

The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the Wars of the 1990s

PEAC-3000 (3 credits)

Serbia, Bosnia, and Kosovo: Peace and Conflict Studies in the Balkans

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

Europe were raising hopes for social change and a better future. As Eastern Europe entered its post-communist transition to democracy and open markets, socialist Yugoslavia began descending towards its dissolution. The breakup of Yugoslavia and escalation into violent conflicts and wars was in fact a process that lasted for a number of years. This course will provide students with the historical context and background of the breakup of Yugoslavia. It will introduce students to the first kingdom of Yugoslavs, followed by the creation of the Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia after WWII. The course will discuss scholarly debates about the reasons for the breakup of the country, and will introduce students to the framework of understanding the conflicts of the 1990s, the rise of ethno-nationalism, and the transition from socialism that overlapped with wars and conflicts. The course will also introduce students to the theoretical frameworks to study the breakup of Yugoslavia and the new successor states that emerged from its dissolution with focus on post-conflict transformation/peacebuilding, transitional justice, and memory studies.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain from a theoretical standpoint the concepts of post-conflict transformation, reconciliation, and memory politics;
- Demonstrate the understanding of the ways in which the memories of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s and its legacies shaped political debates in Serbia;
- Show familiarity with the scholarly approaches to and debates about the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s;
- Explain how the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav state of affairs shapes the entry point to the study of the current post-conflict political realities in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo;
- Show a greater awareness of the importance of historical context as a support in studying and analyzing current issues, specifically in the field of peace and conflict studies.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: The Making and Breaking of Yugoslavia

This module provides students with a historical background and an overview of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s. The course lecturer leads the students through the political history of post-WW2 socialist Yugoslavia, the major political change on the eve of the twenty-first century, and the scholarly debates about why Yugoslavia disintegrated and why so violently. Introducing the economic and political crisis from the end of the 1980s--culminating in the secessions of Slovenia and Croatia, the wars in Croatia and in Bosnia/Herzegovina-- this module is designed as an introduction and a necessary foundation for the following seminar on Peace and Conflict Studies in Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia.

Session 1: The Yugoslav experiment

In this session, students are introduced to the main political and social structures of post-WWII socialist Yugoslavia. From the issues of identities and languages to the economic system and the Yugoslav constitutions (especially the 1974 constitution), students become familiar with the main pillars of the country.

Required Reading:

Luthar, B. & Pušnik M. (2010). The Lure of Utopia: Socialist Everyday Spaces. In B. Luthar and M. Pušnik (Eds.) *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing. pp. 4-21.

Recommended Reading:

Patterson, P. H. (2010). Yugoslavia as It Once Was: What Tourism and Leisure Meant for the History of the Socialist Federation. In H. Grandits and K. Taylor (Eds.) *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s–1980s)*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, pp 367 – 402.

Session 2: Yugoslavia in Crises & Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s

The session builds on the required text for this module by Dejan Jović, and presents the main frames of analysis to the question of why Yugoslavia broke up, and why this break-up process was so violent (unlike states that ceased to exist without bloodshed). From discussing the economic crisis to the death of Tito, rise of nationalism, and other explanations, students are provided with an analytical framework that challenges the 'ancient hatred' doctrine and approaches the wars of the 1990s as well as the post-conflict current state of affairs critically. Finally, students are introduced to the issue of nationalism and ethnicity.

Required Reading:

Jović, D. (2001). The Disintegration of Yugoslavia. A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 4, 1, 101-120.

Denich, B. (1994). Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide. *American Ethnologist*, 21, 2, 367–390.

Recommended Reading:

Oberschall, A. (2000). The Manipulation of Ethnicity: from Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23, 6, 982–1001.

Required Film:

The Death of Yugoslavia [1995 *Television Series*]. N. Percy et al. (Producer). London: (BBC). Episodes 1, 2.

Session 3: Site visit to the Museum of History of Yugoslavia

In this session, students visit the Belgrade-based Museum of History of Yugoslavia. They meet the directors and curator of the museum who talk about their current work, the population who visits the museum from all over the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, and the permanent and temporary exhibitions, etc. Students visit the House of Flowers, the mausoleum of the leader of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), Josip Broz Tito, who died on May 4, 1980, and the permanent exhibition of the batons.

Recommended Reading:

Velikonja, M. (2008). *Titostalgija: A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz*. Ljubljana: Peace Institute.

Session 4: The Milošević regime and its fall

This session discusses the conflicts and wars of the 1990s, with focus on the social, economic and political crisis in Serbia.

Required Reading:

Gordy, E. D. (1999). *The culture of power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, Chapter 1, pp. 1-19, Chapter 5, pp. 165-198.

Fridman, O. (2011). 'It Was Like Fighting a War with our Own People': Anti-War Activism in Serbia During the 1990s, *Nationalities Papers* 39, 4, 507–522.

Required Film:

The Fall of Milošević (BBC series - part III: Finished)

Session 5: Student activity and presentations: tracing Yugoslavia in Belgrade

In the preparation for these presentations, students are divided into pairs and matched with local students from the Faculty of Media and Communications. Each small group sets out to explore an area, building, or street in the city that still has a story from Yugoslavia to be told about it. Students then prepare a presentation based on their own research on the location they visited, as well as the narrative(s) offered to them by a young student, born at the time that socialist Yugoslavia began its integration process (or right before/after). Following the activity, each group presents their experience and findings

Module 2: Theoretical Frameworks: Peace & Conflict Studies; Transitional Justice; Social Memory Studies

In this module, students are introduced to some of the theories related to peacebuilding and post-conflict transformation, as well as transitional justice and memory studies. The sessions are taught by Dr. Orli Fridman, the Academic Director, who introduces students to peace and conflict studies and to interdisciplinary studies. Given that not all students have prior knowledge in peace and conflict studies, the module offers the group the basic terminology and theories that will be used and examined throughout the semester, focusing on three main case studies: Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Session 1: Terms and Definitions: Conflict, Conflict Analysis, Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation

The session begins with a discussion of the term conflict, addressing international, intergroup, or inter-state conflicts, and conflict in general as a phenomenon that exists in all forms and aspects of individuals, groups, and communities. With focus on the creation of Conflict Transformation/Resolution and Peace Studies as fields of study, and the relation between theory and practice, the discussion unfolds to address the main trends and changes in the field, since its creation in the aftermath of WW2 and the present. Discussing John Paul Lederach's theoretical approaches to peacebuilding and conflict transformation, some connections are already made to such processes in the Balkans. Terms such as civil society, statebuilding, and reconciliation are introduced as discussed in the context of the post-Yugoslav successor states.

Required Reading:

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 3-61, 73-85.

Recommended Reading:

- Paffenholz, T. (2015). Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding: a critical assessment towards an agenda for future research. *Third World Quarterly* 36, 5, 857-874.
- Touquet, H., Vermeersch, P. (2016). Changing Frames of Reconciliation: The Politics of Peace-Building in the Former Yugoslavia. *East European Politics and Societies and Culture* 30, 1, 55-73.
- Ramsbotham, O., Miall, H., & Woodhouse, T. (2011). *Contemporary conflict resolution: The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. 226-261.

Session 2: Transitional justice

The session introduces the 'Dealing with the Past' approach to peacebuilding as practiced in the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, as part of transitional justice mechanisms. Students will be introduced to the theoretical dimensions of these approaches. Strengths and challenges to transitional justice and dealing with the past projects will be introduced, from most common critique of civil society, to perceptions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Required Reading:

- Bickford, L. (2004). What is transitional justice. In D. Shelton (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*. Farmington Hills: Macmillan Reference, 1045-1047.

Recommended Reading:

- International Center for Transitional Justice. (2009). What is Transitional Justice? Retrieved from: <http://ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Global-Transitional-Justice-2009-English.pdf>

Session 3: The role of memory studies in Post-conflict analysis

This session will introduce students to the field of memory studies and its role in analyzing conflicts and engaging in post-conflict transformation work. Focusing on the creation of mnemonic communities, national myths, and collective memories, the session will allow students to discuss theoretical approaches to the creation of collective memories in the conflict of post-conflict societies, and examine the role of mnemonic rituals and commemoration events in the aftermath of conflict and war. Collective memory is introduced as socially constructed and in service of the present, allowing a discussion to unfold, based on Eviatar Zerubavel's text on national calendars and national memory.

Required Readings:

- Dragović-Soso, J. (2010). Conflict, Memory, Accountability: What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean? In W. Petritsch and V. Džihic (Eds.) *Conflict and Memory: Bridging Past and Future in [South East] Europe*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 29-46.
- Zerubavel, E. (2003). Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory. In J. Olick (Ed.) *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*. Durham: Duke University, 315-337.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Yugoslavia Introduction in-class presentations (30%)

Students present their experience of searching for traces in Yugoslavia in the city, with a local student assigned to them, and their own online research of what they saw.

2) Breakup of Yugoslavia Essay (60%)

Students write a 5-page essay based on in-class discussions and readings of the first module, Yugoslavia: Making and Breaking. Students are asked to offer an informed and analytical discussion and choose from a number of questions discussed in the first module.

3) Participation (10%)

- Attendance – promptness to class and positive presence in class;
- Active listening – paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes;
- Self-directed learning – reading the local paper and other materials to follow local perspectives on relevant issues, discussing issues with host families and others;
- Involvement in-class discussions – either in small or large groups;
- Group accountability during field excursions and classes;
- Taking leadership roles – leading and guiding discussions in a productive direction.

Assessment

Yugoslavia in Belgrade (in-class presentation) - 30%

Breakup of Yugoslavia Introductory Essay - 60%

Participation/Readings - 10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program. Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that

time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or

participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.

- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.