



Europe, European Union, Eurocentrism

Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
01.090.295.06
T-TH 5:35pm-6:55pm
122 Hickman Hall (Douglass Campus)

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This is a course in the historical social sciences, with a focus on Europe. This definition might seem simple and straightforward at first but, as you will no doubt learn in the course of this semester, questions of history, society, geography and, frankly, even the label 'Europe', are neither trivial nor 'neutral' or 'innocent' matters at all.

The course introduces students to some of the key concepts that are widely used as social scientists and historians who worked on European societies have devised them. This is not a course in "European history." We do not systematically discuss key events or personalities either.

The focus is, instead, on what it is that scholars interested in history—i.e., the ways in which societies change—have learnt from the experiences of European societies over the course of the last five centuries or so. A word of caution: The course takes a *critical* approach—i.e., it desists from the glorification of any social form, not even the forms evolved by European societies.

As usual, readings are central to the course. In addition, we will also draw on a fairly large number of films, since some of the key ideas we study are best represented through the cinematic medium. The films are not in the class as simple illustrations, let alone entertainment; they are an integral part of the course; you are required to view them in advance and "read" them as texts, as you would any of the assigned written materials. The films are on reserve for you to watch in the Media Center in Douglass Library. On the "Film Discussions" days, you are expected to come to class having watched the appropriate film. Please budget enough time to watch, enjoy *and digest* the films before coming to class.

In designing this class, I have assumed that

1. you have an interest in finding out about the world (in this case, the "continent" called 'Europe' and its relationship to the rest-of-the-world) as a social process,
2. you have an open and inquisitive mind,
3. you are eager to compare and contrast what you find so that you don't think you have all the final answers. (Who knows, you may even realize that one never does ;-).) And, because I am deeply optimistic, I have also assumed that
4. you are familiar with the basic ideas of the social sciences (therefore I have not budgeted any time to review them in this course).

This course consists of readings, lectures, films and, importantly, in-class-discussions. Your main job is to prepare for the discussions by /1/ reading the assigned texts / watching the films with interest and critically, /2/ relating them to the world as you experience it, /3/ investigating any issues that might arouse your curiosity while doing the above, and /4/ discussing them in a lively, active, and intellectually open-minded way.

Most of the class time is for discussion. As for the few inevitable lectures, they build on the readings but *do not repeat or formally review them*. You will be asked to contribute to the discussions frequently, and your contributions will be part of your grade. Therefore it is crucial that you keep up with the schedule of readings (see pp. 4-6 below) and that you handle the course material with an active and sustained interest. In short, I expect you to be fully active co-producers of the learning process.

Like most texts in the social sciences, the assigned readings require a little more attention, concentration and imagination of the reader than, say, a tweet. Hence you should allocate enough time to read and digest what you read. I am almost certain that, at some point, you will feel a need to use online and/or library resources to do follow-up work, to find out things alluded to but not explained fully in the readings. This is part of the normal process of learning, and it is good for you (not to mention: FUN ☺).

Grading will be a judicious combination of non-curved scores obtained from your

. attendance, (quizzes, if any), and contribution to class discussion:	25%
. midterm exam	25%
. project	25%
. take-home final paper	25%

Midterm and Take-Home:

Both the in-class midterm and the take-home final assignment are designed to engage your understanding of the readings and stimulate your creativity. I will most likely ask you to put to use some of the concepts we study, to apply them in some way. I have never used multiple-choice or True/False questions, and it is extremely unlikely that I would begin to do so now.

Projects:

We will hammer out the details of your projects after the midterm exams. Until then, I want to encourage you to think about topics that might interest you for possible exploration in close-up, make notes for yourself, poke around in the library or on the internet. More about this later ☺.

Course Schedule

date	Tuesdays	date	Thursdays
1/19	INTRO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - class organization - background - brief illustrations of some issues 	1/21	Afro-EURasia 1 Lecture on the origins of our world (and ‘Europe’, which came much later)
1/26	Afro-EURasia 2 Böröcz, <i>The European Union . . .</i> , ch. 1, part 1: 15-43	1/28	Global Capitalism Böröcz, <i>The European Union . . .</i> , ch. 1, part 2: 43-65.
2/2	Empires . Böröcz & Sarkar, ”Empires”: 1-4 . Hobsbawm, ch. 3, “The Age of Empire.”: 56-83.	2/4	Film Discussion: <i>Dersu Uzala</i> (USSR, 1975. Dir: Akira Kurosawa)
2/9	Colonialism . Böröcz & Sarkar, ”Colonialism”: 1-5. . Böröcz, <i>The European Union . . .</i> , ch. 2, “Segments to Regions. . .”, 65-109.	2/11	Film Discussion: <i>Lagaan</i> (India, 2001. Dir: Ashutosh Gowariker)
2/16	“Race” . Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.” 185-228.	2/18	Film Discussion: <i>Lumumba</i> (Belgium, 2000. Dir: Raoul Peck)
2/23	“Race” cont. Film-in-Class and Discussion: <i>Life and Times of Sara Baartman</i> (South Africa, 1998, dir. Zola Maseko, 53 min.)	2/25	In-Class Exam

3/1	<p>"Race" and the End of Colonialism</p> <p>Fanon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . "The Negro and Language" (14-40) . "The Fact of Blackness" (109-140) <p>Film Discussion:</p> <p><i>Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask</i> (UK, 1995, Isaac Julien, 70 min.)</p>	3/3	<p>Film Discussion</p> <p><i>Battle of Algiers</i> (Italy, Algeria, 1966, Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo)</p>
3/8	<p>State Socialisms</p> <p>Böröcz, <i>The European Union . . .</i>, ch. 3, "Geopolitics of Property Relations. . ." 110-150.</p>	3/10	<p>Film Discussion</p> <p><i>Ashes and Diamonds</i> (Poland, 1961, dir. Andrzej Wajda)</p>
SPRING RECESS			
3/22	<p>European Union</p> <p>Böröcz, <i>The European Union . . .</i>, ch. 4, "Elasticity of Weight: The EU as a Geopolitical Animal" 151-188.</p>	3/24	<p>Film Discussion</p> <p><i>Man of Marble</i> (Poland, 1977, dir. Andrzej Wajda)</p>
3/29	<p>European Identities</p> <p>Loomba:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . "Constructing Racial and Cultural Difference," 104-122, . "Race, Class and Colonialism," 123-132. 	3/31	<p>Film Discussion</p> <p><i>Mephisto</i> (Hungary, 1981, dir. István Szabó)</p>

4/5	<p>Whiteness and Nested Orientalism</p> <p>Loomba:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . “Psychoanalysis and Colonial Subjects,” 133-150, . “Gender, sexuality and Colonial Discourse,” 151-172, . “Hybridity,” 173-183. <p>Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms,” 917-931.</p>	4/7	<p>Film Discussion</p> <p><i>Before the Rain</i> (Macedonian, 1994, dir. Milcho Manchevski)</p>
4/12	<p>The “European Refugee Crisis”</p> <p>Readings TBA</p>	4/14	<p>Film Discussion</p> <p><i>Lamerica</i> (Albania, Italy. 1994, dir. Gianni Amelio)</p>
4/19	<p>Student Project Presentations 1</p>	4/21	<p>Student Project Presentations 2</p>
4/26	<p>Student Project Presentations 3</p>	4/28	<p>Summary and Recap</p>

Readings:

- Bakić-Hayden, Milica. 1995. "Nesting Orientalisms. The Case of Former Yugoslavia." *Slavic Review*, 54, 4 (Winter): 917-31.
- Böröcz, József. 2009. *The European Union and Global Social Change: A Critical Geopolitical-Economic Analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Böröcz, József and Mahua Sarkar. 2012. "Colonialism." *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. Ed. Helmut K. Anheier, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Victor Faessel. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2012. 229-234. *SAGE Reference Online*. Web. 22 Mar. 2012. OR: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>
- Böröcz, József and Mahua Sarkar. 2012. "Empires." *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. Ed. Helmut K. Anheier, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Victor Faessel. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2012. 476-480. *SAGE Reference Online*. Web. 22 Mar. 2012. OR: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated from the French by Charles Lam Markmann. NY: Grove Press. ONLY two chapters:
- "The Negro and Language," (pp. 17-40) and
 - "The Fact of Blackness" (pp. 109-140).
- Hall, Stuart. 1995. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." Ch. 6, in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson (eds.) *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, pp. 184-227.
- Loomba, Ania. 1998. *Colonialism / Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge. ONLY pp. 104-183.

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. You may use laptop computers in the classroom, but USE OF THE INTERNET IN THE CLASSROOM IS PROHIBITED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED BY THE PROFESSOR. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, encouraged.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances