

HIST 585-3: Special Topics in History:

Topic: Borderlands in History

Instructor	Day(s)	Time(s)	Maximum Enrollment
Eckert & Payne	TU	1:00 – 4:00 pm	12

Semester Description:

This course introduces students to the historical study of borders and borderlands in Central and Eastern European history during the nineteenth and twentieth century. War and conquest have frequently redrawn European borders, late twentieth century developments have altered how they function in Western Europe (Schengen), dismantled some in Central Europe (Berlin Wall, “Velvet Revolution”), and created a myriad of new ones in Eastern Europe (dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia). Each new upheaval underscored the point that as spatialized social relations, borderlands may have an afterlife well beyond the states that created them.

With the rise of the modern nation state in the nineteenth century, borders increasingly became lines of demarcation and spatial limits of state power. Territorial strategies aimed at exercising authority in border regions in order to establish a firm relationship between territory and identity, a process frequently accompanied by exclusion. In the early twentieth century, areas of great local, religious, ethnic and cultural diversity were subjected to strategies of homogenization and simplification, many of them violent. At the same time the Russian Revolution produced an “internationalist” polity, the Soviet Union, that sought to create “proletarian nations” while conducting violent class war.

The course is not wedded to a state-centric perspective but will emphasize the everyday life of people in border regions and take into focus the often unanticipated social, economic and cultural consequences of new borders that produce a borderland. Various cross-border networks and migrations may challenge the state’s efforts to enforce the border, yet social practice on the ground may also reproduce the political boundary. The course draws on various methodological approaches from the political to the social to the cultural, including ethnographic, anthropologic and subaltern methodologies. It will also pay close attention to border-related and spatial terminology (territoriality, “contact zone”, “borderlands milieu”, region/regionalism, periphery, “trans”), and the special role of borderlands within Empire.

Required Textbooks, Articles, and Resources:

Please only order books based on the finalized syllabus that you will receive in August 2019.

1. Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press, 1994.
ISBN-10: 0804727023.

Fall 2019

2. Charles S. Maier, *Once Within Borders. Territories of Power, Wealth and Belonging since 1500*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016.
ISBN: 978-0-674-05978-8.
3. Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.
ISBN-10: 0801489083.
4. Kate Brown, *Plutopia : Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
ISBN: 978-0199855766.
5. Steven Sabol, *"The Touch of Civilization" Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization*. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016.
ISBN: 9781607325505.
6. Anne E. Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin*. New York: Oxford UP 2011.
ISBN: 978-0199609949.
7. Ari Sammartino, *The Impossible Border. Germany and the East 1914-1922*. Cornell UP 2010.
ISBN-13: 978-0801448638.
8. Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Cornell UP, 2008.
ISBN-13: 978-0801477607.
9. Brendan J. Karch. *Nation and Loyalty in a German-Polish Borderland: Upper Silesia, 1848-1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
ISBN-13: 9781108487108.
10. Astrid M. Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain. Environment, Economy and Culture in the Borderlands* (Oxford UP, 2019).
ISBN-13: 978-019069005-2.
11. Alison Carrol, *The Return of Alsace to France, 1918-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
ISBN-13: 9780198803911.

Grading:

Active class participation; discussion leading during class; book review; brief presentations; final paper

Syllabus:

Forthcoming