

FONTBONNE UNIVERSITY COURSE SYLLABUS, SPRING 2018
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructors' discretion to accommodate instructional and/or student needs. It is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of such changes.

ENG/HON/HST/494: The Bosnian Immigration: Narrative, Memory, and Identity
(3 semester hours)

INSTRUCTORS: Dr. Ben Moore, Adna Karamehic-Oates

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OFFICE HOURS: Ben Moore: MW 2:00-3:00 and by appointment
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REQUIRED TEXTS:

Drakulić, Slavenka, S.: *A Novel about the Balkans*, trans. Mark Ivić. New York: Penguin, 2001.

Hemon, Aleksandar. *The Book of My Lives*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013.

Lieblich, Julia and Esad Boškailo. *Wounded I Am More Awake: Finding Meaning after Terror*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012.

Mehmedinović, Semezdin. *Sarajevo Blues*. Trans. Ammiel Alcalay. San Francisco: City Lights, 2001.

Sells, Michael. *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Suljagić, Emir. *Postcards from the Grave*. London: Saqi Books, 2005 (handout).

Additional required readings will be distributed through handouts or placed on reserve in the library; some but not all are listed below on the class schedule that begins on p. 10.

You should purchase a three-ring binder for the course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

HST/ENG/HON 494: The Bosnian Immigration: Narrative, Memory, and Identity is designed to bring a broad synthesis of sources and methods to bear on the understanding of the Bosnian war, genocide, and immigration to St. Louis in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

- One objective of this course is to enable students to develop an understanding of the ideologies, ethnicities, nationalities, and religions that were present in the former Yugoslavia. This understanding will be predicated on a historical grasp of the former Yugoslavia as a multicultural republic situated on the boundaries that once separated competing cultures and empires.
- A second objective is to learn how to shed light on historical events, especially events that are very recent in individual and collective memory. In pursuing this objective, we will proceed as attorneys often do, sifting through documentary evidence and interviewing participants and witnesses in an effort to determine what happened and to whom.
- A third objective is to understand the implications of the war in Bosnia and the ensuing immigration of Bosnians to St. Louis, a city that is now home to the largest Bosnian community in the U.S. Interaction with this community through interviews and forums will be a central component of the class, strengthening our grasp of the interdependence of cultures and the relationship between global events and local communities. Part of this objective will also include understanding the complexities of life in a post-war and post-genocidal society, as illustrated by the experiences of refugees returning to Bosnia.
- A fourth objective is to make meaningful comparisons of the results of the research conducted independently and collaboratively by class members. By analyzing various historical and personal narratives, we will examine individual motives, nationalist and ethnic ideologies, and religious preferences and exclusions in order to create a comparative understanding of the war and genocide in Bosnia and the importance of the Bosnian immigration to St. Louis.

Much of the work that we do this semester—including interviewing survivors of the Bosnian war and genocide and assembling relevant photographs and artifacts—will contribute to Fontbonne’s ongoing Bosnia Memory Project, dedicated to establishing and enduring record of the Bosnian genocide survivors now living in St. Louis.

In the first part of the course, we will consider what narratives, interpretations and analyses have recently been offered by historians, filmmakers, journalists, photographers and culture critics in order to explain genocide in Bosnia and the Balkans. Once we have established this academic context, we will attempt to see the war and genocide in Bosnia through the eyes of the people who experienced them—whether as perpetrators, victims or bystanders—by utilizing their letters, photographs, writings, oral testimony and artifacts.

Such an enterprise demands that we become attuned to the problems and themes that attend the oral and textual representations of human experience, whether in histories, journalism, or first-person accounts. To this end, we will consider such critical questions as the nature of historical causality, the use and abuse of memory, the difference between memory (whether individual or collective) and history, the difference between history as event and history as the story of the event, and the importance of language to shaping meaning (a problem that is especially acute when working with translations). We will ask who gets to write history and who gets to decide what history is or should be. We will also consider how different narrative and representational forms—for example, first-person testimony, fiction, feature films, documentary films, poetry, photographs, academic histories, and journalistic accounts—yield different versions or perceptions of the same events.

During the course, students will be asked to engage with the rest of the class through three oral presentation opportunities. Two of these will involve taking the lead on the class discussion of required reading material for that week, which includes providing a summary and feedback on the reading as well as preparing questions to guide the discussion. It is possible that two students may be asked to lead the discussion the same week and that they coordinate the discussion with one another. The third oral presentation opportunity will involve providing an update on research for the major project, the themes that it seeks to study, the sources being used, initial findings, etc.

There are several features of this class that will offer a unique connection between academic and experiential learning. Although we will use traditional texts for this course many of the readings will be government documents and first person narratives such as interviews. Additional resources will include films, maps, fiction, poetry, and photographs. A major part of our task will be to select and assemble various sources into a collaborative understanding of the Bosnian war, genocide, and immigration. In this respect, the class itself will be an evolving text, as we discuss the causes of war and genocide in Bosnia and interact with former residents of Bosnia who now live in St. Louis. The experience of students who have participated in interviews of survivors has shown that such interactions can be transformative, engaging the spirit and the intellect and taking learning far beyond the classroom walls. The transformation that we experience will also reach subsequent audiences, since the work that is completed this semester will contribute to Fontbonne's ongoing Bosnia Memory Project. In a very meaningful sense, we are making history.

COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

The Bosnian Immigration: Narrative, Memory, and Identity is an upper-level interdisciplinary course that may be used as the capstone course or upper level elective for history majors and as a required elective for English majors. As an honors course, it also fulfills a requirement for students in Fontbonne's Honors Program. The course is structured so that class work, readings, written and oral assignments, and tests will help students achieve the following goals and objectives:

1. Students will be able to analyze and discuss political, economic, religious, social, intellectual, artistic, and literary contexts that frame the Bosnian war, genocide, and immigration.

2. Students will develop a nuanced sense of *source*, recognizing the possibilities and relevance of a number of artifacts and texts including maps, first-person accounts, court testimony, academic histories, journalistic narratives, photographs, film, and everyday objects.
3. Students will understand the role of literature—prose fiction, poetry, the personal essay, and film—in treating the complex questions that surround the Bosnian genocide.
4. Students will be able to conduct relevant research using primary and secondary sources, demonstrating resourcefulness and selectivity.
5. Students will be familiar with the methodologies salient to their individual projects and will understand problems of synthesis and analysis that pertain to their projects.
6. Students will become familiar with the ways that Yugoslavian experience, especially the Bosnian experience, has been represented in a variety of competing narratives, including academic histories, journalistic accounts, and film.
7. Students will be able to engage these narrative representations of Yugoslavian experience critically, posing questions that lead to their own conclusions and developing their own ideas and narratives about this experience.
8. Students will be able to identify and discuss the impact of major historical figures in politics, society, economy, and culture, articulating their place in the various narratives that constitute the history of the former Yugoslavia, the genocide in Bosnia, and the Bosnian immigration to St. Louis.
9. Students will apply relevant knowledge about the past to understanding the recent experience and contemporary life of Bosnians.
10. Students will be able to place their research, analysis, and reflection in a global context.
11. Students will develop a sense of the way that global events have impacted local communities, including St. Louis.
12. Students will demonstrate the ability to present their critical thinking about the themes raised in readings by leading two class discussions during the semester. They will also demonstrate their ability to present the goals, methods and results of their research project in a public forum (the class) in a coherent and meaningful manner.

COURSE CONTENT:

Please check the syllabus regularly; it lists the topics in the order they will be covered. However, please note that, given the nature and purpose of this course, some of the reading that will be required of students is not listed on the syllabus. Independent research will be a central component of students' work. Other than the required texts, which provide the basic narratives of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the war and genocide in Bosnia, not all students will be reading the same texts at the same time, though there will be considerable overlap in their readings. Depending on class participation, we may be either a little ahead or a little behind in the discussion of a specific topic on a specific day. It is your responsibility to know where we ended discussion on a particular day and to be prepared for the next class discussion. Please read all materials to be discussed in class PRIOR to class.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Class periods throughout the semester will use a combination of readings, lectures, student presentations, handouts, and/or films that relate to the topic for the day. Because discussion of historical data, documents, lectures and student presentations involves sharing personal observations and ideas, regular class attendance is essential. Class attendance will therefore be a factor in determining the semester grade. Students are responsible for all material covered in any class missed. If any changes are made in assignments when a student is absent, it is the student's responsibility to become informed of these changes.

In addition, there will be a number of Bosnia-related activities and events that are not listed on the schedule, including interviews of survivors. Students are required to attend at least one such event outside of class time and to write a two-page review of the event. With luck, we will experience interaction with people outside of Fontbonne. Since we have no control over their schedules, and since we may wish to change the schedule to take advantage of emergent opportunities, it is important that you remain flexible with respect to the class schedule.

COURTESY IN THE CLASSROOM (yes, these are rules)

Please arrive on time. Arrive prepared. Pay attention to each other and to what's going on in class (other people can tell when you aren't). Turn off cell phones, pagers, computers, and all other electronic devices; if your phone goes off in class, you will be required to bring everyone cookies. Don't use a laptop in class. Absolutely no texting in class. Failure to observe these common standards of decent classroom behavior will result in a significant reduction of your final grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance

Attendance of all classes is mandatory. Students missing more than two classes (two weeks) will fail the course.

Grading

Class participation:	20%
Reading responses, source review, event review, and other writings	30%
Oral presentations:	15%
Major project:	35%

Each assignment will receive a letter grade, and grades will be averaged according to the familiar 10-point scale:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
						F	0-59

Class Participation

This course will be taught as a seminar, which means there will be maximum student participation in class discussions. Class participation is therefore required and may very well help raise or lower a grade. Class participation does not mean you must come to class knowing all the answers. Nor does it refer to the quantity of spoken words in class. Thoughtful class participation does mean that:

- assignments have been read carefully;
- learning objectives listed in the syllabus have been considered in conjunction with reading assignments; and
- students have demonstrated a willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Reading Responses

In order to stimulate thought and prepare for class discussion (and to ensure that you do the reading), you will at several points this semester complete short (one- to two- page typed) reading responses. Some but not all of these responses are listed on the syllabus. More specific guidelines, including questions to which you will respond, will be provided the week before a response is due.

Written Review of a Source

At the fifth class meeting, you will submit a carefully written, two-page (typed) review of a primary source: either a scholarly article, a part of a scholarly book, a documentary or feature film, a trial transcript, a recorded interview, or a relevant work of fiction. This source must be in addition to the assigned readings and viewings listed on this syllabus. Your review should be

divided evenly between a summary and an evaluation of the source. It is hoped that this review will help you develop a topic and direction for your major project.

The Major Project

Each student will complete a research project that will be developed in consultation with the instructors. When proposing their projects, students should consider their individual strengths, their disciplinary backgrounds, and their stake in this course. Although each student is welcome to develop a topic in accordance with his or her personal interest, in general the research topic should be based on an aspect of the war in Bosnia, the genocide against the Bosnians, the Bosnian immigration to St Louis, post-war issues in contemporary Bosnian society, or the literature of Bosnia. Students who are taking the course for literature credit are required to make literature a significant part of their projects. Since some or projects will involve conducting oral histories and/or gaining access to and interpreting original documents, students are advised to begin developing their ideas early. **More information about the major project will be distributed separately.**

FONTBONNE POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

(This syllabus includes the policy as stated in the Fontbonne University catalog)

The university community relies upon academic honesty, which requires that words and ideas that students present as their own truly represent their own work. Plagiarism, defined as using another writer's ideas or expressions without adequate acknowledgment, undermines the very foundation of education, which is a quest for the truth. Often plagiarism occurs because students do not understand the boundaries of legitimate scholarship. In brief, the honest use of research material requires that writers:

1. Use quotation marks around (or indent) words of another writer and cite the source of these words;
2. Cite the source of paraphrased material, even when the paraphrase differs substantially from the original;
3. Attribute to their sources ideas of other writers.

A handbook on writing research papers will provide writers with detailed information on citation of sources. The *MLA Handbook*, in particular, includes examples of plagiarism.

Cheating is a purposeful deception to the preparation and/or submission of papers and assignments and the taking of exams, tests and quizzes.

Anyone found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in this course will fail the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE INSTRUCTORS' DISCRETION

January

- 11 **Introductions.**
A brief background:
 - Finding Bosnia on the map: a micro-lesson in history and geography.
 - The Bosnian community in St. Louis: a brief introduction.
 - The Bosnia Memory Project.Overview of syllabus.
Discussion of keywords and historical problems and interpretations:
 - Why study Bosnia?
 - What are the competing narratives about Bosnia?
- 18 **Past to Present, Global to Local.**
Required reading:
 - Megan Myers, "Recovering Pluralism: A Bosniak-Serb Family in St. Louis" (handout);
 - Ben Moore, "Memory, Oral History, and a Generational Divide: The Bosnian Diaspora Community in St. Louis"
 - Begin reading Sells' *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*.Assignment due: bring in a total of four (written) questions or comments about the readings listed above, *not* including Sells.
Lecture/discussion: Historical Background of Bosnia.
- 25 **The Question of Nationalism.**
Required reading:
 - Aleksandar Hemon, "The Lives of Others" (in *The Book of My Lives*, pp.3-24).
 - Complete the first half of Sells' *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (through p. 114).Assignment due: bring in a one- to two-page written response to the first 114 pages of Sells' book; more guidelines will be given in class.
In class: discussion of Hemon and Sells.

February

- 1 **How Can this Happen?**
Required reading:
 - You should have finished Sells' *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*.Film: *We are All Neighbors* (shown in class).

8 **The Death of Yugoslavia and the Birth of Bosnia.**

Assignment due: submit a carefully written, two-page (typed) review of a primary or secondary source: either a scholarly article, a part of a scholarly book, a documentary or feature film, a trial transcript, a recorded interview, or a relevant work of literature. This source must be in addition to the assigned readings and viewings listed on this syllabus. Your review should be divided evenly between a summary and an evaluation of the source.

Required reading:

Aleksandar Hemon, "Let There Be What Cannot Be" (in *The Book of My Lives*, pp.73-79);

Aleksandar Hemon, "The Book of My Life" (in *The Book of My Lives*, pp.97-101).

Lecture/discussion: The Collapse of Yugoslavia, "Ethnic Cleansing," and the State of Bosnia Today.

15 **Prijedor and the Invention of Ethnic Cleansing.**

Assignment due: two-page proposal for project. Please address the following questions:

- What kind of project do you wish to pursue?
- What topic do you wish to research and write about?
- Why are you interested in this topic?
- What sources will you use?

Required reading:

- Courtney Angela Brkić's "Suspension" (on reserve in the library);
- The U.N.'s *Prijedor Report* (handout);
- Begin reading Semezdin Mehmedinović's *Sarajevo Blues*.

Recommended reading:

- Rezak Hukanović, *The Tenth Circle of Hell* (on reserve in the library);
- Isabelle Wesselingh and Arnaud Vaulerin, *Raw Memory: Prijedor, an "Ethnic Cleansing Laboratory."*

22 **Sarajevo and Srebrenica.**

Required reading:

- Courtney Angela Brkić's "The Angled City" (on reserve in the library);
- Finish reading Semezdin Mehmedinović's *Sarajevo Blues*.
- You should have begun reading Emir Suljagić's *Postcards from the Grave*.
- You should have begun reading Slavenka Drakulić's *S.: A Novel about the Balkans*.

Lecture (with video)/discussion: The Siege of Sarajevo.

Lecture/discussion: The Srebrenica Massacre.

March

1 **Srebrenica and Dayton.**

Required reading:

- Finish reading Emir Suljagić's *Postcards from the Grave*;
- You should be well into *S.: A Novel about the Balkans*.

Recommended reading:

- Please review Patrick McCarthy's *After the Fall* (on reserve in the library).
- You may also want to look at David Rohde's *End Game: The Betrayal and Fall of Srebrenica* (on reserve in the library).

Lecture/discussion:

- The Srebrenica Massacre (continued);
- The Dayton Agreement and Its Legacy;
- Propaganda and the Genocide in Bosnia.

8 **Spring Break – No Class**

15 **Crimes against Women.**

Required reading:

- Finish reading *S.: A Novel about the Balkans*.

Film: *I Came to Testify* (shown in class).

You may also want to look at Beverly Allen's *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (on reserve in the library).

You may also want to watch *Calling the Ghosts* (on reserve in the library).

22 **Being Bosnian in America.**

Required reading:

- Aleksandar Hemon, "The Lives of a Flaneur" (in *The Book of My Lives*, pp. 103-127);
- You should begin reading Esad Boškailo's *Wounded I am More Awake*.

Film: *Neither Here Nor There* (shown in class).

29 **Easter Break – No Class**

April

5 **Narrative, Memory, and Finding What's Missing.**

Required reading:

- You need to have completed reading Boškailo's *Wounded I am More Awake*.

Lecture/discussion:

- Denial and Its Implications;
- Memorializing the Bosnian Genocide.

12 **Returning to post-war and post-genocide Bosnia**

Required reading:

- Excerpts from Sebina Sivac-Bryant's *Remaking Kozarac* – handouts provided

Lecture/discussion:

- Repatriation and the Returns Process;
- Life in Republika Srpska.

19 **Discussion of research projects.**

26 **Catch-up day.**

May

3 **Student major projects due. Class activities to be announced.**