

Seminar's Title: *Moldova between East and West: Politics, Geopolitics, and Everyday Sentiments*

Instructor: Petru Negură, Dr.

2025/26 – Sommer Semester

Day: Tuesdays (start on 14.04.2026)

Time: 8:00 – 10:00

Max Number of Students: 15

Language: English

Type: Proseminar

ECTS: 6

Proseminar

This interdisciplinary seminar brings together historical, geopolitical, political, and societal perspectives to examine Moldova, a small country located at the crossroads of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Despite its size, Moldova's history encapsulates broader global dynamics shaped by imperial legacies, nation-building projects, and great-power geopolitics.

Over the past centuries, the region that constitutes present-day Moldova has existed largely on the margins of larger empires and nation-states, including the Ottoman, Russian, and Austrian Empires, as well as Romania and the Soviet Union. These layers of imperial and national rule have left enduring traces. Former peripheral positions, shifting sovereignties, and “phantom” borders continue to shape Moldova's contemporary politics, geopolitical orientations, and everyday practices, choices, and sentiments.

The seminar explores Moldova's history, politics, and society through a diverse range of sources, including press materials, archival documents, oral-history interviews, films, literary texts, and contemporary ethnographic studies. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between high-level political developments and everyday experiences, perceptions, and narratives.

The course serves as a foundational introduction for a planned field trip to Moldova in September 2026, but it is also designed as a standalone seminar. More broadly, it offers students an opportunity to explore regional and international politics from the perspective of a small Southeast European country and to reflect on how global processes are experienced, interpreted, and negotiated at the local level.

Participants will:

- gain a historically grounded understanding of Moldova's political, geopolitical, and societal development
- analyze Moldova's position between East and West from imperial, national, and post-Soviet perspectives
- explore how high-level politics and geopolitics intersect with everyday experiences, perceptions, and sentiments

- work with a diverse range of sources, including historical documents, media texts, oral-history interviews, films, and ethnographic studies
- develop critical reading, discussion, and presentation skills in an interdisciplinary setting
- strengthen their ability to contextualize local developments within broader regional and global processes

Student Contribution & Assessment

1. Individual Case-Study Presentation (20%)

Each student presents a short case study (10–12 minutes) related to the seminar themes (e.g. political actors, social groups, media debates, memory politics, everyday practices).

The presentation should:

- introduce the case and its context,
- apply key concepts discussed in the seminar,
- raise analytical questions for discussion.

2. Research Paper (60%)

A written paper (10–12 pages) based on the presentation topic.

The paper should:

- engage with relevant scholarly literature and course readings,
 - critically analyze the chosen case,
 - demonstrate conceptual clarity and structured argumentation.
- Original empirical research is not required, but analytical depth is expected.

3. Active Participation (20%)

Regular attendance and active participation are mandatory.

This includes:

- preparation of required readings,
- informed contributions to discussions,
- engagement in in-class exercises and group work.

Note on Use of AI Tools

The use of AI-based tools is permitted exclusively for language-related editing and revision (e.g. grammar, style, clarity). The generation of content, arguments, or analysis by AI tools is not permitted. Students must include a short statement on the use of AI tools in their paper. This regulation follows current institutional guidance and may be adjusted in accordance with official University of Regensburg policies.

Recommended Literature:

Cash, Jennifer R. 2013. "Performing Hospitality in Moldova: Ambiguous, Alternative, and Undeveloped Models of National Identity." *History and Anthropology* 24 (1): 56-77.

Haynes, Rebecca. 2020. *Moldova: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King, Charles. 2000. *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Hoover Institution Press.

Knott, Eleanor. 2022. *Kin Majorities. Identity and Citizenship in Crimea and Moldova*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Negură, Petru, and Lilian Negura. 2025. "Ambivalente Einstellungen: Moldovas Gesellschaft Und Russlands Krieg in Der Ukraine." *Osteuropa* 75 (5): 145–53. <https://doi.org/10.35998/oe-2025-047>.

Negură, Petru, and Svetlana Suveica. 2023. "Everyday Ethnicity and Popular Responses to Nation-Building Projects in Moldova After 1989." *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 71 (4): 465–87. <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2023-0047>.

Negură, Petru. 2021. "Moldova's Thirty-Year Search for Independence." *Current History* 120 (828): 268–73. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2021.120.828.268>.