Europe Study Tour 22 June - 7 July 2014

Netherlands and Bosnia-Herzegovina

Politics, Culture and History at the Heart of the European Project

The European Union is many things, but above all was intended as the foundation for lasting peace in Europe. In this study tour you will learn about Europe from one of its key centres for the administration of justice, diplomacy and learning in The Hague (Netherlands). You will also see Europe quite differently from the crucial Balkan periphery in Sarajevo and Srebrenica (Bosnia-Herzegovina) which challenges, but remains integral to, the expanding European project.

This is a challenging course of study organized around intense experiences and expert instruction. Seemingly abstract concepts and institutions such as the European Union, NATO, peacekeeping missions, war crimes, genocide, international justice, peace, development and cooperation, will come to life as crucial if imperfect global instruments of great consequence.

In The Hague you will ‘couch surf’ at the homes of International Studies students from the University of Leiden and attend lectures and tours with Leiden European studies specialists. You will learn about the Netherlands, its particular history, multi-cultures and unique geography, and its place in contemporary Europe. You will also learn about the sensitivities around the Dutch connection with the 1995 events at Srebrenica and their aftermath.

We will then be in Sarajevo for the 100th anniversary of the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the immediate catalyst for the start of the First World War. We will examine how this apparent periphery of Europe could throw the whole continent into the major cataclysm of 1914-18, and consider what the consequences of the brutal Bosnian war of 1992-95 continue to mean for the European project. You will learn about the grueling three and a half year siege of Sarajevo, ‘the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare’, and see how ingeniously people survived it, witness first hand the consequences of genocide and ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Srebrenica, and meet survivors and affected families from the terrible events that occurred there in July 1995. We will learn about the post-war political dysfunction and corruption that led to civil unrest in early 2014 and what this might mean for the future of Bosnia.

Students will have the option to stay on after the end of the program for a challenging 3 day, 120km peace march retracing the steps of survivors who escaped Srebrenica, and after that to make their own way to Dubrovnik and the Dalmatian coast of Croatia, or other inspiring historic locations in the region.

This course will change your understanding of Europe forever.

Applications

Places are limited and will be decided by written application and brief interview. Applicants should submit a brief summary of their skills and experiences that make them well-suited to this course. In particular any personal connections to Bosnia, the former Yugoslav republics or the Netherlands, relevant language skills, group travel/adventure experience and an interest in post-conflict societies. I am also concerned that students have the personal stamina for a fairly busy schedule that at times deals with some tragic historical events, and the interpersonal skills and mutual tolerance to coexist with each other and 15 Dutch students for over 2 weeks.

>> Applications (max 300 words) due by email to Peter Phipps peter.phipps@rmit.edu.au by midday on Friday 14 March (in week 2 of semester), interviews on the morning of Monday 17 March. I am trying to finalise this asap so students can proceed with booking their flights as soon as possible.

www.rmit.edu.au
Program Details

>> Course coordinator: Dr Peter Phipps

>> 24 credit point course by enrolment in TWO second semester units:

HUSO2318 Contemporary Europe

HUSO2329 Globalising Societies

>> 15-20 students- may be selected by application/interview.

>> Up to 15 Leiden University students to join the tour to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Assessment

>> Participation, reflective journal, essay. Due semester 2, week 5.

Costs

>> Airfares: Melbourne-Amsterdam return. Book early (Southern China airlines can be very cheap). Amsterdam to Sarajevo flights.

>> RMIT materials fee: $720. Includes: food and lodging costs for hosts in Srebrenica and Klotjevac, guest lectures, staff airfare and expenses.

>> Personal expenses: food and drink is delicious and cheap in BiH. Netherlands food and drink prices are slightly more than in Australia. Train from airport to Amsterdam or The Hague, and within Bosnia is reasonably priced, cheap backpacker accommodation in Sarajevo.

Attendance

>> June 22, Melbourne briefing and collaborative workshop sessions (during semester 1)

>> July 7, (plan to stay on to 12th), follow-up, intensive reflective and assessment sessions in Melbourne semester 2, weeks 1 and 2. Skype participation negotiable for those o/s.

>> June- Own travel to Europe

>> June 22: welcome-orientation event in The Hague (please arrive de-jetlagged)

>> Monday-Thursday June 23-26: lectures, field visits about Europe, Netherlands, ICTY, ICJ, etc... (accommodation: couch surfing with students in International Studies at Uni of Leiden, meals self-organised with hosts).

>> A city under siege (Leiden,1573-1574) and tour of Lakenhal (Leiden)

>> Loyal or at Fault (Dutch historiography of a country under occupation) with film ‘Soldaat van Oranje’ (with subtitles)

>> International Court of Justice

>> International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

>> International Criminal Court

>> Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

>> Dutch Parliament

>> (Dutch) Scientific Council for Government Policy

>> June 27: RMIT and Leiden students fly to Sarajevo (accommodation at hostel near centre, meals self-organised)

>> June 28: Franz Ferdinand assassination 100th anniversary

>> June 29-30: lectures on Sarajevo, Bosnian history, explore Sarajevo

>> July 1: Srebrenica Summer University opening at Bosniak Institute, Sarajevo

>> July 2-7: Srebrenica Summer University and Klotjevac undergraduate annex (accommodation and meals provided)

>> July 7- evening: Official close of Study Tour Program

Students then have the (highly recommended) choice to:

participate in Srebrenica peace march (8-10 July) and commemoration/burial of victims of 1995 Srebrenica massacre (11 July)

and/or return to Sarajevo, take bus to Dubrovnik (6 hours) for own education/enjoyment, tour elsewhere in Europe, make own way home.