

1989 in Eastern Europe

(History 300/ver. 2.2)

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Tu/Th 1:30-2:45

or by appointment

Introduction

This course provides history majors with an introduction to the techniques of the historian, including the reading of historical texts, research methods, historiography (the history of history), the various analytical frameworks used by historians today, and the writing of analytical historical prose. We will attack all of these goals by focusing on the history of one particular moment—the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and its immediate aftermath, including the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

This means we'll be considering a very complex set of events spread over eight countries. To make life easier for you, when the time comes for your final project, you can focus in on just one country if you like. But you still have to consider that country in the context of the regional developments.

I am the Principal Investigator for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant called *Making the History of 1989: Sources and Narratives on the Fall of Communism*. The goal of this grant is to create a major website for students and teachers on the events we'll be working on in this course (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989>). That means that you will have access to all the resources we are developing at the Center for History and New Media (<http://chnm.gmu.edu>) and will have the opportunity to learn about how digital media are transforming the historian's craft.

Finally, this course is part of a two-semester sequence I've created on the collapse of Communism in 1989—the other course being a section of the senior seminar (History 499) that I'll be teaching the spring 2008 term.

Study Tours

I am leading two study tours related to this course (and my 499 section in the spring). The first is the *Great Cities of East Central Europe* tour that goes to Prague, Vienna, and Budapest in January 2008. This is a three-credit course in just two weeks. During Spring Break I'll be leading a study tour (for one credit) to Prague and Dresden, two epicenters of the protest movements of 1989. Students in my section are encouraged (but obviously not required) to take part in this tour, as it will significantly enrich the work of the seminar.

Seminars

This class is a seminar, which means that you must come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings or other assignments. A seminar works best when each participant is a contributor. I have very high expectations of each student in the class because this course is your preparation for the more difficult work that will come later in your 300 and 400 level history courses. If you aren't carrying your weight, it will be apparent to everyone in class and to you when you receive your grades.

Special Features of the Course

The first special feature of this course we will be using the research and bibliographic plug-in for the Firefox web browser called *Zotero* (<http://zotero.org>). Zotero allows you to save, annotate, and share citations, notes, and other material from the Internet in real time. Zotero is a free, open source product developed here at the Center for History and New Media and is rapidly replacing older and less agile bibliographic software products. If you are already using *EndNote* or some similar package, your library can be transferred directly into Zotero, or you can just use Zotero for this course.

The second special feature is a focus on digital history. We will also spend a fair amount of time—more than would be the case in most other sections of this course—learning to maximize the available digital resources, both as users and as creators of digital historical content.

Weekly Pattern of Activity

Each week will follow a generally similar pattern. You must complete a set of assigned readings or tasks *before class* and come to class prepared to discuss the questions I pose to you about those readings or tasks. Our class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays and you will be expected to post a weekly entry into our class weblog no later than midnight on the Sunday before the first class of the week, thereby giving everyone in class a chance to read your weblog entry before coming to class. That way, we will all arrive in class knowing at least something about what each person thought about the assignments.

We will spend much of our class time discussing what you read or did. The rest of the time will be devoted to the analysis of different historical sources I provide, the presentation of work in progress, or, later in the semester, the presentation of your final work.

Grading

Grades in this class will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	15%
Weblog entries	15%
Wikipedia entry	5%
Digital work	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Draft of final essay	15%
Final essay	30%

Required Readings

I have only ordered four books for the course, but we will be reading many more articles and primary sources. All of the books are in the University bookstore (and can also be purchased from various online vendors for attractive prices). All four of these books are mandatory:

Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*

Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*

Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism*

Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*

Assignments

Every week you will be expected to post to our class weblog, and I will provide you with a fair amount of guidance on what sorts of contributions I will expect from you with regard to these postings.

You will produce an annotated bibliography for the research essay that you are writing, using *Zotero*.

You will write an entry for *Wikipedia* on some aspect of the events of 1989, or will substantially edit an existing entry (more on this in class).

You will do some digital history work that can take many different forms depending on your personal interest (more on this in class).

Last, but not least, you will write a substantial research paper – that is, one that is one that is between 10-15 pages in length.

- A first (and complete) draft of this essay is due on **November 9**.
- The final essay is due on the last day of class (at the beginning of class, not after). ***Late essays will not be accepted*** and will receive an “F”, which means you are almost certain to fail the class if you hand in your paper late. Why am I so firm on this deadline? It is because 18 students are enrolled in this seminar and so for me to give your essays the attention they deserve in the grading process, I must have them in my hands in plenty of time.

The drafts and the final essays will be graded using the following criteria:

1. Construction of an original historical thesis;
2. Use of primary sources in support of thesis statement;
3. The degree to which the work is situated appropriately in the existing literature of secondary sources, produced by historians as well as scholars in other disciplines (depending on your topic);
4. The synthesis of diverse sources and the sophistication of the historical analysis;
5. How well the work is linked to larger political, social, and cultural issues appropriate to the topic;

6. How well knowledge and skills acquired in other disciplinary contexts (where applicable) is integrated into the work;
7. The organization of the presentation and the quality of the written narrative.

You will also make a 10-minute oral presentation of your work during one of the last class periods. Your presentations will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. The degree to which you present your work in a clear and organized manner;
2. Your ability to handle questions from the audience;
3. How well you complete the presentation's essential elements within the allotted time;
4. How well you engage and maintain the audience's attention.

The grade for your oral presentation will be factored into the grade for the final essay. The writing assignments for this course help to complete the writing intensive requirements for the History major.

Annotated Bibliography

This semester you need to produce an annotated bibliography for your final essay. This annotated bibliography is due on **October 26**. Along with the bibliography itself, you must turn in a copy of your Zotero database folder for this course, so that I can examine your choices of keywords, the notes you have taken on their sources, and other information in the database.

Following the submission of this bibliography, you will make a brief presentation to the seminar in which you describe for the class the decisions you made in constructing your database (why you used particular fields, keywords, etc.) and how those decisions effected your research as you progressed through the literature.

Everyone must submit a final version of their Zotero database folder for this course along with the research essay.

Course policies (please read them all)

Attendance: Because this is a seminar, I place a high premium on arriving on time. Unlike a lecture course, where you can slip in late, in a seminar, it is the height of bad manners to show up while someone else is speaking, disturbing his or her train of thought. Please extend the same courtesy to others that you would expect when you are the one speaking. Also, because class participation is a substantial portion of your grade, you should plan to attend each and every class this semester. How can you participate if you aren't in class?

ADA: Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me to make necessary accommodations (before September 28 please). Students should present appropriate verification from the Disability Resource Center.

Medical and Other Excuses: Every semester someone is forced to miss either an

examination or the due date for an assignment either as the result of an illness or a family emergency. If you find yourself in this situation, fairness to all students in the class requires the proper documentation, without which your excuses will not be accepted. If you need to know more about this process consult me as soon as the emergency is taken care of.

Plagiarism and Cheating: In my courses all students are responsible for adhering to the highest standard of behavior when it comes to honesty and plagiarism. I expect each individual to adhere to these standards so that every member of the class knows that his or her work is being held to an equal standard. If one student cheats, all students in the class suffer. Even worse, however, is the fact that the student who cheats is hurting him or herself. When you are cheating, you are not learning and the reason you are here is to learn.

In addition to my own high expectations when it comes to academic honesty, the University also expects students to demonstrate a high code of personal honor when it comes to academic work. Please re-read the George Mason University Honor Code. If you have any questions about what is expected of you in this regard. Penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, including, but not limited to failing the assignment, failing the course, many hours of community service, suspension or even expulsion from the University. If you have any questions about these policies, please come talk to me in my office.

Plagiarism and cheating are much easier in the digital age. It is an unfortunate fact that since I began teaching here in 2001 a number of my Mason students have felt free to follow those rules that suit them and ignore those that don't. As a result, I use the database service Turnitin.com. Since I began using Turnitin.com the number of cases I have reported to the Honor Committee on an annual basis has dropped. If I (or the software) come across work that appears to be plagiarized, I will meet with you first. If I am not satisfied with the results of our conversation, I will refer the matter to the Honor Committee for adjudication. When I refer a case to the Honor Committee I *always* recommend failure for the *course*.

Food, Drink, Tobacco: In my classes drink is permitted, but food and tobacco products of all kinds are prohibited. If you must chew, whether food or tobacco, do it before you arrive or after you leave.

Cell phone warning – everyone gets one mistake with their cell phone. If it goes off in class a second time, you have to hand it in to me and can collect it on the last day of class in December. I remember to turn mine off when I arrive in class. You can too.

Course Schedule

Note: I have listed readings by week rather than by day. This means I will expect you to have completed these readings by Tuesday so that you will be prepared to discuss them on either Tuesday or Thursday of that week.

August 28 – Class introduction

August 30 – Historiography

September 4 – Zotero workshop

September 6 – Wikipedia—Friend of Foe?

September 11 – Stokes, part I [last day to add/drop]

September 13 – Stokes, part II

September 18 – Kenney, part I

September 20 – Kenney, part II

September 25 – Rosenberg, part I

September 27 – Rosenberg, part II

October 2 – Ash

October 4 – Memoir of your choice

October 9 – **No Class – Columbus Day Switcheroo**

October 11 – Articles as assigned

October 16 – Presenting your plan/class critique

October 18 – Primary Sources as assigned

October 23 – Primary Sources as assigned

October 25 – Primary Sources as assigned

October 26 – Annotated Bibliography due by 5:00 p.m.

October 30 – Digital Work as assigned

November 1 – Digital Work as assigned

November 6 – Individual meetings

November 8 – Individual meetings

November 9 – First Draft Due by 5:00 p.m.

November 13 – Individual meetings

November 15 – No class. I'm at a conference.

November 20 – My summary of the work in progress

November 22 – No class. Thanksgiving holiday.

November 27 – Final presentations

November 29 – Final presentations

December 4 – Final presentations

December 6 – Last class. Final presentations. Class party.

December 6 – Final papers dues at the beginning of class. No exceptions!

Pronunciation Guide

You should try your best to pronounce all the names and local terms that come up during the semester. Here is a rough guide to the pronunciation of the letters/sounds that may be unfamiliar to you.

Albanian

ë	e, as in <i>germ</i>
ç	c, as in <i>cello</i>
dh	th, as in <i>that</i>
gj	dj, as in <i>adjust</i>
j	y, as in <i>yes</i>
nj	ny, as in <i>canyon</i>
rr	trilled as in Spanish
x	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
xh	dg, as in <i>edge</i>
zh	z, as in <i>azure</i>

Bulgarian/Macedonian

See: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/bulgarian.htm>

Czech/Slovak/Slovenian

c	ts as in <i>cats</i>
č	ch, as in <i>reach</i>
cz	ch, as in <i>chicken</i>
ď	dj, as in <i>bridge</i>
ě	i+e, each vocalized
ň	n as in <i>new</i>
ou	long o, as in <i>road</i>
ř	r+z, each vocalized, but together
š	sh, as in <i>she</i>
ů	oo, as in <i>zoo</i>
ž	s, as in <i>pleasure</i>

German

ö	oe – a close equivalent in English is the u in <i>shun</i>
ü	ue – a close equivalent in English is <i>ruin</i>

Hungarian

c	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
cs	ch, as in <i>change</i>
é	ay, as in <i>say</i>
gy	dg, as in <i>lodge</i>
ö	u, as in <i>curve</i>
ó	o, as in <i>joke</i>
ő	oo, as in <i>zoo</i>
s	sh, as in <i>she</i>
ss	sh+sh, each vocalized (Tessék=tesh shayk)
sz	s, as in <i>seven</i>
ü, ű	ew, as in <i>few</i> , the second longer than the first

Polish

c	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
ć	ch, as in <i>change</i>
ch	h, as in <i>hard</i>
cz	ch, as in <i>church</i>
dz	as in English, as in <i>red zone</i>
dzi	j, as in <i>jeep</i>
g	always hard, as in <i>get</i>
ł	w, as in <i>won</i>
ń	ni, as in <i>onion</i>
ó	oo, as in <i>foot</i> , not as in <i>zoo</i>
rz	hard zh, as with ž (see below)
sz	hard sh, as in <i>shot</i>
szch	both, as in <i>frensh cheese</i>
ś	sh, as in <i>shoe</i>
w	v, as in <i>village</i>
ź, ż	soft z, as in <i>Zhivago</i> —ż is harder

Serbian/Croatian

c	ts, as in <i>cats</i>
č	hard ch, as in <i>church</i>
ć	soft ch, as in <i>cheese</i>
dž	j, as in <i>June</i>
đ	dj, sort of like <i>jam</i>
j	y, as in <i>yacht</i>
lj	l, as in <i>lure</i>
nj	like the Spanish ñ
r	trilled as in Spanish
š	sh, as in <i>sheep</i>
ž	zh, as in <i>measure</i>

For the Serbian alphabet, see: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/serbo-croat.htm>