COURSE SYLLABUS

Postwar diaspora(s) – construction of identity and ethnicity out of war and (forced) migration

Instructor:
Name, title: Dr. Ana Mijić, M.A.
Department: Nationalism Studies
Central European University
Semester/term, year: Winter Term 2022
Course level (MA, PhD): MA
# Credits (# ECTS Credits): 2
Office hours by appointment

Course Description
The seminar focuses on an intensive examination of the construction of identity and alterity in the context of war and forced migration. The first part of the seminar is dedicated to sociological and social psychological theories and perspectives on identity, collective identity, and ethnicity. The second part will (theoretically) deal with the specifics of (collective) identity construction in the context of (forced) migration and discuss the analytical potential of the concept of ‘diaspora’ to examine these processes. These theoretical considerations will be complemented by a discussion of empirical studies in this field of research, their key findings and central challenges for future research.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students

✓ will have an overview about the most frequently discussed sociological and social psychological theories on identity, collective identification, and ethnicity.
✓ will be able to critically engage with and discuss competing theories on identity, collective identification, and ethnicity.
✓ will be able to critically engage with the concept of diaspora.
✓ will be able to understand the processes of identity construction and the construction of ethnicity out of war and migration.
✓ will be able to understand the interplay of individual and collective self-identification and categorisation by others as well as the role of power in this process.
Course Requirements

(1) **Regular preparation and active participation (20% of the final grade)**. Student attendance, preparation, and active participation in class are required. Students must come to class having carefully read all the assigned material and prepared to discuss it by also constructively engaging with other student’s points.

(2) **Oral presentation (30% of the final grade)**. Each student will be expected to give a short presentation (as a part of a group) addressing one of the topics listed in the course schedule. Presentations should provide a summary and critical review of one or two of the listed readings.

(3) **Final Paper (50% of the final grade)**. Students can choose if they want to submit a proposal for a research project on identity and/or ethnicity in the context of war and/or migration or a substantive research paper. Both should be 3,000-3,500 words long and based on the student’s own interests. Students should choose the topic of their final paper and discuss it with the instructor by Week 10.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (13.01.2022). Introduction.

- *What is identity? Why study identity (while studying nationalism)?*
- *What characterizes the sociological perspective?*

Discussion of the syllabus and the assignments

Background reading


Week 2 (20.01.2022). Identity.

- *How to conceptualize identity?*
- *What is the significance of identity in social theory?*
- *Why socialization matters?*
- *What could possibly be the effects of war and migration on identity?*

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 3 (27.01.2022). Collective Identity

- What is meant by “collective identity”
- How to conceptualize the connection between ‘I’ and ‘We’, between individual and collective identity?
- What is meant by the “simultaneity of group identification and categorization.” Think about the role of power in this context.
- What effects do the experiences of war and migration possibly have on collective identity?

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional (*recommended for presenters)


Week 4 (03.02.2022). Beyond Identity

- Is it at all beneficial to use the concept of identity in social research?
- What is essential to bear in mind when using “identity” in our research?

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 5 (10.02.2022). Ethnicity

- *What is ethnicity? How to conceptualize ethnicity?*
- *Think about ethnicity in the context of war and migration?*

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional (*recommended for presenters)


Week 6 (17.02.2022). Postwar Identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina

*Lecture and discussion on identity-related postwar transformations in Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Background reading (details will be announced in the first session)


Elissa Helms, Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina, Critical Human Rights (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).
Week 7 (24.02.2022). Diaspora.

What constitutes ‘diaspora’?

Background reading

Mandatory


Highly recommended


Optional


Week 8 (03.03.2022). Introduction to Ex-Yugoslavian Diaspora in Austria / Film Screening “Unten” [Down there] (Djordje Čenić)

„The documentary filmmaker Djordje Čenić sets out on an autobiographical journey through time, which begins in the mid-seventies in the Yugoslavian “guest worker milieu” in Linz and leads him to his original home town, which was destroyed by war, in today’s Croatia. In sometimes absurdly comical, sometimes tragic episodes telling of minor triumphs and major defeats, of homesickness and class oppositions, Čenić allows us deep insights into his family history, thereby illustrating the balancing act between “above” and “below”, exemplifying generations of guest workers.” (crossingeurope.at)
Background Reading:


Week 9 (10.03.2022). Ex-Yugoslavian (Post)war Diaspora(s)

- Discussion of the film “Unten”
- Are there any particular characteristics of (post)war diaspora?

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 10 (17.03.2022). Afghan Diasporas and Refugees

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 11 (24.03.2022). Afghan Diaspora in Austria

Guest lecture by Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek, University of Vienna

Week 12 (31.03.2022). Conclusion

Discussion and Evaluation