

UMBC UGC New Course Request: POLI 476 – State and Societal Transition in Post-Communist Europe: Study Abroad in Poland

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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	476
Formal Title	State and Societal Transition in Post-Communist Europe: Study Abroad in Poland
Transcript Title (≤24c)	Post-Communist Transition
Recommended Course Preparation	POLI 260, POLI 474
Prerequisite	
Credits	3
Repeatable?	Yes X No
Max. Total Credits	3
Grading Method(s)	X Reg (A-F) X Audit X Pass-Fail

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we will use Poland as a laboratory for the study of democratization. We will start by placing Poland in historical context, tracing the roots of Polish politics and society back to the 18th century. Most of this course, however, will be focused on the evolution of 20th century Poland. We will look at repression in the communist system. We will examine isolated and collective resistance. And we will explore the pain of national rebirth and independence in the modern era.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE

- a) There is no other course taught like this subject, which will use various site visits during a study abroad in Poland to explore the challenges of democratization.
- b) To be taught every summer or every other summer (during study abroad in Poland)
- c) This is an upper level POLI elective which dovetails with other courses on comparative politics (POLI 260) and democratization (POLI 474). It is designed to be taken with POLI 372 - Understanding Transitioning Nations: Study Abroad in Poland; while that course deals with the social development of the Polish nation and society, this one deals with the political side of Poland's evolution and democratization. It is an unusual, 'hands-on' approach to studying democratization in an atypically successful case.
- d) Upper level POLI students and other upper level students
- e) Heavy reading component and focus on seminar-style discussion.
- f) Basic background in comparative politics, upon which this course builds
- g) Students can take P/F or regular grades
- h) This course cannot be repeated (unless failing grade)

ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):

POLI 476 - State and Societal Transition in Post-Communist Europe: Study Abroad in Poland Summer 2016

Welcome to this 4-week study abroad in Poland! Throughout this month, we will use Poland as a laboratory for the study of democratization. We will start by placing Poland in historical context, tracing the roots of Polish politics and society back to the 18th century. Most of this course, however, will be focused on the evolution of 20th century Poland. We will look at repression in the communist system. We will examine isolated and collective resistance. And we will explore the pain of national rebirth and independence in the modern era.

There are numerous reasons to study democratization in Poland. Poland was the first country in the communist bloc to successfully rise up and challenge the old regime. With a population of 40 million, it is also the largest country in Central Europe. Perhaps not coincidentally, Poland also had the largest, most sustained anti-regime social movement. Finally, it is the country credited with pioneering shock therapy, a sudden and drastic conversion from communism to free-market capitalism. Poland represents a relatively rare success story in the most recent wave of democratization.

While Poland will be our living case study, this is not a course on Polish politics per se. Rather, it is a course on democratization writ large, colored by the Polish experience. That means that each theme we discuss will be approached from a theoretical angle before it is applied to the specifics of the Polish case. In addition to learning about Poland, you will find yourself learning much about issues germane to other (post-) communist and (post-)repressive states. The goal of the course is not to produce Poland or East/Central Europe experts. The goal is to provide students with a sound and broad understanding of what it takes to emerge from non-democracy.

This 6-credit hour course will be composed of two basic components. The first will involve standard classroom readings, lectures and activities. The second will involve experiential learning, including various site visits throughout Poland. Some of these site visits will be overtly political, others will provide students with a more holistic understanding of Polish politics by incorporating various aspects of the country's history and culture. I strongly recommend that students keep a travel journal throughout their brief stay in Poland (see <http://www.ciee.org/images/uploaded/pdf/occasional27.pdf>, for example).

We will spend the first week of this course residing in Krakow, where we will experience the joys and pain of Poland's history. These are most clearly demonstrated through the following site visits we will take:

Wawel Castle
Kazimierz (Jewish Quarter, Krakow)
Rynek Underground (Krakow)
Auschwitz (Oswiecim)

After that week, we will travel north to Warsaw, where we will spend most of the remaining three weeks. There, we will visit the following sites:

National Museum
Institute of National Remembrance
Monument to the Ghetto Uprising
Warsaw Uprising Museum
Jewish Museum
Wilanow Palace
Royal Baths Museum (with concert)
Polish parliament (schedule permitting)
Presidential Palace

Schindler's Factory Museum (optional)

During this period you can expect to have approximately 3 hours of class every morning for the first week and then three mornings per week for subsequent weeks. In the afternoons we will participate in the various site visits noted above. While we will be very busy during the week, I encourage you to travel on the weekends. Some possible places to explore within Poland include the Baltic Sea port of Gdansk (home of the Solidarity movement), the beautiful – and very accessible – Tatry mountains, and the Mazurian lakes. Some other historic towns that are well worth visiting include Wroclaw, Poznan and Torun. If you are interested in seeing other countries in the post-communist region, Poland is an overnight train or bus ride away from Vilnius (in post-Soviet Lithuania), Prague (Czech Republic), Bratislava (Slovakia), Budapest (Hungary), Berlin (Germany).

Most readings for this class will be available electronically on BlackBoard. The two books you will need are:

Castle, Marjorie and Ray Taras. *Democracy in Poland*. Boulder, Col: Westview Press, 2002.

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014.

Grades

You will be given 3 credit hours for this course. Half (50%) of your grade for this section will be based on participation. The other half will be based on a mid-term (25%) and a final exam (25%). Both of these will be blue book tests.

Day 1 – Arrival in Poland/Orientation

Why study abroad and what are the challenges?

(1) *On Studying Abroad:*

<https://www.coloradomesa.edu/op/documents/GlobalLearningthroughShort-TermStudyAbroad.pdf>

https://www.hws.edu/academics/global/pdf/journal_writers.pdf

Day 2 – Introduction:

What have been the key internal and external influences on the rise and fall of the Polish state from the 19th century to the present?

Davis, Norman, *God's Playground*, Ch.1 (1795-1945)

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Ch.1

Marjorie Castle and Ray Taras, *Democracy in Poland*, Ch.1.

Day 2 Visit (POLI 376): Wawel Castle

Days 3-4: Repressive Regimes and The Communist Experience

What made communism so strong and how was it related to other repressive regimes (including fascism)? What factors opened communism up to potential opposition?

Geddes, B., 1999, "What do we know about democratization after 20 years?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, v. 2, p. 115-144.

Linz, J. J. and A. Stepan (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bartosek, K. (1999). Central and Southeastern Europe. The Black Book of Communism. S. Courtois, N. Werth, J.-L. Panne et al. Cambridge, Harvard University Press: 394-456.

Day 3 Visit (POLI 376): Rynek Underground, Kazimierz (Jewish Quarter)

Day 4 Visit (POLI 376): Auschwitz

Day 5: Poland under Communism (travel to Gdansk)

What did communism look like to every day citizens?

Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present*, Ch. 1 (rise of communism)

Marjorie Castle and Ray Taras, *Democracy in Poland*, Ch.2.

Day 6: Dissident Movements

What were the challenges and opportunities for mobilizing against the communist regime? Why did the early opposition movement take the form it did?

di Palma, G. (1991). "Legitimation from the Top to Civil Society: Politico-Cultural Change in Eastern Europe." World Politics **44**(1): 49-80.

Zuzowski, R. (1992). Political Dissent and Opposition in Poland: The Workers' Defense Committee 'KOR'. Westport, CT, Praeger.

Day 6 Visit (POLI 376): Old Town Gdansk

Days 7-8: Social Movements and the Solidarity Experience

What accounts for the rise of Solidarity? To what degree does it conform to broader social movement theories?

Jasper, "The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements"

Ptuff, "Collective Identity and Informal Groups in Revolutionary Mobilization: East Germany in 1989"

Touraine, "Solidarity: the analysis of a social movement : Poland, 1980-1981"

Mason, "Public opinion and political change in Poland, 1980-1982"

Day 7 Visit (POLI 376): European Solidarity Center

Day 8: Travel to Warsaw

Day 9: The Transition

Why did Central Europe abandon communism the way it did and what were the key issues facing these states as a result of the communist legacy?

Marjorie Castle and Ray Taras, *Democracy in Poland*, Ch.3.

Ekiert, G. (1991). "Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration." *British Journal of Political Science* **21**(3): 285-313.

Day 9 Visit: Churches of Old Town

Day 10: Political Evolution – Institutions and Parties

What are the advantages of presidentialism versus parliamentarism? What did the Polish suggest about the applicability of the parliamentary system in a post-communist state?

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Chapter 2.

Rychard, A. (1998). "Institutions and actors in a new democracy: The vanishing legacy of communist and Solidarity types of participation in Poland." *Participation and democracy, East and West: comparisons and interpretations*. D. Rueschemeyer, M. Rueschemeyer and B. Wittrock. Armonk, N.Y., M.E. Sharpe.

Day 11: Economic Transition

What were the challenges in transitioning from a communist to a capitalist economy and how did these challenges test the new political system?

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Chapter 3.

Orenstein, M. A. (2001). *Out of the red : building capitalism and democracy in postcommunist Europe*. Ann Arbor, Mich., University of Michigan Press.

Wedel, J. R. (1998). Collision and collusion : the strange case of western aid to Eastern Europe, 1989-1998. New York, St. Martin's Press.

Day 11 Visit (POLI 376): Warsaw Uprising Museum

Day 12: Social Transition

How did Central Europeans weather the political and economic transition and in what ways did communism have a lasting impact on political culture?

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Chapter 4: Social Aspects of Transformation.

Marjorie Castle and Ray Taras, *Democracy in Poland*, Ch.5.

Day 12 Visit (POLI 376): Wilanow Palace

Day 13: Transitional Justice

What were the major factors that dictated the path of justice for communist-era rights abuses in Central and East Europe?

Grodsky, B. (2007). *The Costs of Justice: Understanding How New Leaders Choose to Respond to Previous Rights Abuses*.

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Ch. 7.

Day 13 Visit (POLI 376): Institute of National Remembrance

Day 14: Social Movements after Victory

What was the role of key civil society organizations in the post-communist experience? How did they transition from authoritarianism to democracy?

Glenn, J. K. (2003). *Parties out of Movements: Party emergence in postcommunist Eastern Europe. States, parties, and social movements.* J. A. Goldstone. New York, Cambridge University Press: 147-169.

Ekiert, G. and J. Kubik (1998). "Contentious Politics in New Democracies: East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, 1989-93." *World Politics* 50(4): 547-581.

Zald - *Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change*

Day 14 Visit (POLI 409): Polish parliament (schedule permitting); alternative: Monument to the Ghetto Uprising

Day 15: Integration and Realignment

How have the European Union and NATO helped define the post-communist state? In what ways have these external organizations had a positive versus negative impact?

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Chapter 8: EU Accession and After.

Wolchik, Sharon and Jane Curry. *Central and East European Politics.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Chapter 9: Security Issues: NATO and Beyond.

Day 15 Visit (POLI 409): Presidential Palace (schedule permitting); alternative: Monument to the Ghetto Uprising