

**Boston University  
Department of International Relations**

**IR/RN 560  
Semester 2: 2004-2005**

**The Politics of Religion, Ethnicity and Nationalism in International Relations**

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office hrs: noon – 2 p.m. M, T, Th  
class: 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Friday**

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**Course Description & Objectives**

One of the most vexing theoretical and applied problems of the post-Cold War era has been the search for an adequate understanding of the resurgence of religion, ethnicity and nationalism in international relations. More specifically, social scientists and policymakers have been challenged to explain the nature and impacts of religion, ethnicity, and nationalism in both sub-state and inter-state conflicts in the international system. At the core of scholar-practitioners' inquiry into the effects of religion, ethnicity and nationalism on contemporary international relations is the question of whether identity or interests are the main variables for historical change. In an effort to understand the pervasiveness of violence that seems to be rooted in identity or cultural factors in the late twentieth century, academics and policymakers, not to mention the media and public interest groups, have looked for answers in a huge corpus of scholarly research that is based primarily in the historical literatures on modernization and nation-state formation, as well as the theoretical literatures on nationalism and secularization.

The utility, or conversely, lack of utility of the above literatures, forms the overarching framework for this course, and our critical review of these literatures will allow us to gain purchase on how identity and interests are related to both violent and non-violent processes of historical change. The course uses a deliberate inter-disciplinary approach to the relevant readings, and likewise, explores policymaking responses to questions of religion, ethnicity and nationalism in world affairs.

The course is divided into three sections that are inter-related, yet distinct. Section One offers an overview of current discussions about the role of religion, ethnicity and nationalism in international relations. Students are also introduced to historical literature on the origins of nationalism as a political ideology of state-formation and identity-construction, with comparative reference to episodes of nation-state formation through imperial dissolution, decolonization, and post-state failure.

The primary goal of Section One is to clarify the most commonly used terms in the social science lexicon related to the course topic: e.g. "nationalism," "ethnicity," "religion". Likewise, this section of the course will clarify how these terms are used in relationship to one another and vis-à-vis definitions of and assumptions about "modernity". The theoretical and conceptual review will establish the parameters for considerations of identity versus interests as main

variables for changes in international relations.

Section Two considers the treatment of religion, ethnicity and nationalism in terms of the practice of international relations. In other words, this section of the course deals with the operational aspects of religion, ethnicity and nationalism. By exploring policymaking responses to religion, ethnicity and nationalism in international relations, particularly in terms of policy strategies of preventive action and post-conflict resolution, students will be introduced to the ways in which ideas shape international relations.

Section Three examines three case studies where religion, ethnicity and nationalism have affected peace and security in contemporary international relations. The case studies are Yugoslavia, Cyprus, and the European Union. The cases are explored in deliberately comparative manner, in order to gain purchase into how and whether religion, ethnicity and nationalism have been sources of order or disorder, violence or peace, state-formation or state failure or state transformation. Each case is introduced with an historical review and is followed by analysis of the contemporary parameters that define each case against the main themes in the course.

### **Course Requirements & Grading**

The course is designed in combination lecture-seminar format. The course design is meant to allow students to master the subject-matter through a combination of weekly lectures, classroom discussion, in-class assignments, and research for a final paper. The weekly reading assignments average 125-150 pages.

The grade composition of the course is as follows: class participation (25%); midterm book review (20%); in-class writing exam (25%); final research paper (30%).

Please note that the grade for class participation includes both regular and timely attendance, as well as demonstrated preparation of the readings assignments. In other words, the grade for class participation does not simply rely on regular attendance, but is based on the expectation that students will participate regularly in class discussions in order to demonstrate preparation of the readings through the capacity to critically analyze and apply the readings to broader discussions that draw on course readings and contemporary discussions (e.g. in the print and electronic media, as well as in various contemporary cultural contexts such as film and art). Students will also be expected to participate in spontaneous, in-class exercises, including map reviews, media analyses, and policy simulations.

All written assignments are due on the date noted on the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized, without exception, by a half letter-grade per day.

Based on university policy, documentation must be submitted to the professor for absences for medical, religious or personal reasons.

Grades are calculated on a 100-point scale, converted to letter grades as follows:

93-100 A	90-92 A-	87-89 B+	83-86 B	80-82 B-
77-79 C+	73-76 C	70-72 C-	60-69 D	Below 60 F

### **Assignment One: Midterm Book Review**

The midterm writing assignment is a book review of *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City*, by Marjorie Housepian Dobkin. This book is a superb treatment of an historical event whose origins and ongoing consequences deal with the interface of religion, ethnicity, and nationalism, within the context of Great Power politics and current events. The book review itself should address the aforementioned points, while also providing a clear and concise explanation of the subject matter, the author's interpretation of the events, and the strength of the analysis and supporting bibliography.

The book review offers an opportunity for students to demonstrate their writing abilities and analytical skills, with response from the professor in the form of comments that will help students to work on strengths and weaknesses in a manner that can enhance their final paper assignment.

Above all, keep in mind that a book review is a reflection, a commentary, on the book: it is not a synopsis of the book. You should concentrate on assessing how well or poorly the author treated the content of the book, including accuracy of the information in terms of available materials, comprehensiveness of analysis, and overall, whether or not the book helped to improve your understanding of a specific event and its historical and historiographical significance for problematics of religion, ethnicity and nationalism in contemporary international affairs.

If you have never written a book review, you can access many book reviews in scholarly and policy journals of political science, which are available in Mugar Library and online through the internet. The book review should be five pages in length, using double space, 12-point font, and one-inch margins on top, bottom, left and right of paper.

### **Assignment Two: In-Class Midterm Exam**

The midterm exam will be based on a film, *Ararat*, that students will view during the last day of class. Students will write their exam questions in class after viewing the film, based on a set of questions that will be distributed in class one week prior to viewing the film. The topic of the film builds on the midterm writing assignment, and likewise, addresses core theoretical and operational questions about ethnicity, religion and nationalism that we will have covered up to that point in the course. Students will be asked to think about the film as a cultural product that presents, interprets, and describes an historical event, the Armenian Genocide, that is treated in Dobkin's book. The exam requires students to consider how film as cultural product contributes to and shapes thinking and action on issues of ethnicity, religion, and nationalism in contemporary international relations. The midterm book review and in-class midterm exam are part of the materials on which students will be expected to draw for their final research paper.

### **Assignment Three: Final Research Paper**

Students are required to write a final research paper. The paper should be no longer than 30 pages in length, using double space, 12-point font, and one-inch margins on top, bottom, left and right of paper. Citation style must follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*—please refer to the *Turabian Style Guide* for a useful summary of the aforementioned citation style.

All students will write on a single topic, generally titled as “The Armenian Genocide:

Implications for the Study of Religion, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in International Relations”. This topic, effectively, constitutes the fourth case study in this course, in addition to the other three cases studies (Yugoslavia, Cyprus, and the European Union).

The research paper is intended to be of graduate-level quality, and the primary resources for the paper are as follows: the midterm book, *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City* (Marjorie Housepian Dobkin); midterm film, *Ararat*; *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response* (Peter Balakian); *Human Fights as Politics and Idolatry* (Amy Gutman, ed.); and, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (Samantha Power). All books are available for purchase at the university bookstore.

As you will read the Dobkin book and see the film by midterm, the course design allows you to read the materials and develop your approach to the paper topic, against the comparative discussion of the other cases covered in class, in a gradual and systematic manner. Students must draw on these materials for the research paper; in addition, students are free to draw on other sources (e.g. books, periodicals, media reports, oral histories and testimonies, museum materials, and government archives) that are relevant to the topic.

The overarching goal of the research paper should be clearly understood: how does the Armenian Genocide help scholar-practitioners of international relations to understand and respond to religion, ethnicity, and nationalism as variables for peaceful or violent change in international relations? In order to answer this question, students must consider at least some of the following issues: the causes of the Genocide (identity conflicts versus material interest; domestic versus regional and international power politics; domestic versus international reactions to the unfolding Genocide; ex post responses (remembrance, forgetting, prevention, denial) of the Genocide; responses (partition, population exchange, democratization, intervention—preemptive, liberal intervention, non-responsiveness) to genocide in a sovereign state system built on principles of non-intervention, yet simultaneously built on treaties, covenants, and conventions for the protection of human rights and religious freedom; comparative impact of the Armenian Genocide on subsequent genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; classification of genocide versus other types of violence, with implications for intervention by external actors and/or international community.

### **Location and Availability of Course Materials**

There are copies of each week’s readings on reserve in the Mugar Library. The recommended and required books for the midterm assignment and final paper are available for purchase in the campus bookstore. There are four books for purchase for the course, and all are available in the university bookstore. The books are as follows: *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City* (Marjorie Housepian Dobkin); *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response* (Peter Balakian); *Human Fights as Politics and Idolatry* (Amy Gutman, ed.); and, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (Samantha Power).

### **Absences and Late Work**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to submit work on a timely basis, unless documentation is given excusing an absence or late submission for medical, religious or personal reasons, or for official university business. Class participation is taken seriously as part of the overall grade, and students should be fully prepared for each week’s class. Late

assignments will be penalized by a half-letter grade deduction per day late.

## Course Outline

### **KEY DATES:**

4 March: midterm book review due in class; in-class midterm

9 May: final research paper due at 9 a.m.: the paper must be in the professor's e-mail file by 9 a.m. that morning ([ehpk@bu.edu](mailto:ehpk@bu.edu)) and should be written in Word format; alternatively, students can submit a hard copy at the professor's office that morning at 9 a.m.

### **SECTION ONE. The Theoretical and Conceptual Landscape for Religion, Ethnicity and Nationalism: Current Discussions**

**Week One: 21 January 2005.** Introduction to the Course: Structure, Design, Content, and Requirements. NO READING ASSIGNMENT.

**Week Two: 28 January 2005.** Where Have We Been, Where are We Going: An Introduction to the Discussions on Religion, Ethnicity and Nationalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Mark Juergensmeyer. "Introduction: the Rise of Religious Nationalism," in Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993): 1-10.

Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview," in Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999): 1-18.

Samuel P. Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

**Week Three: 4 February 2005.** The Past and Present: History as Understanding  
David Held & Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt & Jonathan Perraton. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999): 32-86.

**Week Four: 11 February 2005.** Primordialist Approaches.

Clifford Geertz. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963): 105-157.

David Martin. *A General Theory of Secularization* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1979): 1-18.

**Week Five: 18 February 2005.** Constructivist Approaches.

Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, England: Verso Publishing, 1991): 1-46 (Chs. 1-3); 67-82 (Ch. 5); 155-207 (Chs. 9-11).

**Week Six: 25 February 2005.**

Intermediate Approaches.

Will Kymlicka. "American Multiculturalism in the International Arena," and "Minority Nationalism and Immigrant Integration," in Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2001): 265-274 and 275-290.

Ghia Nodia. "Nationalism and Democracy," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994): 3-23.

**Week Seven: 4 March 2005.** Midterm Book Review and In-Class Midterm Exam.

## **SPRING BREAK**

### **II. SECTION TWO. Evaluating the Theory and Praxis of International Relations on Problems of Religion, Ethnicity and Nationalism**

**Week Eight: 18 March 2005.** Policymakers' Dilemmas.

Chaim Kaufmann. "When All Else Fails: Ethnic Population Transfers and Partitions in the Twentieth Century," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall 1998): 120-156.

Radha Kumar. "The Troubled History of Partition," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (January/February 1977): 22-1

### **III. SECTION THREE. Testing the Theories: Case Studies on Yugoslavia, Cyprus, and the European Union**

**Week Nine: 25 March 2005.** The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia.

Lenard J. Cohen. *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993): 1-44 (Ch.1) and 327-375 (Ch. 10).

Susan L. Woodward. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (The Brookings Institution, 1995): 1-20.

**Week Ten: 1 April 2005.** Lessons and More (Other?) from the Yugoslav Wars.

Michael Sells. "Religion, History, and Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina," in G. Scott Davis, ed., *Religion and Justice in the War over Bosnia* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge Press, 1996): 23-44.

Michael Parenti. "The Other Atrocities," (ch. 8) in Michael Parent, *To Kill A Nation: the Attack on Yugoslavia* (London, England: Verso Press, 2000): 68-80.

United States Institute of Peace. "Simulating Kosovo: Lessons for Final Status Negotiations, Special Report." <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr95.html>

United States Institute of Peace. "Kosovo Final Status: Options and Cross-Border Requirements." <http://www.usip.org/pubx/specialreports/sr91.html>

**Week Eleven: 8 April 2005.** The Cyprus Republic and the Seeds of Conflict: Communal Conflict, External Interference, or Both?

Thomas Diez. "Last Exit to Paradise? The European Union, the Cyprus Conflict and the Problematic 'Catalytic Effect,'" in Thomas Diez, ed., *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2002): 139-162.

Yannis Papadakis. "Enosis and Turkish Expansionism: Real Myths or Mythic Realities?" in Vangelis Calotychos, ed., *Cyprus and Its People: Nation, Identity, and Experience in an Unimaginable Community, 1955-1997* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1998): 69-83.

Mary N. Layoun. "The Gendered Purity of the Nation: Sovereignty and Its Violation, or, Rape by Any Other Name—Cyprus 1974," in Mary N. Layoun, *Wedded to the Land? Gender, Boundaries, and Nationalism in Crisis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002): 71-123.

**Week Twelve. 15 April 2005.** Breaking and Remaking(?) Cyprus: Partition versus Reintegration.

Elizabeth H. Prodromou. "Reintegrating Cyprus: The Need for a New Approach," *Survival* Autumn 1998, Vol. 40/No.3: 5-21.

Costas M. Constantinou and Yannis Papadakis. "The Cypriot State(s) *in situ*: Cross-Ethnic Contact and the Discourse of Recognition," in Thomas Diez, ed., *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2002): 73-97.

Necati Polat. "Self-Determination, Violence, Modernity: the Case of the Turkish Cypriots," in Thomas Diez, ed., *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2002): 98-116.

**Week Thirteen: 15 April 2005.** The European Union: New Ideational and Structural Possibilities.

Alberta Sbragia. Euro-Politics, "Introduction" and "Thinking about the European Future: The

Uses of Comparison," in Alberta M. Sbragia, ed., *Europe-Politics: Institutions and Policymaking in the 'New' European Community* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992): pp. 1-22, 257-91.

**Week Fourteen: 22 April 2005.** The Ideas versus the Reality of Europe.

Chris Shore. *European Union and the Politics of Culture*. Bruges Group Occasional Paper, No. 42. <http://www.eurocritic.demon.co.uk/ppr43-1.htm>

William Wallace. "From Twelve to Twenty-Four? The Challenges to the EC Posed by the Revolutions in Eastern Europe," in Colin Crouch and David Marquand, eds., *Towards Greater Europe? A Continent Without an Iron Curtain* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1992): 34-51.

Elizabeth H. Prodromou. "Paradigms, Power, and Identity: Rediscovering Orthodoxy and Regionalizing Europe," *European Journal of Political Research* 30 (September 1996): 125-154.

**Week Fifteen: 29 April 2005.** Lessons, Conclusions, Queries: Agendas for Future Research and Action.