BOSTON UNIVERSITY
Department of International Relations

Spring Semester 2012
Course Offering CLA IR 452

TOPICS IN EUROPEAN POLITICS AND CULTURE

TOPIC: CRITICAL MOMENTS AND MEMORY

Class Hours: Mondays 2-5pm
Location: IRB 102

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IR 452  TOPICS IN EUROPEAN POLITICS AND CULTURE

Professor Vivien A. Schmidt

Course Description: Explores European politics through the lens of culture, using materials from literature, film, and the social sciences, including live sessions with European writers/artists.

Topic: Critical Moments and Memory in Europe, including the shadows cast by the Spanish Civil War, the Holocaust, the Cold War and post-Communist transitions, as well as economic dislocations and immigrations.

Instructor permission required, juniors and seniors only.

COURSE CONTENT:
This course had its genesis in a grant from the European Commission Delegation in Washington D.C. to Boston University’s Institute for Human Sciences and the Center for International Relations in the Department of International Relations in the College of Arts and Sciences. The grant, EU for You, had a range of events including a high profile writers and artists series that brings in prominent European novelists, poets, and filmmakers for presentations and conversations. The course will use the tapes of a number of these events, along with the creative works of the artists in question. But it will also use materials from a wide range of disciplines—literature, film, art, politics, history, sociology, and philosophy—to focus in on its object of study: Critical Moments and Memory.

Critical moments, whether affecting large numbers of people in times of upheaval or individuals at crucial times in their lives, and memory, involving how they are remembered—and reinterpreted—over time, have been the subject of wide interest across disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. This is because memories of critical moments can change over time as individuals think about and rethink their experiences at the same time that subsequent generations may have different reactions to, and interpretations of, the memories of their parents and grandparents. How, why, and when such memories change have been the subject of literary and artistic representation or visual performance as well as the topic of political and sociological investigation or philosophical discussion.

The course will focus on a number of major historical moments that have been the subjects of public interest and concerns as well as the objects of study in the humanities and social sciences. Sessions on each historical moment will contain material from the arts—fiction, poetry, film, and/or art—to engage with the critical moment and memory from the most personal of levels. It will also use material from the social sciences—history, sociology and/or political science—and philosophy to provide a more distanced analysis of the moment, the memory, and the art that recreates and reinterprets the moment and memory.
The choice of historical moments is dictated not so much by the time period as by the memories that remain pertinent to contemporary European writers and artists. This is why we explore major historical moments like the Spanish Civil War for the Spaniards through novels, film, art, and literary history; WWII and the Holocaust for the Germans, the French, the Italians and, of course, the Jewish victims, through novels, film, philosophy, and history; May ’68 for the French by contrast with the Czechs through posters, photographs, political science, and historical commentary; and the Fall of the Berlin Wall for the East Germans and East Europeans through history, film, novels, poetry, and political science. We will also, however, explore the spillover effects from major economic transformations in Europe and how these relate to memories of migration and economic dislocation using novels and film as well as political science. Here, we consider contemporary East Europeans moving to the UK to find jobs, we discover post-1989 Italians’ travel to Albania to exploit Albanian dreams of American emigration, and Swedes’ collective memories of labor conflict and subsequent cooperation in the 1930s. Lastly, we explore more recent critical moments and memories with respect to the Balkans, and dreams of a European future.

The course design is deliberately multi-disciplinary. The questions asked, however, are primarily taken from the disciplinary perspective of political science and international relations. This means that class discussion will focus less, for example, on character development, literary style, and aesthetic value than on historical context, philosophical dilemmas, social and cultural impact, and political effects. The final paper is designed to have students bring together these multi-disciplinary materials in a sustained examination of a topic of interest to them focused on one or another of the critical moments considered in the course.

The course will add richness to the offerings of international relations and political science, by bringing in (seldom used) materials from across the humanities and social sciences. It is also intended to be a capstone course in the proposed, new European Studies Major and Minor, and a prototype of the kinds of capstone courses that will be developed across participating departments.

**Course Outline:**

Introduction: How to Think about Critical Moments and Memory
1. Spanish Civil War and the Franco Era
2. World War II and the Holocaust
   a. Germany and Austria
   b. France and Italy
3. May ’68 in Paris and Prague
4. Fall of the Berlin Wall and Post-Communist Transitions
5. Contemporary Immigration and Economic Dislocations
6. The Balkans: Reconstructions and Memories of Loss
7. Northern European Memories and European dreams
8. Class presentations of final papers
COURSE READINGS:
All the books are available in the bookstore: Barnes and Noble. They will also be on reserve in the library. Reading the works of fiction in the original language strongly recommended, where possible. In addition to the required books, there will be numbers of articles, essays, and excerpts from performances, podcasts, and the like—see the syllabus course outline and readings below. The books to be read in full are as follows:

Required (in bookstore):
Art, David *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* New York: Cambridge Univ. Press 2006.
Atxaga, Bernardo *The Accordionist’s Son* Graywolf Press, 2009
Debeljak, Ales *Twilight of Idols: The Tragedy of Yugoslavia and Individualism*
Galloway, Steven *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, 2004
Petterson, Per *Out stealing horses* Graywolf Press, 2005
Ross, Kristin *May 68 and its Afterlives* Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2004
Schlink, Bernard *The Reader (Der Vorlese)* New York: Vintage, 2008
Tournier, Michel *The Ogre (Le Roi des Aulnes)* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997
Wagner, Sarah *To know where he lies*, U of California Press, 2008

Recommended (in bookstore):
Harris, Robert *Fatherland* Random House, 1992
Nemirovsky, Irène *Suite Française* Knopf 2006
Suri, Jeremi *The Global Revolutions of 1968* Norton 2007
Cercas, Javier *Soldiers of Salamis* Bloomsbury Press, 2004

For list of films, see course assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
This course will be run as a seminar. Students are expected to do all the readings and to be prepared to discuss them. No laptops allowed in class, except when students have a presentation.

There will be one short paper (worth 30 percent of the grade) and a final paper (worth 50 percent). Students will also be expected to provide one or two oral presentation in
addition to a final class report on their paper (worth 10 percent), plus attend class regularly and participate in discussions (worth 10 percent of the grade).

The short (5 to 7 page) paper may be an in-depth discussion of any one of the sets of readings up until the 1990s, using the non-fictional readings to lend insight into the fictional ones. The paper (20 to 25 pages) will be a research paper focused on a theme of interest to the student related to critical moments and memory in any given period studied, but will build on the analytic readings in the class, using them as tools for analysis. The oral presentation will be a report based on readings from the syllabus and presented in class (10-15 minute presentation). In the last class of the course, students will give an oral presentation of the issues developed in their papers.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean’s Office has requested that you be informed of the following: The last day you may drop the course without a W grade is Feb. 21. The last day you may drop the course with a W grade is March 30. You are responsible for knowing the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code (copies are available in CAS 105). Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Deans’ Office.
 COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: (Jan. 24)

Introduction: How to Think about Critical Moments and Memory
Course Organization, Course Themes, and Class Discussion of the main questions to be addressed.


Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, Claudio Fogu, (2006) The politics of memory in postwar Europe  Chapter 1

Mary Fullbrook, Historical Theory: ways of Imagining the Past New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 1-50

http://books.google.com/books?id=DdhD_XY4lkC&pg=RA1-PA198&lpg=RA1-PA198&dq=Mary+Fulbrook+Historical+Theory&source=bl&ots=jnGZXY45F1&sig=bKPPtFLfLOBKHP-stjPwWgDhQ&hl=en&ei=S4-qSSCvMiBDIAPmN3MBg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2#v=one page&q=&f=false


Session 2 (Jan 30)

1. Spanish Civil War and the Franco Era


**Audiovisual podcast of Atxaga at BU (May 4, 2009): see BUniverse.


http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsW6i2xRJjM

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPuDiTu-OT8

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyFipHgpdWKY

Recommended novels:

André Malraux, Man’s hope Modern Library, 1984

Javier Cercas, Soldiers of Salamis Bloomsbury Press, 2004

Recommended films (try to watch at least one):

“La Guerre Est Finie” Directed by Alain Resnais, with Yves Montand, Ingrid Thulin, Genevieve Bujold and Michel Piccoli— Director: Jorge Semprun 1966

(download from Netflix)
Pan’s Labyrinth (El Laberinto del Fauno), DVD, Directed by Guillermo del Toro (2007; Belchite, Zaragoza, Aragón, Spain--demonstrated the individual memories of the Fascist soldiers in support of Franco’s ideals during the war (order from Netflix)

“Los Girasoles Ciegos” (“Blind Sunflowers”), Lorenzo’s only memory of the Franco Era involved his father in constant hiding because of his radical Republican ideals that would bring him to his death if discovered. (Rent from video store)

2. World War II and the Holocaust

Session 3 (Feb. 6)

a. Germany and Austria


Required Film on remembering (or not) the Holocaust in Germany

“The Nasty Girl” film (Das Schreckliche Mädchen) 1991 Starring: Barbara Gallauer, Elisabeth Bertram Director: Michael Verhoeven (order from Netflixs)

Session 4 (Feb 13) (reschedule)****

Germany and Austria (continued)


**Videotape of Schlink’s discussion of the 60s generation memories and the problems of history (Find on BUniverse)


Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments, and the Legacy of the Third Reich University of California Press, 2000 (Chapters 1, 5 pp. 1-48, 143-74. (on reserve)

Recommended Readings:

W. G. Sebald, Austerlitz Random House, 2001

Robert Harris, The Fatherland Random House, 1992
**Recommended Films:**
*The Reader* with Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes; Director: Stephen Daldry. 2008
(Download on Netflix, Amazon video on demand, iTunes)

*Exodus*

*Schindler’s List*

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Session 5 (Feb 27)

**b. France**

Tournier, Michel *The Ogre (Le Roi des Aulnes)* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997


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**Recommended readings:**
Irène Nemirovsky, *Suite Française* Knopf 2006

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**Required Film:** on remembering (or not) the Vichy period


**Recommended Film:** Lucie Aubrac, Women in the Resistance

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Session 6 (March 5) (reschedule)****

**c. Italy**

Fogu, Claudio, “Italiani Brava Gente: The Legacy of Fascist Historical Culture on Italian Politics of Memory” in *Politics of Memory* ed. Lebow, pp. 147-176


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**Required Films:**
on the Italian Fascist period:

“Garden of the Finzi-Contini.” Italian film. Starring: Dominique Sanda, Lino Capolicchio Director: Vittorio De Sica, 1971 (rent from local video store)
on today with flashbacks:

“La Finestra di Fronte” Italian film. Starring: Giovanna Mezzogiorno, Massimo Girotti; Director: Ferzan Zpetek 2003 (order from Netflix, watch through Amazon video on demand)

**Recommended Film:** “Life is Beautiful”
Session 7 (Mar. 19)

3. **May ’68 in Paris and Prague**

   Posters of Paris, May ’68. (slideshow in class).
   Check out websites: [http://www.art-for-a-change.com/Paris/paris.html](http://www.art-for-a-change.com/Paris/paris.html)
   [http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/exhibitions/posters/index.htm](http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/exhibitions/posters/index.htm)

   Czech photographer: Josef Koudelka, Photographs of Prague, May ’68:
   and use search mechanism for Prague Spring and Koudelka. (see also Paris May 1968) [www.magnumphotos.com](http://www.magnumphotos.com)

   Download as pdf from Google Scholar or ejournals

   See also: [http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/cohnbendit2/English](http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/cohnbendit2/English)


   **Recommended Readings:**


   Mavis Gallant, *Paris Notebooks*

   Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, 1967

   **Recommended film:**

   *La Chinoise*, Jean-Luc Godard, director; with Jean Pierre Léaud, Juliet Berto (Order from Netflix)

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Session 8 (Mar 26) (Reschedule)*****

4. **Fall of the Berlin Wall and Post-Communist Transitions**


Liliana Ursu, Romanian poet: Clips from interview and poetry reading, about forbidden words under Communism such as ‘loneliness’; see BUniverse

**Recommended Film:** Man of Iron (1981) directed by Andrzej Wajda. A fictional film documenting Solidarity's recognition as a legal party (filmed during the one year before martial law). It's interesting to see how the various characters choose to remember the roles they played under the communist regime and how they decide to identify themselves in what they hope will be a more open society.

**[Mar 26] Special Event 4-6pm Europe in Crisis**

**[Mar 27] Special Event 6pm Don Patterson, Scottish Poet**

Session 9 (April 2)


Clip from Atila Bartis on his father’s arrest in Romania before moving to Hungary; (see on BUniverse)

Clip from Clemens Meyer, E German novelist, on skinheads and coming of age. (See on BUniverse)

Wolf Biermann and Marianne Birthler "The Party has a Thousand Eyes" (See on BUniverse) [Wolf Bierman: Poet, songwriter, essayist and former East German dissident. Marianne Birthler: Head of the state-funded body which manages the archives of the former East German secret police (Stasi).]

**Required Films:** an East German response to the Fall of the Berlin Wall

*Good-bye Lenin* 2002 film-- Starring: Daniel Brühl, Katrin Saß Director: Wolfgang Becker (order from Netflix or buy from iTunes or rent from video store)

*The Lives of Others* (Das Leben der Anderen) 2006 film--Starring: Martina Gedeck, Ulrich Mühe Director: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (order from Netflix or buy from Amazon or rent from video store)

**Recommended Films:** “Where were you son?”

Session 10: (Apr 9)

5. **Contemporary Immigration and Economic Dislocations**


**Required Film:**
“It’s a Free World” British film about exploitation of immigrants in the UK
Director: Ken Loach, 2007  *(order from Amazon)*

**Recommended Films and Readings:**
“Lamerica” Italian film set in Albania.  Starring: Enrico Lo Verso, Michele Placido
Director: Gianni Amelio  1994  *(please rent from your video store)*
“Dirty Pretty Things” Stephen Frears thriller about the extreme exploitation of immigrant workers in the UK
Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*
Zadie Smith, *Whistle Teeth*

Session 11 (Apr 18) (Reschedule)*****
6. **The Balkans: Reconstructions and Memories of Loss**
Steven Galloway, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, 2004
Sarah Wagner, *To know where he lies*, U of California Press, 2008

**Recommended:**

Session 12 (Apr 23)
7. **North European Collective Memories and European Dreams**
Bo Rothstein, “The Transition from Trust to Mistrust” in *Social Traps and the Problem of Trust* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, chapter 8, pp. 167-200
Per Petterson, *Out stealing horses*  Graywolf Press, 2005

**Required Film:**  “L'Auberge Espagnole” a Cedric Klapisch film
(order from Netflix, buy on Amazon)

Session 13 (Apr 30)  Papers due
Class presentations of final papers for discussion