

**RUSS20471**  
**The Revolutions of 1989 and their Aftermaths:**  
**Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia**

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**What is the course about?**

The course studies two very important changes on the political map of Eastern Europe focusing on the period from the fall of Communism in 1989 to 2007 (the independence of Kosovo): the break-ups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. It explores the reasons behind the brutal Yugoslav wars and the 'velvet divorce' of Czechoslovakia, and offers an insight into films, art happenings, images and texts created during the period in question. Contextualized within these two very different and yet comparable cases of political demise, these cultural products are examined as complex responses to the events, but also as strategies (aesthetic, political and psychological) to deal with the crisis and the imminent transformations. The course explores these cultural outputs as effective tools in voicing and shaping emerging identities and mapping out the real and symbolic geographies of the region.

**How is it taught?**

2x1-hour weekly lecture and 1x1-hour weekly seminars. Separate film screenings will be held outside weekly class meetings.

**How is it assessed? [subject to confirmation]**

An in-class test (10%); an essay (40%); and a written exam (50%).

**Indicative List of Topics:**

1. Historical Context: Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia -- Outcomes of WWI
2. Historical Context: Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia between WWII and 1989
3. Political Crisis after the Fall of Communism: The Economies of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia
4. Political Crisis after the Fall of Communism: Ideological Vacuum in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia

5. Political Crisis after the Fall of Communism: Nationalism in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia; Religion in Yugoslavia

6. Constructing Disintegrated Spaces through Films and Plays

7. Textual and Cinematic Responses to Disintegrated Communities

8. Textual and Cinematic Responses to Nationalism

9. Strategies of Conflict Representation: From Motherland to No Man's Land

10. Strategies of Conflict Representation: From Visual Document to Art and Back

11. Constructing New Identities: Public and Personal responses in non-Fiction Genres

### **Set Texts:**

*Balkan Blues: Writing out of Yugoslavia*, ed. by Joanna Labon (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

Vaclav Havel, *Leaving. A Play*. (London: Faber and Faber, 2008).

Dubravka Ugrešić, *The Culture of Lies: Antipolitical Essays* (London: Phoenix House, 1998).

### **Films:**

*Before the Rain*, directed by Milcho Manchevski (PolyGram Video, 1995, c.1994).

*Kolya*, directed by Jan Sverak (Miramax Home Entertainment, 1997).

*No Man's Land*, directed by Danis Tanovic (MGM Home Entertainment, c. 2002).

*Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*, directed by Srdjan Dragojevich (Cobra Films, 1996).  
<http://video.google.com/>.

### **Recommended Texts:**

Ivo Banac, 'The Fearful Asymmetry of War: The Causes and Consequences of Yugoslavia's Demise', *Daedalus*, 121, 2 (1992), 141-174.

Robert Burgoyne, 'Ethnic Nationalism and Globalization', *Rethinking History*, 4, 2 (2000), 157-64.

Mira Furlan, 'A Letter to my Co-citizens', *Performing Arts Journal*, 53 (1996), 20-24.

Abby Innes, *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

Dina Iordanova, *Cinema in Flames: Balkan Film Culture and Media* (London, 2001).

Igor Krstic, 'Re-thinking Serbia: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Modern Serbian History and Identity Through Popular Culture', *Other Voices*, 2, 2 (2002) 1-29.

John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History. Twice There was a Country* (Cambridge: CUP 1996/2000), pp.332-360; 365-415.