POSC 247: Comparative Nationalism
Carleton College, Fall 2010

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Office hours: Mondays, 12:00pm-2:00pm
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Course Description
Nationalism is an ideology that political actors frequently harness to support a wide variety of policies ranging from intensive economic development to genocide. In fact, nationalism is arguably one of the most powerful forces shaping modern life. But what is nationalism? Where does it come from? What gives it such emotional and political power? Is it, as Albert Einstein once proclaimed, merely “an infantile disease” that humanity will eventually outgrow, or is it something more profound and intrinsic to human society? This course investigates these and other questions in a comparative perspective, drawing on both theoretical literatures on the sources and types of nationalism as well as case studies dealing with nationalism’s political uses in state building, development, and conflict.

Course Materials
The following books are required for the course and can be purchased at the Carleton bookstore or checked out from closed reserve at the library. All other readings will be available on Moodle (M).

Assignments and Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on five elements, which will be weighted as follows:

- Participation       15%
- Debate brief        15%
- Mid-term examination 20%  
  (4 wiki entries @ 5% each)
- Case study          20%  
  (4 wiki entries @ 5% each)
- Final paper         30%

1. Participation: your grade will be based on regular, informed contributions to class discussions. This grade is based on quality, not quantity of contributions, and thoughtful questions, as well as responses that further our discussions about nationalism will be counted equally. Students who are perennially late or absent, or who come to class unprepared will receive low participation scores.

2. Debate brief: during the fourth week of the term, we will have an in-class debate in which you will be asked to apply some of the concepts and theories we have discussed to date to a real-world case. Prior to the debate, you will prepare a 1-2 page (double-spaced) brief outlining the case for your assigned position, which will be due the day of the debate. Following the debate, you will submit a 3-5 page (double-spaced) brief stating your personal stand on the issue, with evidence and reasoning to support your position.
   Pre-debate brief due: October 7 (5%)
   Post-debate brief due: October 12 (10%)

3. Mid-term examination: there will be a take-home mid-term examination handed out in class on October 19, consisting of several question prompts. You will select any two prompts and write a response of 8-10 (double-spaced) pages drawing on the readings, lectures, and class discussions.
   Mid-term exam due: October 26

4. Case study: because the literature on nationalism can get a little theoretical and abstract, the case study exercise is a chance for you to relate the concepts and ideas from our readings to a case that is particularly meaningful or interesting to you. You will set up an online “wiki” for a nation or nationalist movement of your choosing and conduct periodic, guided investigations of the case based on a series of prompts that will be handed out in class each week. You may choose the prompts to which you respond and write an entry of 500-1,000 words (1-2 pages) each. You are allowed to respond to as many prompts as you choose. Your four highest scoring prompts will count towards the final grade.

5. Final paper: the final paper for this class will be either a research project of your own invention (subject to consultation with me) or responses to a take-home final exam. If you choose the research project option, you MUST get your topic approved no later than the 7th week of the term. Thereafter, only the take-home exam will be allowed as an option. The final research paper or take-home exam responses will be 12-15 (double-spaced) pages in length.
Final paper due: November 22 (5pm)

Course Policies

Attendance
You are expected to come to class regularly and on time. If you are unable to attend due to illness or some other personal matter, please notify me in advance. A pattern of unexcused and unexplained absences, or chronic tardiness will affect your participation grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to come see me in office hours and/or get notes from a classmate. Emailing me to ask “did I miss anything?” is NOT an acceptable substitute.

Late work
Late work will be penalized by 1/3 grade per day unless you provide documentation of extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergency, etc.) Make a note: computers do crash, printers sometimes jam, and files do occasionally disappear into thin air. Plan ahead, make back-ups of your work, and do not count on technological difficulties to excuse late work.

Extensions
Extensions will not be granted unless there are compelling reasons involving unforeseen complications or obstacles to completing your work on time. Simply having a busy week full of exams and papers is not, in itself, grounds for getting an extension. Please make note of assignment due dates and plan your workload accordingly.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty
Both are offenses that the College and I take very seriously. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment, and will have the case referred to the Dean’s office for further investigation and possible disciplinary action. To avoid landing yourself in this kind of trouble, please take pains to cite your sources accurately and thoroughly. You are also strongly encouraged to keep any outlines or rough drafts of your papers to document the evolution of your work. If you have any doubts or questions about citing and using sources, please feel free to consult with me.

Special needs
If you require special accommodation due to a documented physical or learning disability, please come see me during the first week of class to discuss how I can best help you get the most out of this class.
Schedule of Readings

The literature on nationalism comes from a variety of disciplines, including political science, history, cultural studies, and sociology. The assigned readings for this class reflect this interdisciplinary quality. Some of the readings are highly theoretical and abstract, while others are empirical. Some will be entertaining and easy; others might be tough going. It is your responsibility to take each one seriously and read it with care to understand the author’s arguments. Changes to the syllabus, if needed, will be announced in class and posted on Moodle.

September 14  Introduction to nationalism

Historical genesis of the nation

September 16  Proto-nationalist consciousness


September 21  Debating the emergence and timing of nations

- Hobsbawm, ch. 1-2

September 23  Nations and their states

- Hobsbawm, ch. 3-4

September 28  Nationalism and modernity

- Gellner, ch. 2-6

Nationalist typologies

September 30  Civic and ethnic nations

October 5  Nations and nationalisms outside of Europe
  •  Anderson, ch. 6-7

October 7  Is there an American nation?

The nationalist imagination

October 12  Nationalism, language, and community
  •  Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, ch. 1-5

October 14  Nationalism, emotion, and identity

October 19  Nationalism, myth, and memory

October 21  Movie screening: 1612 (please note: we will start today at 8:00am)

October 26  Movie screening: Katyn (please note: we will start today at 8:00am)

October 28  Discussion of Katyn and 1612

Contemporary nationalism and its challenges

November 2  Nationalism and religion
November 4 Nationalism and ethnic conflict

November 9 Far-right nationalism and xenophobia

November 11 Nationalism and globalization

November 16 The future relevance of nationalism?
- Hobsbawm, ch. 6