# GOVT 94NS: Nation and Nationalism

## Course Overview and Contact Information

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<tr>
<th>Course Overview</th>
<th>Instructor Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Semester and Year: Fall 2021</td>
<td>Name: Prof Daniel J. Epstein</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day/Time: Thursdays 9:45-11:45am</td>
<td>Office Hours TBA</td>
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<td>(I will normally respond to messages within 24 hours, M-F)</td>
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## Course Description and Learning Objectives

Nationalism is a powerful force whose importance is only growing. This course addresses the concept of nation, how it holds legitimacy over peoples, and the origins of nationalism as an intellectual project and ideology in early liberal ideas, as well as more recent illiberal manifestations, including in the United States. Case studies consider the possibility of benign nationalism (Czech), imperial nationalism (Russian), and nationality in the post-colonial context (Democratic Republic of Congo). The semiotic concept of “myth” will be key, especially when addressing the US case, and we’ll engage with film and novels in addition to traditional academic reading.

Learning Objectives—with successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- identify the basic aspects of national identity, how it is formed and reproduced, and the role of history in the conception of the nation.
- describe and use the historical and semiotic concept of “myth,” and distinguish it from the commonly used definition of “myth” as merely false stories or ancient folktales.
- interpret the roles of particular myths in the construction of particular nations.
- critically look, listen for, see, hear, and decode language and symbols around them in everyday life that contribute to the development and reinforcement of national identity.
- compare different nationalisms across world regions.
- explain the role of particular national-historical and world-historical events in the construction of nationalisms.

Note: Updates/Changes may be made after this current version (August 12th). Be sure to check your course Canvas page for the newest updated syllabus, in case of changes.

## Course Materials

**Course Materials:** Four books will required and should be available for purchase:

These should also be on reserve in the library. All other course readings will be provided through links to the Harvard University library online services, or via .pdf files available on the Canvas course webpage.

*Additionally*, we will be viewing **two films** for this course:
- *Kolya*, directed by Jan Svěrák (1996)
- *When We Were Kings*, directed by Leon Gast (1996)

Provision will be made to watch the films together as a class in the evening (attendance this is required). Dates & Times TBA

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**Grading**

(Note all course assignment deadlines are by default at 5:00pm on the due-date noted, **not at midnight**. Papers should be turned in via Canvas, in Word or GoogleDoc format. Late Work may be accepted without penalty if permission is sought at least 24-hours prior to the deadline. Otherwise, a penalty will be assessed of 20% for each 24-hour period it is late. **No work will be accepted for credit more than one week after the assignment deadline.**)

20% Attendance & Class Participation. Students are expected to attend every class, and to show through their participation that they have read the course materials and are able to work with and apply the concepts presented to the cases we study. On component of the participation grade will be weekly Canvas Discussion Posts (200 words each). These must be completed by the **Tuesday before** the class for which the readings are assigned. Full credit is earned by students who show mastery of the materials and concepts.

30% Two short papers (5-6 pages). The **first** will be due Mon 9/20. Students may choose between two topics for their second papers. One (due Mon 10/18) will be a film response, and the other (due Mon 11/09) will be focused on two novels. Details will be handed out in advance.

10% Term Paper Prospectus – A clear statement of the research question and outline of the topic, including an annotated bibliography (2-4 pages). **Due Mon 11/1**

40% Term Paper – A research paper of approximately 15-20 pages, comparing nationalism in two cases. **TBA** (date of the course’s Final Examination Group).

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**Expectations and Policies**

**Attendance & Participation**

Students are expected to attend every section and ready to engage in discussion, seminar-style, as well as take notes. **Students are asked not to have laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices open during class**, unless a medical exemption necessitates their use.

Students are expected to participate actively, ask & answer questions, and be ready to give their opinions, as well as answer questions about the week’s readings and current events.

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**Course Outline and Schedule**
Note: All readings should be completed before the course meeting they are associated with. Additional readings may be added, especially timely news articles, which may be e-mailed and linked in Canvas from week to week.

Updates/Changes to reading assignments may be made after this current version (August 12th). Be sure to check Canvas for the newest updated syllabus, in case of changes.

1. 9/2 Nation as a Concept


2. 9/9 History, Myth, and the Power of “We”


3. 9/16 Intellectual History of Nationalism

- Holy, pp 50-51
- Huntington, pp 28-33

Mon 9/20, 5pm—First Short Paper due

4. 9/23 The Czech Nation I: Discontinuous History of a Liberal Nation?

- Holy, pp 120-121, 124-128

5. 9/30 The Czech Nation II: Communism, Identity, Nation Restored?

- Bažant, Bažantová, and Starn, pp 335-348
- Agnew, pp 234-237, 284-292, 300-306
- Holy, pp 7-10, 35-38, 76-79, 106-109, 139-140, 182-183
6. 10/07 The Russian Nation I: An Empire Brought to Her Knees?

7. 10/14 The Russian Nation II: Is Empire essential to the Russian Nation, or to Putin?
• Graeme Gill, “Putin, Nationalism, and Foreign Policy,” in Kanet & Sussex, eds. pp 42-60
• Charles Ziegler, “Russia as a nationalizing state: Rejecting the western liberal order” in *International Politics*, Vol 53, no 5, pp 555-573

Mon 10/18 5pm—Second Short Paper Due

8. 10/21 Congo as Nation? I: Colonization, Dictatorship, Collapse of Zaire
• Anna Maedl, “Rape as a Weapon of War in Eastern DRC? The Victims’ Perspective” in *Human Rights Quarterly* v 33 (2011), pp 128-147

9. 10/28 Congo as Nation? II: Fragmentation and External Views

Mon 11/01 5pm—Term Paper Prospectus due

10. 11/04 Congo as Nation? III: Region, Gender, Identity, and an Internal View
• Fiston Mwanza Mujila, *Tram 83* (Dallas, TX: Deep Vellum Publishing, 2015), entire

Mon 11/08 5pm—Third Short Paper due

11. 11/11 The United States of America: Multinational State or “Creedal” Nation?
• Jack Citrin, Beth Reingold and Donald P. Green, “American Identity and the Politics of Ethnic Change” in *Journal of Politics* v 52, No 4 (1990), pp 1124-1154
• Judis, pp 74-80

12. 11/18 Constructing “MAGA America”? A response to Creedal Cosmopolitanism
• Huntington, pp 3-17, 53-66, 92-103, 171-199, 244-303, 309-335, 340-350, 362-366
• Judis, pp 40-73
• Joel Olson, “Whiteness and the Polarization of American Politics” in *Political Research Quarterly* v 61, No 4 (2008), pp 704-718

—No Class Thursday 11/25 for Thanksgiving Break—

13. 12/02 Concluding Thoughts
No readings assigned—Comparative discussion of four cases and Student Paper Topics (no formal presentation, but students should be ready to discuss their papers’ cases and arguments.)

Final Exam Date (TBA)—Final Paper Due

**Accessibility**

Harvard University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for with disabilities. Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation. Please call (617) 496-8707 or send an email to aeo@fas.harvard.edu for further information.

**Honor Code**
“Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.”

To help fulfill your commitment, especially with regarding to plagiarism and proper citing, you are encouraged to make full use of the Government Department’s GovWrites: a Resource for Concentrators. This resource has a number of very useful tools to improve your writing generally, and some very specific information about citations under the Working with Integrity section. The Harvard Guide to Writing with Sources is also highly useful.

**Collaboration**

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you will consult with classmates on the choice of research projects and share sources and evidence. However, any written work you submit for individual evaluation must be the result of your own research and writing and must reflect your own approach to the topic. All students must also adhere to standard citation practices in the social sciences and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, videos, and films that have helped you with your work. I recommend using the Chicago Manual of Style’s author-date format.