Public Intellectuals of the World, Unite!

Course Description:

Following theoretical and cultural perspectives of public intellectuals as speakers and writers of resistance in the public sphere, the course examines contemporary themes of public intellectuals and their contributions to democratic discourse, focusing in particular on East and Central Europe. The course presents a discursive approach to the role of public intellectuals in emerging democracies from Eastern and Central Europe during the last part of the 20th century. Following the European tradition of public intellectuals' engagement in national discourse, the course features how public intellectuals' voices impact dissent, exile and democratic changes in the public spheres of the New Europe. Taking as starting point the historical context of 1989 for the dramatic changes in Eastern and Central Europe, the course examines public discourse by Adam Michnik, George Konrad, Vaclav Havel, Slavenka Drakulic, Norman Manea and others, in particular their contributions to the political, cultural and democratic transformation of their countries of origin.

While the specifics of the demise of communism provide a fascinating topic in and of itself, the main goals of the course remain multifold, invoking publics, public voice, oppression and dissidence as fundamental approaches pertinent to the role of public intellectuals in democratic contexts all over the world. Accordingly, the course investigates four areas of research in order to connect perspectives on democratic action, dissidence and historical contexts of oppressive regimes, approaches on national identity, media, globalization, and social movements with concrete public intellectual activities.

Throughout this course, we will examine the theoretical powers of rhetoric and its dimensions as part of engaged public discourse pertinent to social, cultural and political transformations in the New Europe. The course is organized around several clusters of theoretical concepts and specific case studies.

Scheduled as a seminar, the emphasis is placed mainly on continuous online and class participation in multiple and challenging discussions raised by a large array of readings.
Accordingly, throughout this historical, discursive journey on the role of public intellectuals in changing the public sphere(s) of several communist and post-communist countries, we will unravel different perspectives on the historical tradition of public intellectuals in relation to resistance; on the complex historical arenas for the discourse of dissent and domination; on several case studies such as Havel, Michnik, and others and their contributions to social political and democratic changes in that part of the world, as well as on the venues assisting the relationship between rhetoric and power and its implications in social, cultural, and political realms of discourse; and to the new challenges coming from the discourses of the margins. The course concludes by discussing new challenges present for public intellectuals from the New Europe in order to continue promoting a discourse of democracy in the 21st century.

**Required Texts:**
Due to the assignments which are set in a compare and contrast format, the required readings cover most of the [a] definitions of public intellectuals, [b] historical and political context; [c] operative distinctions among the public dissidents of 1989 Eastern and Central Europe; and [d] as important, their discourse of democracy. Accordingly, the required readings bring in some of the issues in relation to the voices of public intellectuals in the area, during a time of crucial transformation in the New Europe.


**Articles and Book Chapters:**

*Most Articles and book chapters will be provided on Blackboard as pdf. Files!*

Bauman, Zygmunt. “From Pilgrim to Tourist--Or A Short History of Identity.” 1996. *Questions*


Robbins, Bruce. *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture.* London: Verso,
1993.

Recommended Texts:
There is a list of readings recommended for the course. For the benefit of your participation in
the seminar, you should consider two additional readings per cluster, selected from the list
provided.

Assignments:
Since this course is based heavily on your reading of the materials, on your participation and on
your work, the overall grade will be determined based on performance in the following areas:

A. Class Discussion and Participation [10%]
Our class sessions will be mostly discussing the texts, with a few sessions used for lectures by
the instructor, exams, and oral presentations by students. Students are expected to have already
done the assigned reading in order to participate actively in class discussions. Failure to be
prepared for the discussions or lack of participation in class may result ultimately in a lowered
course grade. Attendance and class participation will count 10% of the course grade.

B: Online Participation [10%]
Each week, there will be two or three discussion questions and/or positions listed online. Hence
the students are requested each week to provide entries for the requested subject matter listed.
Online participation intends to assist students and create additional clarification on the topics
discussed as well as provide a public forum for students’ positions on the matters presented
during class time.

C: Assignments:
Most of the assignments require a compare and contrast format, covering relevant perspectives
on issues pertinent to the role of public intellectuals during a time of crucial transformation in the
New Europe.

[1] Background Paper: Based on the readings, the background paper features a
comparison either between several definitions of intellectuals or between historical
contexts pertinent to public intellectuals’ action in the democratic arena of discourse.
Hence, the background paper needs to provide a thorough description of the theoretical or
historical location for public intellectuals’ discourse in New Europe. This paper should
be about 5 pages, and should bring in additional readings reflecting either theoretical or
historical setting, The paper weighs 15% of overall grade.
In addition, prepare a list of bibliographic sources for classmates to understand better the presentation. Such brief papers are to be presented for no longer than 10-15 minutes per student.

[2] Close Textual Analysis of Discourse: This paper will provide a comparison between two pieces of discourse authored by one of the public intellectuals featured in the class. One of the pieces of discourse should be from the readings, the other from additional sources. This close textual analysis should have four parts: [a] a thesis statement on the purpose of discourse; [b] a brief discussion of the overall work provided by the specific public intellectual selected; [c] a detailed description of the two pieces of discourse; [d] and a comparison section in view of the readings provided. Additionally, the paper should offer an annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources additional sources pertinent to the topic. The paper counts for 25 % of the course grade.

[3] Compare and Contrast Paper: Due on April 27, this final paper counts for 40 % of the course grade. Using the theoretical equipment presented throughout the term, the paper needs to be a 17-20 page paper (typed, double-spaced) in which students demonstrate the breadth of understanding of contemporary theories and practices on the role of resistance and democratic discourse in historical implications for social and cultural action.

Originality:
All assignments are to be original work of the student presenting the work. Sources used in preparation need to be cited, and direct quotations are to be identified as such. Presenting materials prepared by another person as your own work causes failure in the course. See the University’s policy on plagiarism for additional information.

Attendance, Participation and Deadlines: Attendance is expected at each class session.

Grade Distribution:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Online Discussion</td>
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<td>Bck Paper</td>
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<td>Textual Analysis</td>
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Tentative Weekly Schedule CST 7304
Week 1: Jan 12
*Overview to Public Intellectuals’ Role in New Europe: Theorists, Definitions*
Said, *Representations*

Week 2: Jan 19
*Traditions: Past and Present*
Said, *Representations*; Kristeva

Week 3: Jan 26
*Continuing the Role of Public Intellectuals*
Lepenies, Hall, Foucault, Tismaneanu

Wk 4: Feb 2
*Communist and Post-Communist Critical Intellectuals and their Role in Public Sphere*
Tismaneanu, *Reinventing: Fantasies of Salvation*

Week 5: Feb 9
*Public Positions on Democracy and Dissent: A History*
Stokes, *From Stalinism to Pluralism*
Radulescu, *Realms of Exile*
Hobsbaum, Marin

Week 6: Feb 16
*Public Discourse and Its Functions in ECEurope*

Week 7: Feb 23
*Legitimacy, Rhetoric, and Otherness*
McKerrow: Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis [LCC 441-64]
McGee: Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture [LCC-65-79]

Week 8: March 2
*Readings on Public Discourse and Rhetorical Theory*


*Background Paper Due- Post on Blackboard Topic and Bibliography*

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**Week 9: SPRING BREAK**

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**Week 10: March 16**

*Public Intellectuals: Who Are They in Eastern and Central Europe?*

*Vaclav Havel: President or Dissident*

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**Week 11: March 23**

*Past and Post: Freedom/Domination Problem for Public Intellectuals*

*Gyorgy Konrad*

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**Weeks 12: March 30**

*The Public Intellectual as a Journalist of Resistance*

*Adam Michnik*

*Issues of and for the Author as the Other*

*Slavenka Drakulic, Danilo Kis*

**Close Textual Analysis Paper due**

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**Week 13: Apr 6**

*Exile and Return: Critical Perspectives on Identity*

*Norman Manea, Andrei Codrescu*


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**Weeks 14: April 13**

*Revisiting the Past: Role and Legitimacy After the Fall*

*Antohi, Tismaneanu: Between Past and Future*

*Bozoki, Intellectuals and Politics in Central Europe*
Week 15: April 20
Roundtable
*Public, Critical Views on Polis and the 21st Century*
This last part of the course provides conceptualizations of the role of public(s) and publicness, within international and national contexts of democratic discourse; collective vs. individualist perspectives on public participation.
“What’s Next?” - Fundamental Question for Public Intellectuals in the New Europe

Week 16: Apr. 27-Final Paper