Modernization in nineteenth century Central Europe: topics, problem areas and research methods in historical sociology and social history

**Full description:** The aim of the course is to familiarize students with the main topics and problem areas in the history of Central Europe in the long nineteenth century. The course follows a topical arrangement focusing on central themes at the intersection of social history and historical sociology; it is neither chronological, nor comprehensive. Each section starts with the presentation of basic theoretical concepts, followed by the discussion of selected readings. The course focuses on problem areas in connection with the social and economic changes that took place in Central Europe during the long nineteenth century. The key concept of our discussion is ‘modernization theory’ and the different facets of modernization understood as a process of social and economic change in the period under scrutiny. Here, instead of interpreting ‘modernization’ as a normative developmental model, the course demonstrates how modernization could be analyzed as a heterogeneous and non-linear process, which always infers the possibility of fallbacks, as the history of Central Europe demonstrates it, and contains a mixture of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ elements.

**Assessment:** Active class participation, one in-class presentation on a chosen topic (ca. 10-15 minutes), a position paper based on the presentation (ca. 1500 words) at the end of the term.

1 - Conceptual framework; Historical sociology vs. social history; the historical geography of Central-Europe in the 19th century


2 - Modernization, economic backwardness and belated embourgeoisement in Central Europe


3 - Industrialization and urbanization (2 sessions)


4 - Embourgeoisement and the middle-class question


5 – The dynamics of educational expansion (2 sessions)

Cohen, Gary B. Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848-1918. West Lafayette, Ind: Purdue University Press, 1996.

6 – Professionalization

Gispen, Kees. “German Engineers and American Social Theory: Historical Perspectives on Professionalization.” Comparative Studies in Society and History 30, no. 3 (July 1, 1988): 550–74.
7 – Jewry: agents of modernization (2 sessions)


8 – Nations, empire, and nationalism at the challenges of modernization (2 sessions)