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THEORY AND PRACTICES OF MODERN NATIONALISMS

Course Syllabus

This course is focused at analysis of the phenomenon of present-day nationalism as well as constructing a scientific approach to political processes in Russia and abroad concerning interethnic relations and so-called nation-building.

The social key task that is being fulfilled in the course is overcoming at the students-historians the initial and strong everyday stereotypes about nationalism, which is understood by the students doubly: first, as the ideology of the European bourgeois revolutions and in this respect nationalism is torn off from the present (positive perception) and second, as the ideology of interethnic opposition and enmity (negative perception). Such understanding of nationalism in many respects is defined by a situation, which has developed in our country after disintegration of the USSR. Moreover, the problem of nationalism has become a topical issue for the whole human communality though most often it is used for the matters of rather different source and sense: fillings that feed present-day nationalism (as it is understood in political and public discourses) can grow up from different kinds of supposed commonness, from common land and ancestors to common religion, language, great past and heroes.

In this respect present-day nationalisms have acquired forms and essence of ethnonationalisms or ethnicism. Though all these are also called nation-building (in any case, national elites of ethnic minorities are firmly

convicted in this), in social and political sense this doesn't correspond to civil or state-nation.

Thus, scientific approach to the problem of nationalism is inevitably connected to the political and ethnocultural climate in Russia both in history and at present and must be studied through scientific works (theoretical level) and concrete manifestations in the present-day developments in the world, in Russia and in particular in Siberia and Buryatia (case studies level).

Besides, it is a topical problem to explain to the young people what political mythology is and how this corresponds the mythological consciousness.

Aims of the Course

The aims of the course are:

- To promote scientific approach to the problems of nationalism in the present-day world;
- To explain and implant into the students' world-view basic and secondary concepts concerning nationalisms;
- To teach the students the scientific vocabulary on nationalism by means of explaining to them all concepts and ideas, which have been elaborated by social anthropology, political studies, and history;
- To teach the students different methodological approaches to nationalism;
- To promote civil thinking by means of adequate knowledge and understanding what is ethnonationalism and applying of the received knowledge to current social practices in Russia;
- To form scientific approach to analyzing the present-day Buryat ethnic ideology;

- To promote forming the scientific language of the present day humanities and skills for practical use of the received knowledge.

Learning Outcomes

When the course ends, for the students this will result in:

- Knowledge of all approaches to nationalism as they are classified in scientific research works;
- Professionalism in building the argumentation on the problems of nationalism;
- Mastering the whole variety of vocabulary concerning nationalisms in history and present-day;
- Skills to conduct scientific discussion on the problems of nationalism both in theory and social practice;
- Skills to characterize and analyze the present-day ethnopolitical and ethnocultural situation in Russia and in the whole post-soviet space;
- Skills to find and define the basic nationalist argumentation in political (ethnopolitical) agitation of elites;
- Actualization and strengthening of personal civil position;
- Possibly profound knowledge about manifestations of ethnonational feelings and their forms;
- Applying the received knowledge to personal estimation of ethnopolitical situation in Russia and in Buryatia in particular.

Role of the Course in the Overall Curriculum

The course “Theory and practices of Modern Nationalisms” has been developed for the undergraduate students (4th year students of the Department of History, Chair of World History) and is taught to the students, who have already got knowledge in the world political history.

The course promotes understanding that in present science the distinct limits between the disciplines do not exist any longer and methodology has also become interdisciplinary. Having received the knowledge from the course, students will successfully use it in different other courses concerning history and modernity, world and Russia.

It's not a secret that the students of humanitarian specialties very often receive knowledge that is in many respects too academic and far from practical reality. Thus importance of knowledge is being devaluated and promotes neither professionalism nor civil position of a person. The course on nationalisms helps in overcoming the gap between disciplines and social realities in which young people live and must understand them in proper if not to say scientific way. In this respect the course fulfills additional educational function, which is education of civil consciousness.

Simultaneously the course is a methodological and informational tie for different and by now distant disciplines, such as Modern History (Russian and World), Philosophy, Cultural Studies (analog for Western Cultural and Social Anthropology), Political Studies, and Methodology of Historical research.

Structure of the Course and Teaching Methods Used

The course "Theory and practices of Modern Nationalisms" is conducted according to the principles generally accepted in the Russia's state universities. This is a compulsory one-semester discipline included into curriculum for IV year undergraduate students (70 hours). The course is divided into lectures and seminars (practical classes), 32 academic hours for each or 16 classes. The rest 6 hours are given for examination.

Every lecture is devoted to one topic and thus sixteen topics are been discusses in the course of lectures. They are grouped in blocks:

1. Introduction into the course: History of Nationalism

1. General characteristics of pre-political (potestarian) and political societies: Ethnia or Nation?
2. Vocabulary of researches on Nationalism
3. Political Mythology on state and ethnonational borders
4. Nation: what, when, where, and why?

2. Studies on Nationalism: basic theories and approaches

5. From tribe to state and nation: Marxist social theory and its reflection in the ethnographic works
6. Primordialist concepts: socio-biological, socio-functional, and evolutionary-historical (positivist evolutionist) approaches
7. Coming of social constructivism: disappearing of objectiveness or constructing the new realities?
8. Instrumentalism in the role of a servant for two masters

3. Nation-building in the post soviet space

9. The Nation “Soviet People”: “ethnonational by form and socialist by essence”.
10. National Culture and Ethnonational Interests
11. Mythology and Ideology: transformation of basic mythologems into ideologems
12. Ethno-nations and Idea of Civic Nation: world experience and post soviet realities
13. Transformed nationalisms and interethnic relations in Russia

4. Buryat Nation-building in the conditions of Ethnic Mobilization and Demobilization

14. Historical memory in the construction of the Buryat national ideology

15. Buryat ethnocultural space and present-day Russian politics

5. Final lecture. Manifestations of national feelings and perspectives for Nationalisms in the epoch of Globalization

The practical classes (seminars) include:

1. answering teacher's questions
2. delivering papers on the topics given by the teacher
3. written works (short 20-minute tests)

Graduation papers on the relevant topics defended in 2006-2008:

1. National revival in Mongolia in 1988 – 2003
2. Cultural revival in Buryatia in 1991-2000
3. National space and boundaries: ethnocultural interaction in Buryatia
4. National elites in present day Buryat nation-building
5. Politicization of religion in India (XX century).