RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and WWI (1914-1918): Shattering Images of Modern Europe

Spring 2015

Thurs: 4:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Scott Hall 215 (43 College Avenue, New Brunswick)

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Outline: Far from being limited only to military confrontations, World War I (1914-1918) constituted a milestone that changed perceptions of and realities in modern Europe on many fronts. Its truly global origins and connotations extended not only beyond the battlefield but also beyond Europe’s territorial limitations. This class invites students to think of WWI within the context of global trajectories and by reference to socioeconomic, environmental, political, and ideological factors that gradually transformed states, communities, and individuals. Identifying new trends in the study of the period and offering an alternative periodization of the Great War, the class will start with a discussion of regional clashes that directly preceded it and, in particular, with the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). Through an examination of the secondary literature, global studies theory, and primary sources, students are expected to think of WWI by refocusing debates from Western Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean, following new directions in terms of both content and geographical scope. They are encouraged to revisit the wars in terms of issues such as minority politics, redistribution of resources, new forms of solidarity and belonging, as well as new forms of violence and atrocities in a global setting.

Students of modern Greece, in particular, are invited to address the Greek case from a comparative perspective. The Balkan Wars provided Greece with an opportunity to almost double its size and influenced profoundly the meaning of identity and nationalism among diaspora Greeks. Moreover, they radically changed regional hierarchies, creating new opportunities as well as new constraints. WWI, at the same time, sealed not only the collapse of the Ottoman Empire but also the end of Greece's expansive dreams, resulting in chaos, massacres, and massive deportations.

Course Requirements:

A) Students are expected to attend all classes prepared for a critical discussion but they do not have to do all of the readings. Each student will have to prepare only three to four weekly readings over the whole course of the semester. The course will be run in a seminar format and students will be organized in teams of three or four students. The teams will take turns in preparing the weekly readings, opening the debate by summarizing and reflecting on a few key-aspects of the weekly topic. Each team is expected to post a few relevant questions on SAKAI a day ahead of class and to prepare the rest of the participants for the debate.
B) Students are expected to write a historical essay on one of the course themes by using the suggested sources of their selection. Each essay should be 20-30 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. At the end of the semester students should give short (15 minute-long) presentations of their papers in class.

Grading:

Participation and oral presentations: 50%
Final paper: 50%

Week 1 (Jan 22)
Methodology: The Great War in the Global Perspective

Readings:

http://history.rutgers.edu/component/content/article?id=106:writing-historical-essays-a-guide-for-undergraduates

Points of Discussion:
- Goal and scope of the course: Global studies theory, traditional historiographies and the movement towards a different periodization/contextualization of the Great War.
- The Balkan Wars and the “Other” fronts.
- How to use the library/ electronic/ archival resources.
- How to write about history.

Week 2 (Jan 29)
Prelude to the Great War: Contested Memories and the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)

Readings:
Ginio, Eyal. “Mobilizing the Ottoman Nation during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913): Awakening from the Ottoman Dream.” War in History 12, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 156–77.

Points of Discussion:
- Conditions in the Ottoman Empire right before the outbreak of the wars: economic conditions, attempts to political reform, national aspirations.
- International Diplomacy and the “Eastern Question.”
Remembering and Observation: Contested images.
How to approach memoirs/travelogues.
Contextualizing subjective memory.

Suggested Sources:


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**Week 3 (Feb 5)**

**Reporting on the Balkan Wars: Old and Emerging Powers**

**Readings:**
Todorova, Maria. “War and Memory: Trotsky’s War Correspondence from the Balkan Wars.” *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 5.

**Points of Discussion:**

- Balkan alliances and antagonisms: goals, strategies, rivalries.
- “Great” and “small-power” politics.
- Newspapers and periodicals as sources: what are the stories they tell us?
- Comparative/thematic discussions of the press coverage of the wars: gender, nationhood, class, political affiliations.

**Suggested Sources:**

- Baldwin, Herbert F. *A War Photographer in Thrace; an Account of Personal Experiences during the Turco-Balkan War, 1912; with 36 Illustrations from Photographs by the Author*. London: TFUnwin, 1913.
- Chicago Defender on the Balkan Wars:
Week 4 (Feb 12)

Nationalism, Internationalization, Balkanization

Readings:

Points of Discussion:

➢ Treaties and outcomes of the Balkan Wars: demographic and territorial modifications, socioeconomic impact, ideological consequences.
➢ Developments in international law: Commissions, relief, and punishment.
➢ The diplomacy of philanthropy. Victims, victimizers, international observers.
➢ Internationalization of local conflicts: what does the international gaze offers as a historical source? Are international reports/institutions more objective?

Suggested Sources:

❖ Carnegie Report, Macedonian Muslims during the Balkan Wars, 1912: http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/1455
❖ Carnegie Report, the Greek Army and Bulgarian Peasants during the Second Balkan War, 1913: http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/1454
❖ Carnegie Report, The Serbian Army during the Second Balkan War, 1913 http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/1456

Week 5 (Feb 17)
From the Balkan Wars to the Great War (1914-1918)

Readings:


**Points of Discussion:**

- End of Empire: The Ottoman front.
- Autonomy, self-determination, violence in the context of WWI.
- Female agency: philanthropists, nurses, workers.
- Recording oral traditions, anecdotes about the War. Is there a difference between written “evidence” and “hearsay”?

**Suggested Sources:**


**Week 6 (Feb 26):** Writing week/ seminar using the library

**Week 7 (March 5):** Writing week

**Week 8 (March 12):** Writing week

**Week 9 (March 19):** Spring Recess

**Week 10 (March 26)**

Genocide on the Ottoman Front

**Readings:**


**Points of Discussion:**
➢ The Armenian genocide: Sources, interpretations, controversy.
➢ Migration to America.

➢ The United Nations Genocide Convention’s definition of genocide and the debate on intentions.
➢ Childhood in the midst of war.

Suggested Sources:

➢ American Armenian Relief Fund, and American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief. The Cry of Armenia. New York City: American Armenian Relief Fund, in cooperation with the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, 1916.

Week 11 (April 9)
The War after the War: The Greek-Turkish Confrontation

Readings:

Points of Discussion:

➢ Division of the Ottoman Empire among the victors of the war. Turkish counter-attack.
➢ The Greek-Turkish war (1921-1922). The Asia Minor Catastrophe.
➢ Occupation/liberation of Smyrna: Contested memories of war.
➢ Trauma. Nostalgia as resistance.

Suggested Sources:

http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003484258.
➢ Economos, Lysimachos. The Martyrdom of Smyrna and Eastern Christendom; a File of Overwhelming Evidence, Denouncing the Misdeeds of the Turks in Asia Minor and Showing Their Responsibility for the Horrors of Smyrna. London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1922:
http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006527876.
➢ The Greek-Turkish war in American Periodicals:
http://search.proquest.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/americanperiodicals?accountid=13626

Week 12 (April 16)
Exchange of Populations
Readings:

Points of Discussion:

➢ International Agreements after the War. Exchange of populations.
➢ Refugee resettlement and its impact on economy, culture, politics.
➢ National historiographies and collective memories.
➢ The politics of international relief.

Suggested Sources:


Week 13 (April 23): Oral Presentations
Week 14 (April 30): Oral Presentations