

CHANGING IDENTITIES IN POST-COLD WAR CENTRAL EUROPE

Spring 2014
Masaryk University in Brno

The seminar focuses on the cultural production and reproduction of identities in East-Central Europe, especially after the end of state-socialism, in order to reveal various cultural patterns of continuity and change. The course starts with a brief overview of theoretical approaches and historical legacies, and continues with the exploration of various forms of identities as they are presented and discussed in empirical case studies and ethnographic accounts.

The format of the course is a combination of brief lectures and a controlled discussion of various assigned readings. The students should be prepared to give concise presentations on the readings during the class meetings and carry out focused research tasks between them. The class convenes on the Thursdays of March 6, March 13, March 27, April 3, April 17, and April 24 between 11.30 and 14.45 (that is, in a 2+1 week rhythm). Please note that the enrollment of only those students will be considered final who are present in the first class session on March 6.

1	March 6	11.30–13.00	Introduction: cultural and political theories of identity
2	March 6	13.15–14.30	Cultural geographies of East-Central Europe
3	March 13	11.30–13.00	Nationalism and national minorities
4	March 13	13.15–14.30	Race and ethnicity: ascribed and adopted identities
5	March 27	11.30–13.00	History, memory and forgetting: reworking identities
6	March 27	13.15–14.30	Religious revival and emerging fundamentalism
7	April 3	11.30–13.00	Citizenship: exclusion and inclusion
8	April 3	13.15–14.30	Property, personhood, and community: selves and identities
9	April 17	11.30–13.00	Class cultures: vocational identity, flexibility, and mobility
10	April 17	13.15–14.30	Leisure, consumption, and situational identities
11	April 24	11.30–13.00	Gendered and generational identities
12	April 24	13.15–14.30	Rethinking the family: feminism and anti-feminism
	May 15	12:00	<i>Final papers due</i>
	May 22	12:00	<i>Final grades are posted to the Information System</i>

The assigned readings are made available through the university information system (IS MU). However, thorough knowledge of additional literature might be required to complete the research tasks. The main source of case studies and ethnographic accounts are the following books: Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next* (Princeton University Press, 1996); David D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Cornell University Press, 1998); Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery, eds., *Uncertain Transition* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); and Daphne Berdahl, Matti Bunzl, and Martha Lampland, eds., *Altering States* (University of Michigan Press, 2000).

The course grades will be based on written work and class attendance. Active participation in the class discussions and *in-class presentations* based on the course readings will account for 30 percent; the timely completion of *brief research assignments* for 30 percent; and writing a *final essay* for 40 percent of the grade. The deadline of submitting the final paper, in an electronic format, is at noon on Thursday, May 15.

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