

Clark University
Comparative Literature / Communication and Culture 130
The National Imagination
Spring 2010
Thursdays 2:50-5:50
Estabrook 303

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What images make people think of the United States of America? Cowboys? The flag? And are there similar icons in other cultures that help define cultural identity? The National Imagination explores the concept of a national community as constructed and critiqued through literary and cinematic narratives, as well as other cultural texts.

Our underlying premise is that national languages and cultures promote the identity of particular communities. We are interested in examining those subjective expressions of culture—images, symbols, narratives—that lead people to feel that they are members of the communities we call nations. We are also interested in discovering points of resistance to national identity.

Students are trained to examine the nature of the national imagination as a seminal idea that has shaped modern cultures. They explore a variety of cultural texts and contexts—such as architecture, painting, journalism, film, and literature—that may be said to embody the national.

Some of the goals of the course include:

- developing the ability to discuss the concept of the national. What makes a nation a nation? Where does nationalism come from? How does it differ from regionalism, globalism, localism?
- increasing our sophistication in discussing national characteristics and differences, in a way that avoids crude stereotypes, yet recognizes cultural distinctiveness.
- learning the specifics of the emergence of a national tradition in three different areas of the world (this year, Austria, Spain and Japan).
- becoming familiar with basic comparative methods.
- becoming aware of multiple layers of culture, including popular and folk genres as well as less accessible and elite culture forms.
- becoming better close readers of texts of all kinds.
- practicing collegial discussion in large and small groups, both real and virtual.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular attendance at all class sessions. More than one unexcused absence will adversely affect your grade. When you know you will be absent, please have the courtesy of contacting one of us in advance by e-mail.
2. Preparation of all assigned readings and viewing of all assigned films prior to class.
3. Participation—in class and on line. Although this is a large class, we expect participation in both the small sections and, when possible, the larger group meetings.
Electronic Participation will consist primarily of weekly Cicada forum postings. Generally, each student should post at least one comment by midnight of the Wednesday preceding each class. In addition, by midnight of the Friday following each class, students will post a response to at least one comment.
Occasional small homework assignments and small internet assignments will count toward the participation grade.
4. As a final exercise, we will ask students to write (a) a short personal reflection on their own sense of identity and their relationship to the concept of nation and (b) an essay reflecting on some of the points of comparison between the three national traditions that we have studied (gender, modernism, imperialism, militarism, fascism, transnationalism, globalization, etc.). This will be due on the first day of finals. [6-8 pages]
5. After each of the three “National Experiences” students will generally complete a take-home examination. [6-8 pages] Students may, however, undertake the following alternative assignments:

Instead of one take-home examination, students may write a research paper (circa 8 pages) based on class readings, with a bibliography of at least five scholarly essays on the subject. Students must clear the topic with the appropriate faculty member at least a week before the due date.

Instead of one take-home exam, students are encouraged to undertake a visual/aural culture project, involving the visual and aural dimensions of themes and materials presented in course readings. These may be collaborative projects. Students must clear the topic with the appropriate faculty member at least a week before the due date.

Students who write research papers or develop visual/aural culture projects are encouraged to present them at Academic Spree day (April 28).

Due Dates for submitting take-home essays and analytic essays:

Austrian Experience: February 22

Spanish Experience: March 29

Japanese Experience: April 26

GRADING

We will use a point system for grading.

Austrian Experience	100 points
Spanish Experience	100 points
Japanese Experience	100 points
Final Exercise	100 points
Participation	150 points

The faculty will collaborate on the grading—no single professor will be responsible for a single grade.

Plagiarism: Plagiarized papers will result in a grade of 0 for the unit in question, and may result in a grade of F for the class as a whole. We will report plagiarism to the dean of students. A second report of plagiarism may result in expulsion from the university.

TEXTS AND MOVIES

Required for all units: *Course Reader: The National Imagination 2010*

Austria:

Required:

Franz Kafka, The Complete Stories (New York: Schocken, 1996).
Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, trans. James Strachey, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1969)
Ruth Kluger, Still Alive (New York: Feminist Press, 2003).

Recommended:

Mozart's Magic Flute: Opera Classics Library Series, ed. Burton D. Fischer
(Opera Journey's Publishing: 2005)
Elfriede Jelinek, The Piano Teacher, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Serpent's Tail: 2002)

Spain

Required:

De Vega, Lope de, Fuenteovejuna (Dove: Dual Language Books, 2002)

Japan

Required:

Enchi Fumiko, The Waiting Years, trans. John Bester (Kodansha International, 2002)

Kawabata Yasunari, Thousand Cranes, trans. Edward Seidensticker (Vintage, 1996)

FILMS AVAILABLE AT GODDARD LIBRARY RESERVE DESK:

Please make every effort to watch the film versions recommended. We do not recommend that you watch these films from web sources, as they are often edited or cut and rarely have the visual or sound quality of the versions on reserve.

Austria

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, The Magic Flute—watch the BBC edition, unless you know the opera well and want a new treat—in which case, watch the Bergman version on Criterion.

Michael Haneke, The Piano Teacher

Spain

Vicente Aranda, Libertarias (Juegos de Guerra)

J. A. Bayona, El orfanato

Japan

Itami Juzo, Tampopo

Kurosawa Kiyoshi, Tokyo Sonata

January 21: What is a National Imagination? Singing the Nation. National Anthems of Austria, Spain and Japan. How does the course work?

Handout: Benedict Anderson on “unisonance,” from *Imagined Communities*.
In-class assignment: What would you list as your identity? What would you list as your national identity?

INVENTING AUSTRIA

January 28: Mozart’s Magic Flute: The Gendered Dream of a Rational Nation

Read the libretto of “The Magic Flute,” either on line (see link on Cicada) or in the recommended edition.

Watch the BBC edition of Mozart’s Magic Flute. There will be a communal screening, probably on the evening of Tuesday, the 26th. Otherwise, it is available at the reserve desk of Goddard.

recommended:

Mozart’s Magic Flute: Opera Classics Library Series, ed. Burton D. Fischer (Opera Journey’s Publishing: 2005)

Ingmar Bergman’s version of Mozart’s Magic Flute, available in a Criterion edition at the reserve desk of Goddard.

February 4: Minorities and Modernity: Kafka’s Short Stories and Sophie Freud’s Memoirs

Kafka’s “Metamorphosis” and “Penal Colony,” from Kafka’s Short Stories
Excerpts from Sophie Freud’s Living in the Shadow of the Freud Family (in course reader)

recommended:

Carl Schorske, Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture (New York: Vintage, 1980). On reserve in Goddard.

February 11: Sex and Death: Freud and the Holocaust

Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, trans. James Strachey, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1969)

Ruth Kluger, Still Alive (New York: Feminist Press, 2003), pp. 1-60

recommended

Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis. On reserve in Goddard.

David Luft, Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 13-45. On reserve in Goddard.

February 18: Postmodern Austria: “The Piano Teacher”

Watch Michael Haneke’s “Piano Teacher.” There will be a communal screening, probably on Tuesday, February 16th. If you can’t make that, it is available on reserve at Goddard.

recommended:

Elfriede Jelinek, The Piano Teacher, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Serpent’s Tail: 2002)

Border Crossing to the Spanish Experience with Prof. Atienza

INVENTING SPAIN

February 25: Masculinity, Language and Imperial Spain: Lope de Vega and Octavio Paz:

Vega, Lope de. Fuenteovejuna (Dover: Dual Books, 2002)

Paz, Octavio, “The Sons of la Malinche” in *The Mexico Reader* (Duke UP, 2002). (In course reader).

recommended:

Alvarez Junco, José, “The Formation of Spanish Identity,” pages 12- 22 (reader).

March 4: Modernity, Technology and Trauma: Clarín’s Short Stories

Clarín, “Dona Berta” (reader), “Goodbye Lamb” (photocopies)

recommended:

Alvarez Junco, José, “The Formation of Spanish Identity,” pages 23-35 (reader).
Manzano, Eduardo, “A Difficult Nation?” (reader).

SPRING BREAK

March 18: The Spanish Civil War: Poetry, Idealism and Martyrdom.

Watch Vicente Aranda’s *Libertarias (Juegos de Guerra)* (Communal screening Tuesday, March 16, 7 pm).

Read Miguel Hernández’s “First Elegy (for Federico García Lorca),” “The Plowboy,” “War,” “Lullabies of the Onion,” “Mother Spain” and Salvador Espriu’s “Rehearsal for a Canticle in the Temple,” and “XLVI.”

March 25: Democratic Spain: Amnesia, Horror Movies and the Ghosts of the Past.

Watch J. A. Bayona's *The Orphanage* (Communal screening Tuesday, March 23, 7 pm)

Read Salvador Espriu's "Roses Remembered" (reader).

recommended:

Labany, Jo. "History and Hauntology; or What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past?" (photocopies).

Border Crossing to the Japanese Experience with Prof. Valentine

INVENTING JAPAN

April 1: Inventing Japan: Sacrifice, Feudal Remnants and the Nation as Family

Reading due:

1. "Black Ship Scrolls," [**Cicada link**]
2. Enchi Fumiko, The Waiting Years

April 8: Retreat into Aesthetics: Longing for an Imagined Past

Reading due:

1. Kawabata Yasunari, Thousand Cranes
2. Kawabata's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech [**Cicada link**]

April 15: Japan and the West, Redux. Subjection, Accommodation, and Re-visioning the Past. Identity and the Other

Reading due:

1. Nosaka Akiyuki. "American Hijiki" [*Course Reader*]
2. Itami Juzo, *Tampopo* [film; communal screening TBA]

April 22: Family, Nation, Art: Ambiguity, Commerce, and Cultural Identity. What does it mean to be Japanese in the Post-Post-War?

Reading/Viewing due:

1. Kurosawa Kiyoshi, *Tokyo Sonata* [film; communal screening Tuesday, April 20, 7 pm]
2. Tawada Yoko. "Is Europe Western?" [**Cicada link**]
3. Takashi Murakami links on **Cicada**

CONCLUSION:

April 29: Performing the National and the Supranational: The Eurovision Song Contest

Required readings and viewing:

1. Current Eurovision contestants, available on the Internet at:
<http://www.eurovision.tv/>
2. Possible selections from *A Song for Europe* [handout]