For those looking at it from the outside, Eastern Europe has often seemed a mysterious place, backward, savage, and unknowable, hidden behind the veil of what Czech novelist Milan Kundera called its “strange and scarcely accessible languages.” Even for professional historians of Western Europe, the history of Eastern Europe can seem not only strange, but esoteric, peripheral to the “proper” study of of European history. This class aims to remedy this misconception and break down the academic Iron Curtain that has kept Eastern Europe apart from the rest of the continent. Its goal is to de-mystify the history of Eastern Europe and to show how the past of this region is not merely interesting in its own right, but necessary for understanding the big themes of modern European (or indeed, global) history, including nationalism, colonialism, modernization, fascism, socialism, or the experiences of war, occupation and dictatorship.

This class concentrates on recent scholarship written about Eastern Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries. Whether your own research concentrates on Britain, France, Germany, the USSR, the United States or any other region, this class will push you to think about “Europe” differently. It will also prepare you to integrate Eastern Europe into your future teaching. It requires no previous knowledge of the history of the region and no knowledge of strange languages, only a willingness to attempt to pronounce unfamiliar names when necessary.

Grading and Assignments: Because the purpose of this course is to expose you to a new historiography, it is particularly important that you complete all reading assignments before class and contribute actively to class discussion. To help you prepare for weekly discussion, you will write a response to each week’s reading (approximately 500-750 words) and post it to the Sakai discussion board by Tuesday at noon. Your reading response should address some aspect of the question: what is this book’s argument and why is it important? Rather than simply summarizing the material, you should aim to raise important issues (whether of interpretation, methodology, sources, argument, or ideology) that will be pertinent to class discussion.

In addition, each of you will take at least one turn introducing the readings and facilitating class discussion. As part of this, you will post a series of guiding questions to Sakai for the class by noon on Tuesdays.

Grades will be based on your weekly reading responses (25%), thoughtful, engaged, and consistent participation in class discussion each week (25%), discussion facilitation (10%), and a final written project (40%).

There are two options for the final project.
Option 1= a 15-20 page historiographical essay (strongly recommended for Ph.D students). For this option, you will read 4–5 additional books on a focused topic and write about how the work in this field intersects or differs from the current state of a related field in your own region of expertise. Your topic should be one of relevance to your own work. Examples might be the history of the Second World War, everyday life under socialism, gender and nation, nationalism and politics, etc. An essential part of the exercise here is figuring out which books to choose (not simply the first ones you find, but the most influential ones).

Option 2= a curriculum development project. This could take a variety of forms. You might write a detailed plan describing how you would integrate themes from the history of Eastern Europe into your current teaching (such as a high school world history or European history class), including themes and topics, assignments, activities, and appropriate readings. You could develop an annotated syllabus for an undergraduate course on East European history. Etc.

You should consult with me about what form your project will take. All final projects will be due no later than December 22 (no extensions).

Reading: You are responsible for obtaining copies of all assigned books, whether this is through purchase, EZ-Borrow, ILL or other means. All journal articles are available via Rutgers library resources. Book chapters or sections of books will be available on Sakai.

The following books have been assigned for this course:


ISBN: 978-0804190114

**Schedule of Readings**

**September 5**  
Imagining the East (No Sakai responses necessary for today)  

**September 12**  
Nationalism and National Indifference  
Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*  

**September 19**  
Cleaning Up the Nation: Vice, Modernity and Progress  
Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Devil’s Chain*  

**September 26**  
“Backwardness” and Modernization  
Mary Neuberger, *Balkan Smoke*  

**October 3**  
Population Politics: Migration, Expulsion, Deportation  
Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure*  
Eric Weitz, “From Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights,
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Authors/Editors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>Nationalism in Power: The Interwar Decades</td>
<td>Andrea Orzoff, <em>Battle for the Castle</em></td>
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<td>October 17</td>
<td>East Europeans as Perpetrators and Victims in WWII</td>
<td>Jan T. Gross, <em>Neighbors</em></td>
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<td>Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, eds., <em>The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland</em> (Princeton UP, 2004), 93–118 (Macierewicz, Świdzia, Mac) and 220–236 (Strzemboz)</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
<td>Making New Men and Women in Stalinist EE</td>
<td>Katherine Lebow, <em>Unfinished Utopia</em></td>
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<td>October 31</td>
<td>Molding the Land: Collectivization and (Re)Settlement</td>
<td>Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman, <em>Peasants Under Siege</em></td>
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<td>November 7</td>
<td>Marriage, Family and Sexuality during State Socialism</td>
<td>Josie McClellan, <em>Love in the Time of Communism</em></td>
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<td>Kristen Ghodsee, “Pressuring the Politburo: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement and State Socialist Feminism,”</td>
<td><em>Slavic Review</em> 73 no.3 (Fall 2014): 538–562</td>
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November 14  Communist Consumerism  
Patrick Hyder Patterson, *Bought and Sold*  

November 21  no class (Thursday classes meet today)

November 28  Dissidents at Home and Abroad  
Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent*  

December 5  1989 and a “Return” to Europe?  
Philipp Ther, *Europe Since 1989: A*  

December 12  Lessons from the “Totalitarian” Past?  
Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: 20 Lessons from the 20th Century*