



At the Crossroads of Empires: East-Central Europe and the Polish Lands in the Modern Era

Educational subject description sheet

Basic information

<p>Field of study History</p> <p>Speciality -</p> <p>Organizational unit Faculty of History</p> <p>Study level second cycle</p> <p>Study form full-time degree programme</p> <p>Education profile General academic</p> <p>Mandatory elective</p>	<p>Education cycle 2025/26</p> <p>Realization year 2025/26</p> <p>Subject code UJ.WHHISS.22.17213.25</p> <p>Lecture languages english</p> <p>Disciplines History</p> <p>ISCED classification 0222 History and archaeology</p> <p>USOS code</p>	
Subject coordinator	Kamil Ruszała	
Lecturer	Kamil Ruszała	
<p>Period Semester 2</p>	<p>Examination exam</p> <p>Activities and hours Lecture: 30</p>	<p>Number of ECTS points 4.0</p>

Goals

C1	Introducing students to the history of East-Central Europe as a borderland of empires.
C2	Raising students' awareness of the role of nationalism and national movements in shaping regional identity.
C3	Analyzing the impact of the World Wars on East-Central Europe and the Polish lands.
C4	Introducing students to different types of historical sources and methods of analysis.
C5	Developing skills in working with maps and recognizing the geography of the region in a historical context.
C6	Placing the history of the Polish lands and East-Central Europe in the broader context of the Romanov, Habsburg, and Hohenzollern empires and European history.
C7	Providing knowledge on the cultural interpretation of the region and its people in the modern era.
C8	Explaining the economic challenges of the region: between backwardness and industrial revolution.
C9	Analyzing revolutionary movements in East-Central Europe in the context of European revolutions, between nationalism and the European spirit of struggle.

Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
Knowledge - Student knows and understands:			
W1	Upon completing this course, students will comprehensively understand the modern period in Polish history, particularly the era of partitions from 1772 to the establishment of an independent Poland in 1918, with knowledge extending to the broader East-Central European context. The student understands the key historical processes that have shaped East-Central Europe from the 18th century to the present. They recognize the influence of the Romanov, Habsburg, and Hohenzollern empires on the region's political and social development. Additionally, they comprehend the significance of nationalism, revolutions, and social movements in transforming the region. The student is also familiar with the economic and cultural conditions that influenced the historical trajectory of East-Central Europe and understands the role of history in shaping contemporary national and regional identities.	HIS_K2_W01, HIS_K2_W02, HIS_K2_W03, HIS_K2_W04, HIS_K2_W06, HIS_K2_W07, HIS_K2_W08, HIS_K2_W10, HIS_K2_W11	written exam
Skills - Student can:			
U1	They will be equipped to analyze and interpret key historical issues, encompassing political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, allowing them to navigate the complexities of the decline of the old Commonwealth, resistance movements, the creation of quasi-statehoods, post-partitioned space organization, and the profound changes shaping modern society in Polish lands.	HIS_K2_U01, HIS_K2_U02, HIS_K2_U04, HIS_K2_U05, HIS_K2_U07, HIS_K2_U09	written exam
Social competences - Student is ready for:			

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
K1	The student is ready to engage in scholarly discussions about the history of East-Central Europe, demonstrating an ability to analyze historical narratives critically. They show intellectual curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning in the field of history. The student is open to diverse historical perspectives and respects different national experiences and memories. Furthermore, they can apply their historical knowledge to analyze contemporary social and political challenges.	HIS_K2_K01, HIS_K2_K02, HIS_K2_K03, HIS_K2_K04	written exam

Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*
Lecture	30
self-study regarding classes	30
preparation for the exam	60
Student workload	Hours 120
	ECTS 4.0

* hour means 45 minutes

Study content

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
1.	Approaching the East-Central Europe and Polish Lands in the Modern Era - Introduction. This module introduces students to the historical landscape of East-Central Europe and the Polish lands, emphasizing their unique position at the crossroads of empires. It covers the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the partitions, the rule of three major empires, and the eventual post-imperial transition leading to state formation and postwar reconstruction.	W1, U1, K1
2.	The Decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Rise of Partitioned Poland. This section explores the factors behind the weakening of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, leading to its partitions by Prussia, Austria, and Russia. The session will examine how Polish lands were divided and the effects of imperial rule on governance, economy, and society.	W1, U1, K1
3.	Floating Borders. The session investigates the fluid nature of borders in East-Central Europe and the concept of Polish quasi-statehood during the 19th and 20th centuries. Students will discuss the political dynamics that led to frequent border changes and examine how these shifts influenced national identity and everyday life. Were these real or phantom borders for the people living in these regions? How do we interpret Polish borders today? (This topic spans two class sessions.)	W1, U1, K1

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
4.	<p>Romanticism and National Uprisings. This module delves into the Romantic era's influence on Polish and East-Central European nationalism. It examines major uprisings, including the November and January Uprisings, their motivations, outcomes, and broader impact on national consciousness and European revolutionary movements.</p>	W1, U1, K1
5.	<p>Romanov Empire and the Kingdom of Poland. A detailed analysis of the Russian-dominated partition of Poland, focusing on administrative policies, cultural repression, and societal responses. Topics include censorship, forced Russification, and the emergence of the Positivist movement advocating Organic Work as a means of national survival.</p>	W1, U1, K1
6.	<p>Hohenzollern Empire: Policy, Everyday Life, and Resistance. This session explores the Prussian partition, its administrative structure, economic policies, and the Germanization efforts targeting Polish communities. Resistance movements, including educational and cultural strategies, will also be discussed.</p>	W1, U1, K1
7.	<p>Habsburg Empire and Galicia. Galicia, under Habsburg rule, served as a unique case of relative autonomy and political experimentation. The session examines the balance between imperial control and local self-government, the rise of Polish and Ukrainian nationalism, and the region's socio-economic conditions (This topic spans two class sessions.)</p>	W1, U1, K1
8.	<p>Multicultural and Multiethnic Dimensions of the Polish Lands. This module explores the ethnic and religious diversity of the Polish lands under imperial rule. It highlights Jewish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, German, and Lithuanian communities and their roles in shaping regional identity, as well as tensions and cooperation among different groups.</p>	W1, U1, K1
9.	<p>From Peasants to Workers: Social and Economic Transformations. The transition from agrarian society to industrialization, the impact of capitalism, and the transformation of labor structures. The module discusses the emergence of a working-class consciousness, urbanization, and economic policies shaping industrial centers in the Polish lands.</p>	W1, U1, K1
10.	<p>Cultural History and Intellectual Life (outdoor classes) This session examines artistic, literary, and intellectual movements that shaped Polish and regional identity during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Students will explore how cultural production reflected national aspirations and social changes. Outdoor classes will be held at Sukiennice, the Cloth Market, and the National Museum in Kraków.</p>	W1, U1, K1
11.	<p>World War I and Its Impact on East-Central Europe: a long shadow of violence. This module focuses on World War I as a pivotal moment in East-Central European history. It covers the military campaigns, shifting frontlines, and the war's impact on local populations. The war's role in shaping national movements and its consequences for post-war borders will also be analyzed.</p>	W1, U1, K1
12.	<p>Imperial Transitions and the Post-War Landscape and Trial of Reconstruction. The final module examines the collapse of the Habsburg, Romanov, and Hohenzollern empires, the emergence of new nation-states, and the challenges of state-building in the postwar period. Discussions will include long-term socio-political effects and the legacy of imperial rule in contemporary East-Central Europe.</p>	W1, U1, K1

Course advanced

Teaching methods :

conversation lecture, lecture with multimedia presentation, discussion

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Lecture	written exam	The course will conclude with a written examination, comprising a critical and contextual analysis of an iconographic source (illustration, photograph, painting), map interpretation, verification of understanding of concepts and terms covered in the sessions, and a critical essay written in a classroom. Students will be challenged to apply the knowledge acquired during the course to deconstruct and analyze visual and cartographic materials, demonstrating their proficiency in historical interpretation and contextualization. The critical essay component will require students to engage deeply with the course content, offering an opportunity for thoughtful reflection and analysis on a topic closely aligned with the course themes.

Entry requirements

Embark on a captivating exploration of East-Central Europe and the Polish lands in the modern era, tracing their history through political, social, and cultural transformations. This immersive course delves into the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the rise of partitioned Poland, and the broader entanglements of the region within the Habsburg, Romanov, and Hohenzollern empires. By engaging with a range of historical sources – including maps, literary works, and archival materials – students will analyze the complexities of nationalism, economic shifts, and cultural identities.

This course takes a transnational perspective, examining the development of modern nationalism, fluid borders, and the evolving concept of imperial and post-imperial citizenship. Students will explore the transition from imperial structures to modern nation-states, the role of East-Central Europe as an intersection of empires, and the shifting geopolitical landscape. Special attention will be given to ruling dynasties in Europe and their influence on the Polish lands, as well as border changes and their long-term implications.

The course is structured thematically and chronologically, beginning with the partitions of Poland and continuing through Romanticism and national uprisings, the emergence of Positivism and Organic Work, and the realities of life under imperial rule. Special attention is given to the role of Galicia within the Habsburg monarchy, as well as the multicultural and multiethnic fabric of the Polish lands. Economic transformations, industrialization, and cultural developments are explored. A significant component of the course focuses on the analysis of visual and cartographic sources, fostering skills in historical geography and interpretation. Field workshops and discussions will further enhance students' understanding of spatial dynamics in historical processes. The course culminates in an in-depth study of World War I and its impact on East-Central Europe, linking past and present through historiographical debates and contemporary memory politics.

Assessments will include map interpretation, critical analysis of visual sources, and essay in form of exam written in a classroom. Through these methods, students will develop a nuanced understanding of how the Polish lands and East-Central Europe functioned at the crossroads of empires, linking the history of the region with the modern European history. No prerequisites required.

Literature

Obligatory

1. Magocsi, Paul Robert. *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

Optional

1. R.L. Nelson. *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East: 1850 Through the Present* (Studies in European Culture and History), Palgrave Macmillan 2009.
2. Connelly, John. *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.
3. Davies, Norman. *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
4. Judson, Pieter M. *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.
5. Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
6. Snyder, Timothy. *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
7. Wandycz, Piotr S. *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974.
8. Wolff, Larry. *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Effects

Code	Content
HIS_K2_K01	Absolwent jest gotów do dostrzegania i rozumienia konieczności przestrzegania norm etycznych w nauce, w szczególności w pracy historyka i przy popularyzacji historii.
HIS_K2_K02	Absolwent jest gotów do uznawania i szanowania różnic opinii; potrafi je zaakceptować i prowadzić polemikę w sposób etyczny, kulturalny i tolerancyjny.
HIS_K2_K03	Absolwent jest gotów do docenienia roli historii w kształtowaniu lokalnych, regionalnych i narodowych więzi społecznych i szanowaniu dziedzictwa kulturowego Polski i innych krajów.
HIS_K2_K04	Absolwent jest gotów do krytycznego ocenienia zakresu swojej wiedzy historycznej i ciągłego rozwoju fachowego, jak i ogólnego. Jest gotów do rozwoju kompetencji personalnych i społecznych.
HIS_K2_U01	Absolwent potrafi samodzielnie zdobywać i utrzymywać wiedzę.
HIS_K2_U02	Absolwent potrafi wskazać na wzajemne uzależnienie różnych kierunków i dziedzin badań historycznych, udowodnić i omówić wzajemne ich zależności.
HIS_K2_U04	Absolwent potrafi świadomie stosować w mowie i piśmie terminologię fachową, tak w pracy badawczej, jak i przy popularyzacji nauki.
HIS_K2_U05	Absolwent potrafi analizować, interpretować i wykorzystać do własnych badań teksty historyczne oraz różnorakie źródła.
HIS_K2_U07	Absolwent potrafi argumentować i przedstawić swoje poglądy i stanowisko w dyskursie naukowym, wykorzystując tak swoją wiedzę i doświadczenie, jak i opinie, tezy i argumenty znanych mu różnych autorów prac historycznych.
HIS_K2_U09	Absolwent potrafi komunikować się w przynajmniej jednym obcym języku nowożytnym na poziomie B2+ Europejskiego Systemu Kształcenia Językowego z użyciem fachowej terminologii charakterystycznej dla nauk historycznych i pokrewnych.
HIS_K2_W01	Absolwent zna i rozumie w sposób pogłębiony i uporządkowany wybrane działy nauk historycznych.
HIS_K2_W02	Absolwent zna i rozumie fachową terminologię na rozszerzonym poziomie w zakresie nauk historycznych oraz podstawy takiej terminologii w szeroko rozumianych naukach humanistycznych
HIS_K2_W03	Absolwent zna i rozumie zaawansowane zagadnienia z historii przynajmniej w odniesieniu do jednej epoki historycznej w związku z wybraną specjalizacją badawczą.
HIS_K2_W04	Absolwent zna i rozumie relacje zachodzące między przeszłością, a wydarzeniami bieżącymi.
HIS_K2_W06	Absolwent zna i rozumie różne metody badawcze i narzędzia warsztatu historyka właściwe dla badanej epoki.
HIS_K2_W07	Absolwent zna i rozumie wiedzę pozwalającą na krytykę, analizę i interpretację źródeł historycznych pisanych i innych (materialnych niepisanych).
HIS_K2_W08	Absolwent zna i rozumie powiązania interdyscyplinarne historii i nauk pokrewnych; rozumie zastosowanie różnorodnych metod w pracy historyka.
HIS_K2_W10	Absolwent zna i rozumie wpływ podłoża narodowego i kulturowego na różnice stanowisk w naukach historycznych.
HIS_K2_W11	Absolwent zna i rozumie metody i sposoby tłumaczenia tekstów dotyczących zagadnień historycznych przynajmniej z jednego języka nowożytnego obcego i tłumaczenia tekstów źródłowych.