forgetting and Reconciliation

Class Working Session and Discussions

Required Readings


September 17 – From Sejny to Krynki and Kruszyniany

September 17 8:30 – Depart from Krasnogruda for Krynki

10:30 – 12:00 – Introduction and Study Tour of Krynki – Part I
- Stop at the Tannery
- Brief slide show of pre-war Krynki at the Caucasus Synagogue
- Walking Tour of Jewish Krynki and the central square

12:00 – 13:00 – Lunch break at the Gospoda pod Modrzewiem, Plac Jagielloński 6, 16-120 Krynki, tel. 085 -722-80-69, kom. 0512-273-820

13:00 – 14:30 – Study Tour of Krynki – Part II – Byelorussian Krynki
- Visit the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Cemetery

15:00 – Travel to Kruszyniany

15:30 – 17:30 – Visit the Tatar Mosque and Cemetery in Kruszyniany

17:30 – Transfer to hotel

Dworek Pod Lipami
Kruszyniany 51
18:30 – Dinner

19:30 – Film and Discussion – Identity and the Politics of Memory on the Polish – Byelorussian Borderlands with Joanna Czaban, Byelorussian journalist and local activist.

Required Readings


“Polish Muslims condemn 'hooliganism' after mosque attack,” TheNews.pl, July 1, 2014.


Recommended Readings


“Krinki, the tannery town, in creativity and struggle,” Translated by Eszter Andor, Memorial Book of Krynki (Poland), Published in Tel Aviv by Former Residents of Krynki in Israel and the Diaspora, 1970, pp: 68 – 93.


September 18 – September 20, 2014 – Lublin

September 18
9:00 – Depart from Kruszyniany
14:00 – Check into hotel

Dom na Podwalu Hotel
ul. Podwale 15
Lublin
Tel: +48 81 532 41 38

16:00 – Guided visit of the exhibition “Lublin. Memory of the Place at the "Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre" Centre

Free Evening

September 19
10:00 – 10:30 – Introduction to the activities of the "Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre" Centre
10:30 – 12:00 – The Jewish Heritage of Lublin Educational Workshop
12:00 – 13:30 – Tour of the former Jewish Quarter and the Yeshiva building
13:30 – 16:00 – Lunch break and preparations for presentations
16:00 – 17:00 – Student presentations

September 20
Depart from Lublin

Check into accommodation in Warsaw
Wilcza 25/4
00-544 Warsaw

Orientation of Warsaw Program and discussion of the readings
**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**

Marc P. Smith “Karski,” 2009

Part II – From the Metropolis on the Odra to Krakow, Berlin, Prague, Sluknov and Dresden – September 28 – December 13, 2014

October 6
10:00 – 13:00 – Field Study: The Polish Soldiers' Monument/Monument of Shared Memory/the Grabiszyń Cemetery/the New Jewish Cemetery in Wroclaw

Class Working Session and Discussions

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings


R. M. Douglas, ORDERLY AND HUMANE: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War (Available at IISCE)

October 9 – October 12, 2014 – Prague, Sluknov, Dresden

October 9
Depart Wroclaw for Prague in the afternoon

Evening Program in Prague

October 10
Study Day in Prague

October 11
Prague Program
Sluknov and Europe’s Roma

Evening Arrival at Dresden

Free evening in Dresden

October 12

9:00 – Meet in lobby for Dresden program with Janosch Pastewka

9:30 – 11:30 – Visit the Militärhistorische Museum der Bundeswehr (The Military History Museum)

11:30 – 12:30 – Break

13:00 – 14:00 – Guided visit of the New Synagogue in Dresden

15:30 – 17:00 - Visit the Dresden Frauenkirche, including a climb to the dome and the lantern

18:30 – Depart for Wroclaw

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


October 17 – October 19, 2014 – Krakow

October 17

8:30 – departure from Wroclaw

13:00 - 13:30 – Tour of the Museum of Galician Jews

13:30 - 16:30 – Tour of Kazimierz
16:30 - 17:30 – Break
17:30 - 19:30 – Introductory Tour of Krakow and Wawel Castle
Free evening in Krakow

October 18
7:30 - Depart from Krakow
9:00 – 15:00 – Study Tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum
15:30 - 17:00 – Food and reflections with reconciliation volunteers at the Café Bergson, located in the 100-year old Kluger Family House in the town of Oswiecim
Free Day in Krakow
17:00 - Departure for Wroclaw

October 19:

Required Readings:


Marcin Sobczyk, “Europe News: Kaczynski to be buried next to kings --- Poland’s unity over dead president fractures, as opponents criticize plans to inter him in Krakow's Wawel Castle," *Wall Street Journal*, Europe, Apr 14, 2010, p. 7

Recommended Readings:


**October 24 – October 26, 2014 – Berlin**

**October 24**

8:00 – Departure for Berlin

Visit to the Berlin Wall Memorial and guided visit to the former STASI (East German Secret Police) prison

**October 25**

Hotel check-In and free evening

10:00 – 11:00 – Visit to the Bundestag

11:00 – 14:00 – Visit to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and other memorials

**October 26**

Free Afternoon and evening in Berlin

Free Day in Berlin

Afternoon departure for Wroclaw

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended:**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>10:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Reflecting on Krakow, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Berlin in Wroclaw</td>
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<td>- Exploration of themes, ideas, from readings and site visits from</td>
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<td>Krakow, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Berlin</td>
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<td>- Working Session on Urban Labs Group Assignments</td>
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<td>- Progress reports and group feedback on research projects</td>
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<td>November 10</td>
<td>10:00 – 16:00</td>
<td>Opposing and Remembering Communism (Wroclaw)</td>
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<td>- 10:00 – 12:00 Visit and Discussion at IPN</td>
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<td>- 13:00 – 14:00 - The Orange Alternative</td>
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<td>- 14:00 – 16:00 – Working Session</td>
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**Required Readings:**


**Recommended:**


| December 8 | 10:00 – 13:00 | Final Presentations |

Additional Bibliographical Resources for Research Papers


Ruth Gruber, Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe, University of California Press, 2002


Eva Hoffman, After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust, Public Affairs, 2005


Brett Klopp, German Multiculturalism: Immigrant Integration and the Transformation of Citizenship, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002


Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe", New York Review of Books,


Czeslaw Milosz, Return to Krakow, 1980


Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, Communities of Memory, in Frames of Remembrance, New Brunswick, 1994, (pp. 47-67)