

Mass Education and Modernization in the South Eastern Europe and Western Soviet Republics, from the Bolshevik Revolution to De-Stalinization

Course syllabus

(Submitted to the UC Berkeley-CASE-CRRC Field Development Project)

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Optional course for Master students in social sciences (history, sociology, political science)

Course length: 32 academic hours

Course Description:

This course offers to MA students in social sciences an in-depth social and historical presentation of the mass education system in South Eastern Europe and the Western Soviet Republics (namely: the late Russian Empire, interwar Romania (Bessarabia) and Soviet Moldavia (MASSR and MSSR)) during the 1918 – 1956 period, when different political regimes competed in the region. The instructor will provide for discussion a series of relevant statistical and narrative materials concerning the schooling process in the given area, in a comparative perspective (structured by region, political regime, social environment). Different theoretical models (historical sociology, social history, historical anthropology) will be discussed and applied in order to find pertinent and appropriate approaches and interpretive frameworks for understanding the presented data. The instructor and the students will seek to identify the strategies elaborated and applied by different state regimes towards the schooling process, aiming at constructing a specific national, state and/ or federal community and identity, according to specific political and national agendas. In that sense, students will acquire the ability to analyze the contents of school education (programs, teaching guides, textbooks) and the concrete ways in which these contents were communicated to pupils through classes and extra-curricular activities. Not least, students will study the multiple (not always favorable) responses articulated by the target population (schoolchildren and their parents) to the schooling process. At the practical level, students will acquire a number of research skills and strategies in order to discover and elaborate a sufficient body of quantitative and qualitative data. At the end of the course, the students should be able to analyze them in a critical and reflexive way (the usual biases will be taken into account). Thus, each student will examine one case study on a narrow aspect of the history of public education and will present it in class. In addition to their pedagogical and methodological rationale, these case studies will complete the general picture of the course topic.

Topics and readings:

- 1. The public school education in the 20th century Eastern Europe (Bessarabia and Transnistria): Introduction.**
 - a. The public education at the peripheries of Russian Empire (and Bessarabia) at the early 20th century: modernizing agenda by preventing nationalisms.
 - b. The public education in the Interwar Romania (and Bessarabia): an unequal expansion.
 - c. The public schooling in the Interwar Transnistria (MASSR/USSR): ‘cultural revolution’ and ‘mass mobilization’.

Readings: Eklof, 1986: 1-16; Dowler, 2001: 3-20, Colesnic-Codreanca, 2003: 20-36; Livezeanu, 1995 (139-149); Mihalache, 2012: 275-294; Fitzpatrick, 1979: 159-176; Eklof, 2012: 140-166; Negura 2006, 2010.

2. The history of modern mass education in relation to the “awakening of nations” in the Western and Eastern Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries.

- a. Elite formation and mass schooling: from Enlightenment to the “national awakening”.
- b. The nation before the state or the state before the nation? Primordialist and constructivist theories of nation in relation to the visions upon the education process.
- c. Learning the nation: education policies and practices within the context of nation building process in Eastern Europe.

Readings: Thiesse, 2000: 171-184; Smith, 1998: 39-58; E. Weber, 1976: 3-21; 303-338; Gellner, 1983 (2006): 8-14; Sugar, 2002: 5-21; 226-250.

3. The public mass education: sociological approaches

- a. The mass education: between ‘sponsored mobility’ and ‘contest mobility’;
- b. The public education as symbolic violence and social reproduction institution;
- c. The ‘side effects’ of the democratization of the public education.

Readings: Turner, 1960: 855-867; Bourdieu, 1970: 89-129; Boudon, 2000: 9-31; Fitzpatrick, 1979.

4. The State / Nation-building through school textbooks.

- a. National education in the textbooks for public schools in Western Europe (France, England, Germany);
- b. The Romanian school textbooks in the Interwar period: educating the ‘Romanianness’;
- c. ‘Revolution’ and nation-building in the school textbooks in MASSR (Transnistria).

Readings: Thiesse, 1997 (Introduction); Clark, 1984: 26-59; Murgescu, 1999: 95-119; excerpts from textbooks (Romanian, Soviet).

5. The social and cultural construction of genders in the public schools in Europe during the first half of the 20th century.

- a. Educating the girls in European public schools: mothers, wives; citizens;
- b. Educating the boys in European public schools: soldiers, workers, citizens;
- c. Popular attitudes towards girls’ school education. The cases of Romanian Bessarabia and Soviet Transnistria.

Readings: Clark, 1984: 5-25; Adler, 2011: 13-27; Ewing, 2010: “Why Single-Sex Schooling?”; Archive documents and oral testimonies.

6. Integrating and segregating ethnic minorities through the public schooling in the 20th century Eastern Europe.

- a. Building the nation in the ‘minority’ schools in France and Germany;
- b. Assimilation policies and cultural preservation in the ‘ethnic minorities’ schools

in Interwar Romania.

- c. 'Affirmative action' policies and incoherent linguistic policies in the MASSR (national Soviet) schools.

Readings: Weber, 1976: 303-338; Lamberti, 1989: 109-144; Livezeanu, 1995: 144-156; King, 68-77; Negura, 2006. Archival documents and oral testimonies.

7. The public mass education as an institution of 'legitimate (symbolic) violence'.

- a. The system of school discipline in Western Europe, Tsarist Russia and USSR (1900-1950);
- b. Case study: the application of corporal punishments in Romanian Bessarabia (1918-1940)

Readings: Bourdieu, 1970: 18-84; Krop, 1999: 109-132; Caron, 1999: 58-113; Gardner, 1996: 141-163; Negura, 2010: 159-175; Archival documents; oral testimonies.

8. The adult literacy: eradicating backwardness and spreading of political enlightenment in the Eastern Europe and USSR.

- a. The 'uses of literacy' in the Western European popular milieus;
- b. The 'Liquidation of Illiteracy' campaigns in the USSR during the 1920-30s.
- c. Case study: the literacy campaign in the Post-War Soviet Moldavia (1945-1955).

Readings: Hoggart 1956: 35-64; Clark, 2000: 15-40; Werth, 1986: 19-36; Negura, 2009: 445-452.

9. The responses of the civilian population towards the public education in the 20th century.

- a. The school attendance in the public schools in Europe, Romania, and USSR;
- b. Case study: the mass drop-out and contends between parents and teachers in the public primary schools in the Interwar Bessarabia.

Readings: Giolitto, 2003: 165-176; Mihalache, 2012: 275-294; Negura, 2010: 159-175; Archive documents; oral testimonies.

10. – 11. Collecting and analyzing archive documents; recording and listening for testimonies about the schooling experience in the 20th century Romania, Moldavia, USSR.

- a. Selecting and reading institutional documents: tools of content analysis;
- b. Questioning, codifying, understanding oral testimonies: methods and techniques of collecting and analyzing interviews about the school experience.

Readings: Atkinson, 2006: 9-40: 101-128; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, Zilber, 2006: 9-34; Krippendorff, 2012; Schreier, 2012; Archive documents and interviews.

12. Conclusions. Presentation and discussion of students' case studies.

Recommended Bibliography:

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- COLESNIC-CODREANCA, Lidia, *Limba română în Basarabia (1812-1918), Studiu sociolingvistic pe baza materialelor de arhivă*. Chișinău: Museum, 2003.
- DOWLER, Wayne, *Classroom and Empire. The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1870-1917*. Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.
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KRIPPENDORFF, Klaus, *Content Analysis. An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Los Angeles, London: Sage Publications, 2012.

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Note: A selection of archival documents’ copies and oral testimonies’ transcripts will be also provided.