The European Union Center Presents:

The European Union in the 21st Century: Policies and Approaches to Global Challenges

Jean Monnet Pre-Conference Panel

Friday April 13th, 3:00-4:40pm Levis Faculty Center, Music Room

1. Alexandra Lively (European Union Studies), “Constructing a Mediterranean Identity through Social Media: Women’s Empowerment"


3. Rumyana Hristova (Library and Information Sciences), “Theoretical Models in the Studies on the Bosnian Church”

Discussant: Kostas Kourtikakis, Research Assistant Professor of Political Science

Students presenting in the Jean Monnet Panel are enrolled in the course “Europe and the Mediterranean: Transnational Spaces and Integration.” This course presents Europe and the Mediterranean as interdependent, multicultural, and multinational spaces historically connected by cultural, economic, and migratory networks. It pays special attention to the role of the EU and its policies in the Mediterranean. The course is a Jean Monnet Module, funded by the European Union’s Lifelong Learning Programme and aims to stimulate teaching, research and reflection on European integration in higher education institutions worldwide.

Jean Monnet Pre-Conference Abstracts
(Listed Alphabetically by Presenter’s Last Name)

Hristo Alexiev, “Identity and State Building in Kosovo (1999-2012)"

The paper examines the process of state building in Kosovo and the formation of a new national identity in the period after the NATO intervention and the establishment of the UN Interim Administration (UNMIK) until the present. The paper takes into consideration the fact that the Republic of Kosovo is a new state and it is normal to assume that dynamic and significant developments can be expected at any moment. The paper argues that the building of a new Kosovar national identity is strongly influenced by the context of on-going state building efforts in which international actors have played a major and often times determining role. Perhaps the most serious challenge to building a multi-ethnic liberal democracy has been the danger of slipping into a majority-dominated ethnically excluding new state where the Kosovar Albanians dominate over other minority groups.
The topic is extremely important in several different respects: the US’ continuing involvement in Kosovo; the process of EU enlargement and its implications in terms of Balkan politics; the issue of stability in the Balkans in general and problematic spots in several regions of former Yugoslavia in particular (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo); the international community’s ability to intervene successfully and defend peace and human rights; modern state and identity building.

Rumyana Hristova, “Theoretical Models in the Studies on the Bosnian Church”

The origin, nature, and disappearance of the medieval Bosnian Church, as well as its significance for the Mediterranean region have been subject to intense scholarly debates. Currently there are two main views related to the nature of that Church. The first one maintains that this was a dualist and thus heretical church, which was considered to be part of the wider movement of the Bulgarian Bogomils and the French and Italian Cathars. This movement originated in Bulgaria in the tenth century and spread all over Europe, stirring reformative processes which culminated in the Reformation. Evidence about this view is found in papal and inquisitional documents. The second, very different view, which has been primarily upheld by Serbian and Croatian historians, asserts that the Bosnian Church, was “independent and schismatic but more or less orthodox in doctrine.” This view is also supported by some of the available sources, which poses a great challenge in establishing the precise nature of that Church. This paper examines critically these two theoretical models of the Bosnian Church. It also explores some aspects of the contested historical link between the followers of this historic Church and the present day Bosnian Muslims. More specifically, it examines the specific doctrine and religious practice of the members of this medieval Bosnian Church and the specific variant of Islam that has been traditionally practiced by some of the Bosnian Muslims in an attempt to improve our understanding of the nature of this connection.

Alexandra Lively, “Constructing a Mediterranean Identity through Social Media: Women’s Empowerment”

This paper argues that social media help women around the Mediterranean construct a new shared identity, and focuses on the role of the Women’s Empowerment movement in this process. Modern communication technology in the form of social media can transcend differences and barriers in constructing this new Mediterranean identity. Facebook and Twitter will be the primary social media analyzed. Even though different religious, political, ideological, and values persist, this new identity empowers women both in their own nation and at the regional level. Research on social media reveals the power they have to transcend gender, ethnicity, and social class. Social media are also breaking language barriers as Facebook has a “see translation” option below a post in a foreign language that your profile is not set to. Women’s Empowerment contributes to a recognized Mediterranean identity through the use of social media. This development is part of a more general trend, which is witnessed at the United Nations 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where women from all over the world came together and fought for their basic human rights and gender equality under one common identity.