

# **Historical Memory During the Russo-Ukrainian War in the Central and Eastern Europa: Etatism, Securitisation, Decolonisation**

New University in Exile Consortium Spring 2024  
Wednesdays, March 6 – May 8, 2024  
9:00 - 10:30 AM ET

## **Course Description:**

This 10-week seminar is focused on historical memory as one of the main battlefields of the war between Russia and Ukraine. Not only in Ukraine and Russia, but also in other Central and Eastern European countries, states have increased their control over historical memory, securitised the sphere of humanitarian policy and are discussing the "cleaning" of imperial markers from public space.

One of the primary characteristics of the memory landscape of Central and Eastern Europe is the state's pivotal role in shaping the politics of memory through legislation and public institutions (institutes and commissions of national memory). It will examine concept of a "vulnerable nation" emerged encompassing language, history, and memory, all of which are constantly threatened by prohibitions and destruction. Consequently, historical politics is seen as an important means of legitimising the existence of the nation and state, consolidating society, preventing the recurrence of past tragedies. During the war historical memory is viewed as an integral part of state security. The securitization of historical memory acts as a means of ensuring the security of the national historical narrative by delegitimizing and criminalizing the "enemy" narratives, which are considered a threat to the state and society.

Dealing with Eastern Europe often still means dealing with the post-communist, post-Soviet "Eastern Europe", within the imagined boundaries from the Cold War period. The mental map of "Eastern Europe" also affects the organization of academic research Russia-focused approach in Western academia. The reasons and consequences for the "decolonisation" politics of memory for society, and its connection with the ongoing war in Ukraine are analyzed. Research findings on historical memory and gender stereotypes among Ukrainian refugees, and displaced Ukrainian scholars will be used.

## **Class Schedule and Readings**

### **Week 1: March 6**

#### **Memoryscape of Eastern and Central Europe**

Suggested reading:

- Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, "Eastern and Central Europe as a Region of Memory. Some Common Traits" in: *Constructions and Instrumentalization of the Past. A Comparative Study on Memory Management in the Region*, ed. Ninna Mörner, Södertörn University, Stockholm, 2020, pp. 15–22.

Further reading:

- Maria Mälksoo, "Memory Must Be Defended: Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security" in: *Security Dialogue* 2015, 46 (3), pp. 221–237.

### **Week 2: March 13**

#### **Vladimir Putin's Retrotopia: From Soviet to Imperial Memory Model**

Suggested reading:

- Niels Drost, Beatrice de Graaf, “Putin and the Third Rome. Imperial-Eschatological Motives as a Usable Past” in: *Journal of Applied History* 2022, 4 (1–2), pp. 29–45.

Further reading:

- Alexei Miller, “Talking Politics: Vladimir Putin’s Narrative on Contemporary History (2019–2022)” in: *Russia in Global Affairs* 2023, 21 (2), pp. 58–75.

### **Week 3: March 20**

#### **Weaponizing History of Russian Aggression**

Suggested reading:

- Georgiy Kasianov, “The War Over Ukrainian Identity” in: *Foreign Affairs*, 4 May 2022.
- Andrew Wilson, 2021, Russia and Ukraine: ‘One People’ as Putin Claims? <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russia-and-ukraine-one-people-putin-claims>

Further reading:

- Jeffrey Mankoff, 2022, Russia’s War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and-conflict>
- Georgi Verbeeck. “The Return of History as Travesty. The ‘Struggle against Fascism’ in the Russian-Ukrainian War” in: *Journal of Applied History* 2022, 4 (1–2), pp. 76–84.
- Video: Timothy Snyder: The Making of Modern Ukraine. Class 1: Ukrainian Questions Posed by Russian Invasion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJczLlwp-d8>

### **Week 4: March 27**

#### **“A Divided Nation?” History and Memory in Ukraine**

Suggested reading:

- Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis” in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, 2014, 89 (1/2), pp. 249–267.

Further reading:

- Georgiy Kasianov, “In Search of Lost Time? Decommunization in Ukraine 2014–2020” in: *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2023, DOI: 10.1080/10758216.2023.2198135
- Alla Kyrydon, “The Politics of Memory in Independent Ukraine: Main Trends” in: *Constructing Memory: Central and Eastern Europe in the New Geopolitical Reality*, ed. Hanna Bazhenova, Instytut Europy Środkowej, Lublin 2022, pp. 129–162.
- David Marples, “Decommunization, Memory Laws, and “Builders of Ukraine in the twentieth Century” in: *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 2018, 39, pp. 1–22.
- Oxana Shevel, “The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine” in: *Slavic Review* 2011, 70 (1), pp. 137–164.

## **Week 5: April 3**

### **“Burn out the entire Russian subculture in yourself”: Ukraine’s Decolonization of Memory**

#### Suggested reading:

- Yurii Latysh, ““Get away from Moscow!’: Main Trends of Ukraine’s Politics of Memory during the Russo-Ukrainian War” in: *Russia’s War in Ukraine: Implications for the Politics of History in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Hanna Bazhenova, Instytut Europy Środkowej, Lublin 2023, pp. 31–46.

#### Further reading:

- Sam Edwards, “World War II Memory Weaponized. The US, UK and Ukrainian Memory Diplomacy” in: *Journal of Applied History* 2022, 4 (1–2), pp. 46–57.
- Georgiy Kasianov, “Challenges of antagonistic memory: Scholars versus politics and war” in: *Memory Studies* 2022, 15 (6), pp. 1295–1298.