This is an introduction to modern history of Poland. From the downfall of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth to the emergence of independent nation state following WWI, the interwar period and the tragic experience of WWII to the establishment of the communist rule we will finish with the 1989 collapse of the communist system and the rise of an independent democratic state. Poland’s history will be placed in the context of broader regional development. The course will focus on political, social, and economic history seen from various vantage points. We will study the re-writing of history according to newly created collective memories of events and struggles in which contemporary political ends dictate the content of history.

This 2 credit course will meet from January 13 to March 3. All course work must be completed by March 3. You will be graded based on one short paper 5 to 7 pages double space 12 font (50% of the final grade), class participation (20% of the final grade) and a final test (30%) given during the last class on March 3. You will get study questions one week prior to the test.

Class Schedule

Introductory meeting

01/13/05 Collective memory and its role in creating national consciousness

*Maurice Halbwachs, Collective memory, New York, Harper & Row, 1980 Historical Memory,*  
e-reserve pp. 50-83

e-reserve pp. 3-19

Week one

01/18/05 How new nations were formed in Central Europe: an example of Poles and Ukrainians

*Piotr S. Wandycz, Lands of partitioned Poland, 1795 - 1918, Washington, University of Washington Press, Chpt. 12,13, pp. 239-272*
01/20/05 Polish and Ukrainian memory of the beginning: the case of Bohdan Chmielnicki and Cossack uprisings of XVII century; fragments of film With Fire and Sword, dir. Hoffman


Week two

01/25/05 Collective memory: heroic history
Polish uprisings against Russia (facts and memory)


01/26/05 Dewey 210 7:40 Film Screening: The Promised Land, dir. A. Wajda

Students’ presentations based on film viewed.

Week three

02/01/05 Year 1918 Memory and the present. The birth of nation states in Central Europe: Poland, Ukraine, Bialorus, Lithuania


02/03/05 Between two totalitarianisms: the interwar period in Central Europe

Norman Davies, Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland’s Present, Oxford University Press, 2001, Chpt 3, pp. 95-137

Week four

02/08/05 WWII and the Holocaust in Polish and Central European History

Joseph Rotschild, Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe pp 23-74

02/09/05 Film Screening: The Pianist, dir. R. Polanski

02/10/05 The memory of the witnesses
Week five

02/15/05  Communist take-over

Joseph Rotschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe* pp. 75-123

02/17/05  Collective memory stolen: Communism


Week six

02/22/05  02.24.05 Memory and the Fall of Communism

Jan Kubik, *Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power*, pp 183-238

02/24/05 Poland and her neighbors since 1989


Week seven

03/01/05  Contested historical memories between neighbors within the European Union

Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania*, pp. 277-293

03/03/05 Final test

Books on reserve (books denoted by * are also available at the campus bookstore):

*Courtois, Stephene*  
*The Black Book of Communism*

*Davies, Norman*  
*Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland’s Present*

Grenville, John  
*History of the World in the Twentieth Century*

Halbwachs, Maurice  
*Collective Memory*

Karski, Jan  
*Story of a Secret State*

*Kubik, Jan*  
*Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power*

Lukowski, Jerzy  
*A Concise History of Poland*

Polonsky, A. Michlic, J. ed.  
*The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*

Rotshschild, Joseph  
*Return to Diversity: A Political History of East of East Central Europe since World War II*

*Snyder, Timothy*  
*The Reconstruction of Nations*

Wandycz, Piotr S.  
*Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918*

Zuckerman, Yitzhak  
*A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*