

# Teaching East European Anthropology

**Katherine Verdery, Johns Hopkins University**

*Katherine Verdery (Johns Hopkins University) shares her ideas for teaching a course in East European Anthropology. following her introduction and annotations written specifically for newsletter readers, we reproduce her syllabus in its entirety. We hope this is the first in a series on the subject. If you teach such a course, send us your ideas and syllabi. If you don't teach such a course, why don't you?*

The course is designed to start students off with a fairly sympathetic view of the real problems faced in socialist transformation (i.e., Ferge -- supposedly but not actually available in paperback, it turns out). It then goes through a number of topics designed to raise obstacles to socialist "ideals," to present actual processes and variations in these, and to show attempted solutions to real-life dilemmas faced by the regimes and/or their citizens. It turns finally to assessing various forms of resistance or negative evaluation, asking how these vary in form and content for different social groups why we seize upon some forms more than others, etc., and emphasizing that much dissent comes from those who would not overthrow socialism far capitalism but would rather improve it as socialism. Throughout, I argue against the categories in terms of which Americans view socialist countries -- my first assignment juxtaposes propaganda pieces from Time and the Romanian press. Given the sorts of things my students are so far offering as views, I think combating this is the first duty of the course, more than any coherent "organizing scheme" beyond an attempt to move toward a sympathetic and informed critique, from initial presentations of socialism's attractiveness as an idea.

A couple of remarks on the specific content of a few assignments. In the week on "family ties etc., I aim partly to show how problems in the official distribution system are variably mediated, depending on the degree of private agriculture, by rural-urban kin ties and movements, and I will also use these ties and movements to talk about cross-class relations and bases for solidarity. I will then pivot the discussion around, on the rural-urban-movement theme, to talking about the "double burden" of women and problems in reproducing the labor force. The discussion of "cultural homogenization" takes several realms in which state policy is clearly aimed to create new kinds of public response~ new "silences" and new foci of attention, via

appropriating folklore, censorship, minorities policies, etc.; two weeks later I take up the popular view of many of these things,

With Haraszti's book, my first aim is to get students to figure out what's wrong with it: why Haraszti is a bad informant, and why his kind of factory is nonrepresentative. Then I'll pick up the shreds that are worth keeping (work slowdowns, etc.). You will note that I have not used the only English-language anthropology book on Hungary (C. M. Hann)- the main reasons are that students mostly didn't follow it in a different course in which I used it, and I have too much on Hungary as it is. There are many reference works I am consulting to prepare lectures but have not included in the course bibliography. I will try to complete this longer bibliography for a later Newsletter.

### 7.335 Comparative Socialist Societies

This is an exploratory course designed to investigate a range of issues concerning East European socialist countries. The course has several objectives; the most important are to emphasize the countries' differences from one another, to relate both the differences and some of the problems of socialism's "working" to facts of varying political and economic histories, to present the issues and problems as much as possible from the point of view of East Europeans rather than of Western analysts, and to insist on a close investigation of actual social processes, rather than mere outlines of structure, as the basis for assessing how these societies run. The special contribution of anthropology, even though relatively little of it has been done in Eastern Europe, is especially evident for the last of these points.

Literature of the sort I wish to emphasize is very unevenly distributed, for English-speaking readers. To my knowledge, there is little for Albania, Bulgaria, and East Germany; only modest amounts for Czechoslovakia; more for some aspects of Yugoslav and Polish society; and by far the most for Romania and Hungary (Hungarians themselves having produced much of the most useful and interesting work). To avoid overlap with other courses in the University and from limitations of my competence, I make only restricted use of material from the Soviet Union and include none from other socialist societies (China, Cuba, etc.).

### Assignments

Attached is an outline of topics to be covered, a list of assignments, and a reference bibliography. Changes may be made in the assignments at any time: it is your responsibility to keep track of

any such changes. Since many of the assigned items are available in only one copy in the Reserve Room, I urge you to begin reading well in advance of each week's class session. (This course will, if nothing else, expose you to the difficulties of working within economies of shortage like the East European economies!)

The following books have been ordered for the bookstore. Not all of them will be read in their entirety, but purchasing them will make life easier for you. The ones to be read more or less in--full are starred.

- Ferge, Zsuzsa 1979 A society in the making: Hungarian social and societal policy 1945-75.
- Haraszti, Miklós 1977 A worker in a worker's state. Okey, Robin 1982 Eastern Europe: feudalism to communism.
- Sweezy, Paul, and Charles Bettelheim 1971 On the transition to socialism.

### Requirements

The course will be run as a combination of lecture and discussion sessions. Please come to class regularly, with assignments completed. I will give an occasional unannounced quiz, two short paper assignments on specific readings, and a final take-home exam. There will be no senior option for the final exam. Your grade will be based on all of these, including your participation in discussions.

Week	Date	Outline of Weekly Topics
		<b>I. Preliminaries</b>
1	Jan 27-28	Introductory sessions.
2	Feb 3-4	Founding ideals: short introduction to Marxism-Leninism.
3	Feb 10-11	Descriptive views from within.
4	Feb 17-18	Descriptive views from within.
		<b>II. Issues</b>

5	Feb 24-25	Divergent historical antecedents to a "unified" revolutionary model.
6	Mar 3-4	Macroeconomics organization: varying centralizations, collectivizations, and articulations with capitalist and socialist economies.
7	Mar 10-11	Local-level economic processes, emphasizing the rural sector.
8	Mar 17-18	family ties, migration, and urbanization.
9	M 31-A 1	Cultural homogenization and the state: censorship, folklore, minorities, ritual.
10	Apr 7-8	Problems of legitimacy and forms of resistance. Assessing "dissent."
		I. Dissent in the factory. Haraszti.
11	Apr 14-15	II. Other forms of popular resistance (counter-uses of folklores parades, Emigration, loafing, Solidarity, jokes).
12	Apr 21-22	III. Critique by the intelligentsia: Djilas, Bahro, Medvedev, and others.
13	Apr 28-29	Change and the future: Possibilities for creating more-satisfactory socialism.

	<b>Assignments</b>
Jan. 28	<u>Time</u> magazine and Romania's president on socialism's failures and achievements (handout)
Feb. 3-4	<u>Founding ideals...</u>
	K. Marx and F. Engels, Communist Manifesto (available under this title or in Feuer, ed., Marx and Engels: Basic Writings)
	E. Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man, pp. v-83, 163-163.
Feb. 10-	<u>Views from within....</u>

11	
	Hungarian short stories (xerox, on reserve)
	Zs. Ferge, A Society in the Making (begin reading. You may wish to skip 98-112)
	K. Verdery, Transylvanian Villagers, pp.18-22 (xerox)
Feb. 17-18 Zs.	Ferge, remainder
Feb. 24-25	<u>Divergent histories...</u>
	R. Okey, Eastern Europe, pp. 13-34, 47-83, Map p. 85, 110-123, 138-15}, 151-180 (skim), 228-232. Note that there is a glossary in the back of the book.
	<b><u>Begin next week's reading</u></b>
Mar. 3-4	<u>Macroeconomic organization.</u>
	A. Abonyi, "Dependent development: a socialist variant" (xeroxed portion)
	Z. Fallenbuchl, "The interaction of development strategy and economic system... in Poland" (xerox)
	P. Gregory and R. Stuart, Comparative Economic Systems pp. 284-310, 318-20.
	K. Nyiri, "Toward an integrated international division of labor..." (xerox, also in Current Periodical Room)
	N. Spulber, Socialist Management and Planning, pp. 28-35, 80-101.
	P. Sweezy and C. Bettelheim, On the Transition to Socialism, pp. 3-54.
	J. Wilczynski, The Economics of Socialism, 1-14, 23-41. (xeroxed) Recommended: Sweezy and Bettelheim, 93-106
Mar. 10-11	<u>Local-level economic processes</u>
	J. Kenedi, Do It Yourself, pp. 27-43 (xeroxed)

	E. Preobrazhensky, "Peasantry and...the early stages of industrialization," in Shanin, Peasants and Peasant Societies.
	S. Sampson, "Rich families and poor collectives" (xerox)
	K. Verdery, Transylvanian Villagers, pp. 23-40, 45-47 (xeroxed)
	<b>Also read any two or more of the following:</b>
	D. Doder, The Yugoslavs, pp. 78-93
	M. Hollos, "Ideology and economics.." (xerox, also in Current Periodical Room)
	M.C. Nagengast, "Polish peasants and the state..." (ditto)
	F. Pine and P.T. BsgdaScwicz, "Polcy, response, and alternative strategy." (ditto)
	Z. Salzmman, "Komaorov revisited: from local cooperative to regional consolidation" (xerox)
	On one of these two days we will have the Hungarian film Angi Vera.
Mar. 17-18	Family ties. migration, urbanization
	M. Cernea, "Macrosocial change, feminization of agriculture..." (xerox)
	J. Cole, "Patterns of daily life in Southeastern Europe" (xerox)
	G. RonrSd and I. Szele'nyi, "Social conflicts of underurbanization" (xerox7also in M. Harloe, Captive Cities)
	W. Lockwood,~ "The peasant-worker in Yugoslavia" (Xerox; also in Faber, Social Structure of Eastern Europe)
	H. Scott, Does Socialism Liberate Women? Ch. 7 (xeroxed)
	A. Simic, The Peasant Urbanites, pp. 112-125 (108-112 optional)
	Recommended: M. Cernea, "The large-scale formal organization and the fsmily..." (stacks).
Mar. 24-25	<u>Spring Break</u>

Mar. 31- Apr	<u>Cultural homogenization and the state...</u>
	C.A.P. Binns, "The changing face of power," (xerox, also in Man, stacks)
	R. King, Minorities Under Communism (TBA)
	J. Kott, "Controlling the writing on the wall," NY Review of Books 25(13): 16-18 (August 17) (This& item below are in Audio-visual Rm.)
	L. Lifshitz-Losev, "What it means to be censored,~ NY Rev. of Books 25(11): 43-50 (June 29)
	J. Marrant, "A contextual view of Romanian folklore" (xerox)
	C. Silverman, "The politics of folklore in Bulgaria," (xerox)
Apr. 7-8	<u>Dissent in the factory.</u>
	M. Haraszti, A worker in a worker's state. Read all.
Apr. 14- 15	<u>Other forms of popular resistance...</u>
	E. Hauser, "Multivocality of the May Day parade message" (xerox)
	D. Kideckel, "The socialist transformation of agriculture..." (xerox, also in stacks in <u>American Ethnologist</u> )
	G. Kligman, "Poetry and politics..." (xerox)
	O. Norgaard & S. Sampson., "Poland's crisis and East European socialism" (xerox)
	S. Sampson, "Why do they leave?" (xerox)
Apr. 21- 22	<u>Critique by the intelllgentsia</u>
	R. Bahro, The Alternative in Eastern Europe (TBA)
	M. Djilas, The New Class, pp. 1-69, 154-172
	J. Kuron & K. ModzeXewski, "Revolutionary Marxist students in Poland speak out," pp. 15-41, 62-69.

	T. Long, "On the class nature of soviet-type societies." (xerox)
	L. Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 234-256.
Apr. 28-29	<u>Change and the future: Possibilities for creating moresatisfactory socialisms</u>
	I. Berend, "Hungary's road to the seventies," (xerox)
	Interview with Andras Hegedus (xerox)
	Sweezy and Bettelheim, On the Transition...pp 107-122.
	(Other assignments to be announced)

### Reference Bibliography for Assignments

- Abonyi, A. 1982 Dependent development: a socialist variant. MS.
- Bahro, Rudolf 1978 The alternative in Eastern Europe. London: Verso.
- Berend, Ivan T. 1980 Hungary's road to the seventies. Acta Oeconomica 25: 1-17.
- Binns, C. A. P. 1979-80 The changing face of power: revolution and neocommodation in the development of the Soviet ceremonial system. Man 14: 585-606, 15: 170-187.
- Cernea, Michael 1975 The large-scale organization and the family primary group. J. of Marriage and the Family 927-936. 1978 Macrosocial change, feminization of agriculture, and peasant women's threefold economic role. Sociologia Ruralis 18: 107-124.
- Cole, John W. 1979 Patterns of daily life in Southeastern Europe. MS.
- Djilas, Milovan 1957 The new class: an analysis of the co ~ lnsst system. NY: Prnegger.
- Doder, Dusko 1978 The Yugnslavs. NY: Vintage.
- Fallenbuchl, Zbigniew 1982 The interaction of development strategy and economic system as a source of periodic socio-economic crises in Poland. MS.
- Ferge, Zsuzsa 1979 A society in the making: Hungarian social and societal policy 1945-1975. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Feuer, Lewis S. 1959 Marx and Engels: basic writings on politics and philosophy. NY: Doubleday.
- Gregory, Paul R., and Robert C. Stuart 1980 Comparative economic systems. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.



- Haraszti, MiRlos 1978 A worker in a worker's state. NY: Universe Books.
- Hauser, Ewa 1977 Multivocality of the May Day parade message. MS.
- Hollos, Marida 1982 Ideology and economics: cooperative organization and attitudes toward collectivization in two Hungarian communes. *Dialectical Anthro.* 7 (2): 165-183.
- Hungarian Short Stories 1979 from 44 Hungarian short stories. Budapest: Corvina.
- Interview with Andras Hegedus 1981 *In Telos* 47: 132-137.
- Kenedi, Janos 1982 Do it yourself: Hungary's hidden economy. NY: Pluto Press.
- Kligman, Gail 1982 Poetry and politics in a Transylvanian village. MS.
- Konrad, Gyorgy, and Ivan Szelenyi 1977 Social conflicts of underurbanization. *In* *Captive cities*, ed. Michael Harloe, pp. 157-173. London: John Wiley.
- Kott, Jan 1978 Controlling the writing on the wall. *New York Review of Books* 25 (13) 16-18 ( August 17).
- Kuron, Jacek, and Karol Modzetewski 1968 Revolutionary Marxist students in Poland speak out. Merit Publishers.
- Lifshitz-Losev, Lev 1978 What it means to be censored. *New York Review-of Books* 25 (11): 43-50 (June 29) .
- Lockwood, William G. 1976 The peasant-worker in Yugoslavia. In *The social structure of Eastern Europe*, ed. Bernard Faber, pp. 281-300. NY: Praeger.
- Long, Tom 1981 On the class nature of Soviet-type societies: two perspectives from Eastern Europe. (Review of Bahro, and Konrad and Szelenyi). *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 26: 157-188.
- Marrant, Joel 1975 A contextual view of Romanian fol kl ore. MS.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels 1848 The communist mP^ifesto.
- Nagengast, birian Csrole 1982 Polish peasants and the state. *Dialectical Anthropol&y* 7(1): 47-66.
- Norgaard, Ole, and Steven Sampson 1982 Poland's crisis and East European socialism: structural, specific, and conJunctural implications. MS.
- Nyiri, Karoly 1982 Toward an integrated international division of labor: the place of the world socialist economy. *Review* 6(1):15-24.
- Okey, Robin 1982 Eastern Europe 1740-1980: feudalism to co ~ rnism. U. of Minnesota Press.

- Pine, Frances, and P. T. Bogdanowicz 1982 Policy, response, and alternative strategy: the process of-change in a Polish highland village. *Dialectical Anthropology* 7 (1): 67-80.
- Preobrazhensky, Evgenii (1971) Peasantry and the political economy of the early stages of industrialization. In *Peasants and peasant societies*, ed. T. ShPnin, pp. 219-226. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Salzmaan, Zdenek 1982 Kom4tov revisited: from local cooperative to regional consolidation. MS.
- Sampson, Steven 1981 Why do they leave? MS. 1982 Rich f~'lies and poor collectives: some anthropological notes on Romania's second economy. MS.
- Scott, Hilda ig74 Does socialism liberate women? Boston: Beacon.
- Silverman, Carol 1983 The politics of folklore in Bulgaria. MS.
- Simic, Andrei 1973 The peasant urbanites: a study of rural-urban mobility in Serbia.' NY: Seminar Press.
- Spulber, Nicolas 1971 Socialist management and planning: topics in comparative socialist economics. Indiana University Press.
- Sweezy, Paul M., and Cgarles Bettelheim 1971 On the transition to socialism. NY: Mee.
- Trotsky, Leon 1972) The revolution betrayed. NY: Pathfinder Press.
- Tucker, Robert 1965 Philosophy and myth in Karl Marx. Cambridge University Press.
- Verdery, Katherine 1983 Transylvanian villagers: three centuries of political, economic, and ethnic change. University of California Press.
- Wilezynski, Jozef 1982 The economics of socialism. (Fourth edition). London: George Allen and Unwin.

### **Selected Monographic Works and Theses, for Reference**

- Beck, Sam Transylvania: the political economy of a frontier. Ph.D. thesis, 1979, U. Mass. Amherst.
- Bell, Peter D. Social change and social perception in a rural Hungarian village. Ph. D. thesis, 1979, u. of Calif., San Diego. 1983? Peasants in socialist transformstion. U. of Calif. Press.
- Denitch, Betty S. Social mobility and industrialization in a Yugoslav town. Ph. D. thesis, 1969, U. of Ci if., Berkeley.

- Bloch, Harriet Household economy and entrepreneurial activity in a Polish village. Ph. D. thesis, 1973.
- Halpern, Joel M. 1958 A Serbian village. NY: Columbia U. Press.
- Hammel, E.A. 1969 The pink yo-yo: occupational mobility in Belgrade, ca. 1915-1965.
- Hann, C.M. 1980 Tazlar: a village in Hungary. Cambridge U. P.
- Kideckel, David Agricultural cooperativism and social process in a Romanian commune. Ph.D. thesis, 1979, u. Mass. Amherst.
- Kligman, Gail CaLug: ritual reversal in RomPnia. Ph. D. thesis, 1977, U. of Calif., Berkeley.
- Lane, Christel 1981 The rites of rulers: ritual in industrial society--the Soviet case. Cambridge U. P.
- Lane, Datid 1976 The socialist industrial state: towards a political sociology of state socialism. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Lockwood, William G. 1975 European Moslems: economy and ethnicity in western 30snia. SY: Academie.
- Marrant, Joel The idea of folk tradition in Romania. Ph.D. thesis, 1977, u. of Oregon.
- McArthur, Marilyn S. The politics of identity: Transylvanian Saxons in socialist Romania. Ph. D. thesis, 1981, U. Mass., Amherst.
- Ratner, Mitchell Educational and occupationi selection in contemporary Romsnia: a social anthropological account. Ph.D. thesis, 1980, American Univ.
- Salzmann, Zdenek, and Vladimir Scheufler 1974 Komarov: a Czech farming village. NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Sampson, Steven L. National integration through socialist planning: an anthropological study of a Romanian new town. Ph.D. thesis, 1980, U. Mass., A\_herst.
- Winner, Irene 1971 A Sloveniar. village: Zerovaica. Providence: Brown U. Press.
- Skreija, Andris Boguty: a village in Poland. Ph.D. thesis, 1973.