Drifting cities. Multiethnic societies from empire to nation-state

What happens to a multiethnic city, one inhabited by Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Italians, Slavs, and Germans, or Czech, Bohemians and Jews, when it passes from a dying empire to a nascent nation-state? This course focuses on Vienna and the Mediterranean ports of Trieste and Salonica from the late 19th century to the end of the Second World War and examines their transformation from cradles of Habsburg and Ottoman imperial modernity into laboratories of Austrian, Italian and Greek nationalism. The course stresses the unique characteristics, the shared patterns, and no less the circulation of peoples, ideas, and things between the three cities, to: question the dichotomy of European - non-European empires; to suggest other geographies (i.e. “Mediterranean” - “Central European”); to discuss the relationship between urban modernity, empire and the nation-state; to assess the impact of the First World War, of interwar nationalism, of antisemitism and state policies on the multiethnic urban fabric and the local class and ethnic hierarchies of power; to examine the Holocaust and its traumatic memory; and to ponder on the nostalgic imaginings of these cities in current public discourse. Students will work through a variety of primary sources, literary works, maps and films, and will learn to inventively apply the tools of digital humanities.

Mondays 3-5:20 pm, 101 Thayer St. (VGQ) 116E

Professor Paris Papamichos Chronakis
Sharpe House 102B (130 Angell Street)
Fridays 12:00-1:30 and by appointment

Goals
1. Examine major historical phenomena from the perspective of urban history;
2. Acquaint oneself with the merits of a comparative approach to history;
3. Develop skills of analysis and interpretation that question the national framework.
Assignments
The requirements of the course are active and thoughtful participation in class discussions and successful, punctual completion of written assignments. Informed, productive questions, comments and criticisms concerning the week’s readings are expected. Small presentations and reading responses are going to be part of the seminar. There will be two longer papers [one historiographic essay (7 pp.) and one research paper (12-15 pp.)].

Grading
Historiographic paper: 20%
The historiographic essay should be 7 pp. in length and should be a discussion of 3-4 works (articles, essays, monographs) dealing with a particular topic. Students are invited to ask for guidance in searching for works that match their interests.

Using Digital Humanities tools: 20%
Students will work through two Holocaust survivors’ audiovisual testimonies applying digital humanities tools to construct their social networks at the concentration camps.

Research paper: 30%
The research paper should be 13-15 pp. in length and argumentative in nature. You should speak with me well in advance if you have a particular topic you would like to pursue. Papers should draw from, cite, and engage with the arguments of a variety of sources, including course readings or other material.

Participation (including reading responses and presentations): 25%

Assessment
Student performance will be assessed according to three criteria:
1. Quality of written assignments and engagement with the key concepts and events analyzed in the course;
2. Active participation in the classroom and the course blog demonstrating critical engagement with course material;
3. Attendance and punctuality.

Class Blog
Every week students will be expected to write a short reading response (of approximately 500 words) on the week’s readings and post it by 10am on Mondays. I will provide guiding questions in advance. Ideal blog posts will synthesize the assigned materials, connect them to earlier readings and ask critical questions about a given author’s argument.

Due Dates
27 February (11 pm): Topic proposal for historiographic essay (1 p. plus bibliography) due by email.
20 March (11 pm): Historiographic essay (5-7 pp.) due by email.
9 April (11 pm): Topic proposal for research paper (1 page plus bibliography) due by email.
25 April (11 pm): Using digital humanities tools
May 10 (11 pm): Final research paper (12-15 pp.) due by email.
* Attendance is mandatory. It is not only essential for your own edification but also for securing a good final grade. Absence does NOT constitute a reason for not handing in assignments, except in the case of severe illness, religious holidays or serious emergencies. If, for no serious reason, work is handed in late, this will result in a lower grade. The same applies to frequent late arrivals. If there are any exceptional circumstances that might affect your performance or attendance, please let me know at once (this includes religious holidays). **Students with multiple unexcused absences or excessive lateness may not pass the course.**

* Laptop use must be reduced to the minimum and should be confined to note taking. Failure to comply with this basic rule may result in a lower class participation grade.

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

*All recommended books are on reserve in the library*


**Introductory texts**


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All weekly readings are on Canvas

**27 January. Introduction: Imperial modernities east and west, north and south**

- Municipality of Thessaloniki. Heritage walks (any one of them)
- Welcome page of the Municipality of Trieste
- The history of Vienna in the website of the Municipality of Vienna
- History of the Jews of Vienna in the website of the Municipality of Vienna

**3 February. Ottoman Salonica, the Jerusalem of the Balkans**


**10 February. Habsburg Trieste: the city of nowhere?**

- Edward Freeman, *Sketches from the subject and neighbour lands of Venice* (London, 1881), pp. 70-82.
- Thomas Jackson, *Dalmatia, the Quarnero, and Istria* (London, 1887), pp. 343-368.

24 February: Fin-de-siècle Vienna: cultures and clashes of modernity
- *Vienna 1900* (documentary)
- Gustav Mahler, *Symphony no. 1, part 3*, & ‘Der Abschied’ (‘Farewell’) from *Das Lied von der Erde* (‘The Song of the Earth’).

3 March. Cities at War. The impact of the Balkan Wars and the First World War
Guest lecturer: Jean Bauer (digital Humanities librarian): Introduction to social network analysis and digital humanities tools
- *Salonica, nest of spies* (spy film, 1936)
- British and American consular reports and Jewish community documents on the situation in Salonica during the Balkan Wars and the First World War.
- Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the fall of the Habsburg Empire* (Cambridge, 2004), Chapter 1 (Food and the politics of sacrifice), pp. 31-86.

Recommended

10 March. Remaking the city
- Maps of Vienna
- Maps of the new plan of Salonica
- Petitions of the Jews of Salonica against the city’s new plan.

**17 March. Refugees and exiles**

**31 March. Outcasts: workers and women, gender, class and ethnicity**
- Yannis Ritsos, ‘Epitaphios’ (poem)
- British consular reports from Salonica on the conditions of the working classes

**7 April. Processes of assimilation, cultures of Zionism, and minority nationalisms**

**14 April. Varieties of fascism and antisemitism**
- British, Jewish, and Greek reports on anti-semitism in Salonica in the 1930s

21 April. The Second World War: the Holocaust and its remembrances
- Audiovisual testimonies of Salonican, Triestine, and Viennese Jews from the Shoah Foundation Institute’s Visual History Archive.
- Carol Reed (dir.), The Third Man (1949, fiction film)
- Orna Ben-Dor Niv (dir.), Because of that war (documentary film, 90 min., 1997)
- Mark Mazower, Salonica city of ghosts, Chapters 22 (Genocide) & 23 (Aftermath), pp. 421-461.
- Evan Burr Bukey, Hitler’s Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era (Chapel Hill, 2000), Chapter 7 (The popular assault on the Jews), pp. 131-153.
Recommended reading:

28 April. The power of the past. Cosmopolitan nostalgias and exilic memories of home
- Maurice Amaraggi, Salonica, city of silence (documentary film, 2006)
- Jan Morris, Trieste and the meaning of nowhere (Da Capo Press 2002), excerpts