

CHANGING IDENTITIES IN POST-COLD WAR CENTRAL EUROPE

Spring 2013

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 every second week on Thursdays between 12.00 and 15.30.

1	February 28	12.00–13.30	Introduction: cultural and political theories of identity
2	February 28	14.00–15.30	Cultural geographies of East-Central Europe
3	March 14	12.00–13.30	Nationalism and national minorities
4	March 14	14.00–15.30	Race and ethnicity: ascribed and adopted identities
5	March 28	12.00–13.30	History, memory and forgetting: reworking identities
6	March 28	14.00–15.30	Religious revival and emerging fundamentalism
7	April 11	12.00–13.30	Citizenship: exclusion and inclusion
8	April 11	14.00–15.30	Property, personhood, and community: selves and identities
9	April 25	12.00–13.30	Class cultures: vocational identity, flexibility, and mobility
10	April 25	14.00–15.30	Leisure, consumption, and situational identities
11	May 9	12.00–13.30	Gendered and generational identities
12	May 9	14.00–15.30	Rethinking the family: feminism and anti-feminism
	May 23		<i>Final papers due</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 23.

Budapest, February 28, 2013

Miklós Vörös

miklos.voros@gmail.com

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STUDY GROUPS AND PRESENTATIONS

As the number of students registered and enrolled for the course this semester is unusually high, students are required to form study groups of three to four members. These groups will focus on one of the topics below and prepare a 30 to 40-minute presentation based on the guidance of the course instructor. These in-class presentations will include a comparative review of two to four course readings, paying a special attention to the specific interpretations of 'identity' in these readings. The study fields to choose from are the following, mostly in line with the course topics:

1. Nationalism and national minorities
2. Race and ethnicity
3. Memory and forgetting: selected past
4. Religiosity and fundamentalism
5. European and regional identities
6. Citizenship
7. Property and identity
8. Labor and vocational identities
9. Leisure and consumer identities
10. Gendered and generational identities

In certain cases, additional readings will be assigned and sent to the study groups to enhance the comparative perspective of their presentation.

In the break after the first lecture you are supposed to form study groups and choose from the above study fields. Selections are made on a first come, first serve basis.