

Faculty of Arts
Department of Geography

GEOG 493
Contemporary Europe:
Identity and Geopolitics

Dec. 2011 version; minor changes possible.

The table of contents of the course reader is up on my website as a separate file. The reader is very similar to last year's version

Class meets: Tue, Thu 11-12:30, Room Geog. 201

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Office hours: Tue. 3-4pm.

Brief course description: The objectives of this class are two-fold. First, the course explores some of the key concepts and questions that animate political and cultural practices today: questions about community and difference, territories and borders, security and danger. The lectures will focus empirically on Europe, but the issues they explore are at the heart of political struggles around the globe. Europe is used here as an illuminating example of broader societal processes.

Second, the course explores the complex and contested economic, political, and cultural transformations specifically in Europe. For example, it analyzes how ideas about what is Europe or who is a European influence political debates and policy-making in the region. The course accentuates the countries and regions, such as Russia, the Caucasus, or the Mediterranean, that are often omitted from analyses of contemporary Europe and yet constitute integral parts of Europe's economy, politics, and culture.

The course is based on two lectures per week, but it also includes a small discussion component.

No prior coursework in geography or on Europe is necessary.

Readings: A course reader will be available in the bookstore.

Grading:

Mid-term exam: 25%

Final exam: 36%

Term paper: 2,500-2,700-word critical review essay (about 8-9 pages of text, instructions below): 35%

Participation: 4%

Class participation:

Given that this is a relatively small class, I plan some discussion time for every Tuesday. This can work only if people actually do the assigned readings before the class. I recommend that you do the readings for each week by Tuesday's lecture. This will help you to participate in the class discussion. Given that this is a lecture class, I will not grade your comments in the class. Rather, I will sporadically circulate an attendance sheet, which will form the basis of your participation grade.

I will set aside class time on February 14 to answer any question that you might have about the mid-term, March 6 to give some tips regarding the paper, and on April 5 to answer your questions regarding the final exam.

Final exam: TBA. The exams are not cumulative. Both are based on short essay questions.

Class schedule. This is a **tentative** schedule and it is subject to minor changes. All readings are from the course reader.

Dates	Theme	Readings
Week 1 Jan 3, 5	Multiple Europes	Jan. 6: Garton Ash 2001 (1)
Week 2 Jan. 10, 12	Europe as an idea Jan 11: Film: 'Rape of Europa'	Wolff, 1994 (2) Swift, 1729 (3)
Week 3 Jan. 17, 19	Where is Central Europe?	Brown 2006 (4) Kundera 1984 (5)
Week 4 Jan 24, 26	A 'vacuum-packed phantasmagoria?':	Shore, 2000 (6) Fraser, 1998 (7)
Week 5 Jan 31, Feb 2	EU and its neighbours	Browning, 2003 (8) Kitagawa 2011 (9)
Week 6 Feb. 7, 9	Russia and Europe	Prozorov 2007 (10) Wedel, 2000 (11)
Week 7 Feb 14, 16	NATO	No reading
Week 8 Feb. 22, 24	Break. No class	Pilgin 2003 (12)
Week 9 Feb 28, March 1	Europe's outsiders Mid-term, March 1	Koch, 2010 (13) Megoran 2005 (14)
Week 10 March 6, 8	Belonging to difference March 10: Film: 'Mirror Mirror: Northern Ireland'	Mazover, 1998 (15) Perrons, Plomien, and Kilkey, 2010 (16)
Week 11 March 13, 15	Heritage and cultural industries	Agnew 2003 (17) Russo and Sans, 2009 (18)
Week 12 March 20, 22	Making Europeans: EU standards	Dunn, 2005 (19)
Week 13	Toward a cosmopolitan	Kuus 2011 (20)

March 27, 29	Europe?	
Critical reviews due IN CLASS on March 29		
Week 14	Whose Europe?	Bialasiewicz 2008 (21)
April 3, 5		Kuus 2008 (22)

Instructions for the critical review:

The objective of the critical review is to give you an opportunity to read up on a topic that interests you, beyond the readings assigned for the class. The review has to be an essay on the same topic as any one week in this class (e.g. ‘Europe and its Neighbours’, ‘Russia and Europe’, ‘Heritage and Cultural Industries’, ‘Whose Europe?’, etc.). The essay must accomplish two things. First, it should summarize the key points of the selected articles (hereafter ‘writings’) drawn from the pool specified below. Second, it has to provide a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the writings. The review must integrate the writings into one coherent essay, and so the writings must be somewhat related in terms of their topic. Summary of the writings should take up no more than two thirds of the critical review; the rest should be devoted to a critical assessment of the writings (that is, it should assess whether the writings provide an effective analysis of the topic at hand).

Note: If you are unsure about how to summarize and critically evaluate scholarly arguments, I suggest that you read book reviews published in any academic journal. Further tips on how to write an effective review will be provided in the class. I will set aside class time on March 6 to answer any questions that you might have.

The main limitation in terms of the topic is that the essay should focus on today’s Europe—essays on the Cold War or the history of a particular place fall outside that limit. The main parameter in terms of the sources is that the essay should be based mostly on scholarly articles—possibly supplemented by one book chapter if necessary--and it has to include any two readings assigned for this class among the sources (this parameter is there to make sure that your paper relates in some way to the material in this class). If you use only full-length articles, then a total of eight sources (six new sources plus two from the reading list) would be sufficient for a competent to excellent paper. If you use review essays or commentaries, increase the number of sources accordingly. No more than one of the six new sources can be a book chapter.

The specific theme is entirely up to you, within the parameters laid out above. You cannot use the same articles you reviewed for the GEOG 391 paper (if you have taken that class before).

Late assignments and missed exams: Seven percent of the assignment grade will be subtracted for every 24 hours (including weekends and holidays) that the assignment is late. This means that if you turn in the review paper three days late without a valid excuse, you will lose twenty-one percent of the paper grade. I will be strict in applying such penalties. They will only be waived with the submission of a note from a physician or from Arts Advising in the event of an emotional trauma. In the latter case, please go to Arts Advising prior to asking for late assignments to be accepted without penalty. The same applies to missed exams. You will not be allowed to make up exams missed without a valid excuse.