

Cultural and Social Modernization in Central Europe: Resurrecting Civil Society and Generational Change

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Spring 2007

Course description:

The course introduces students into the topic of transition from one type of political and economic regime (state socialism) to another (parliamentary democracy and capitalism). It does so within the context of a theory of social and cultural modernization, while specifically focusing on the modernization (de-modernization, re-modernization) processes in the sphere of public life and civic engagement. The concepts of civil society and generational conflict are central to our discussion, and the perspective of analysis is sociological. The course concentrates upon everyday cultural forms, social interactions and experience, rather than institutions and political ideas. One of the goals of the course is to inform students about the character of everyday life during state socialism, and thus cultivate their historical sensitivity, i.e., sensitivity to the peculiar interplay between institutional discontinuities and social or cultural continuities. In this respect, the generational perspective of analysis will be particularly useful. Examples will be taken from the Central European national contexts (Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, East Germany), and tentative comparisons will be made in order to stress some differences among these countries and their recent social histories.

Requirements for classes: knowledge of assigned texts, position paper on each assigned text, active participation in class discussions.

Final exam: essay on a chosen topic (must be consulted with the teacher), 1.400 to 1.600 words; will be assigned individually on or before April 24, deadline for submission is May 17 (detailed information will be given to students during the semester, but not later than on April 24).

Performance in classes (seminar discussions) will be taken into account for the final grade.

Block I: THE MODERN VISION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

February 20, 2007

1.-2. Introduction to the course: outline of the concept of civil society in the context of modernization

assigned reading:

*Jeffrey C. Alexander: "Civil Society I, II, III: Constructing an Empirical Concept from Normative Controversies and Historical Transformations" (in: J.C. Alexander [ed.]: *Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalization*. London: SAGE Publications 1998, pp. 1-12)

*Bryan Turner: "Outline of a Theory of Citizenship" (in: Chantal Mouffe [ed.]: *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*. London: Verso 1992, pp. 33-62)

Block II: CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

March 6, 2007

3. Contemporary revival of the concept of civil society

assigned reading:

*Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato: "The Contemporary Revival of Civil Society" (in: Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato: *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 1992, pp. 29-82)

4. Civil society and democratic transitions: Shifting meanings of civil society in the transition process

assigned reading:

*Radim Marada: "Civil Society: Adventures of the Concept before and after 1989" (in: *Czech Sociological Review*. Praha: ČAV 1997, pp. 3-22.)

Movie (Pelíšky)

Block III: HERITAGE OF THE PAST

March 20, 2007

5. Forms of opposition before 1989: dissent, grey zone, islands of positive deviation

assigned reading:

*Václav Havel: "Anti-Political Politics" (in: John Keane [ed.]: *Civil Society and the State*. London: Verso 1993, pp. 381-398)

6. State Socialism and Civil Society (was there any?)

assigned reading:

*Michal Buchowski: "The shifting meanings of civil and civic society in Poland" (in: Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn [eds.]: *Civil society: Challenging western models*. London: Routledge 1996, pp. 79-98.)

Movie (Pupendo)

Block IV: AFTER 1989 – CIVIC CULTURE AND DIVIDED MEMORIES

April 3, 2007

7. Social and cultural sources of public engagement

assigned reading:

*Piotr Sztompka: "Mistrusting Civility: Predicament of a Post-Communist Society" (in: J.C. Alexander [ed.]: *Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalization*. London: SAGE Publications 1998, pp. 191-210.)

*Melanie Tatur: "Why is There No Women's Movement in Eastern Europe?" (in: Paul G. Lewis [ed.]: *Democracy and Civil Society in Eastern Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press 1992, pp. 61-75.)

8. Civic or ethnic: traumatic memory, re-birth of nations, and generational experience

assigned reading:

*Outhwaite, William and Ray, Larry: "Modernity, Memory, and Postcommunism". In: Outhwaite, William and Ray, Larry. 2005. *Social Theory and Postcommunism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 176-196

Movie (Kolja or Horem Pádem)

Block V: "NEW" GENERATIONS: Revolution and Nostalgia

April 24, 2007

9. Revolution and Emerging Generational Conflict

assigned reading:

*Radim Marada: "Social Construction of Youth and Formation of Generational Awareness after 1989" (in: Petr Mareš [ed.]: *Society, Reproduction and Contemporary Challenges*. Brno: Barrister & Principal, 2004, pp. 149-169)

10. Nostalgia through consumption

assigned reading:

*Jonathan Bach: "The Taste Remains: Consumption, (N)ostalgia, and the Production of East Germany (In: *Public Culture* 2002, 14(3): pp. 545-556)

Evening: movie (Good Bye Lenin or t.b.a.)

Assignment of the final essay: due May 17

May 8, 2007 – National Holiday: NO CLASS

Block VI: RESUMÉ

May 22, 2007

11. Post-Communist Modernization

assigned reading:

*Paul Blokker: "Post-Communist Modernization, Transition Studies, and Diversity in Europe" In: *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2005/8 (4), pp. 503-525

12. Make Up Session

No reading: general discussion of final essays, evaluation of class

May 29, 2007

Students are informed about their exam results (grades) through the *Information System* of the Masaryk University.