ANTH-UA9200001

Instructor Details
Yasar Abu Ghosh
ayg2@nyu.edu, (or yabughosh@gmail.com)
Malé náměstí 2, professor’s office, Thu 2pm – 3pm

Class Details
Roma in Central and Eastern Europe – SPRING 2015
Lecture Tue 3pm – 4.20pm
Seminar Thu 3pm – 4.20pm
Room: Kafka

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
The course will introduce students to the development of Romany politics and culture from a persecuted minority through to the emergence of Romany organizations with an emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe. The aim is to challenge any essentializing view on Roma as either a people outside or/and without society or as perennial victims of oppression. Two main approaches have dominated the teaching of Romany issues: a culturalist/ethnic approach, which stresses Romany cultures, and an economistic approach, which stresses ‘poverty’. This course will challenge mono-causal and a-historic explanations for the social situation of Roma and will stimulate students to think about Roma in a critical holistic way that brings into consideration the societies they live in. Building on a diverse selection of empirical material, ranging from ethnographic, historical and sociological case studies to artistic representations of Roma, the course will present the Roma “as good to think” for our comprehension of current social issues. The course is divided into three interconnected thematic clusters – 1. Identity, community and culture, 2. Power, the State and social stratification, 3. History, memory and politics of representation – which will allow to cover much of the current debates on the plight of European Roma as well as a grasp of social theories on marginality.

Desired Outcomes
1. Examine the history and historical underpinnings of social marginalization in CEE, 2. Developing a substantive knowledge on the history and anthropology of European Roma, 3. Apply theoretical approaches to contemporary Roma issues in Europe. 

Assessment Components
The format of this course consists of a class lecture on Tue, accompanied by a seminar discussing assigned readings on Thu. Each class discussion will also highlight a significant event of the week touching on Roma in Europe. As a way to familiarize with the on-going debates, controversies and stories surrounding European Roma we will at the beginning of every discussion session on Thursdays discuss current events. This should help us escape the “scholarly fallacy” and be alert to on-the-ground tensions, stereotypes, political agenda etc. You may come up with your own articles you happen to come across; nonetheless we will be regularly consulting www.romea.cz/en/ as our shared pool of information. You can focus on various kinds of information, cultural or political (or other). There are also off-class screening sessions (films are also accessible in the library, you may watch them alone) in which students select a pair of films from a provided list that focus on a similar subject (i.e. social exclusion, ghetto culture, commemoration etc.) and write a film review comparing the different techniques and narrative strategies on the subject. The seminar session will then proceed with a student presentation of assigned readings. As assigned reading should be considered those listed under “Reading” for Thursday sessions. The syllabus contains also references to other texts used in the lecture. These are not mandatory but highly suggested to those interested in the given topic. Feel free to get creative about your presentation; however, you should at least present the readings’ main points (30minutes), provide discussion questions for the class (2-3 questions), and organize and run the discussion (45 minutes).

Mid-term exam. A written in-class response to one of two questions testing student’s grasp of concepts and case studies discussed in class.

The main component of your assessment is the final paper. This is a research paper based on required readings. After mid-term exam you will have to start figuring out the topic of your paper. Oral presentations in class will take place on April 24 where you will receive feedback from both the course instructor and students. On May 13 you will have to submit a final paper project and receive
commentaries and further suggestion from the instructor within two days. The deadline for the final paper is May 23.

Recap of the required work:

- **Film review (2 pages)** 15 % (due May 19)
- **Presentations (30min)** 15 % (dates of each will be decided during Course overview)
- **Mid-term exam** 30 % (March 26)
- **Final paper (2500-3000 words)** 40 % (deadlines: topic May 5, first draft May 12, final May 21)

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:**

**Grade B:**

**Grade C:**

**Grade D:**

**Grade E:**

**Grade F:**

**Grade conversion**

A: 93-100
B: 85-92
C: 77-84
D: 70-76
F: 0-69

**Attendance Policy**

Absences only for medical reasons and for religious observance will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor’s note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). To be excused for religious observance, you must contact the instructor and the Associate Director via e-mail one week in advance of the holiday. Your absence is excused for the holiday only and does not include days of travel associated with the holiday. Unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from your final course grade for every week of classes missed.

**Late Submission of Work**

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Plagiarism Policy**

According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:

- **Plagiarism** is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science’s Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

- “Presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt.”

- “Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university.” (Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook)

**Required Text(s)**

Course reader, Part I – II and texts provided through NYU classes website: [https://newclasses.nyu.edu/portal/site/19e0ff1d-df45-4193-8222-614d6fd19adb](https://newclasses.nyu.edu/portal/site/19e0ff1d-df45-4193-8222-614d6fd19adb)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Tuesday, Feb 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course overview</td>
<td>- class schedule, assignments and presentation, mid-term exam, final papers</td>
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<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Thursday, Feb 5</th>
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<td>History of the scholarly interest in Roma/gypsy groups.</td>
<td>The lecture will address the main shifts and paradigmatic turns in the study of Roma/Gypsy groups as it has developed in Western scholarship since the 18th century. We will focus mainly on how a linguistic paradigm established itself in both research methodology and in Romani studies and the political consequences of this</td>
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Reading:  

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<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Tuesday, Feb 10</th>
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<td>The question of ‘Indic roots’ and the idea of diaspora in debates on Roma identity.</td>
<td>In the lecture we will look at contemporary uses of the term diaspora, both as an analytical and descriptive device. We will then look on how Roma scholars and other intellectuals voiced the idea of Roma identity as a consequence of uprooting and displacement.</td>
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Reading:  

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<th>Session 4</th>
<th>Thursday, Feb 12</th>
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<td>Unpacking the ‘Indic origin’ theory: what are the historical references, what makes diasporas politically more legitimate and what political and cultural claims does it allow?</td>
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Reading:  
A. Fraser. 1998. The Gypsies, chap. 1 (pp. 10-32) and 2 (pp. 33-44)  

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<th>Session 5</th>
<th>Tuesday, Feb 17</th>
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<td>Deconstructing concepts and paradigms.</td>
<td>As a prelude to a more substantial immersion into the ethnography of various Roma/Gypsy groups, we will take a look at how these groups have been ordered, typified, ranged and compared. As we will see, variations always establish some dogmas and turn heterogeneity into a mosaic.</td>
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Reading:  

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<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Thursday, Feb 19</th>
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<td>The politics of knowledge in Romani studies.</td>
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Reading:  

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<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Tuesday, Feb 24</th>
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<td>Comprehending Roma from the Rom point of view.</td>
<td>The lecture will make explicit the advantages of the ethnographic perspective: what does “participant observation” of Roma social life offer as a way of challenging common sense understanding, stereotypes and researcher’s identity?</td>
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Reading:  

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<th>Session 8</th>
<th>Thursday, Feb 26</th>
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<td>Facets of Romanes.</td>
<td>How have anthropologists approached the study of self-identification of various Roma/Gypsy groups? And how can we use such knowledge to understand different social settings?</td>
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Reading:  

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<th>Session 9</th>
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<td>Roma in the wider society – strategies of disappearance and passing among Roma groups.</td>
<td>Both</td>
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### Session 10
**Tuesday, March 3**

Sociology and anthropology have attempted to look at some of the distinctive cultural phenomena as intricate adaptations to already existing social divisions (of labor, gender) and power relations. How do Roma get by in daily life in a given social world?


Screening: *Across the Tracks* (1988, dir. J. Blake)

**Performing Identity.** The Kalderash of Paris, as well as various urban Roma/Gypsy groups, seem to be quite resourceful in persisting while unrecognized. What is there ethnicity then and is it a helpful perspective to understand Roma - non-Roma relations?

Reading:


### Session 11
**Tuesday, March 10**

The ‘gypsy question’ during socialism: a comparative perspective. The lecture will focus on the ‘gypsy question’ as a surprising challenge to a regime that insisted on building a society of equals. The lecture will also address the ethnic theory in post-war Central and Eastern Europe.

Reading:


### Session 12
**Thursday, March 12**

Gypsy nostalgia – discussing the exhibit *O Leperiben* on Romany recollections of socialist times


### Session 13
**Tuesday, March 17**

Cultivating marginality: living for the moment as a life-style. How to live in the present with an open neglect of the past and future? Is this only an anti-economic stance and how is it maintained?


**Economies of survival.** Form of subsistence and relation to work. Why do some working Roma prefer non-working status?

Reading:


### Session 14
**Thursday, March 19**

**Culturalization of poverty in neoliberal order.**

Reading:


### Session 15
**Tuesday, March 24**

**Mid-term exam**: A written in-class exam (student chooses one of two questions) testing student’s grasp of concepts and case studies discussed in class.
Session 17
Tuesday, March 31
The Romany political movement in contemporary Europe. The politics of ethnicity has reached into the Gypsy question quite recently. In the lecture we will look what are the obstacles of pro-Roma activism and the diversity of ethnic projects carried out by them.


Session 18
Thursday, April 2
Inveting gypsiness vs. unconstructed gypsyness.

Reading:


Session 19
Tuesday, April 14
Time of the Gypsies as western imagination.

Reading:


Session 20
Thursday, April 16
Film and society. A number of authors find visual means of representation more appropriate for portraying Roma social life. As precursor to your film reviews we will try to point out some of the techniques of ethnographic film-making as well as to form of representation in films for general audience.

Reading:


Reviews of E. Kusturica films

Screening: E. Kusturica films (Black Cat, White Cat; Time of the Gypsies).

Session 21
Tuesday, April 21
The history of the Nazi persecution of Roma. The lecture will present you with the main historical events effectuating the saddest history of Roma in contemporary history. However, the numbers of victims and details of persecution do not tell everything, therefore we will look also on the comparative aspect of persecution: how were future victims identified and how did the perpetrators think of them?


Session 22
Thursday, April 23
Historical narrative vs. memory. History and memory often address the same thing but in a different way. What constitutes this difference and how is it socially appropriated?

Reading:


Session 23
Tuesday, April 28
The memory of the Nazi persecution of Roma: the case of Lety camp. The Czechs were on the winning part of the WWII. However, as an occupied territory with local home run administration, the state apparatus participated at the execution of the final solution. Czech historical consciousness hasn’t taken this into account and in the lecture we will reflect on this through an
analysis of a debate that took place during the late 90’s.


C. Nečas. 1999. The Holocaust of Czech Roma (*Introduction*).

*Guest lecturer – Markus Pape* (The Committee for the Redress of Roma Holocaust)

**Session 24**  
Thursday,  
April 30

**Session 25**  
Tuesday,  
May 5

**Session 26**  
Thursday,  
May 7

**Topic for Final paper due** (to be sent by email till 12am the same day)  
- discussion on topics with lecturer’s feedback

*The social construction of collective amnesia.* How can disaster be forgotten? The answer, apparently, lies in the aftermath. How have Roma dealt with their memory of persecution and how did the present determine it?

Reading:


**Session 27**  
Tuesday,  
May 12

**Session 28**  
Thursday,  
May 14 (last day of classes)

**Session 29**  
Tuesday,  
May 19  
Final exam

**Session 30**  
Thursday,  
May 21  
Final exam

**Classroom Etiquette**

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

**Final paper due**

Visit to Lety camp memorial and attendance of the annual commemorative service (Date TBC, usually May 13)

Final paper first draft due

Film screenings

Being Roma in the Czech Republic – an overview of contemporary media representation, public debates of issues related to the ‘maladjusted people’


Film review due

Final paper due