

Bruce Masters

GLSP, SOCS 651

Summer 2016

SECTARIANISM AND MODERNITY

Beirut, Belfast, and Sarajevo all witnessed scenes of devastating sectarian conflict in the late 20th century. Sectarian conflicts continue to wrack Syria, Iraq and Yemen today. In each of these conflicts, “talking-heads” in the media and politicians in the US have solemnly intoned that these are “centuries-old” conflicts, with the implication that nothing can be done about them. In part, that characterization derives from the “Enlightenment” view prevalent in the West today that religious identity is primordial or traditional, with no place in modern nation-states. But is that wisdom correct? This course will examine the historical origins of the “Troubles” in Ireland (?-1998), the Yugoslav Civil War (1989-1995), the Lebanese Civil War (1974-1990), as well a brief excursion into the contemporary Middle East. The question is: When religious communities have been living side by side for generations in relative harmony what promotes a turn to violence? We will examine how memory and selective history perpetuate the “culture of victimhood” that helps fuel these conflicts. We will also turn to artists from the zones of conflict and examine how they have represented the culture of sectarianism. With the case of Lebanon, we can examine if women’s voices add unique perspectives to the issue. Lastly, we will hopefully arrive at some answer to the question: Is sectarianism a reversion to a primordial past or a product of modernity?

Required Reading or Viewing:

Jon Calame & Esther Charlesworth, *Divided Cities* (ISBN: 978-0-8122-2195-4)

John Gibney, *The Shadow of a Year: The 1641 Rebellion in Irish History & Memory* (ISBN: 978-029928954-6)

Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina* (a novel) (ISBN: 0-226-02045-2)

Hanan al-Shaykh, *Beirut Blues* (a novel) (ISBN: 0-385-47382-6)

CAL (a Northern Irish film, based on the novel by Bernard MacLaverty)

Before the Rain (Macedonian film by Milche Manchevski)

Where Do We Go Now? (Lebanese film by Nadine Labki)

There will be additional short pieces and/or articles distributed in class.

Note: The films will be shown outside of class (TBA)

Course Requirements:

3 short response papers (2-3 pages) at the end of each of unit.

Final essay (5-7 pages) on historical memory.

Participation in Discussions

Course Outline

Part I: IRELAND

Tuesday, June 28- What do we mean when we use the terms “sectarianism” & “modernity”?:
The case of Ireland, Sectarianism vs. Nationalisms

Reading: *The Shadow of the Year*

Thursday, June 30 - History and Memory in Ireland

Readings: *The Shadow of the Year* and Lyrics of Irish “Rebel” songs

Friday, July 1- Showing of Film *CAL* (Time & Place TBA)

Tuesday, July 5 – Part I: The Good Friday Accords and After Part II, Discussion of Ireland

Calame & Charlesworth “Belfast”, 1-82

Part II: THE BALKANS

Thursday, July 7– Understanding the Balkans: Ottoman Past & Nationalist Present

Reading: Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina*

1st Essay due today, July 7th.

Friday, July 8 - - Showing of Film *Before the Rain* (Time & Place TBA)

Tuesday, July 12 – Balkan Wars & World Wars

Thursday, July 14 – Part I: Disintegration of Yugoslavia; Part II, Discussion

Calame & Charlesworth, pp.103-120

2nd Essay due today, July 14th.

Part III: LEBANESE CIVIL WARS

Tuesday, July 19 – Old Wounds: Syria & Lebanon in the 19th Century

Reading: Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, pp.130-68

Thursday, July 21 – Lebanese Civil Wars

Reading: al-Shaykh, *Beirut Blues*; Calame & Charlesworth, pp.37-60

Friday, July 22 - - Showing of Film *Where Do We Go Now?* (Time & Place TBA)

Part IV: The Sunni-Shia Divide

Tuesday, July 26 – Part I: Discussion ; Part II, Sunnis & Shia: What’s the difference?

Reading: Bruce Masters, “*Rawafid, taqiyya, and Wahhabiyyun: Sunni Polemics in the Ottoman Period*”

3rd essay due today, July 26th.

Thursday, July 28 – Part I: Sectarian Crisis in the Contemporary Middle East: Iran vs. Saudi Arabia; Part II, General Review of Course

Calame & Charlesworth, pp. 143-235

Tuesday, August 2 -Take-Home Final/ Essay Due