

**LOST IN TRANSITION: ETHNOGRAPHIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE
AFTER COMMUNISM**

SUGGESTED READING AND ACTIVITIES GUIDE

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The following teaching guide was prepared for an anthropology seminar on “Globalization and Social Change,” which was taught at Luther College in the spring semester of 2014. The activities and exercises are arranged to coincide with the chapters in the book, but can be used in a different order depending on the instructor’s needs.

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PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

Before the students start reading the book, it is a good idea to give the students some questions to help them think about the context within which the book was written.

PRE-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (to be sent or posted electronically)

Why did Kristen Ghodsee write this book? Examine the author's webpage and the book trailer in preparation for class discussion:

Ghodsee Webpage: <http://scholar.harvard.edu/kristenghodsee/home>

Lost in Transition Book Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF5r1ttB6Kg>

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to know what has been lost in transition?
2. In the Introduction, the author explains her notions of the socialist bloc prior to visiting the region:

“The only thing I could imagine was some kind of Orwellian dystopia with no colors and people all dressed in exactly the same clothes. Would it look like one big jail? Or perhaps one big work camp?” (p. 10)

- How do you imagine life in the Eastern Bloc?
- How do you imagine life in the Soviet Union?
- What might have contributed to shaping your ideas?

STUDENT EXERCISES

Three generations exercise

(*Adapted from Kaifa Roland. *Cuban Color in Tourism and La Lucha*. Oxford University Press, 2011: 108)

Invite three individuals of different generations to interview (phone or Skype interviews are OK). There should be one interviewee from each generation (i.e. college age, the age of your parents, and the age of your grandparents). Ask each interviewee about their perceptions of the Eastern Bloc, the Soviet Union, and communist Bulgaria. Ask them to reflect on the

source of their perceptions (news, personal experience, education, hearsay, etc.)? Write a brief reflection and be prepared to discuss in class.

“Donuts” exercise

(*Adapted from Darryl Macer. Moral Games for Teaching Bioethics,” a publication of the The UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, 2008. Available online at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001627/162737e.pdf>)

This exercise allows students to share their insights from “Three generations exercise” with each other before beginning the class discussion.

Arrange the students into two circles: an inner circle and an outer circle so that the students are standing in pairs facing each other. The two students facing each other will share some highlights of their interviews for two minutes each. After four minutes the inside circle will shift clockwise by two students so that new pairs are made. Repeat the sharing activity for four minutes. Rotate clockwise one more time. After this 3rd time, the students return to their seats. The instructor leads a general class discussion about how their opinions were changed or enriched by hearing their classmates’ views.

CHAPTER 1 - CONTRABAND, 1990

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think socialist governments often chose to restrict the freedom of movement of their citizens?
2. What did the young men on the train think about the U.S., and why? If you were travelling on the train in Eastern Europe and someone asked you “What is it like in the US?” how would you answer? Prepare a 1 minute “elevator” speech. Is this difficult or easy? Why or why not?
3. What did Goran, Sasha, Pavle, Nikola and Miloje smuggle and why?

STUDENT EXERCISES

Brainstorm in pairs exercise

(adapted from:

http://www.indiana.edu/~west/documents/Curriculum/Culture/Goodbye_Lenin/GoodbyeLeninLessonPlan.pdf):

Allow student to choose a partner and have the students brainstorm together for five to ten minutes about the following questions:

- What 4-5 products would you have a hard time living without?
- What items do you use the most?
- What if these items became unavailable overnight?
- What changes in your life would occur?
- What does this tell you about the habits/hobbies/activities that are most crucial to making you who you are?

Visa exercise

This exercise can be done in the classroom if students have access to the Internet. Otherwise it can be assigned as an assignment to be done outside of class with students presenting their findings to the class at a later point.

Have you always been able to travel abroad feely? Are you familiar with travel document requirements for the foreigners entering the United States? On p. 29, the author describes visa procedures in the socialist bloc. Select 3 countries of your choice (challenge yourself and select different regions) and research the US visa requirements for citizens of these states. To do so, visit the American Consulate webpages of the respective countries and the US Department of State webpage (<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html>).

Reflect upon the freedom of movement that people of various nations can or cannot enjoy.

CHAPTER 2 - KALOYAN AND HRISTO, 1998

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On p. 39, the author is describing her conversation with Hristo, Kaloyan, and Kaloyan's wife.

Hristo says: "We kept reelecting socialists. We had free elections, but the Americans didn't like the outcome. It was messing up their nice little story about the 'velvet revolution.' That the people really wanted free markets and foreign investment."

The author is surprised: "Didn't they?" triggering laughter from her friends.

- Why did Hristo, Kaloyan and his wife laugh?
2. Throughout the book, the author chooses to share some personal stories.
- Why do you believe she decided to do so methodologically?
 - What does it add to the book?
 - What does it take away?
 - What makes a work "scholarly"?
 - Is this a scholarly work?

3. On p. 41, Hristo tells Kristen:

"Look, Kristen, it's not your fault. You're just American. You don't understand anything."

Reflect on this sentence.

- Why would Hristo say this?
- What would be your reaction if you were sitting in the café instead of the author?
- What issues of representation do you feel are obvious here?
- Who can represent the voice of their interviewees?
- How should we go about it?

STUDENT EXERCISES

“Vulnerable observer” exercise

Students should read an excerpt from Ruth Behar’s 1997 book, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart* (Beacon Press), pages 18-25 before class. In class ask the students to discuss the main premise of the Behar abstract. How does Behar’s work relate to Ghodsee’s style choice for *Lost in Transition*?

Once the students have discussed the Behar abstract return to question 2 above, asking the student if their answers have changed.

CHAPTER 3 - HER LOVER IN CUBA, 1999

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Despite the privileges of having graduated from a prestigious university program and receiving multiple job promotions at the Golden Sands resorts, why did Damiana claim that communism ruin her life?
2. This chapter introduces some information about the education system in the socialist block (p. 49).
 - What do we learn about it?
 - How is it different from what you have encountered at home?
 - What are advantages and disadvantages of this system?
3. Despite the claims of gender equality in socialist space, what essentialist notions of gender were discussed in the book so far? How is it similar or different from gender roles at home?

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Research exercise (student should complete this assignment outside of class)

Ask students to watch the “Protecting Women as Workers and Mothers: Socialist Women’s Internationalism in Africa during the Cold War,” interview with ILO TV, December 9, 2012 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD6ELHYceqM&sns=em>

Then ask student to use their library journal database to locate this article by Kristen Ghodsee: “Revisiting the International Decade for Women: Brief Reflections on Competing Definitions of Feminism and Cold War Politics from the American Perspective,” *Women’s Studies International Forum*. 33(1) 2010: 3-12.

Students will use the information from these two sources to write a brief paper answering the following questions:

- Are “women’s issues” universal? Why or why not?
- How are “peace” and “equality” perspectives different, and why?
- What is the value of each perspective?
- What are the critiques?
- What is the historic context of each perspective and how has it changed since the end of the Cold War?

- What would you like to discuss with women from around the world at an international conference such as the one described by Ghodsee in the article above?

These papers can be discussed in class or just turned in for assessment to the instructor.

CHAPTER 4 – HAIR

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How has life changed for Yordanka's family after the fall of communism? Find specific examples in the text. Why did it change?
2. When Yordanka received a 50 leva bill for the sandals that were discounted to 35 leva, should have she kept the difference given her working environment? Why or why not?
3. Should have she followed the advice of her roommate Nelly and taken the 550 leva that the storeowner owed her before she was fired? What would you do?

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Research exercise (student should complete this assignment outside of class)

As students to use their library journal database to locate this article: Farmer, P., Nizeye, B., Stulac, S. "Structural violence and clinical medicine." *PLOS Medicine*, 3(10), 2006, pages 1686-1691.

Ask the students to write a short paper answering the following questions:

- What is structural violence?
- How is it present in the "Hair"?
- Given Yordanka's story, did her family experience much structural violence before the end of the Cold War?
- Why did it change?
- Can you identify examples of structural violence at home?

CHAPTER 5 - SHOPAHOLIC IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1998-2006

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the storekeeper refuse to sell all 8 boxes of the herbal tea to the author?
2. Why did Hristo call the shopkeeper a “red grandmother”? What does it mean?
3. How does the availability of the consumer goods work in the socialist system?
4. Why would the Central Planning Committee end up ordering 1,000 bottles of French perfume despite their plan to domestically produce 57,000 bottles?
5. Why did the author feel revulsion in the Mall of Sofia when she saw 2 girls spend 300 leva on cosmetics?
6. Why did the Calvin Klein Eternity perfume “has never quite smelled right?”

Before asking the final two questions, play this five-minute interview to the class:

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)/PRI/WGBH “The Fall of Communism in Bulgaria,” Kristen Ghodsee with Lisa Mullins on the radio show *The World*, broadcast December 28, 2011 to help you answer this question: <http://www.pri.org/stories/2011-12-26/fall-communism-bulgaria>

7. Why would Bulgarians who lived before the transition feel that the new capitalist system of consumption is immoral?
8. While many new consumer goods became readily available, were Bulgarians integrated into the new market system easily?

CHAPTER 6 - NEW CARPETS FOR OLD KILIMS, 1999

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why didn't the Bulgarians involved in the "new carpets for old kilims" operation just offer money to the peasants instead of offering to trade them for new colorful Chinese-manufactured carpets?
2. Who deserves to reap the most profit in various business transactions? Should it be any different in a transitional society? If so, who should be overseeing the process?
3. What if the peasants were indeed genuinely interested in the trade, as Dimitar has suggested on p. 96?
4. What would be the ideal exchange situation, in your opinion?
5. On p. 97, the author suggested that if the transaction were overseen by a fair council, the difference between the buying and selling price could go to the state budget and be invested in education and health care for the same peasants who gave up their kilims. What do you think about these suggestions?
6. Dimitar pointed out that "the world does not work that way" in response to the author's comment "I think the peasants should be paid what they are worth" on p.100. Dimitar also explained how trade was essential for the new wealth creation (p. 99). What would you say if you were sitting at the same café as the author and Dimitar?
7. The author suggested that the role of the government should be policy-making that would guarantee the fair rules of the game for all, including making sure that the powerful do not enrich themselves at the expense of the most marginalized and powerless (p. 100). What role should the state play? When should it stay away? Why?

STUDENT EXERCISES

Playing Monopoly Exercise

This exercise is likely to require at least 1 hour of class time, and is recommended after Ch. 6 or as a concluding activity when the book is finished.

(*Abridged from Pete Brown. "Economic Monopoly." in *Strategies in Teaching Anthropology*, 6/E. Patricia C. Rice, David W. McCurdy, Scott Lukas Eds. Pearson, 2010. pages. 82-86.)

Students often think the economy is something unique unto itself, driven by an "invisible hand," and separate from the rules and norms that govern other aspects of culture. This exercise forces students to confront the limited applicability of this way of thinking and to see economic activity as a dynamic interaction among individuals and a "cultural hand." By using a regular Monopoly game, it takes what students believe they know and puts it to use in promoting a more critical perspective and causing them to question basic assumptions about the economy.

The exercise has two stages. In stage 1, get the Capitalist and Collective economies started on different tables (you will need to divide the class into groups, based on the class size) and let the students play for about thirty minutes. In stage two, "globalization," all the rules change and students can interact with other game boards (see below).

Stage 1:

The Capitalist Economy: This is the standard game of monopoly. Tell the students using this economy to follow the written rules and begin. This board will develop slowly at first then more rapidly as resources accumulate. Usually this board demonstrates considerable wealth along with strongly developing inequalities. Some gain while others lose. The **point for discussion** is that the rules of this board provide considerable wealth, but channel it away from some players toward others depending on luck, skill, etc. Ask the players of this board why person X is poor while person Y is wealthy.

The Collective: This version of the Monopoly game is based on a communist ideal. Most wealth and resources are not individually owned, but rather controlled by the collective. The game begins shortly after the "revolution."

Rules: To begin, collective members receive \$300 individually and an additional \$200 goes into the collective from their efforts. This represents the initial expropriation. The collective's money can be placed in the middle of the board (like free parking money) or you can provide a separate bowl. Members receive fifty dollars each time they pass GO. Properties, upgrades (e.g., houses), and all other costs and benefits (e.g., rent, luxury tax, etc.) are one-half normal value. Properties can be purchased when any member lands on an unowned property. The property then becomes part of the collective, and subject to collective management. Note: this means an actual "monopoly" can be achieved when the collective controls the relevant properties. Rent is paid when a player lands on a property. One-half the sum

is lost to upkeep (goes into the bank) and one-half goes into the collective's operating funds.

Variants: benefits from Chance or Community Chest can go to the collective or you can sow some discord by allowing individuals to retain the money. "Go to jail" is renamed "go to the gulag"; the player loses one-half of his or her personal wealth (it goes into the collective) and remains at the gulag for three turns. During this time they also lose any voice in the collective. The rules of the collective encourage students to develop their board (otherwise the money just sits there), but you may need to encourage this ideology. Tell them that they are living validation of the revolution.

This board will usually develop faster than the capitalist board. The **point for discussion** is that the rules of collective ownership, the pooling of resources, even if they are fewer individually, leads to more resources for more development. It also forces students to confront the values governing their economic decisions. And it raises the issue of the persuasiveness of individual collective members. Ask students how they were able to build so quickly.

Stage 2:

Globalization: We live in a global world. What happens in one part of the world affects others. People and capital migrate for a variety of reasons and purposes. To bring this point home, after about 30 minutes you should announce worldwide improvements in telecommunications and transport, i.e. the infrastructure of globalization is now in place.

Globalization means players can view other boards (walk around when it is not their turn). Players can even travel to other places. The cost of such a trip is \$500 (roundtrip) and can be done at the time a player passes GO. This means they take their token and place it on another board. They have access to all their money. They then participate in that game to the extent allowed by the players and rules of that board. Allow some flexibility but in general the collective can block or restrict actions of visitors in any manner they choose.

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Initiate a classroom discussion after the game is played.

One option for discussion is to have students from each board, prior to globalization, offer brief summaries of their economic development. Ask students to talk about their experiences of the game, utilizing a comparative perspective. Point out the dramatic differences in economic options and incentives. Emphasize that these differences are not the result of

“human nature” or a universal economy, but the result of rules governing economic behavior.

Another option for discussion is to focus on globalization, and how it affected the development of their board. How did globalization affect options and incentives? From the students’ (albeit artificial) experience of Monopoly, what fosters Westernization and what fosters resistance?

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Research exercise (student should complete this assignment outside of class)

Moral Capitalism Exercise

Give students the following prompt: Have you encountered or heard of a business practice in the capitalist open market system where nobody is taken advantage of?

Ask students to search the recent news for an example to share in class. They should feel free to find short video clips to share with their classmates.

CHAPTER 7 - COMRADES, 2000

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The author stated that some of her favorite questions to ask during interviews were “what was your first memory of the end of communism?” and “when was the first moment you realized that it was really over?” Can you answer either of the questions? Why or why not?
2. Was there a definitive moment in your life or the life of your country that makes you think in terms of “before” and “after”? What was it?
3. If someone were to ask you “what is your first memory of capitalism,” would you be able to answer? Why or why not? How can it help us understand Ani’s story?
4. What did Ani feel was “lost in transition”? How can it help us understand the apparent contradiction between the persecutions of the Bulgarian Turks under socialism and Ani’s memories?
5. What aspects of the Muslim beliefs of the Bulgarian Turks were banned and why? How is this process similar/different from the current ban on veiling in many European nations? What rhetoric is used? (Refer to p.103)

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Research exercise (student should complete this assignment outside of class)

Ask the students to listen to Kristen Ghodsee’s podcast “Headscarves as Politics: Gender, Islam and Shifting Discourses of Social Justice in the Balkans,” a public lecture at Indiana University (2009) at <http://podcast.iu.edu/Portal/PodcastPage.aspx?podid=1c943e21-c676-425e-9333-bb42cea57358>

Using the insights from the podcast, ask student to write a short paper answering these questions.

1. What did Ani feel was “lost in transition”? How can it help us understand the apparent contradiction between the persecutions of the Bulgarian Turks under socialism and Ani’s memories?
2. What aspects of the Muslim beliefs of the Bulgarian Turks were banned and why? How is this process similar/different from the current ban on veiling in many European nations?

CHAPTER 8 - PETAR HAILS A CAB

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel that Petar was successful in his life during his time in Silicon Valley? What is success? What are your personal goals? How might these goals be different if you were born in socialist Bulgaria, like Petar? Is there just one vision of success in a globalized world?
2. Why did Petar decide to return to Bulgaria?
3. Why did Petar's friends call him an idiot for coming back?
4. What struggles did various international companies face in Bulgaria? Why?
5. Why did Petar have reservations about moving to London and what episode helped him make his decision?
6. What rights and responsibilities does a citizen of a particular country have for ensuring its continuing growth and wellbeing?
7. Is brain drain an issue that should require international regulation or would it be an infringement on individual human rights?

CHAPTER 9 - BASSETT HOUNDS IN THE BALKANS, 2005

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was always the most difficult part of the move between Maine and Bulgaria for the author? Why and what does this demonstrate about Bulgarian life?
2. What do you think about the way in which the author handled the situation when the dogs were threatened? What would you do?
3. What questions did the author have to answer? What did it help her realize?
4. How did it feel to become a subject instead of a researcher? Think back to our discussion of Ruth Behar's "Vulnerable Observer" to help you answer this question.

CHAPTER 10 - THE MASTER OF CONSPIRACIES, 2005

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why were conspiracy theories so abundant in Bulgaria in the 1990s and early 2000s? What was the most popular plot?
2. Is there anything to Kaloyan's conspiracy theories? Which parts of Kaloyan's stories seem more plausible than others? Why?
3. Why does Kaloyan say "there are no conspiracy theories in Bulgaria" after having just told one?
4. How is his attitude similar or different from Hristo's reaction to the explosions described in Chapter 11?

STUDENT EXERCISES

Urban legend exercise

Have the students find an urban legend or a conspiracy theory that they have recently heard at home. If they are unsure, have them visit the Snopes website (<http://www.snopes.com/>), and select one for class discussion. They can also ask a friend outside of class to share one.

The students should print out a brief version of the legend (feeling free to use a creative format, e.g. comic strip, poem, etc.) and bring it to class. In class, the students post their stories on a classroom blackboard, whiteboard, or wall. The students then circulate around the classroom reading each other's material.

After the students have had a chance to read all of the urban legends and conspiracy theories, have a classroom discussion using the following questions:

- How are the stories different or similar?
- How are they different or similar from the stories shared by Kaloyan?
- Why do you think people feel compelled to circulate such folklore genre?
- What factors may create a favorable environment for their proliferation?
- Is it important whether or not the stories are actually true? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 11. AN EXPLOSION IN SOFIA, 2008

1. How was the reaction to the blasts in Sofia different between the author and Hristo? Why?
2. What were the explanations that followed the blast? How do they, together with the way in which the blasts were handled, help you understand Kaloyan's perspective from Chapter 10?
3. What was the worst collateral damage of transition, in Hristo's case, according to the author?

STUDENT EXERCISES

List Exercise

Have the students form pairs, and compile a list of things lost in transition from the eleven chapters that they have read so far. Then have the students volunteer things from their lists to the whole class, and make a list on the board.

CHAPTER 12 - COFFEE

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For the first 12 minutes of class, have the students listen to Kristen Ghodsee read Chapter 12 at: <https://soundcloud.com/theworld/kristen-ghodsee-lost-in-transition>

1. What had bridged the differences between the main character of “Coffee” and his future wife?
2. How does this portrait of a man help you understand the human face of socialist revolutions around the world?
3. On p. 146, the wife lists the lost opportunities that her husband refused to pursue even though his colleagues and the new government were taking advantage of him. What do you think about his decisions? Are they ethical or not? Is there one measurement of ethics and morality, or are there multiple versions?
4. How do you think this man and woman would react to blasts in Sofia?
5. How are their notions of success similar or different from Petar’s (Chapter 8) and from your own?

CHAPTER 13 - KALOYAN IN MAINE, 2009

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would Kaloyan bring back from communism if he could? Why?
2. What did he want the classroom of Americans to know about the life in a socialist Bulgaria?
3. Revisit your “three generations” exercise and discussion notes from Foreword and Introduction. Is your interviewees’ and your own image of socialism the same as Kaloyan’s and other characters’ of the book?
4. How has the mental picture of socialism changed for you after reading this book?
5. In the end of the last chapter, Kaloyan says: “I’ve had enough change for one lifetime.” Discuss the changes that he is referring to. What has been the most significant change in your life so far? How is it similar or different from Kaloyan?

STUDENT EXERCISES

On page 153, Kaloyan shares the last conspiracy theory. Locate it and read it out loud to the class.

Initiate a classroom discussion about what Kaloyan is trying to tell us.

CHAPTER 14 - TITO TRIVIA

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would an objective observer evaluate to be Rada's most significant losses in transition?
2. How was Rada's sense of loss similar or different? What did she feel she lost? Why?
3. How does Rada's story help you understand the human face of social changes in Eastern Europe?
4. At this point in the book, do you feel like you have walked "a hundred or so pages in someone else's postcommunist shoes?" (p. xiv)

CHAPTER 15 - PILGRIMS FROM SOFIA TO ZAGREB, 2009

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do the stories of Misho, Anastasia and Elena encapsulate the main message of the book? What is the main message of “Lost in Transition?”
2. On p. 174, Anastasia says:

“I wonder if I would have been a happier woman under communism, even if I did have fewer choices. Maybe too many choices makes us unhappy. I certainly would have worried less about whether I was making the right ones.”

What would you tell Anastasia if you could pick up a phone and give her a call? What would you like to ask to understand why she feels this way? Do you agree or disagree with Anastasia? Did her friends agree with her, from what you can tell from Chapter 15?

STUDENT EXERCISES

Hot seat exercise

Each student will draw pieces of paper that will indicate their role in this exercise: audience, one of three people who will be in a “hot seat,” a note-taker, and a facilitator.

Students who drew “hot seat” cards make themselves comfortable in seats at the front of the room. They take position of the characters associated with the book: the author (Kristen Ghodsee), Misho, and Anastasia.

The audience takes a minute to compose at least 2 questions each and write them down. Facilitator begins the interview. The audience takes turns to ask questions addressing the person. The person in the hot seat answers the questions based on their judgment of the character.

AFTERWORD: LOST IN TRANSITION, 2010

IN CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask the students to take a minute to think about and discuss the statistics on page 177-178.

11% Bulgarians claimed that ordinary people were better off by a “great deal” or a “fair amount” since 1989;
52% Bulgarians approved of the change to democracy compared to 76% in 1991
62% Bulgarians reported being economically worse off today than under socialism; only 13% felt better off
76% Bulgarians were unsatisfied with how democracy was working

1. Why do many people find these statistics surprising?
2. Why are the stories of ordinary people seldom told? What is the value of the ordinary stories?
3. How do you make sense of disenchantment with the changes that people in Bulgaria have experienced?

STUDENT EXERCISES

Moral continuum exercise

(*Adapted from Darryl Macer. Moral Games for Teaching Bioethics,” a publication of the The UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, 2008. Available online at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001627/162737e.pdf>)

Students take a position (agree or disagree) on a statement that the instructor makes. Students stand in a U-shape line to form a continuum based on their view between two extremes along the continuum. After the first several students express their opinion, other students move to the appropriate point in the continuum so that they are more positive or negative than their immediate neighbors to the side. After each student gets a chance to take their place in the continuum, they are allowed to change their position based on the opinions expressed by their classmates.

The instructor reads the statement: *Do you agree or disagree with the popular joke on page 185: “Everything that Communists told us about communism was wrong, but everything they told us about capitalism was right.”*

After the students have placed themselves on the continuum, have students consider what they have learned from the socialist experiment in Bulgaria.

Quote exercise

Have students take a minute to select their favorite quote from the book.

Ask them, “What is so compelling to you about this quote?”

Instructor starts with a quote to lead off the discussion. For example, instructor can select this quote as one that captures the nature of “transition” for Eastern Europeans:

“Many Bulgarians I met believed that ‘democracy’ meant that they would have the consumer goods of capitalism combined with the social safety nets of socialism. Instead, many of them got neither. They lost their jobs while gaining the right to vote” (p. 187)

“What has been lost” exercise:

Have students look through their notes and exercises from reading “Lost in Transition.” After all of the class’s discussions, ask student to reflect once more on what has been lost. Update the class’s list on the board.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Human Development Report exercise:

Have students study the document “Human Poverty in Transition Economies: Regional Overview for HDR 1997” by Ewa Ruminska-Zimny available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/ewa_ruminska.pdf

And

Press release: “Mass privatisation in the post-communist world may have cost up to one million lives” available online at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_releases_for_journalists/090115.html

The class will be randomly split into 2 teams: Team 1 researching poverty indicators and Team 2 researching health indicators. The students work with the report as well as other sources of their choice on poverty/health issues in Eastern Europe to compose a 1-page written statement on the human costs of “transition” in Bulgaria, and the region more broadly.

Select a speaker or two speakers from each team to read their 1-page reports to the rest of the class.

FILM PROJECT: "GOODBYE, LENIN!" (2003)

(This exercise is taken from *Film Education NSW Resources 03. Goodbye Lenin.* <http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/GoodbyeL.pdf>)

Have the students watch "Goodbye, Lenin" prior to reading Chapter 1. (*Alternatively, the film could be shown during one of the final discussion days).

"'Goodbye, Lenin!' is set in East Germany around the time of the collapse of the Berlin Wall. It is a satire about one man's attempt to make history and time stand still, so he can protect his ill mother from the times political upheaval. It offers viewers with little or no knowledge of this political era an insight into how life was and how life changed so dramatically.

The dismantling of the famous divide in 1989 was as significant as its construction. The wave of change brought with it a new economic social and political landscape. East Berlin residents suddenly had rights, freedom of speech, the right to vote in a range of political parties in democratic elections and freedom of movement. They could join free trade unions and negotiate with their employers for better pay and working conditions. Their newspapers, radio and TV were free and no longer censored or controlled by the state for propaganda purposes. Secret police forces no longer existed and there were no more political prisoners. But such a dramatic transformation is not going to be without problems. Although the people of East Berlin were now 'free', this did not automatically mean that everyone was better off."

Discussion Questions.

(*Adapted from:

<http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/GoodbyeL.pdf>

http://www.indiana.edu/~west/documents/Curriculum/Culture/Goodbye_Lenin/GoodbyeL_eninLessonPlan.pdf

http://www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/FEAndVocational/CreativeandMedia/GCSE/GCSEFilmStudiesforWJEC/Resources/CaseStudies/Good_Bye_Lenin.pdf)

1. What differences does the film highlight about the life under a socialist and capitalist government?
2. Each system is challenged in a film. How so? For example, you can think about the ways in which the shops in the old East Berlin and the new united Berlin are shown. What is missing? What is present? How is it a critique of social order?
3. After the collapse of the Wall, what obvious signs of capitalism does the film show? List the things that Christiane would not have seen in the old East Berlin that surround her as she walks outside for the first time.

4. The statue that floats through the air is of Lenin. Why is it being taken away and how does Alex explain away what Christiane has seen?

5. As Christiane finds out more about the world she has woken up to, Alex is forced to resort to ever more complicated methods of covering up, or explaining away, what she has discovered. How does he do this? Why do you believe Wolfgang Becker (the film director) chooses this plot? What does it achieve? What parallels might it draw?

6. What are Alex's hopes for the future as a child? What are the differences between childhood dreams and adult reality for Alex?

7. The final scene shows Alex and his family launching their homemade rocket containing Christiane's ashes into "space." Why do you think he has chosen to open and close the film this way?

8. As Alex, Ariane and Christiane look at Berlin through their apartment window, Alex says, "The GDR I had created for her had increasingly become the one she had wished for." Alex and Christiane both have big hopes and dreams. Each of them believes that these can be achieved by creating a fictional world. What does each of them finally realize?

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Exercise at the DDR Virtual Museum

Have students visit DDR Museum online at <http://www.ddr-museum.de/en/exhibition>

Students will research 3 DDR-produced products of their choice (either from the film "Goodbye, Lenin!" or from the DDR Museum in Berlin).

Students write short papers answering the following questions.

- Are the products still available for purchase today? Why or why not?
- What is used instead?
- Why do you think was the DDR Museum created?