

History of Nationalism
Preliminary Examination
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Fall 2008

Answer one question from each section. You must do a total of three (3) questions. Be sure each essay has a clear line of argument, addresses as many dimensions of the question as possible, and offers relevant, persuasive evidence from specific secondary sources wherever appropriate. Good luck!

Section I: choose one

How have scholars understood the relationship between the ideologies of nationalism and socialism/communism? Who are the most important authors dealing with this problematic and to what extent (if at all) have they developed a consensus? Please answer by focusing on the East European (especially Romanian and Hungarian) context after the Second World War.

What have historians of nation and empire had to say about the relationship between the two -- and why is this important to the historiography of comparative nationalisms? What role does anti-colonial nationalism play in this story, and how portable are theoretical critiques that emanate from a British imperial context beyond the boundaries of the British empire?

Section II: choose one

After the Second World War a scholarly consensus around the modern origins of nations and nationalism began to be formed. No sooner was the modernist paradigm established than it was challenged by the ethno-symbolist approach. Discuss the ensuing historiographical debate and state your own position.

You have been invited to be a visiting professor in comparative nationalism studies at Boston University. The chair has asked you to teach a graduate seminar on "The Work of the Nation in Comparative Contexts." Discuss the central organizing principles of the course. What themes would you stress and what would be the seminar's pivotal readings? Please be as specific as possible. How and in what ways would your course bring theory into dialogue with historical narratives? What contribution would your own work and interests make to the course?


Section 3: choose one

In the past couple of decades the global rise of religion and the parallel renewed academic attention to this phenomenon have challenged existing theoretical approaches to the general relationship between nationalism and religion. Discuss which recent works have contributed in reconfiguring the scholarly understandings of this relationship? What contribution would your own work make to the debate?

According to Frantz Fanon, "Europe is . . . the creation of the Third World." Discuss models of the nation on offer in the historiography of the last quarter century with a view to their applicability across diverse geographical spaces and temporal frames. What is at stake in theorizing the nation as fragment, as processual, as fluid, as in-the-making?

Department of History
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**Comparative Nationalism
Preliminary Examination**

Todorova/Symes for 

Instructions: Choose three out of six questions below, answering one from each section. Be sure to discuss specific scholars and publications in your answers.

I. Area specific

Discuss the relationship between nation and empire over the course of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman context.

What are the 18th-century antecedents to Romanian nationalism? Where do you stand in the general debate about Eastern European nationalism as either a foreign import or indigenous ideology?

II Comparative

Outline the emergence of Balkan nationalism in a general European context. How do existing typologies of nationalism (about big and small nations, about the variable social base of nationalist elites, about organic versus civic, etc.) mark historiographical assessments. Answer for the period up to the First World War.

Discuss the effects of periodization and long-term historical memory on the histories of nationalism. How do various historiographical models diverge -- or don't they -- with respect to the influence of the Enlightenment, for example? What value have different nationalist historiographies attached to the pre-modern past? How do you account for these differences (or similarities)?

III General Historiography and Theory

Discuss the road to and reasons for the general historiographical consensus around the modern origins of nations and nationalism. Please give the appropriate historiographical examples. In your view, is this consensus warranted?

In what ways does Anthony Smith's "ethnic origins of nations" thesis challenge or refine the modernist interpretation of nationalism and the nation state? What is the historiographical response to Smith's thesis?

