Course description

The course aims to introduce students to the critical debate on the issue of postsocialism in social sciences, as well as to discuss several relevant questions connected with socio-cultural changes in Central and Eastern Europe.

The debate on postsocialism in CEE will be presented in a global context. We will discuss the relationships and possible links between theories of post-socialism and post-colonial theory as well as theories of globalization and global governance. The goal is to acquire an enhanced view of how postsocialist lives are defined, experienced and understood by those living them. In so doing, we will focus on the contradictions, paradoxes and ambiguities of postsocialism by looking closely at gender, religious practice and its transformations, politics, economy, heritage and food politics. Each topic will be presented by lecturers from various V4 countries. Most examples and texts will focus on V4 countries. The juxtaposition of these topics will allow us to think comparatively of different forms of postsocialism, as well as read more carefully and critically more general descriptions of postsocialism.

In 2014/2015 the course was held for the first time. The 2nd enrollment took place in the winter semester 2016/17. In 2018/19 the course will be held 3rd time. more [1].

Debates on postsocialism in V4 countries in the global context (course supported by the International Visegrad Fund, grant no. 61300009).
Project Coordinator: Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska [2]

Syllabus for 2018/19

9 October: Introduction and class rules

16 October: A brief history of the region under socialism. General debate on socialism, post-socialism and post-communism in anthropological perspective. The first session aims to introduce students to the recent works of post-socialism in social sciences, to assess the state of the field, as well as critically examine methodological, analytical and theoretical issues offered by this concept. Postsocialism and postcolonialism.

Lecturer: Dr. Agnieszka Ko?cia?ska [3], University of Warsaw

Readings:


Further references:


30 October: Moralties of postsocialism: the view from religion

This session provides an overview to debates on religion and morality in postsocialist societies. It looks at postsocialist transformations through questions of ethics, individual and collective moralities showing how religion constitutes a privileged space for remaking self and society.

Lecturer: Dr. Vlad Naumescu, Central European University

Readings:


Further readings:


13 November: Moral Economies of Consumption in Post-Socialism.

Lecturer: dr. Renata E. Hryciuk, University of Warsaw

Readings:


Renata Blumberg (2014), Placing Alternative Food Networks: Farmers’ Markets in Post-Soviet Vilnius, Lithuania
27 November  CHANGE! Sexuality, gender and (post)socialism

Lecturer: Dr. Agnieszka Kościańska [3] (University of Warsaw)

Readings:


11 December: Postsocialist mobilities and refugee crisis in Central-Eastern Europe

The first part of the session explores migration and mobilities from and to V4 countries as sites for studying social change in post-socialist societies. In the second part, we will discuss refugee crisis in Europe and its responses in V4 countries.

Lecturer: Dr. Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska [2], University of Warsaw

Readings:


8 January The Post-Socialist Peoples’ Economy

The session aims to discuss what matters for people with regard to economy, livelihood strategies as well as ideas about the material world after socialism and how peoples’ model of socialist economy - i. e. the model different from official socialist planning and redistribution -- finds the way to and is re-made up by contemporary political mobilisation. The discussion shall cover people’s everyday economic practices and ideas under communism, their transmission, and/or re-invention by contemporary politics and gain fuller understanding of ambivalent role that communist modernization had in developing of specific model of livelihood strategies, ideas, and practices under post-socialist capitalism.

Lecturer: Dr. Juraj Buzalka, Comenius University in Bratislava

Reading:
Juraj Buzalka (forthcoming) Post-Peasant Memories: Populist or Communist Nostalgia in East European Politics, Societies, and Cultures.

Further readings:

22 January Presentations of students’ projects. General discussion.

Lecturers: Dr. Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska [2], University of Warsaw, Dr. Agnieszka Kościańska [3], University of Warsaw

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Text for students [8]

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