

Politics and culture in Southeastern Europe

July 1, 2003



As the birthplace of the Olympic Games, Olympia is a historical and symbolic reminder of the ideals of peace and international cooperation. Inspired by the classical legacy, the aim of the Balkan Studies Seminars is to study the modern world and to promote cross-cultural understanding through historical and philosophical investigations of European and Mediterranean cultures.

The 2003 Balkan Studies Seminars were composed of two parallel programs. The first was political in content and was entitled Southeastern Europe and the Great Ideologies whereas the second had a cultural focus and was entitled Contemporary Ethnomusicological and Anthropological Issues in Perspective: Ethnographic Reflexivity and the Study of Music Cultures in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The Southeastern Europe and the Great Ideologies program sought to evaluate the democratization trajectories of Southeast European nations and the prospects of democracy in the region today, and to promote cross-cultural understanding of historic and contemporary political problems. The program's objective was to establish a permanent regional network and a forum for the discussion of policy reform priorities and regional development challenges, and for the promotion of peace and prosperity in view of the region's Euro-Atlantic integration.

In particular, it examined the birth, growth and interplay of great ideologies in Southeastern Europe in the modern era. It reviewed the arrival of great historical narratives in Ottoman Southeastern Europe from Western and Central Europe in the aftermath of the French Revolution, seeking to identify and analyse the causes of their rise, and to explain their strength or weakness. The program focused on the perseverance of nationalism as the dominant ideological tradition of the region and the ways in which other ideologies have attempted to appropriate it.

The program was inter-disciplinary combining the study of the politics, society, and history of Southeastern Europe. The BSS 2003 topics included: the role of ideologies in politics; Enlightenment, the French Revolution and Southeastern Europe; the failure of Liberalism?; Socialism in Southeastern Europe; and Modernity and Modernization in Southeastern Europe-The case of Kemalist Turkey. The following distinguished faculty from Europe and the United States conducted the BSS 2003 program: Stathis Kalyvas, University of Chicago; Halil Berktaş, Sabanci University; Paschalis Kitromilidis, University of Athens; Milan Protić, Vice-president of the Christian Democratic Party of FR Yugoslavia; and Ahmet Evin, Sabanci University. The program was coordinated by Larry Wolff, professor of History at Boston College.

The Contemporary Ethnomusicological and Anthropological Issues in Perspective: Ethnographic Reflexivity and the Study of Music Cultures in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Region program was an advanced seminar in which salient issues of contemporary ethnomusicology and cultural anthropology were examined in reflexive and dialogical perspective. The ethnographic focus was on the music cultures of the Balkan peninsula and the circum-Eastern Mediterranean area. The seminar was not an area studies activity, but rather an experiment in dialogue and reflexivity, based on the juxtaposition of ethnomusicological and anthropological, theory and ethnography.

This program was taught by distinguished scholars and academics, with a theoretical and ethnographic expertise in the topic of the seminar as well as a mixed educational and cultural background, including Donna Buchanan (Bulgaria, Balkans, music and symbol, aesthetics, power, cosmology, identity), Svanibor Pettan (Croatia, Kosovo, Slovenia, Gypsies, minorities, nationalism, multiculturalism), Sonia Seeman (Turkey, Balkans, Near East and Mediterranean, Roma groups, ethnicity and identity, performance studies, ritual, gender, politics of recording, globalism, minorities), Daphne Tragaki (Greece, Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, contemporary Greek music, musical ethnography, urban music culture) and Pavlos Kavouras (Greece, Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, phenomenological hermeneutics, musical performance and performative ethnography, ethnographic biography, dialogical folk singing in Greece).

[See also link](#)

Tags: edu summer



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