The Price of Identity: Romani Reality and the Gypsy Myth

UGS 302 (63740)
Mezes Hall 1.204, T-Th 8:00-9:30
Fall 2012

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323-7684
Office hours: T/Th 7:30-8:00 and 9:30-11:00

Our TA is *************************************
Office hours:

Policy; Grading; Syllabus

This course is an examination of the world's 12 million Romani people that will address their origins, migrations and culture. Examined in particular will be the challenges of ethnic/linguistic maintenance for diasporic peoples, the vulnerability of stateless populations to discrimination and stereotyping, and the contemporary efforts on the part of such populations to resist and change those things. Questions raised for discussion/debate will inter alia address the psychology of stereotyping and racism, and how ethnic groups with radically different cultural values and practices can adjust to coexist with those of the mainstream and continue to survive. Requirements include three in-class, closed-book, hand-in exams across the semester and the preparation of a substantial research paper, the first draft of which must be completed and submitted by mid-term (October 14th), with the pre-final version to be presented before the class for comment and criticism at the end of the semester. This must be written with the potential submission for publication in mind. A former member of this class won the signature course essay competition, and we have had another student’s presentation published in The International Journal of Romani Language and Culture. Written exams will constitute 40% of the final grade, oral presentation and the paper 50%, while the remaining 10% will count toward class involvement and attendance. Substance will count more than volume; signature courses are special courses, and a high standard of participation is expected of you.

There will be one or more invited speakers. One or more documentary films will be shown.
**Syllabus**

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**August 30** First day of class; overview and your participation

**September 20** First test

**October 11** Second test

**October 18** First draft submissions

**November 1** Third test

**November 27** Thanksgiving - no class

**Week 1** What is race? What is ethnicity?

**Week 2** What are "Gypsies"? Where did this image come from?

**Week 3** What are Romanies? Where did they come from?

**Week 4** Romani exodus from the original homeland (the Teljaripe)

**Week 5** Romani entry into the West; reception in the West (the Aresipe)

**Week 6** Migrations (the Buxjaripe)

**Week 7** Romani language and culture

**Week 8** Conflict, racism and response

**Week 9** The contemporary situation

**Weeks 10-16** Your presentations; 30 minutes each; two per period

**December 6** Last day of class

Your three tests will be on the dates indicated (9/20, 10/11 and 11/1). There may be unannounced spot tests. Beginning on November 6th you will begin giving your class presentations, in reverse alphabetical order (thus Tran, Stephens, Spielberger, Pham, Reding, Parchman, Milner, Mieczkowski, Lovejoy, Lo, Jahanian, Holender, Hernandez, R., Hernandez, J., Gulick, Gowin, Casco, Blevins,). These will be 30 minutes each, 15 minutes for you and 15 minutes for class response. Your questions and suggestions will count toward your own grade, so each of you must have something to say. The first draft of your paper should be brought to me by October 14th. Tell me what you want to write about first; there are some suggestions in the workbook. I'll tell you if the topic has already been chosen, and suggest some directions for research.
DO’s and DON’T’s

DO
• Ask lots of questions. The day before each test can be devoted wholly to review if you bring questions for that day, but of course you can ask questions at any time.
• Turn in your homework assignment each morning at the beginning of class. Don’t do it once you’re here.
• Watch your neatness and spelling on the tests—remember, I’m an English professor too!
• Keep good notes in your notebook. They will serve as your textbook.
• Make use of Office Hours and let me know if you want to set up an appointment.
• Make use of e-mail (radoc@radoc.net) to ask questions.
• Create small study groups and meet outside of class.
• Bring a tape recorder to class if you like, but no laptop computers.
• Switch off your cell phone during class.

DON’T
• Come late to class.
• Talk when someone else has the floor.
• Read non-related material after the bell has rung.
• Do homework for another class during this class.
• Ask “what will be on the test?”
• Ask “Do we have to know that for the next test?” – ANYTHING you learn in any of our classes could potentially turn up on a test.
• Miss class without a legitimate excuse. Unexcused absences will cost you two points each time off your total grade, up to 10 points. An attendance sheet will be circulated each day. You won’t be able to sign it if you arrive after the bell’s rung, and you’ll be counted absent. This is an 8 a.m. class, so we must all be punctual. I have to drive in from Hays County, if I can be on time, so can you.
• Get up and leave in the middle of class to use the bathroom (or use your cell phone). Do this before class begins. If you have a medical excuse for needing to visit the bathroom during class time, or for special consideration otherwise, please provide me with a doctor’s note.
• Leave your cell phone on.

Cheating

I know this doesn’t apply to this class, but students have been caught bringing answers in on test days written on their arms, on Coke cans, in their cell phones and inside their baseball caps. In each case, the student was immediately expelled from the course with an F and a report to the dean’s office.
Sources and Suggested Readings

REQUIRED: Hancock, Ian, 2002. *We Are the Romani People: Ame Sam e Rromane Džene*. Hatfield: Hertfordshire University Press. From the University Co-op.

REQUIRED: Workbook for this course, from Speedway Copy in Dobie Mall.

Make full use of the Internet, but use your judgment. Not everything on Wikipedia is reliable, for example. Get the “Google alerts” sent to you each day for newspaper stories; enter “Roma” or “Gypsies” at [http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en](http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en) -- it’s free. The European Roma Rights Centre maintains an excellent website: [www.errc.org](http://www.errc.org), as does The European Roma Information Office, [romano_liloro@googlegroups.com](mailto:romano_liloro@googlegroups.com). There are many Romani-American sites but they are mostly private. But you can access and even join [www.rromanizor.com](http://www.rromanizor.com). We will watch a number of films during the course.

The PCL has many relevant books, and the HRC contains the Rupert Croft-Cooke Romani Collection. The Romani Archives are (mostly) in my office. You may consult the materials there and in the HRC but they cannot be borrowed from either place.

Pages 161-165 in the course book include some recommended sources, and advise the researcher to discriminate between reliable and unreliable material. Most of what has been written about “gypsies” is inaccurate and misleading. Following are some of the latest reliable books on the subject. There are many more. I will suggest them from time to time.

Acton, Thomas, 2008. *Asylum-seeking, Racism and Gypsies in Contemporary Europe*. Workbook for course of same name, Department of Sociology, Criminology and Cultural Studies, Greenwich University, London.


Thelen, Peter, 2005. *Roma in Europe: From Social Exclusion to Active Participation*. Skopje:
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.