

Fall 2013

# Syllabus for FYS173J, Nationalism

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

# *Connecticut College*

*Fall 2013*

**FYS 173J**



**Truman Street Laundry**  
73 Truman St., New London, CT 06320

# *Nationalism*

**Prof. Petko Ivanov**

# FYS 172F: *Nationalism*

Fall 2012, Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:15  
Knowlton Seminar Room



The banner is a work of art entitled “Device for determining nationality” (1977) by the renowned Russian artist Leonid Sokov, a resident of New York City since 1980. It “measures” eight nationalities: Jewish, Russian, Georgian, Armenian, Uzbek, Lithuanian, Moldavian, and Tungus. The instructions for the device’s “use” read as follows: “1) Insert your nose into the notch; 2) If the nose’s form fits, the person belongs to the corresponding nationality.”

## **Instructor: Petko Ivanov**

Blaustein 330, x5449, [pivanov@conncoll.edu](mailto:pivanov@conncoll.edu)

Office hours T, R 10:30-11:30 and by appointment

Library Research Liaison:

Fred Folmer ([ffolmer@conncoll.edu](mailto:ffolmer@conncoll.edu))

## **Course Description**

What is a nation? Do nations exist primordially, or are they manufactured products of relatively recent human history? What makes possible the imagined “kinship” of an individual with millions of living, dead, and unborn members of a given nation, most of whom are completely unknown to him/her? What social forces turn complete strangers into relatives, and how is this community of intimate strangers maintained? These and other questions will be addressed in this survey of the conflicting theories and experiences of nationhood. Case studies reflecting students’ specific interests will be engaged in addition to classic works on nationalism and nationhood studies.

This course satisfies General Education Area 7 (History) and is a designated Writing course. Accordingly, our main task is to experience and utilize *writing as power*, our key-notion for the semester, through which nation, writing, and “writing the nation” will be approached.

**Goals of the course:**

- To develop an understanding of how and why nationness came to be a dominant identity pattern in modern history.
- To gain a theoretical appreciation of the notions of “nation” and “nationalism” from multiple points of view, among them the proposition that nationhood cannot be taken for granted but exists in flux and requires constant reaffirmation.
- To identify and critically examine the key ideas and issues, as well as the main players in the theoretical debates that shaped the recent historiography of nationalism studies.
- To engage in “case-studies,” in which you demonstrate your mastery of the intellectual instruments referred to above.
- The overarching goal, of course, is to facilitate critical thinking and improve your research, discussion, and oral presentation skills, including collaboration on a final project.

**Course Materials**

The main required text for the course is **Benedict Anderson**. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition. London & New York: Verso, 1991. You may purchase the book in the College Bookstore or online.

All other texts and materials for this course (academic articles, book chapters, links to video clips, pictorial objects, discussion board, etc.) are available through the course **Moodle site** (<http://moodle.conncoll.edu>) which you should visit frequently as the week’s readings will be posted there. Be advised of the resources of the Language and Culture Center on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Blaustein, where video materials for this course are held on reserve.

You are expected to have read all assigned texts *before* the class in which they will be discussed, and to be sufficiently familiar with their content to participate actively in the discussion.

**Evaluation and Grading**

Attendance and active participation are required at all class meetings and are preconditions for passing the course. There are 27 class meetings during the semester, and students who have not attended them cannot be considered as having completed the course. Students with more than one absence will have their final grades lowered, with multiple absences resulting in a significant lowering of the final grade.

*Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:*

Short papers	30%
Postings to online discussion forum	20%
Participation in class and in debates	20%
Final group research project	30%

### ***Assignments and Final Group Project***

You will see above that your evaluation in this course is based on frequent written responses to the course material (50%), on participation in class (20%), and on a final project for which you will work with other students in the class (30%). The point of these assignments is for you to engage with the material on a regular basis and to communicate with others in doing so. The aim is never for you to produce “the right answer.” We will be discussing many controversial and hotly contested issues for which there is no right answer.

On that note, never feel that you need to “find information” on a given question and present it to me wholesale, and *never* present anyone else’s written work as your own—that is plagiarism. *Always* feel free to discuss others’ ideas, both in your written work and in class, and to articulate your thoughts about the material in the various forums available. We will discuss accepted conventions for paraphrasing and citing others’ words and arguments throughout the semester.

### ***Short papers in various genres***

There will be three, 3-page papers due at the end of weeks Four, Nine and Twelve — i.e., on *Sept. 29, Nov. 3, and Nov. 24*. Each of them should adhere to the conventions of a specific genre:

- A review, as scholarly as you can master, of our main reading, Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*;
- A piece of informed journalism (an op-ed piece) on an issue discussed in class, e.g., What makes us Americans? — or other nationals, as the case may be;
- A response paper to a “surprise” question not directly dealt with previously in class, e.g., How useful is the concept of “identity” in describing nationhood? (This is only an example :)

In these papers I will ask you to paraphrase and compare arguments, analyze sources, and argue various positions on a given topic. We will discuss the purpose and design of the short papers in class.



**The online discussion forum** is available through the course Moodle site. Please post your responses to the readings by 9:00 PM each Monday (i.e., twelve hours before our first class of the week). Postings will be evaluated on their thoughtfulness and content, not length. *You should have at least 14 postings by the end of the semester*, which I will reread before assigning final grades. The purpose of this forum is to give you a place to articulate your ideas about the material as you read, view, and think about it. It also offers another forum for discussion for those who are less comfortable speaking in class, although I would like *everyone to speak at least once every class*. Please post complete sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation (i.e., no e-mail or “text-speak”). Speaking of *texting*: don’t it in class — ever.

**Final projects and presentations:** After the seventh week of class you will choose a topic for your final group research project on which you will work with five or more other people of your cohort. The class will be divided into three groups, each working on a project of inventing a nation (e.g., Ruritania, as per Gellner 1983) according to a set of variables that we will establish during our class-discussions. The three invented nations, which may or may not share borders, will be used as a learning tool for both understanding and questioning the differences between the ethnic, the civic and the (anti-, post-) colonial nationhood. We will use Moodle (<http://moodle.conncoll.edu>) as a platform for visualizing and presenting the Ruritanians. Each of the participants will contribute to the project’s wiki-pages at least one “nationalist” text written in an assumed, distinct “professional voice” – that of a historian, a journalist, a politician, a linguist, an ethnographer, an artist or a poet. The goal is to present complementary (or conflicting) articulations of the nation by different intellectuals while maintaining the crucial for our seminar distinction between the imaginary and the imagined. As we move through the course, start thinking about the project and seek out others in the class who might like to work on it with you.

Your group will work with Kathleen Gehring and me to develop and research your chosen topic. We will talk more about the final research projects in class.

**Internet Resources.** Among the useful online sources three are particularly relevant to the study of nationhood:

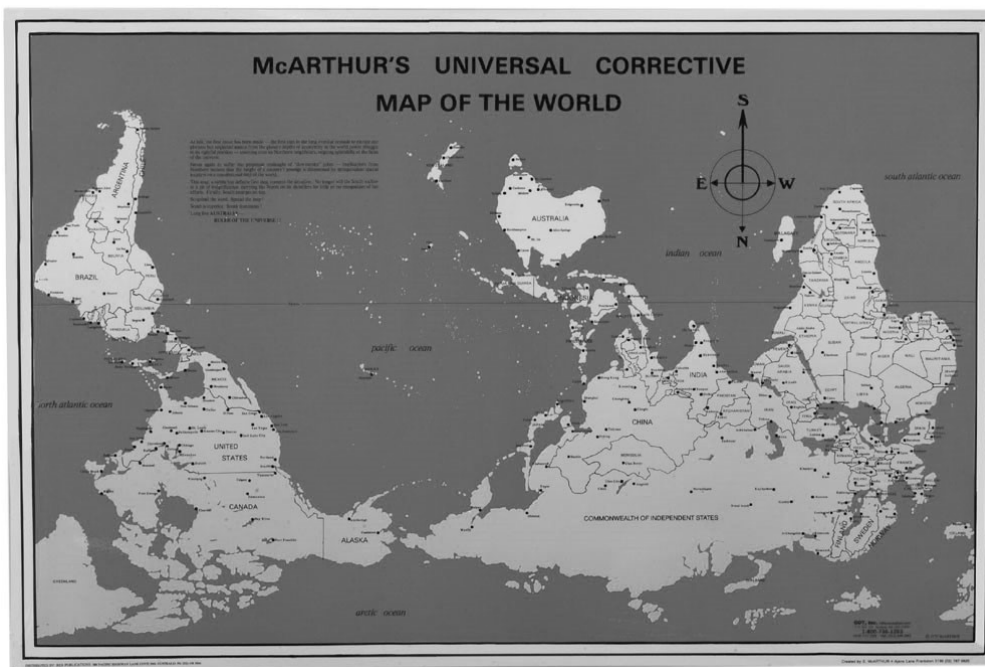
- 1) *The Nationalism Project* (<http://nationalismproject.org>) maintained by Eric Zuelow, a website rich in information on all aspects of nationalism studies;
- 2) *SPIN - Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms* (<http://www.spinnet.eu/>), a web-based project aimed at charting “the cultural and historical root system of European nationalisms.”
- 3) *H-Net* (<http://www.h-net.org>), the main forum for scholarly book reviews on a variety of topics. Be advised to frequent these websites more often than *Wikipedia*.

**The Roth Writing Center** provides one-to-one peer tutoring free of charge to help student writers of all abilities during all stages of the writing process. To make an appointment, call x2173 or stop by the Writing Center at 214 Blaustein. For further information, visit the Writing Center web page at <http://write.conncoll.edu/>.

**Students with disabilities.** If you have a physical or mental disability, either hidden or visible, which may require classroom, test-taking, or other modifications, please let us know. If you are a Connecticut College student and have not already done so, please register with the Office of Student Disability Services in Crozier Williams (Room 221) or e-mail [barbara.mcllarky@conncoll.edu](mailto:barbara.mcllarky@conncoll.edu) or [lillian.liebenthal@conncoll.edu](mailto:lillian.liebenthal@conncoll.edu).

**Office Hours and Advising.** Office hours will be held in Blaustein 330 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 or by appointment. Sign-up sheets will be posted on my door, and I will see students on a first-come-first-serve basis. Questions or concerns addressed via e-mail will be answered within 24 hours of receiving your message.

### McArthur's Universal Corrective Map of the World ☺



This map was drawn in Japan by 15-year-old Australian exchange student Stuart McArthur who was tired of being teased by his classmates for being from "the bottom of the world." In 1979 McArthur published his upside-down map of the world. In it, Australia is atop the world and Europe is an insignificant cluster of little countries in the lower right. Inset in McArthur's map is the following text:

*At last, the first move has been made—the first step in the long overdue crusade to elevate our glorious but neglected nation from the gloomy depths of anonymity in the world power struggle to its rightful position—towering over its northern neighbours, reigning splendidly at the helm of the universe.*

*Never again to suffer the perpetual onslaught of "downunder" jokes—implications from Northern nations that the height of a country's prestige is determined by its equivalent spatial location on a conventional map of the world.*

*This map, a subtle but definite first step, corrects the situation. No longer will the South wallow in a pit of insignificance, carrying the North on its shoulders for little or no recognition for its efforts. Finally, the South emerges on top.*

*So, spread the word. Spread the map!*

*South is superior. South dominates!*

*Long live AUSTRALIA—RULER OF THE UNIVERSE!!*

## *Class Schedule*

*\* This schedule is subject to change as required by unforeseen circumstances.*

### **Aug. 29**     *Introducing Each Other and the Course*

*Reading (in class):*

“What is Nationalism? Definitions.” An online resource maintained by *The Nationalism Project* (<http://nationalismproject.org/what.htm>).

Umut Özkirimli “Contemporary Debates on Nationalism” (2005) Intro

### **WEEK I**     **Setting the Stage: What Is Nation(alism)?**

#### **Sept. 3**     *“Imagine There's No Countries”*

*Readings:*

Garry Davis “The World Is My Country” (1961) (excerpts)

John Lennon “Imagine There's No Countries” (1971)

*Optional:*

Martha Nussbaum “For Love of Country: Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism” (1994)

Madeleine F. Green “Global Citizenship: What Are We Talking About and Why Does It Matter?” (2012)

Saskia Sassen “Toward Post-National and Denationalized Citizenship” (2002)

#### **Sept. 5**     *“A Nation Is...” + Predicates*

*Readings:*

Joseph Stalin “Marxism and the National Question” (1913) (excerpts)

Ernest Renan “Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?” [What is a Nation?] (1882) (excerpt)



*Optional:*

Liah Greenfeld “Nationalism: Etymology, Definitions, Types” (2001)

Max Weber “Structures of Power: The Nation” (1910/1921) (excerpt)

A.K. Ramanujan “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?” (1989)

Francis Hutchins “Concepts of Indian Character” (1967)

**WEEK II**    **Imagi-Nation****Sept. 10**    ***Imagined Communities****Readings:*

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (1991) (Chapters 1, pp. 1-7)

Elie Kedourie “Nationalism” (1961) (Chapter 1, pp. 9-19)

*Optional:*

Cornelius Castoriadis “Social Imaginary Significations” (1975)

Charles Taylor “Modern Social Imaginaries” (2002)

**Sept. 12**    ***Imagined vs. Imaginary****Readings:*

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (Ch. 2, pp. 9-36)

*Optional:*

Jonathan Culler “Anderson and the Novel” (1999)

Partha Chatterjee “Anderson’s Utopia” (1999)

Cairns Craig “Benedict Anderson's Fictional Communities” (2007)

Anatoliy Gruzd et al. “Imagining Twitter as an Imagined Community” (2011)

Ed White “Early American Nations as Imagined Communities” (2004)

**WEEK III**    **Inventing Nationalism****Sept. 17**    *Narrating the Nation (in Print)**Readings:*

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (Ch. 3, pp. 37-46)

*Optional:*

Homi Bhabha “Nation and Narration” (1990) (Introduction, pp. 1-7)

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (Ch. 4, pp. 47-65)

Peter Wogan “Imagined Communities Reconsidered: Is Print-Capitalism What We Think It Is?” (2001)

**Sept. 19**    *Invented Traditions**Readings:*

Eric Hobsbawm “The Invention of Tradition” (1983) (Introduction, pp. 1-14)

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (Ch. 11, pp. 187-206)

*Optional:*

Alexander Motyl “Inventing Invention” (1999)

David A. Bell “The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism” (2001) (excerpts)

**WEEK IV**    **The Nation and/in History****Sept. 24**    *The Usable Past(s): Nation and/in History**Readings:*

Natalie Zemon Davis “Who Owns History?” (1996)

Ronald Suny “Old Histories for New Nations” (2001)

*Optional:*

David McCrone “Inventing the Past” (1998)

Ronald Suny “Encyclopedia of Nationalism: History” (2001) *Optional:*

**Sept. 26**     ***When Is a Nation?***

*Readings:*

Immanuel Kant “The Character of Nations” (1798)

Clifford Geertz “Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics” (1973) (pp. 255-269)

*Optional:*

Walker Connor “When Is a Nation?” (1990)

Anthony D. Smith “Were There Nations in Antiquity?” (2005)

Anthony D. Smith “Ethno-Symbolism and the Study of Nationalism” (1999)

Philip Gorski “The Mosaic Moment” (2000)

*Sunday, Sept.29*     *FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE ELECTRONICALLY by 12:00 p.m.*

**WEEK V**     **Vernacular Idioms of Nationhood**

**Oct. 1**     ***Language — A Dialect with an Army***

*Readings:*

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (1991) (Chapter 5, pp. 67-82)

Dennis Baron “The English-Only Question” (1990) (excerpts)

*Optional:*

Michael Silverstein “Worfianism and the Linguistic Imagination of Nationality” (2000)

Einar Haugen “Dialect, Language, Nation” (1966)

Joshua A. Fishman “The New Linguistic Order” (1999)

Joshua A. Fishman “Language and Nationalism” (1972) (excerpts)

**Oct. 3**      *Working with Sources on Nationalism (Fred Folmer)*

A session with our research and instruction librarian Fred Folmer who will assist your preparation for the debate next week and for developing your cyber-nation group projects.

**WEEK VI**    **Do Nations Have Navels?****Oct. 8**      *Classroom Debate**Readings:*

Anthony D. Smith vs. Ernest Gellner “The Nation: Real or Imagined?” (1996)

Oct. 9-13    FALL BREAK – No class

**WEEK VII**   **Peasants into Nationals****Oct. 15**     *Peasants into Frenchmen**Readings:*

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (1991) (Ch. 10, pp. 163-185)

*Optional:*

Eugene Weber “Peasants into Frenchmen” (1976) (excerpts)

Ronald Grigor Suny & Geoff Eley “Becoming National” (1996)

Mirela-Luminița Murgescu “What Is a Nation in Southeast Europe” (2005)

**Oct. 17**     *What Is an American? And How Do You Know?**Readings:*

Hector de Crèvecoeur “What Is an American?” (1782)

Samuel Huntington “The Hispanic Challenge” (2004)

*Optional:*

Patricia Bizzell & Bruce Herzberg “Opinions on the Japanese ‘Threat’” (1996)

Eric Foner “Who Is an American?” (2002)

## **WEEK VIII “Good” and “Bad” Nationalisms**

### **Oct. 22 *Nation and “the People”; Patriotism***

*Readings:*

John Plamenatz “Two Types of Nationalism” (1975)

Michael Ignatieff “Blood and Belonging” (1994) (Intro, pp. 3-16)

*Optional:*

Johann Gottlieb Fichte “What Is a People & What Is Love of Fatherland?” (1807)

Edmund Morgan “Inventing the People” (1988) (excerpts)

Pierre Bourdieu “The Uses of the ‘People’” (1990)

Arjun Appadurai “Patriotism and Its Futures” (1993)

### **Oct. 24 *Nation and Violence***

*Readings:*

Michael Ignatieff “Blood and Belonging” (1994) (ch.1, pp. 19-56)

*Optional:*

Rogers Brubaker & David Laitin “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence” (1998)

Ronald Grigor Suny “Why We Hate You” (2004)

Robert M. Hayden “Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia” (1996)

## **WEEK IX Nation and State**

### **Oct. 29 *Do Nations Have to Become States?***

*Readings:*

Michael Ignatieff “Blood and Belonging” (1994) (ch. 4, pp. 143-177)



*Optional:*

John Breuilly “Nationalism and the State” (1985) (excerpts)

Benedict Anderson “Imagined Communities” (1991) (Chapter 6, pp. 83-111)

Charles Taylor “Why Do Nations Have to Become States?” (1993)

Brendan O’Leary “What States Can Do with Nations” (2003)

**Oct. 31**      ***Self-Determination, Territoriality, Borders****Readings:*

Miroslav Hroch “National Self-Determination” (1995)

Emil Šćuka et al. “Roma Declaration of a Nation” (2001)

*Optional:*

Arjun Appadurai “Sovereignty without Territoriality” (1996)

Ian Hancock “Gypsy Nationalism” (1975)

Anders Linde-Laursen “The Making and Remaking of a National Border” (1997)

Marc Howard “An East German Ethnicity?” (1995)

*Sunday, Nov.3*      *SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE BY 12:00 p.m.*

**WEEK X**      **Nation, Race, (Anti-) Colonialism****Nov. 5**      ***Is There a Black Nation?****Readings:*

Malcolm X “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964)

Albert Murray “The Omni-Americans: The Natural History of the Black Man as American” (1970)

Martin Luther King, Jr. “I Have a Dream” (1963)

*Optional:*

Sian Jones "The Archaeology of Ethnicity" (1997) (Chapter 3, pp. 40-55)

Marcus Garvey "Africa for the Africans" (1919)

Clare Corbould "Becoming African Americans" (2009) (excerpts)

**Nov. 7**      *Nation for the Oppressed?**Readings:*

Benedict Anderson "Imagined Communities" (1991) (ch. 7, pp. 113-140)

Alistair Horne "A Savage War of Peace" (1977) (ch. 1 & 9, pp. 23-43, 183-207)

*Optional:*

Frantz Fanon "The Wretched of the Earth" (1967) (excerpts)

Leopold Senghor "On African Homelands and Nation-States" (1960s)

Amilcar Cabral "National Liberation and Culture" (1974)

Partha Chatterjee "Nationalist Thought & the Colonial World" (1986) (excerpts)

**WEEK XI**      **Nation and Gender****Nov. 12**      *"Biological Reproduction of the Nation"**Readings:*

Nira Yuval-Davis "Gender and Nation" (1997) (Chapters 2-3, pp. 26-67)

*Optional:*

Julie Mertus "'Woman' in the Service of National Identity" (1994)

Anne McClintock "No Longer in a Future Heaven" (1996)

Nira Yuval-Davis "Gender Relations and the Nation" (2001)

Anne McClintock "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family" (1993)

Cynthia Enloe "Nationalism and Masculinity" (2000)

**Nov. 14**     *Sexing the Nation**Readings:*

Joanne Nagel “Sexually Imagined Communities” (2003)

“Sex: The American Way Is Best” (1955)

*Optional:*

George L. Mosse “Nationalism and Sexuality” (1985) (excerpts)

Joanne Nagel “Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations” (1998)

Alexander Maxwell “Nationalizing Sexuality” (2005)

V. Spike Peterson “Sexing Political Identities: Nationalism as Heterosexism” (1999)

**WEEK XII**     **Banal Nationalism****Nov. 19**     *Flagging the Nation**Readings:*

Michael Billig “Banal Nationalism” (1995) (excerpts)

*Optional:*

Tim Edensor “National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life” (2002) (excerpts)

Catherine Palmer “Experiencing the Nation in Everyday Life” (1998)

**Nov. 21**     *Consuming the Nation**Readings:*

Donica Belisle “Retail Nation” (2011) (excerpts)

*Optional:*

John E. Fox & Cynthia Miller-Idriss “Everyday Nationhood” (2008)

Paul Nugent “Do Nations Have Stomachs?” (2010)

Eric Zuelow “National Identity and Tourism in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland” (2007)

*Sunday, Nov. 24*

*THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE BY 12:00 p.m.*

**Nov. 26 – Dec. 2**      THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS

**WEEK XIII**    **Case-Study: Ruritania vs. Megalomania**

**Dec.3**

*Readings:*

Ernest Gellner “Nations and Nationalism” (1983) (Ch. 5, pp. 53-62)

*Optional:*

Santo Cilauro, Tom Gleisner & Rob Sitch “Molvania” (2004) (excerpts)

Vesna Goldsworthy “Inventing Ruritania” (1998) (excerpts)

**Dec. 5**      *Cyber-Nations: Final group presentations*

**WEEK XV**    **Reaching Conclusions: Whose Imagined Community?**

**Dec. 10**      *Nation and Globalization*

*Readings:*

Partha Chatterjee “Whose Imagined Community?” (1996)

Benjamin R. Barber “Jihad vs. McWorld” (1992)

*Optional:*

Samuel Huntington “The Clash of Civilizations?” (1993)

Richard Handler “Is Identity a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?” (1994)

Rogers Brubaker & Frederick Cooper “Beyond Identity” (2000)

## ***What is Nationalism? – Definitions***

### **Ernest Renan What is a Nation? (1882)**

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A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. Man, Gentlemen, does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more—these are the essential conditions for being a people. One loves in proportion to the sacrifices to which one has consented, and in proportion to the ills that one has suffered. One loves the house that one has built and that one has handed down. The Spartan song – “We are what you were; we will be what you are” – is, in its simplicity, the abridged hymn of every *patrie*.

More valuable by far than common customs posts and frontiers conforming to strategic ideas is the fact of sharing, in the past, a glorious heritage and regrets, and of having, in the future, [a shared] programme to put into effect, or the fact of having suffered, enjoyed, and hoped together. These are the kinds of things that can be understood in spite of differences of race and language. I spoke just now of “having suffered together” and, indeed, suffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort.

A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation’s existence is, if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as an individual’s existence is a perpetual affirmation of life. That, I know full well, is less metaphysical than divine right and less brutal than so called historical right. According to the ideas that I am outlining to you, a nation has no more right than a king does to say to a province: “You belong to me, I am seizing you.” A province, as far as I am concerned, is its inhabitants; if anyone has the right to be consulted in such an affair, it is the inhabitant. A nation never has any real interest in annexing or holding on to a country against its will. The wish of nations is, all in all, the sole legitimate criterion, the one to which one must always return.



We have driven metaphysical and theological abstractions out of politics. What then remains? Man, with his desires and his needs. The secession, you will say to me, and, in the long term, the disintegration of nations will be the outcome of a system which places these old organisms at the mercy of wills which are often none too enlightened. It is clear that, in such matters, no principle must be pushed too far. Truths of this order are only applicable as a whole in a very general fashion. Human wills change, but what is there here below that does not change? The nations are not something eternal. They had their beginnings and they will end. A European confederation will very probably replace them. But such is not the law of the century in which we are living. At the present time, the existence of nations is a good thing, a necessity even. Their existence is the guarantee of liberty, which would be lost if the world had only one law and only one master.

Through their various and often opposed powers, nations participate in the common work of civilization; each sounds a note in the great concert of humanity, which, after all, is the highest ideal reality that we are capable of attaining. Isolated, each has its weak point. I often tell myself that an individual who had those faults which in nations are taken for good qualities, who fed off vainglory, who was to that degree jealous, egotistical, and quarrelsome, and who would draw his sword on the smallest pretext, would be the most intolerable of men. Yet all these discordant details disappear in the overall context. Poor humanity, how you have suffered! How many trials still await you! May the spirit of wisdom guide you, in order to preserve you from the countless dangers with which your path is strewn!

Let me sum up, Gentlemen. Man is a slave neither of his race nor his language, nor of his religion, nor of the course of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains. A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation. So long as this moral consciousness gives proof of its strength by the sacrifices which demand the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community, it is legitimate and has the right to exist. If doubts arise regarding its frontiers, consult the populations in the areas under dispute. They undoubtedly have the right to a say in the matter. This recommendation will bring a smile to the lips of the transcendents of politics, these infallible beings who spend their lives deceiving themselves and who, from the height of their superior principles, take pity upon our mundane concerns. "Consult the populations, for heaven's sake! How naive! A fine example of those wretched French ideas which claim to replace diplomacy and war by childishly simple methods." Wait a while, Gentlemen; let the reign of the transcendents pass; bear the scorn of the powerful with patience. It may be that, after many fruitless groupings, people will revert to our more modest empirical solutions. The best way of being right in the future is, in certain periods, to know how to resign oneself to being out of fashion.

Ernest Renan "What is a Nation?" In *Becoming National: A Reader*, eds. Geoff Eley & Ronald G. Suny, pp. 41-55. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

## Ernest Gellner Defining "Nation" (1983)

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In fact, nations, like states, are a contingency, and not a universal necessity. Neither nations nor states exist at all times and in all circumstances. Moreover, nations and states are not the same contingency. Nationalism holds that they were destined for each other; that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy. But before they could become intended for each other, each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state. It is more debatable whether the normative idea of the nation, in its modern sense, did not presuppose the prior existence of the state.

What then is this contingent, but in our age seemingly universal and normative, idea of the nation? Discussion of two very makeshift, temporary definitions will help to pinpoint this elusive concept.

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations make the man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.

Each of these provisional definitions, the cultural and the voluntaristic, has some merit. Each of them singles out an element which is of real importance in the understanding of nationalism. But neither is adequate. Definitions of culture, presupposed by the first definition, in the anthropological rather than the normative sense, are notoriously difficult and unsatisfactory. It is probably best to approach this problem by using this term without attempting too much in the way of formal definition, and looking at what culture does.

Ernest Gellner. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 6.

## Benedict Anderson

### The Nation as Imagined Community (1991)

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In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Renan referred to this imagining in his suavely back-handed way when he wrote that ‘Or l’essence d’une nation est que tons les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses.’ With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a comparable point when he rules that ‘Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.’ The drawback to this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity’, rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’. In this way he implies that ‘true’ communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. Javanese villagers have always known that they are connected to people they have never seen, but these ties were once imagined particularistically – as indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship and clientship. Until quite recently, the Javanese language had no word meaning the abstraction ‘society.’ We may today think of the French aristocracy of the ancien régime as a class; but surely it was imagined this way only very late. To the question ‘Who is the ‘Comte de X?’ the normal answer would have been, not ‘a member of the aristocracy,’ but ‘the lord of X, ‘the uncle of the Baronne de Y,’ or ‘a client of the Duc de Z.’

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet.

It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith’s ontological claims and

territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.

Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the cultural roots of nationalism.

Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 5-7.

## **Miroslav Hroch** **Defining "Nation" (1996)**

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Now the 'nation' is not, of course, an eternal category, but was the product of a long and complicated process of historical development in Europe. For our purposes, let us define it at the outset as a large social group integrated not by one but by a combination of several kinds of objective relationships (economic, political, linguistic, cultural, religious, geographical, historical), and their subjective reflection in collective consciousness. Many of these ties could be mutually substitutable – some playing a particularly important role in one nation-building process, and no more than a subsidiary part in others. But among them, three stand out as irreplaceable: (1) a 'memory' of some common past, treated as a 'destiny' of the group – or at least of its core constituents; (2) a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it; (3) a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.

Miroslav Hroch. "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe." In *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan, pp. 78-97. New York: Verso, 1996.

## Ernest Gellner Ruritania (1983)

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A characteristic scenario of the evolution of a nationalism [ ... ] ran something like this. The Ruritanian were a peasant population speaking a group of related and more or less mutually intelligible dialects, and inhabiting a series of discontinuous but not very much separated pockets within the lands of the Empire of Megalomania. The Ruritanian language, or rather the dialects which could be held to compose it, was not really spoken by anyone other than these peasants. The aristocracy and officialdom spoke the language of the Megalomanian court, which happened to belong to a language group different from the one of which the Ruritanian dialects were an offshoot.

Most, but not all, Ruritanian peasants belonged to a church whose liturgy was taken from another linguistic group again, and many of the priests, especially higher up in the hierarchy, spoke a language which was a modern vernacular version of the liturgical language of this creed, and which was also very far removed from Ruritanian. The petty traders of the small towns serving the Ruritanian countryside were drawn from a different ethnic group and religion still, and one heartily detested by the Ruritanian peasantry.

In the past the Ruritanian peasants had had many griefs, movingly and beautifully recorded in their lament-songs (painstakingly collected by village schoolmasters late in the nineteenth century, and made well known to the international musical public by the compositions of the great Ruritanian national composer L.). The pitiful oppression of the Ruritanian peasantry provoked, in the eighteenth century, the guerrilla resistance led by the famous Ruritanian social bandit K., whose deeds are said still to persist in the local folk memory, not to mention several novels and two films, one of them produced by the national artist Z., under highest auspices, soon after the promulgation of the Popular Socialist Republic of Ruritania.

Honesty compels one to admit that the social bandit was captured by his own compatriots, and that the tribunal which condemned him to a painful death had as its president another compatriot. Furthermore, shortly after Ruritania first attained independence, a circular passed between its Ministries of the Interior, justice and Education, considering whether it might not now be more politic to celebrate the village defence units which had opposed the social bandit and his gangs, rather than the said social bandit himself, in the interest of not encouraging opposition to the police.

A careful analysis of the folk songs so painstakingly collected in the nineteenth century, and now incorporated in the repertoire of the Ruritanian youth, camping and sports movement, does not disclose much evidence of any serious discontent on the part of the peasantry with their linguistic and cultural situation, however grieved they were by other, more earthy matters. On the contrary, such awareness as there is of linguistic pluralism within the lyrics of the songs is ironic, jocular and good-humoured, and consists in part of



bilingual puns, sometimes in questionable taste. It must also be admitted that one of the most moving of these songs—I often sang it by the camp fire at the holiday camp to which I was sent during the summer vacations—celebrates the fate of a shepherd boy, grazing three bullocks on the seigneurial clover (*sic*) near the woods, who was surprised by a group of social bandits, requiring him to surrender his overcoat. Combining reckless folly with lack of political awareness, the shepherd boy refused and was killed. I do not know whether this song has been suitably re-written since Ruritania went socialist. Anyway, to return to my main theme: though the songs do often contain complaints about the condition of the peasantry, they do not raise the issue of cultural nationalism.

That was yet to come, and presumably post-dates the composition of the said songs. In the nineteenth century a population explosion occurred at the same time as certain other areas of the Empire of Megalomania—but not Ruritania—rapidly industrialized. The Ruritanian peasants were drawn to seek work in the industrially more developed areas, and some secured it, on the dreadful terms prevailing at the time. As backward rustics speaking an obscure and seldom written or taught language, they had a particularly rough deal in the towns to whose slums they had moved. At the same time, some Ruritanian lads destined for the church, and educated in both the court and the liturgical languages, became influenced by the new liberal ideas in the course of their secondary schooling, and shifted to a secular training at the university, ending not as priests but as journalists, teachers and professors. They received encouragement from a few foreign, non-Ruritanian ethnographers, musicologists and historians who had come to explore Ruritania. The continuing labour migration, increasingly widespread elementary education and conscription provided these Ruritanian awakeners with a growing audience.

Of course, it was perfectly possible for the Ruritanians, if they wished to do so (and many did), to assimilate into the dominant language of Megalomania. No genetically transmitted trait, no deep religious custom, differentiated an educated Ruritanian from a similar Megalomanian. In fact, many did assimilate, often without bothering to change their names, and the telephone directory of the old capital of Megalomania (now the Federal Republic of Megalomania) is quite full of Ruritanian names, though often rather comically spelt in the Megalomanian manner, and adapted to Megalomanian phonetic expectations. The point is that after a rather harsh and painful start in the first generation, the life chances of the offspring of the Ruritanian labour migrant were not unduly bad, and probably at least as good (given his willingness to work hard) as those of his non-Ruritanian Megalomanian fellow-citizens. So these offspring shared in the eventual growing prosperity and general embourgeoisement of the region. Hence, as far as individual life chances went, there was perhaps no need for a virulent Ruritanian nationalism.

Nonetheless something of the kind did occur. It would, I think, be quite wrong to attribute conscious calculation to the participants in the movement. Subjectively, one must suppose that they had the motives and feelings which are so vigorously expressed in the literature of the national revival. They deplored the squalor and neglect of their home valleys, while yet also seeing the rustic virtues still to be found in them; they deplored the discrimination to which their co-nationals were subject, and the alienation from their native culture to which they were doomed in the proletarian suburbs of the industrial towns. They preached

against these ills, and had the hearing of at least many of their fellows. The manner in which, when the international political situation came to favour it, Ruritania eventually attained independence, is now part of the historical record and need not be repeated here.

There is, one must repeat, no need to assume any conscious long-term calculation of interest on anyone's part. The nationalist intellectuals were full of warm and generous ardour on behalf of the co-nationals. When they donned folk costume and trekked over the hills, composing poems in the forest clearings, they did not also dream of one day becoming powerful bureaucrats, ambassadors and ministers. Likewise, the peasants and workers whom they succeeded in reaching felt resentment at their condition, but had no reveries about plans of industrial development which one day would bring a steel mill (quite useless, as it then fumed out) to the very heart of the Ruritanian valleys, thus totally ruining quite a sizeable area of surrounding arable land and pasture. It would be genuinely wrong to try to reduce these sentiments to calculations of material advantage or of social mobility. The present theory is sometimes travestied as a reduction of national sentiment to calculation of prospects of social promotion. But this is a misrepresentation. In the old days it made no sense to ask whether the peasants loved their own culture: they took it for granted, like the air they breathed, and were not conscious of either. But when labour migration and bureaucratic employment became prominent features within their social horizon, they soon learned the difference between dealing with a co-national, one understanding and sympathizing with their culture, and someone hostile to it. This very concrete experience taught them to be aware of their culture, and to love it (or, indeed, to wish to be rid of it) without any conscious calculation of advantages and prospects of social mobility. In stable self-contained communities culture is often quite invisible, but when mobility and context-free communication come to be of the essence of social life, the culture in which one has been taught to communicate becomes the core of one's identity.

So had there been such calculation (which there was not) it would, in quite a number of cases (though by no means in all), have been a very sound one. In fact, given the at least relative paucity of Ruritanian intellectuals, those Ruritians who did have higher qualifications secured much better posts in independent Ruritania than most of them could even have hoped for in Greater Megalomania, where they had to compete with scholastically more developed ethnic groups. As for the peasants and workers, they did not benefit immediately; but the drawing of a political boundary around the newly defined ethnic Ruritania did mean the eventual fostering and protection of industries in the area, and in the end drastically diminished the need for labour migration from it.

What all this amounts to is this: during the early period of industrialization, entrants into the new order who are drawn from cultural and linguistic groups that are distant from those of the more advanced centre, suffer considerable disadvantages which are even greater than those of other economically weak new proletarians who have the advantage of sharing the culture of the political and economic rulers. But the cultural / linguistic distance and capacity to differentiate themselves from others, which is such a handicap for individuals, can be and often is eventually a positive advantage for entire collectivities, or potential collectivities, of these victims of the newly emergent world. It enables them to conceive and express their resentments and discontents in intelligible terms. Ruritians

had previously thought and felt in terms of family unit and village, at most in terms of a valley, and perhaps on occasion in terms of religion. But now, swept into the melting pot of an early industrial development, they had no valley and no village: and sometimes no family. But there were other impoverished and exploited individuals, and a lot of them spoke dialects recognizably similar, while most of the better-off spoke something quite alien; and so the new concept of the Ruritanian, nation was born of this contrast, with some encouragement from those journalists and teachers. And it was not an illusion: the attainment of some of the objects of the nascent Ruritanian national movement did indeed bring relief of the ills which had helped to engender it. The relief would perhaps have come any way; but in this national form, it also brought forth a new high culture and its guardian state.

Ernest Gellner. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983, pp. 58-62.

## Eric Hobsbawm Nations and Nationalism since 1780 (1990)

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Finally, I cannot but add that no serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist, except in the sense in which believers in the literal truth of the Scriptures, while unable to make contributions to evolutionary theory, are not precluded from making contributions to archaeology and Semitic philology. Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so. As Renan said: **'Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation.'** Historians are professionally obliged not to get it wrong, or at least to make an effort not to. To be Irish and proudly attached to Ireland – even to be proudly Catholic-Irish or Ulster Protestant Irish – is not in itself incompatible with the serious study of Irish history. To be a Fenian or an Orangeman, I would judge, is not so compatible, any more than being a Zionist is compatible with writing a genuinely serious history of the Jews; unless the historian leaves his or her convictions behind when entering the library or the study. Some nationalist historians have been unable to do so.

Eric J. Hobsbawm. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp.12-13.

### Essay Topic

The posters below present two contrasting visions of nationalism. Relying on our class discussions of what it means to be an American, compare and analyze critically both of them in a 3-page essay.

Hint: Note the quotation marks in the second picture.



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