Anth 430/530: Balkan Society and Folklore

Focusing on ethnicity, gender, politics, and folklore, this class explores the current and historical situation in the Balkans and the role of symbols, the state, and nationalism. An ethnographic approach examines socialism/postsocialism, rural/urban, age and gender relationships, life cycle and calendrical celebrations, and music and expressive arts. Readings are drawn from many disciplines. Slides, films, and guest presentations supplement the lectures and discussions. The class will be run interactively, with discussion and mutual respect.

The Syllabus is located on BB under Course Information. Maps and outlines are under Documents. Most readings/films are available on BB under Readings or via the url listed.

I welcome discussion with students during office hours, by appointment, or by email or telephone on topics related to the class. I have a comment bag available at every class.

Please turn off cell phones during class.

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the UO. Cases of plagiarism (from other students or published materials) will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Course requirements
1. 10% of the grade is based on attendance. Late arrivals and departures will count as an absence.
2. 10% of the grade is based on oral participation.
3. 10% of the grade is based on an in-class geography quiz that will be given without warning sometime during the first three weeks.
4. There are two take-home essay examinations, worth 30%+40% each (graduate students 20% + 30% each), due Oct. 27 in class and Dec 10 (Wed 4:30 PM, or earlier, if possible). Exams must be typed and lateness will be penalized.
5. Graduate students are required to do a research paper (10 pp.) in addition to the final and to present it in class (20% of grade, due Dec 10). A 1-page research paper proposal with five bibliographic entries is due Oct. 13. Students are encouraged to meet with me to discuss possible topics and receive bibliographic assistance.
6. Graduate students will help lead one class discussion (20-30 minutes); sign up immediately. By 6 PM the day before, post questions and/or outlines on BB Discussion Board (under Tools).

Grading Rubric
A – Outstanding performance relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at the highest level.
B – Performance that is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at a high level.
C – Performance that meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates an adequate understanding of course content.
D – Performance that is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.
F – Performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the course content.
Course Objectives

- Identify the Balkan nations geographically and culturally.
- Trace the history of the Balkans, especially the Ottoman legacy and the socialist and postsocialist periods.
- Analyze the role of ethnicity and nationalism, especially ethnic conflict, in the Balkans.
- Identify the gendered dimensions of Balkan life.
- Analyze rituals (such as weddings) and other forms of folklore on multiple planes (symbolic, economic, political).
- Identify the varieties of Balkan folk music and its connection to politics.
- Trace the history and current situation of Balkan Roma.
- Analyze the changing roles of Balkan Romani music.
- Identify what an ethnographic approach offers.

Readings

The required readings consist of 3 books (excerpts from 2), scholarly articles, internet sources, and newspaper articles. Readings must be done prior to class discussion. Articles are posted on BB under Readings or via urls. Students are expected to be aware of current news in the Balkans.

Four books were ordered in the UO Bookstore (3 are on Reserve in the Library):
- Silverman, Carol. Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora. Oxford 2014. (Required pages will be on BB)
- Helms, Elissa. 2013. Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Hercegovina. University of Wisconsin Press. (recommended for future)

Course Outline

1. Sept 29  Introduction to the history, geography, languages and peoples of the Balkans.

2. Oct 1  The Ottoman legacy. Conversions to Islam.

Hupchick, Dennis. "Nation or Millet? Contrasting Western European and Islamic Political Cultures in the Balkans." In Culture and History in Eastern Europe, St. Martin’s Press, 1994, 121-155.


Optional: For more information on the Yugoslav wars, see “The Death of Yugoslavia,” video in six parts: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4bI3iLoZkc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4bI3iLoZkc)


6. Oct 15 Post-war Bosnia. Guest presentation by Almir Methadžovic on Bosnia as a divided country and Mostar as a divided city.

Current news from Bosnia:
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1066886.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1066886.stm)

also found at
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8R0XK7qtAE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8R0XK7qtAE)

also found at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RtEaXiEAnY&feature=relmfu](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RtEaXiEAnY&feature=relmfu)

“Two schools under one roof” (videos, 30 minutes)
Part 1: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0Qx6J878co](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0Qx6J878co)
Part II: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmYOQFParAY&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmYOQFParAY&feature=related)
Part III: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD_SFbwr1E&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD_SFbwr1E&feature=related)

Optional reading:

Recommended for future reading:

7. Oct 20  Gender: power/authority; arranged marriages.


9. Oct 27  Midterm exam due (covering material until Oct 22)

Verdery, Katherine 1996. What was Socialism and Why Did it Fail? In What was Socialism and What Comes Next? Princeton University Press, pp.19-38


12. **Nov 5** Lived experiences of socialism/postsocialism. Feature fiction film: *Good Bye Lenin* (Germany, 2003, 121 minutes). Please be on time!

Nostalgia Grows for Tito's Lost World:
Social and economic instability prompt many Balkan citizens to yearn for a time of order and prosperity. Vladimir Sudar, BCR Issue 500, 21 Feb 2005
http://iwpr.net/report-news/nostalgia-grows-titos-lost-world

Yugo-Nostalgia Grows as Harsh Realities Bite
Old federation offered comfort and security – which many would dearly like to have now. Mirza Ajnadzić - TRI Issue 710, 27 Sep 2011
http://iwpr.net/report-news/yugo-nostalgia-grows-harsh-realities-bite

Report on Yugo-Nostalgia Elicits Big Online Response
IWPR story touches a nerve as local republication draws flurry of reader comments.
By IWPR 28 Oct 2011
http://iwpr.net/report-news/report-yugo-nostalgia-elicits-big-online-response


15. **Nov 17** Roma (Gypsies) in the Balkans: Discrimination, Marginality, and Culture

Read at least 4 news items from at least 2 the following 4 websites:
European Roma Rights Center: www.errc.org
European Roma Information Office: www.erionet.eu
European Roma and Travelers Forum, sponsored by the Council of Europe: www.ertf.org
Roma Virtual Network: http://groups.google.com/group/romano_liloro?hl=en


Silverman, Carol. Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora. Oxford University Press, 2014. Chapter 4: Transnational Families, pp. 59-81 and Chapter 5: Transnational Celebrations, pp. 82-106. As you read, take a look at some of the accompanying videos and photos, and listen to the music on the website that is referenced on these pages: www.oup.com/us/romaniroutes. The username is Music1 and the password is Book5983. Also read text supplement 4.1 on the website.


18. Nov 26 Balkan Romani music as world music: DJs, club culture, and appropriation.


19. Dec 1 Graduate student presentations.

20. Dec 3 No class. Professor Silverman will be attending the American Anthropological Association conference.

Final Exam due Wed, Dec 10, 4:30 PM (or earlier)