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Film and Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Geography, Political Science

**MEDIA GLOBALIZATION AND POST-COMMUNIST
EUROPEAN IDENTITIES**

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Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis

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Faculty: **Andaluna Borcila**, Michigan State University
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Lisa Parks, University of California Santa Barbara

Course Coordinator: **Huub van Baar**, Ph.D. Candidate, Universiteit van Amsterdam

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The goal of the course is twofold: to contribute to the emerging body of interdisciplinary research on media globalization and identity through a focus on a historically important but often neglected region, Eastern and Central Europe; and to employ theories of media globalization in order to understand and interpret the processes of European enlargement and post-totalitarian transformation. In the course of working toward these twin goals, our international group of students and scholars will examine various intersections of identity-formation and the ongoing processes of economic, political and cultural globalization as they are filtered through the use of media such as satellite, television, film, video and the web in the post-Cold War European sphere. The course also provides an introduction to a range of research foci and methodologies related to globalization and the media across the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including cultural geography, history, comparative cultural studies, film and media studies, anthropology and sociology.

PREREQUISITES

The course should be accessible and of interest to students and researchers in the humanities and social sciences who intend to pursue interdisciplinary research on globalization, identities and the media with a particular geographical emphasis on the post-communist transitions, the processes of European integration, and the cultural and political role of the United States in current European transformations. An M.A. in the social sciences or the humanities is required.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The course examines the relationship between the media and identities in the former socialist region in the wake of the transition from state-controlled, highly nationalized cultures to cultures permeated by global multimedia practices. Our group of international scholars, representing several disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities, assume that “the Other Europe” constitutes an especially important site for understanding processes of globalization because the transition to transnational media capitalism has happened over a relatively short period of time. Such a transition, characterized by geographically uneven processes of democratization, marketization, the transformation of state institutions and the civic nation-building within the region, has been fuelled by the staggered enlargement of the European Union and involved processes of accelerated technological development as well as the thorough transformation of media institutions, ownership structure and media content. These changes have set in motion a struggle for control over resources and representation among national political and cultural elites, corporate entertainment media and emerging forms of identity politics.

Issues of political and cultural representation, the role of different technologies in identity constitution and social control, historical legacies, the creation of collective memories, and aesthetic questions will be addressed as integral parts of the same problematic rather than as issues to be examined within particular disciplinary confines. The course presents a set of approaches and themes that will help participants investigate the theoretical and political implications of these highly ambivalent and contradictory transformations: we ask how and to what extent the post-communist, globalizing order has produced needs and opportunities for creating modes of transnational culture within and beyond the nation and its violent ethnic, sexual and religious exclusions. Several of the case studies we examine are transnational formations that have resulted in new artistic and media networks, enabled by the rise of multiparty systems and market economies, which have presented unprecedented opportunities for the region’s minorities. At the same time, the course also asks how the region’s post-Soviet geopolitical reconstitution and the politics of the EU’s expansion have resulted in new migrations and diasporic formations and have solidified actual and metaphorical borders as well as primordial nationalisms within the new Europe.

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COURSE SCHEDULE

1 Introduction

Ginette Verstraete, John Neubauer, Anikó Imre

The course begins with a thorough introduction, which provides an overview of the course contents and expectations and discusses some of the essential terms that will recur throughout the course, such as media, identity, globalization, space and place, and representation. It also gives a historical introduction to the transformations of nationalism and national identities in the region from the time of the emergence of national languages in response to imperial pressures through the state's deployment of print and electronic media during socialism up to the current time of precarious negotiations between nation-states and global corporations for media control. In particular, the introduction helps students answer the following questions: What new forms of communication, literacy and visibility are meant by "media," particularly "new media?" How does one study the relations between media and global capitalism, and between media and social identity formations? What does it mean to think of globalization, Europeanization and identity formation together from the perspective of communication and media theory as well as of European/EU policy? We

will pay particular attention to the multiple, fluid identifications behind the taken-for-granted term “national identity” in the political and cultural context of globalizing Eastern Europe.

2 Media Studies and Cultural Geography

Lisa Parks

This course explores the role that satellite, wireless and web technologies play in generating new geographies related to recent economic, political and cultural transformations in Europe. It looks at various ways of historicizing, visualizing and critiquing post-socialist media cartographies and gives special attention to “fringe areas” – regions on the perimeter of an expanding Europe such as former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet republics, Turkey and Mongolia.

3 Western/Balkan Inside/Out - Representations of War and Wars of Representations

Aida Hozic

The course explores the powerful lock-in effects of media representations of the Balkans generated during the decade of Yugoslav wars. Focusing on films made in and outside of the former Yugoslavia (e.g. *Before the Rain*, *Welcome to Sarajevo*, *Ulysses's Gaze*, *Behind Enemy Lines*, *Underground*, *Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame*, *Fuse*, *Perfect Circle*, *Vukovar*, *Grbavica*) and their afterlife in political debates in the region, we examine the prospects of local artists to address and move beyond the images of warfare that defined the region in the 1990s. We discuss representational issues along with questions of production, marketing and distribution.

4 Televisual Geographies of the Fall of Socialism

Andaluna Borcila

The course focuses on two global television events, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Romanian revolution of 1989 as case studies through which to examine the relationships among television, globalization, and Eastern/Southern European identities, and as key sites around which the post-Cold War global imaginary has been articulated.

5 Media, Globalization and Identity Politics

Anikó Imre

This course asks how the processes of EU enlargement and the saturation of Eastern Europe by global media have transformed post-socialist minority identities. It focuses on specific case studies that involve mediated negotiations among nation-states, the European Union, media corporations and new forms of media activism that aim to empower ethnic, racialized, religious and sexual minorities. The main goal is to refract the relationship between budding identity politics and transnational media practices such as lesbian video collectives, independent animation films and Roma rap through theories of media entertainment, performance, identity, multiculturalism, nationalism and postcoloniality.

6 Globalization and Global Diaspora

John Neubauer

Globalization both thrives on and clashes with the waves of diaspora formation that have been brought about by repressive and unstable political regimes. This course looks specifically at the modalities of East European diasporas in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We analyze the condition of global homelessness in terms of the writings of Giorgio Agambén and others. At the same time the course raises the question to what extent diaspora has been redefined by new electronic means of communication.

7 Sociology of Memory and Forgetting in Post-communist Societies

Slawomir Kapralski

The main aim of the course is to present the post-communist transformation as a restructuring and reconstructing of the system of collective memories in East European societies. The following issues will be discussed: the deconstruction of the communist vision of history; filling in the memory gap: post-communist frames of memory; memory and myth in the new nationalist narratives of post-communist societies; trauma, memory, and amnesia: the memory of the Holocaust in post-communist Europe; changing ‘Others’ of East-European memory; historical politics and rituals of remembrance. The main learning objectives of the course are: (1) to make students familiar with the main approaches in the sociology and anthropology of collective memory; (2) to allow students to conduct a comparative analysis of the social frameworks of memory in various post-communist countries; (3) to make students able to show similarities and differences between various politicized approaches to the past; (4) to understand the role of Holocaust remembrance for the memories of East European societies.

POTENTIAL INTEREST OF TARGET AUDIENCE; NETWORKS

The course directors belong to an Amsterdam-based, international research network centered on globalization, the media, and post-Cold War European identities. Their five-year collaborative project, entitled *Globalization and the Transformation of Cultural Identities in Central and Eastern Europe*, is part of a larger, interconnected set of research projects on globalization sponsored by NWO, the Netherlands Organization for Academic Research. In the course of organizing and participating in research workshops, symposia and outreach events and conducting research together, the group has drawn on and expanded a sizable international network.

Individually, all the course instructors belong to several scholarly and activist organizations and will thus be able to reach and mobilize potential applicants via e-mail discussion lists and personal academic contacts. Two of the instructors currently reside in Eastern Europe while five of them hail from the region. The teaching staff is evenly divided between senior and junior scholars, all of whom have worked and thus can raise applicant interest on both sides of the Atlantic. Three instructors have previous or existing working relationships with the CEU. The directors are also working on involving faculty members from the CEU's Center for Media and Communication Studies in some of the course activities (a guest lecture, or a joint workshop) particularly to benefit from their empirical research on post-Cold War European media.

ASSESSMENT AND PROJECTED OUTCOMES

We will ask participants to reflect on their own learning process throughout the course. By the end of the course, we will expect each student to produce a report that identifies the specific ways in which their own research agendas have been enriched by the course and outline their plans for a scholarly paper to prepare for publication. Instructors will work with students individually in person and online to assist with this evaluation process.

The members of the core Amsterdam-based group intend to replace the planned closing conference that would have originally concluded their five-year joint project with the proposed SUN course, aiming to bring together a longer, focused workshop that is expected to inspire further collaborations. As a concrete plan in this regard, they plan to publish the best student papers to emerge from the course, along with the instructors' own contributions, in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal such as *Globalizations, Media, Culture and Society*, or the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Non-discrimination policy statement

Central European University does not discriminate on the basis of--including, but not limited to--race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation in administering its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.