

## **Nationalism: concepts, theories, values**

Professor: Erica Benner  
 Central European University  
 Fall Semester 2016  
 MA, 2/ credits  
 Office hours: TBD

### **Course description**

This course offers a very short introduction to the study of nationalism. In the first week we'll analyse basic concepts of the nation and typologies of nationalism, placing them in historical context. In the second week we'll discuss theories that seek to explain nationalism's origins and its effects on human life. In third and final week, we'll deploy these conceptual and theoretical tools to examine the nature and appeal of national values today, especially in democracies. The last session will discuss two of the main practical challenges posed by nationalist politics: how to address rival claims to self-determination, and how to deal with large-scale migration.

### **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will have acquired

- Basic conceptual tools for approaching the study of nationalism
- A general knowledge of the main explanatory and normative theories of nationalism
- An ability to critically discuss the academic literature

### **Course requirements**

*Participation:* 34%

*Presentations:* 33%

*Paper:* 33%

***Participation:*** Active participation means:

- (1) *Attendance.* This is an intensive course, with only 6 sessions held in a 3-week period. It is therefore essential that students attend all classes. Except in cases where permission has been granted in advance, absences from any class or parts of a class will result in a lower final mark.
- (2) *Discussion and presence.* Thoughtful contributions to class discussions will be noted. Attentive listening and constructive engagement with other students' points will also gain credit.

**Forewarning/Achtung:** In a course based on intensive, active discussion, laptops and other personal devices aren't always strictly necessary. The instructor may sometimes ask students to put them away for the sake of improved (one hopes) social interaction.

**Presentations.** Apart from the first introductory session, classes will be based on student presentations and seminar-style discussions. Each student will be expected to give at least one short (10-15 min) presentation addressing one of the topics listed in the course schedule. Presentations should provide a summary and critical review of one or two of the listed readings. Presenters may also address one or more of the discussion questions on the schedule.

**Paper.** A final paper (minimum 2500 words, with full bibliography) will be due at 5 pm on 17 October. For their topic, students should choose one or two of the questions from the syllabus and address it/them, drawing on any of the course readings. Papers may critically discuss one or two readings in detail, OR develop a more wide-ranging answer to the chosen question with reference to a number of readings. Students should choose a different topic for the paper than their presentation topic, although some overlap is acceptable; if in doubt about the degree of overlap, please ask the instructor.

Assessment will be based on:

- (1) Clarity of expression and structure
- (2) Balance and strength of arguments
- (3) Independence of thought
- (4) Timely submission: late papers will receive lower marks

## **Schedule**

### **Session 1 (Monday 12th): Introductions and opening questions**

#### **Topic 1A: What is nationalism?**

- Is nationalism an ideology, a sentiment or belief, or something else? Is it different from patriotism?
- ‘Nationalism is a pathology that needs to be cured, not indulged.’ Do you agree?

#### **Background reading:**

Ernest Renan, ‘What is a Nation?’ in Omar Dahbour and Micheline Ishay, eds. *The Nationalism Reader*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995. 143-155.

John Dunn, ‘Nationalism’ in Ronald Beiner, ed. *Theorizing Nationalism*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1999. 27-50.

David Miller, ‘In Defence of Nationality,’ in Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000. 24-40.

#### **Topic 2B: Why study nationalism?**

- Why study nationalism in a rapidly globalising world? How strong a force is it today?
- When and why did nationalism emerge as a subject of academic study? What was its main focus in the past, and what should it be now?

Craig Calhoun, 'Is it Time to be Postnational?' in *Nations Matter: Culture, History and the Cosmopolitan Dream*. 2007. 11-26.

Last half-hour or so: choose presentations

## **Session 2 (Thursday 15th): Basic concepts and national values**

**Topic 2A:** Is nationalism one thing or many?

- Is there a core national doctrine, or is nationalism a chameleon-like concept with no generic content?
- Can nationalism form a common ground for people who hold widely different political opinions?
- How useful are the distinctions between Eastern and Western, ethnic and civic concepts of the nation?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Michael Freedman, 'Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?' in *Liberal Languages: Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought*, 2005. 204 – 224.

\* Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991. 74-91.

Isaiah Berlin, 'Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power' in *Against the Current*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. 333-355.

Hans Kohn, 'Western and Eastern Nationalism.' In. John Hutchinson – Anthony Smith (eds.): *Ethnicity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 162-164.

Bernard Yack, 'The Myth of the Civic Nation' in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Nationalism*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1999. 103-118.

**Topic 2B:** The historical origins of nationalism and its main values

- When, where, and why did the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism' become important part of intellectual and political discourse?

- What are the main political, cultural, and personal values associated with nationality?
- What is the relationship between language and nationhood?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland and its Projected Reformation' in Victor Gourevitch, ed. *Rousseau: The Social Contract and other later political writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 177-197, 216-239, 255-260.

\*Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Treatise on the Origin of Language' in Michael N. Foster, ed. *Herder: Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 65-74, 127-164.

Erica Benner, 'Nationalism: Intellectual Origins' in John Breuilly, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 36-55.

Avishai Margalit, 'The Moral Psychology of Nationalism,' in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, eds. *The Morality of Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 74-87.

### **Session 3 (Monday 19th): Theories of nationalism I**

#### **Topic 3A: Modernization and communication**

- Why did nationalism become a major political force only in modern times?
- Critically assess Gellner's or Anderson's theories.
- Do recent 21<sup>st</sup> century developments confirm classical modernist theories of nationalism, or call them into question?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983. 1-87.

\*Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. 1-46.

Daniele Conversi, 'Homogenisation, nationalism and war: should we still read Ernest Gellner?' 2007. *Nations and Nationalism*, 13 (3). 371-394.

#### **Topic 3B: Perennialism and ethnosymbolism**

- Do nations have navels?

- Are pre-national ethnic identities the most important motivating element in modern nationalism?
- ‘Theories that stress the continuity of ethnic and national identities fail to explain why their mobilizing power differs at different times.’ Discuss.

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999. 1-27; 99-147.

\*Smith and Gellner, The Warwick Debates, in *Nations and Nationalism*, November 1996, Vol. 2, Issue 3, pp. 357-388.

Umut Özkırımlı, ‘The Nation as an Artichoke? A critique of ethnosymbolist interpretations of Nationalism’ in *Nations and Nationalism* Vol. 9, issue 3, 2003. 339-355.

#### **Session 4 (Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>): Theories of nationalism II**

##### **Topic 4A:** Nation-building and the ‘invention’ of traditions

- Why did intellectual and political elites in Europe and beyond start constructing large-scale national narratives? Does it matter if we describe what they did as ‘construction’ or ‘invention’?
- According to Hobsbawm, what political aims were pursued through new national ‘traditions’?
- Does the constructed (or invented) character of national myths and narratives make them less effective?

Reading:

Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 1-79.

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 1-14, 263-307.

##### **Topic 4B:** Nationalism, empire, and war

- How did international factors such as imperialism and war influence the rise of nationalism?

- Why has strong ethnic nationalism often become dominant in internationally vulnerable nations?
- How are racialist doctrines related to nationalist ones?
- Do peoples and states need some kind of nationalism to defend their interests in a competitive international environment?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, ed. G.A. Kelly. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968. 111-143, 175-228.

\*Max Weber, 'Ethnic Groups' in *Economy and Society*, Vol. II. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. 385-398.

George Mosse, 'Racism and nationalism' in *Nations and Nationalism*. Vol. 1, no. 2. 1995. 163-173.

Erica Benner, 'Japanese National Doctrines in International Perspective,' in N. Shimazu, ed. *Nationalisms in Japan*. London: Routledge, 2006. 9-40.

### **Session 5 (Monday 26<sup>th</sup>): Democracy and the politics of nationality**

#### **Topic 5A: Democratic citizenship and nationality**

- Is some form of nationalism needed to secure democratic legitimacy?
- Does modern citizenship require bounded political communities?
- Can 'liberal nationalist' norms be applied to all places and circumstances?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*David Miller, 'Group Identities, National Identities and Democratic Politics' and 'Bounded Citizenship' in *Citizenship and National Identity*. 62-96.

\*Ghia Nodia, (1994) 'Nationalism and democracy' in Diamond, L. and Plattner, M.F., eds. *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

J. H.H. Weiler, 'To be a European Citizen: Eros and civilization,' in Goldmann et.al., eds. *Nationalism and Internationalism in the Post-Cold War Era*. London: Routledge, 2000. 170-194.

Rodney Barker, *Legitimizing Identities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 106-140.

**Topic 5B:** Populist nationalism

- What is meant by the phrase ‘populist nationalism’?
- Why do national values tend to draw popular support today?
- Can nationalism help to strengthen democracy and empower the people?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Michael Mann, ‘A Political Theory of Nationalism and Its Excesses’ in Sukumar Periwal, ed., *Notions of Nationalism*. Budapest: CEU Press, 1995. 44-64.

\*H-G Betz and S. Meret, ‘Right-Wing Populist Parties and the Working Class Vote: What Have You Done for Us Lately?’ in J. Rydgren, ed. *Class Politics and the Radical Right*. Oxon: Routledge, 2012. 107-121.

Nadia Urbinati, ‘The Populist Phenomenon’ in *Raisons Politiques*, Presses de Sciences Po, Vol. 3 no. 51, 2013. 135-154.

Margaret Canovan, ‘Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy,’ in Yves Meny and Yves Sorel, eds. *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. New York: Palgrave. 25-44.

Takis Pappas, ‘Populist Democracies: Post-Authoritarian Greece and Post-Communist Hungary’ in *Government and Opposition*, Volume 49, issue 01, January 2014. 1-23.

**Session 6: (Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>) Contemporary ethical challenges**

**Topic 6A:** The ethics of self-determination

- Why did nation-states become the main units of international politics?
- Should there be a basic right to national self-determination? Whose right should it be and what goods should it secure?
- Has the doctrine of national self-determination made the world safer or more just?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*John Stuart Mill, 'Representative Government' in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Gray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. 427-467.

\*Yael Tamir, 'The Right to National Self-Determination' in *Liberal Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. 57-77.

James Mayall, 'International Society, State Sovereignty, and National Self-Determination' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, 2013. 537-555.

Allen Buchanan. 'Self-Determination, Secession, and the Rule of Law' in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, eds. *The Morality of Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 301-323.

Rainer Bauböck, 'Why secession is not like divorce,' in Goldmann et.al., eds. *Nationalism and Internationalism in the Post-Cold War Era*. London: Routledge, 2000. 216-243.

**Topic 6B:** Multiculturalism, religion, and the challenges of migration

- Does large-scale migration endanger national identities?
- Should the claims of refugees always take precedence over the rights of political communities to police their borders and manage their identities?
- Do global religious movements tend to erode nationalism, or to reinforce it?

Reading: (\*= main texts for presentations and discussion)

\*Joseph Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 1-19, 225-287

\*David Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. 1-37, 130-174.

Jens Rydgren, 'Immigration sceptics, xenophobes or racists? Radical right-wing voting in six West European countries' in *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 47, no. 6, 2008. 737-765.

Kinnvall, C. (2004) 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security', *Political Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 5

Frederik Barth, 'Are Islamists nationalists or internationalists?' in Goldmann et.al., eds. *Nationalism and Internationalism in the Post-Cold War Era*. London: Routledge, 2000. 51-63.