

MEMORY, HISTORY AND CONFLICT: DEALING WITH THE PAST IN THE
AFTERMATH OF MASS VIOLENCE
Summer 2015

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Course Description:

This course examines various ways and practices through which post-conflict societies deal with contentious past. We will visit two post-conflict societies in the Balkans – Serbia and Kosovo - and learn on the ground how the politics of collective remembering impacts the dynamics of relationships among different ethnic groups.

The conflicts that swept through the republics of former Yugoslavia in 1990s are often described as Europe's deadliest conflicts since World War II. They have become infamous for the war crimes committed, including mass murder, ethnic cleansing and genocide. Even eighteen years after the war, the communities of former Yugoslavia are undergoing a painful process of facing the past, while the reconciliation and positive peace remain elusive.

The backdrop of this course is the Balkans, but we will explore other case studies and perspectives using a comparative lens to crystallize knowledge applicable in different contexts. History and memory can be tools for connecting communities, but they can also be utilized to generate polarization and differentiation. The course will focus on learning about a systemic approach in dealing with the past that can contribute to building more equitable and just societies. The aim is to understand not only how contentious past impacts the ways in which post-conflict societies function, but also to look into various social practices and initiatives of counteracting the negative effects of divisive past through education, art, commemoration, justice and pedagogy.

Approaches to dealing with the past have so far mostly focused on top down approaches such as creation of policies and coalitions to combat and prevent occurrence of mass violence. Examples of such approaches are truth and reconciliation commissions, international courts, DDR, compensation and reparations for the victims etc. However, this course will also explore ways in which communities at the grassroots deal with contentious past. We will examine topics such as the role of non-violent grassroots movements in dealing with the past, memory eradication and denial, historical narratives and counter narratives, politics of commemoration, manipulation of the sites of memory, history education and forgiveness.

The value of this experiential learning course is that it provides an opportunity for its participants to listen and learn from the local people about what is going on the ground,

which is a necessary precondition for successful CR analysis and practice. The course will also provide a space in which each participant will be able to reflect on and re-examine his/her own assumptions on conflict resolution theory and practice, and explore innovative ways of dealing with complex issues. This will be an opportunity to apply various conflict resolution theories and concepts, network with representatives of local and international organizations, engage with people on the ground and immerse in the rich culture of the region.

The course instructor, Dr. Borislava Manojlovic, is an Adjunct Professor at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University. Her research focuses on history education, dealing with the past, memory, cultural diversity, forgiveness and reconciliation. As a Conflict Resolution practitioner, she has worked for 7 years with the UN and the OSCE peacekeeping missions in Croatia and Kosovo.

During our stay in the Balkans, we will engage in conversations with the following organizations/ institutions/individuals (among others):

- Resistance movement Otpor that led the toppling of President Milosevic in Belgrade
- The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- ECPD Belgrade
- Youth Initiative for Human Rights
- Women in Black
- Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication (CRDP), Prishtina
- Humanitarian Law Centre Kosovo, Prishtina
- Community Building Mitrovica
- Key scholars/practitioners working on dealing with the past and reconciliation in the Balkans

Course Structure: The course will take place during the last week of May. Students will spend 9 days in Kosovo and Serbia in addition to a preparatory meeting in the US. Each day will be structured as 3 hours class time, and the rest of the day and evening in field experience and discussions/interviews with scholars/ practitioners. We will be studying as well as traveling in various parts of both countries.

Eligibility: This course is open to all Mason and Non-Mason BA, Ms and Ph.D students as a 3 credit course and to non-students as a professional development seminar. Mason students can take the course as CONF 695.

Course Requirements:

- A. Participation personally in one preparatory meeting prior to departure for Kosovo/Serbia in late April/May.
- B. Effective and successful engagement with both peers in the class and local scholars/practitioners in Kosovo/Serbia. **25% of Grade**

- C. One 5-page blog that describes your experience of the trip, and analytically reflects on class readings, discussion, interviews and day to day experiences. Write about how the experience relates to your own ideas and your own way of thinking about the world. You should also include any critiques of the material presented in and outside class. The best blogs will be published. Blogs are due on June 20, 2015. **30% of Grade**
- D. A final paper (11-15 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 1'-margin) is due on June 20, 2015. Course participants will choose their own topics, drawing upon the readings for the course as well as outside sources as relevant. The objective of this paper is to reflect on and propose an intervention/initiative that would counteract the negative effects of divisive and contentious past. Students can use cases covered in the readings or any other case that would fit the objective. All submissions should be made to the instructor by e-mail. **45% of Grade**

The total classroom time for this course will be 35-40 hours. This is based on 1 three-hour preparatory classes before travel (dates TBD), 8 three hours class sessions while in Kosovo/Serbia, as well as hearing from multiple guest speakers in the region, and 1 three-hour classroom session after returning home from the course.

Honor Code and Plagiarism:

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. SCAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

English Language Institute:

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff.

For more information contact 703-993-3642 or malle2@gmu.edu.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments please contact us at wcenter@gmu.edu or call: 703-993-4491.

Readings:

Required texts for purchase:

Minow, Martha. 1998. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Judah, Tim. 2008. *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Subotić, Jelena. 2009. *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Optional text:

Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. 2012. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Reprint edition. Columbia University Press.

All other readings will be accessible through Dropbox.

Course Schedule:

Session 1: Memory and conflict (Introduction/preparatory class)

Introduction to course aims, processes and expectations.

Judah, Tim. *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Chapters 1-6)

Minow, Martha. 1998. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press (Chapter 2)

Subotić, Jelena. *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009 (Introduction)

Session 2: Political system and justice in the aftermath of mass atrocities (Monday)

Subotić, Jelena. *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009 (Chapters, 1, 2)

Minow, Martha. 1998. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998 (chapter 6)

Session 3: Conflict transformation and dealing with the past – what really works? (Tuesday)

Loew, David. 2013. *Decentralization as a Model for Conflict Transformation: The Case of Kosovo*. Zentrum für Konfliktforschung der Philipps-Universität Marburg.

Subotić, Jelena. *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009 (Conclusion)

Session 4: Dealing with the past and non-violent movements (Wednesday)

USIP. 2001. “Whither the Bulldozer? Nonviolent Revolution and the Transition to Democracy in Serbia”. Special Report. Washington D.C.: USIP.
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/sr72.pdf>.

Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. 2012. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Reprint edition. Columbia University Press. (Part 1)

Sharp, Gene. 2005. *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (chapters 1, 3)

Session 5: Narratives of the past and education (Thursday)

Judah, Tim. *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
(Chapters 8-13)

Manojlović, Borislava. (2015). “Individual and Official Narratives of Conflict in Croatia: Schools as Sites of Memory Production”. Simona Mitriou (ed), *Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan

Dimou, Augusta. 2009. *Transition and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. . Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. pp. 141-159; 159-201

Session 6: Identity, memory and conflict (Friday)

Volkan, Vamik D. 2001. "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity." *Group Analysis* 34 (1): 79–97. doi:10.1177/05333160122077730. <http://gaq.sagepub.com/content/34/1/79>.

Di Lellio, Anna and Stephanie Schwandner Sievers. 2006. "The Legendary Commander: the Construction of an Albanian master Narrative in Postwar Kosovo," *Nations and Nationalism*. 12 (3).

Tatjana Markovic. 2007. Idiosyncrasies of the Grand Narratives on Serbian National Identity. Revisited. Online article. <http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/emerg/TMarkovic1.pdf>

Session 7: Dealing with contentious past and its cultural implications (Saturday)

LeBaron, Michelle. 2003. *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*. (Chapter 3)

Shank, Michael & Schirch, Lisa. 2004. Strategic Arts-Based Peacebuilding. Retrieved from http://escolapau.uab.cat/img/programas/musica/strategic_arts.pdf

Session 8: Responsibility and healing (Sunday)

Duhaček, Daša. "The Making of Political Responsibility: Hannah Arendt and/in the Case of Serbia," *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe*, 2006.

Hoskins, Te Kawehau, Betsan Martin, and Maria Humphries. 2011. "The Power of Relational Responsibility." <https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/handle/123456789/37277>

Session 9: Reflection, feedback and concluding remarks upon return. (TBD)