

Michael L. Galaty, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Millsaps College
galatml@millsaps.edu
601-974-1387
Interdisciplinary Program in Albania
June 15-22, 2007
\$8500.00

1) Original Goals and Objectives

Our primary project goal was to spend one week in Albania in order to plan an interdisciplinary study abroad program to be held for the first time during the summer of 2008. Three professors (Bowley, Fiser, and Galaty) and one student (West) made the trip (see individual written testimonies, below Appendix One). We were accompanied by three college trustees and their wives, as well (testimonies below, Appendix One). Several Albanian colleagues also joined us at various times. Our itinerary was such that we explored the cities of Tirana, Kruja, and Shkodër, and the high mountains of the north. While in these places we met our secondary goals: to determine what a program in Albania would likely cost, what logistical challenges might exist, where to house and how to transport participants, and what kind of interdisciplinary curriculum we might create.

2) Changed Goals?

Our goals did not change.

3) Were Goals Met?

Our goals were certainly met. We have decided definitely to run an interdisciplinary study abroad program during the summer of 2008 (see syllabus, below Appendix Two). While in Albania we kept careful track of costs, for food, accommodation, fuel, etc., and have determined that we can run a two-week program at a relatively low price (under \$5000.00 per student), which includes plane ticket, faculty salary, room and board, and four course credits. We also now have an itinerary for the program, which will begin with a week of pre-departure classes at Millsaps. We believe even more firmly that a program built around nation- and identity-building will resonate with our students and with the Albanians who have agreed to help teach the class.

Our study program starts in Tirana, the capital of Albania, but we will only spend a few days there since it is a relatively expensive city. While in Tirana in 2007 we met with a dervish at the world headquarters of the Bektashi order, a Sufi Islamic sect. It was a wonderful meeting and he assured us that he would love to spend time with us and our students next year, teaching them about mystical Islam, as would the Grand Bektash, a living saint. While in Tirana we also visited the Etham Bey mosque and had a wonderful tour of the 17th-century building. We also toured the national historical museum, which is ripe for investigations relating to identity building. A whole new exhibit on the atrocities of the dictatorship is especially apropos. We also created – or built upon existing – relationships with Americans and Albanians in Tirana who work for various NGOs, USAID, and in the American Embassy, including a meeting with

Stephen Cristina, the deputy chief of mission. Meeting with these individuals will help students understand the difficulties still faced by Albania and Albanians.

After Tirana, we will take students to Shkodër, Albania's second largest city and the capital of the north. Our time there was very productive. Shkodër is and always has been a true melting pot of religions, boasting one of the largest mosques in the Balkans, alongside huge Catholic and Orthodox cathedrals. Students will have ample opportunity to discuss the coexistence of these three faiths with local people, as well as with imams, nuns, and priests. While in Shkodër in 2007 we toured the historical museum, with the museum's director, Zamir Tafilica, and Rozafa Castle, with Shkodër's chief archaeologist, Bashkim Lahi. Finally, we met with the prefect of the province (the equivalent of an American governor) and he assured us that he and his staff were eager to work with us and to meet with our students.

Given the relative ease of traveling to Montenegro from Albania, we also plan to spend the middle weekend of our program in the Montenegrin city of Ulcinj. There, Christian Montenegrins, who are Slavic, and Muslim Albanians live and work side by side. They are all bilingual and live in relative peace and growing prosperity, as a lucrative tourism industry takes hold. Montenegro will give students a feel for what life is like for Albanians who live just outside of Albania, in a truly multi-ethnic, post-Socialist state. This will mean more to them if we can convey just how badly things have gone for Albanians in Kosova and Macedonia, not to mention for Muslims generally in the former Yugoslavia.

The highlight of the study program will perhaps be the week or so we spend in the high mountains in the valley of Shala, one of the most remote regions in Europe. While in Shala in 2007 we toured the main village of Theth, met villagers (who, incidentally, are all proudly Catholic) and hiked along the river to various archaeological sites, waterfalls, and canyons. We visited the restored Late Medieval Catholic church and a tower of refuge, a *kulla*, where men in feud used to hide out. There is much that students could do in Shala to learn about Albanian identity. Because the villagers practice an extreme form of hospitality (they are honor-bound to invite foreign guests into their homes), students can practice simple forms of ethnography, getting to know people and interact with them. Children and teenagers are also a potential source of information regarding identity-building, since they typically speak English and are somewhat familiar with (via satellite television) American popular culture. (In fact, the Millsaps student who traveled with us, Chelsi West, has written and successfully defended an Honors Thesis on the impact of American hip hop culture on Albania.) While in Theth we plan to stay with local families (as opposed to staying at the lone hotel), which will expose students to day-to-day life in the mountains.

Finally, before departing Albania, we will spend a day in the town of Kruja, famous as the home of Albania's greatest hero, Skanderbeg, who fought off the Ottoman Turks for 25 years in the 15th century. Skanderbeg's castle is well preserved and is the site of the Skanderbeg Museum, a wonderful piece of Communist propaganda. Kruja also houses a fantastic ethnographic museum as well as a preserved Ottoman bazaar.

We should also mention that the three Millsaps trustees and wives who traveled with us were extremely excited about Albania and the program we plan. They have agreed to support us morally and financially and have been great assets as we seek to launch our new study abroad program.

4) Evaluation.

Our 2007 planning trip was evaluated by all who participated. The faculty and student who participated each wrote a short report. The trustees and their wives all completed a short survey. The information gathered in this fashion helped us to create a stronger interdisciplinary study abroad program.

5) Do Differently?

We do not believe there is anything we would do differently in terms of our planning trip. However, given what we learned during the trip, there are some things we know not to do when we bring students. For example, we now know to spend less time in Tirana, given the high cost of room and board.

6) Share With Colleagues.

We have not yet shared with ACS colleagues the results of our project, but we intend to recruit students from other ACS campuses in the future. We have described our plans to several colleagues at other universities (e.g., Colorado State University, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and they have expressed interest in possible future participation. We also hope that students who come to Albania will become interested in the country and will perhaps return to work on research papers and Honors Theses, as did West. The results of this research might then be presented at regional and national meetings.

7) Next Steps.

During the 2007-2008 academic year we took several significant steps in planning and implementing an interdisciplinary study abroad program in Albania, to take place in May and June of 2008. We have also taken important steps towards ensuring the long-term viability of a program in Albania.

Inaugural Study Abroad Program (see attached syllabus, for the sociology-anthropology course)

During the fall of 2007, we met several times in order to plan our study abroad program (and we emphasize again that this would not have been possible without the ACS-sponsored 2007 planning trip). We created a working budget for the trip, one balancing time in country with educational return, and chose dates. The price of the trip (which includes one week of on-campus, pre-departure study and two weeks in country) is \$3300 plus airfare (about \$1600). We have developed three separate but intertwined classes that focus on archaeology and history, religion, and business and law in Albania. They are titled: "The Snake That Bites": History and

Archaeology as the Basis for Albanian National Identity” (Galaty, Sociology-Anthropology); “No Man May Tell Another What To Do”: The Impact of Traditional Law on Modern Conceptions of Albanian Identity” (Fiser, Business Law); “The Religion of Albanians is Albanianism”: Religious Pluralism and Identity in Modern Albania” (Bowley, Religious Studies). What ties the three classes together is a shared desire to explain Albania’s experience of identity formation as it impacts the difficult task of post-Communist nation-building. During the week of pre-departure classes, students will meet separately and together, and will teach each other their respective topics of study (see syllabus). We believe that we have developed a truly interdisciplinary approach to the class and that this will add depth and detail to our study of Albania.

We spent the spring semester recruiting students. In this we have had mixed success. Each class needed three students to break even and be allowed to proceed. Three students have signed up for Galaty’s class (and two more are flying over for an additional two-week archaeological field school), three (perhaps four) have signed up for Fiser’s class, and none have signed up for Bowley’s.¹ Given that this is the first time we have run these classes, and given the expense, we feel that we have been relatively successful at attracting students. Given that the trip goes well, we expect that many more students will sign up in future years. In addition, the recent declaration of independence in Kosova has perhaps scared off some students (or their parents), despite the fact that Albania is a completely different country and likely will not be affected by events in Kosova.

Long-Term Viability

During the fall of 2007, Galaty met repeatedly with the Millsaps College president, Frances Lucas, the academic dean, Richard Smith, and the dean for international programs, George Bey. All expressed support for and interest in our study abroad plans and (tentatively) plans for a long-term, intensified Millsaps presence in Albania. In October, Galaty and West addressed a gathering of the Millsaps College Heritage Society. Their presentation focused on Albanian archaeology and history. Members of the Heritage Society are individuals who have made significant donations to the college. Nearly the whole college administration attended this presentation, and alumni in attendance were very enthused about our proposed future activities in Albania. Based on this reaction, the administration invited us to make a similar presentation to the Board of Trustees meeting in November, but focusing on possible plans for study abroad in Albania. The three trustees who came to Albania over the summer also attended, along with their wives. This presentation generated much discussion and support for continued development of our program.

We now feel as though we have generated support for our Albania program across campus constituencies – students, faculty, administration, alumni, trustees – and that we are approaching the 2008 summer trips with a certain amount of momentum. If the summer trips are successful, we hope to capitalize on this momentum in the coming academic year. Recently, our goals for Albania received a substantial boost when Galaty and Bey, both archaeologists, and colleagues

¹ Bowley had previously committed to running a study program in Israel, as well. Some students may have opted to go there with him, as opposed to Albania. We hope that this conflict will not exist in future years.

in chemistry and biology received an \$800,000 grant from the Keck Foundation (\$400,000 outright and \$400,000 matching) to establish a laboratory for archaeological chemistry on the Millsaps campus. This one-of-a-kind, interdisciplinary laboratory is designed to allow artifacts from Albania to be compared to artifacts from Yucatan (where Bey runs Kaxil-Kiuic, Millsaps' southern campus in Mexico, site of a ruined Maya city). Thus, our interdisciplinary approach to study in Albania has spread to and informs our research there, as well.

8) Budget.

Our original budget was as follows:

Four international, round trip plane tickets from Jackson, MS to Tirana, Albania	\$7200.00
Room and board for one week for four people (at \$30 per day per person for seven days)	\$840.00
Rental vehicle and gas	\$460.00

Amount received: \$8500.00

Amount spent: \$8500.00

We were fortunate to receive additional funds from the Millsaps College Robinson Fund for International Study in the amount of \$1748. In addition, the Millsaps trustees traveling with us helped defray some costs, for instance by paying for some gasoline and some of our meals.

In the end a very large portion of our budget went to plane tickets, which, with the exception of West, who bought a student ticket, cost well over \$2000 a piece.

9) Statement.

We hereby give ACS permission to post our original proposal and this summary at the ACS Interdisciplinary website.

Appendix One: Student, Faculty, and Trustee Evaluations of the 2007 Planning Trip to Albania

Harvey Fiser

Assistant Professor of Business Law
Else School of Management, Millsaps College

As part our investigation into designing a cross discipline program, we traveled to Albania June 15-22, 2007. The group included Professors Michael Galaty and James Bowley along with one Millsaps senior, Chelsi West. During those eight days, we traveled from Tirana, the capital of Albania, north to the city of Skodër, and into the mountains near Montenegro.

During our travels, I was encouraged to see the vast resources available to our program in preparing our classes. We were able to meet with political, religious, and social leaders at all levels. Our interactions with these Albanians gave us a unique opportunity to build a study abroad program that will give our students experience in a culture far removed from their typical American upbringing.

As a lawyer and member of the business school faculty, I focused my attention on the area of business law and the country's economic struggles, opportunities, and successes. Albania is a country with a unique history deeply ingrained in economic protectionism and strict communism. Given this history, Albania will prove to be a great study in business and law. The mixture of religious influence in business and culture and the struggle to emerge into economic stability make for a great economic study, as well.

Albania is currently struggling to build its economy in preparation for admittance into the European Union. According to the locals, they have a "long way to go." However, it was clear that the country is making great efforts in the area of infrastructure and human rights in an effort to meet the demands of admittance into the European Union.

However, the struggling economy and very recent shift to a free trade society are what makes the country an interesting case study. Home grown family owned businesses are popping up on every corner. Hundreds of car wash stands are springing up – we even saw one "rug wash" stand. Small restaurants and bars seem to open in every conceivable location. Precursors to a modern convenience store are being opened. All of these give a student first hand illustrations of how an economy forms.

Albania is absent any American franchises at this time. There are no McDonalds or Burger King restaurants that are all too familiar in western Europe and Mexico. The country has yet to reach that stage of commercialism. However, students might find a "Subway" sandwich shop or a "Yahoo" café – complete with the appropriate logo and colors. However, upon closer inspection, students will learn about wholesale intellectual property violations and the lack of enforcement in this fledgling economy.

During our time in Albania, we traveled from the modern capital of Tirana, complete with home grown fast food franchises and a strong café culture to the mountains of northern Albania where

electricity no longer flows from the Chinese built hydroelectric dam. The trip alone is a study in economics. Watching the modern suburbs of Tirana give way to the pasture lands and less developed city of Shkodër, and finally stepping back 50 or more years to the mountain country near Montenegro. Students will see a country of deep contrasts. In Tirana, they will see luxury cars by the thousands. But a short drive to the mountain country and they will appreciate an area where farm land is still cultivated by hand and shepherds build summer homes out of hundred-year-old rock walls to tend their flocks.

This program is sure to provide our students with a unique opportunity to see a country in transition. With our cross-disciplinary approach, students will be able to see how one country is struggling to emerge from communism into a free market society while maintaining a strong sense of pride in their history.

James E. Bowley,

Associate Professor of Religious Studies

Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Millsaps College

We traveled in Albania June 15-22, 2007 in order to work as a team exploring the intellectual and physical possibilities of designing an interdisciplinary undergraduate study tour of Albania. I worked with two other professors on the trip, Michael Galaty and Harvey Fiser, each of us from a different discipline. We also traveled with one advanced student, Chelsi West.

Throughout the trip we gathered information, and discussed with each other and with outsiders, the possibilities for our students. At the end we came away positively encouraged that an interdisciplinary travel program was feasible.

As a scholar of religion, it is my impression that Albania can provide our students a unique opportunity for seeing religious realities in new ways. The newness stems from some of the major differences in the ways religion(s) are lived and worked out in Albania *vis a vis* cultural norms in the United States. For example, Islam is prominent in Albania, yet it is not Islam as our students usually have opportunity to see it here in the United States. This awareness of difference – and one can only become so aware by actually seeing and “being there” – becomes an excellent tool for exploring pluralities, sociological factors, historical factors, and other aspects of religious identity and practice.

Albania’s complex history, including its recent past of enforced atheism, its strongly independent folk traditions, its solid Christian minorities (Orthodox and Catholic), and its current modernization, make it a fascinating place especially for interdisciplinary study. For example, we envision lectures and discussions on how economic advances and difficulties are affecting religious practices, and vice versa. In Shkodër we learned that since the end of the dictatorship, the government has been giving some public lands in the center of the city to religious institutions to build churches and *masjids*. The planning that went into these decisions and the varied reactions of Albanians makes for a fascinating case study in economic, sociological, and religious factors. Due to the rapidly expanding economy and large political changes and

challenges, we think that Albania will be an increasingly interesting place to study in the next few decades.

During our week there, and based on Professor Galaty's previous years in Albania, we made contacts with governmental, academic, business leaders, and experts in a variety of fields who will be excellent resources for us as we plan our program and for our students when they arrive in Albania.

For these and other reasons, I believe a fruitful interdisciplinary study program can be set up with unique intellectual and cultural benefits for our students.

Chelsi West

Senior Anthropology Major
Millsaps College

When I was first presented with the idea of an interdisciplinary study program in Albania I knew immediately that I wanted to be a part of the team that would create it. During the week of June 15-22 I was fortunate enough to travel to Albania with three Millsaps College professors and three members of the Board of Trustees (along with their spouses). Our objective for the one week trip to Albania was to begin the steps necessary to create an interdisciplinary study abroad program. Honestly I was honored just to be able to participate in the planning process. It is not every day that students are afforded these types of opportunities and I am grateful to Dr. Galaty for allowing me the chance to work on this project.

Our goal for the week was to establish the necessary groundwork for the proposed program. I feel that interdisciplinary study is critical to a liberal arts education. During my first year at Millsaps I discovered that interdisciplinary study provided me with the opportunity to combine several foci in my classes. Unlike many courses in high school, I was not limited to studying only one concept or learning from just one academic perspective. This interdisciplinary form of study has been the foundation for my learning at the collegiate level. Our program in Albania would offer this type of learning.

Albania is a unique European country and has several things to offer students who would be interested in studying there. The country's history, religion, economic conditions, art, architecture, and language are all possible areas of study. Our visits to mosques, museums, villages in the mountains and other places prepared us to develop a program that would introduce Albania to students. In addition to these areas of study, students would have the opportunity to interact with Albanians providing a platform for cultural exchange, as well as the chance to study the relationships among people in a society different from their own. The most memorable moments of my visits to Albania usually involve people and my attempt to understand their way of life, as well as having the chance to share my life with them. Our study abroad program would therefore have elements of academic learning in the classroom, but also would enable students to establish links with Albanians and receive personal accounts of Albanian of life.

There is also the possibility that students will leave Albania with the desire to continue their studies in the country. I have recently completed work on a thesis about hip hop music in Albania and the processes of cultural transfer and identity formation. In addition I am currently a finalist for a Fulbright Fellowship. If I receive a Fulbright, I plan to return to Albania to pursue more research upon completing my undergraduate studies in the spring of 2008. If given the opportunity to study there I feel that more students would be able to develop research studies about various aspects of Albanian culture.

I feel that our trip equipped us with the necessary data to develop a program and I enjoyed presenting our work to students this year. I worked to inform more students about the opportunities that Albania has to offer. For many students it may not be a country that they look for often on a globe. My objective was to introduce them to the distinct elements that the country has to offer. Having taken our trip in 2007 and having launched the interdisciplinary courses for next summer, Millsaps students will now have the chance to study in Albania and perhaps experience a country that previously they may not have known much about.

Robert Leggett
Millsaps College Trustee
Falls Church, Virginia

Questionnaire regarding travel in Albania, June 15-22, 2007

Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will help us to create a better Millsaps College study abroad program in Albania. Please use an additional sheet if needs be. Thank you very much for your help!

1) Did you find the pre-departure seminars useful? Would you change anything about them?

“It was difficult trying to do things from afar, particularly when we did not get the discussion items in advance. I had not done a lot of travel in Europe, so I had less of an idea of what to expect in general. I think a bit more about the current political and economic structure might have been helpful.”

2) Did you find the accommodations, food, transportation, etc. adequate? Would you suggest any changes to these?

“I thought it was all well done. The hotel in Shkodra was not the best, but I don’t know what other choices could be made.”

3) What, if anything, would you change about the itinerary? Would you skip certain attractions and/or places? Would you spend more/less time in certain places versus others?

“I think a bit less in Tirana and more in Theth could have worked well. There was some overlap in the museums in Tirana.”

4) Did you feel like you learned something about Albania's culture and history, including its religious, political, economic, and legal systems? Did you feel as though you had enough contact with Albanian people?

"Yes. I felt very good about what we learned and see it as a rich area of study for Millsaps. Albania has been shorted in the history books, but it's interesting how much it has been in the press lately on historical items continuing into the present (sworn virgins and blood feuds). The tolerance shown by the Muslim community should make for an interesting study in contrasts with other Muslim communities and other religions. The emergence into a 21st century culture, democratic political structure, and economy should provide a wealth of study areas."

5) Do you think an interdisciplinary study abroad program would prove attractive to Millsaps College students? Do you think a class built around identity formation and the creation of an Albanian civil society would be successful? Using your trip as a model, what, if anything, might be added or subtracted from a study abroad program?

"See above. I can see a wealth of opportunities in at least Sociology/Anthropology, Music, Economics, Law, History, Classical Studies, Religious Studies, Geology, and Political Science. Albania provides an opportunity to observe and study an evolving culture that is off the beaten path, and where we have good contacts and little competition."

Bud Robinson
Millsaps College Trustee
Jackson, Mississippi

Questionnaire regarding travel in Albania, June 15-22, 2007

Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will help us to create a better Millsaps College study abroad program in Albania. Please use an additional sheet if needs be. Thank you very much for your help!

1) Did you find the pre-departure seminars useful? Would you change anything about them?

"Yes....great background info. Well done."

2) Did you find the accommodations, food, transportation, etc. adequate? Would you suggest any changes to these?

"No changes needed. Was fine."

3) What, if anything, would you change about the itinerary? Would you skip certain attractions and/or places? Would you spend more/less time in certain places versus others?

"Since this was my 3rd trip to Albania, I thought the itinerary was just right."

4) Did you feel like you learned something about Albania's culture and history, including its religious, political, economic, and legal systems? Did you feel as though you had enough contact with Albanian people?

"Yes....good to have Business School and Dept. of Religion professors along for their perspectives.

5) Do you think an interdisciplinary study abroad program would prove attractive to Millsaps College students? Do you think a class built around identity formation and the creation of an Albanian civil society would be successful? Using your trip as a model, what, if anything, might be added or subtracted from a study abroad program?

"Yes to the first two! Albania and North Korea are the last two hard line Communist states....only Albania is currently open to study in, to live and witness the monumental change from Communism of the worst kind to capitalism...and all that entails! Plus, Albania loves America and Americans! An added bonus is that it is on the fracture line of the Christian and the Moslem religions and is currently peaceful and somewhat tolerant. Albania offers a unique opportunity for students."

William Jeanes

Millsaps College Trustee
Madison, Mississippi

Questionnaire regarding travel in Albania, June 15-22, 2007

Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will help us to create a better Millsaps College study abroad program in Albania. Please use an additional sheet if needs be. Thank you very much for your help!

1) Did you find the pre-departure seminars useful? Would you change anything about them?

"The seminars were an excellent thing to do. Too often, travelers do little homework. In our case we were able to read two books that gave us a feel for the country and to learn more about the current situation through an exchange of articles and Web sites than we might have managed absent the seminars. A Web site reading list might be helpful as would some archived news and feature coverage of the country. A side comment: the local currency and dollars worked fine, with Euros a poor third. Note that ATMs, at the airport anyway, worked well."

2) Did you find the accommodations, food, transportation, etc. adequate? Would you suggest any changes to these?

"The accommodations were a nice mix of relative luxury and plain. All were clean, and the prices were quite reasonable. The food was far better than we had expected and ranged from

good to near-excellent. Food, too, was inexpensive. As part of the Land Rover crew, our transportation was basic, but it had the effect of not making us feel insulated from the country.”

3) What, if anything, would you change about the itinerary? Would you skip certain attractions and/or places? Would you spend more/less time in certain places versus others?

“Working backwards, the time spent in the Shala Valley was about right. We didn’t think the trekking parts were too demanding, although we skipped the climb to the waterfall from fatigue. It would be good not to minimize the difficulty of the terrain. We and the Leggetts arrived early and had a most pleasant mountaintop lunch at the top of the tramway. A day in Tirana with time to explore would be welcome.”

4) Did you feel like you learned something about Albania’s culture and history, including its religious, political, economic, and legal systems? Did you feel as though you had enough contact with Albanian people?

“Yes on all points. The visit to the spiritual seat of the Dervishes was a fascinating example of the kind of thing that should be maximized insofar as possible.”

5) Do you think an interdisciplinary study abroad program would prove attractive to Millsaps College students? Do you think a class built around identity formation and the creation of an Albanian civil society would be successful? Using your trip as a model, what, if anything, might be added or subtracted from a study abroad program?

“Certainly such a program would be attractive...unless we’re attracting the wrong kind of students to Millsaps College, which I do not for a moment believe to be the case. Obviously, considerable contact with Albanian students would add to such a program. A brief History of Albania could be taught prior to departure, and knowing a bit more Albanian history might have benefited our group. Knowing more in advance of the Ottoman conquest(s) and then seeing the Shkoder mountaintop fortress would make for an even more unforgettable experience.”

6) A final comment

“Susan and I have made two Millsaps College-connected trips to the Yucatan and one to Albania. I do not think one could overemphasize the real and potential benefits of alumni, friends, and trustees making these visits. If they do nothing else, these excursions allow faculty, students, and alumni/trustees to get to know and appreciate each other on an informal basis—always a good thing—but I think they do much more, not the least of which is to encourage contributions to these valuable multi-disciplinary overseas programs.

You, George Bey, and Harvey Fiser (and I know there are others) are creating programs that are not only in keeping with the Millsaps College approach to learning as I understand it, but which also bring great credit and recognition to the College. And also to yourselves, which is as it should be. We are enormously fortunate to have all of you.”

Appendix Two: Syllabus for Study Abroad Course in Albania

Up From the Ashes: Nation- and Identity-Building in the Former Communist Country of Albania

SOAN 3110: Archaeology of Selected Culture Area

“The Snake That Bites: History and Archaeology as the Basis for Albanian National Identity”

Dr. Michael Galaty (galatml@millsaps.edu)

Summer 2008

Office: Sullivan-Harrell 343

Phone: 974-1387

“If we slackened our vigilance even for a moment or toned down our struggle against enemies in the least, they would strike immediately like the snake that bites you and injects its poison before you are aware of it.”

Enver Hoxha, former dictator of Albania, 1982

Course Description

Some scholars have argued that a shared national identity, one that transcends cultural differences, is necessary to the formation of stable, functioning nation-states. In this course we will evaluate this idea by studying the European nation of Albania. This course will introduce you to the archaeology and history of Albania, specifically. In studying the Albanian past, we hope to identify one means – among many – of producing Albanian national identity, in particular in the aftermath of 50 years of xenophobic totalitarian rule. This course will be held in conjunction with two other Albanian courses, being taught by professors Bowley and Fiser, on Albanian religion and business/law, and unfolds in two parts. For one week in May we will meet together and discuss the origins of the Albanian people and nation. Our understanding of the Albanian past, when combined with our classmates’ understandings of Albanian religious and business/legal practices, should help us to explain how and why the modern Albanian nation and national identity have formed as they have in the 15+ years since the fall of the Albanian communist government. Our discussions in May will lay the intellectual groundwork for two weeks of study and travel in Albania (June 8-22), during which time you will have ample time to meet Albanian people. In order to make sense of Albanian history, we will visit various museums and monuments throughout Albania, but we will also talk to ordinary Albanians. How do they perceive their past? How does it affect their present? By the end of our trip we hope to be in a position to ascertain whether or not Albania’s national identity might help build the structures necessary to a functioning civil society, including a western-style capitalist democracy.

Grading and Assessment

Your grade in this class will be based in large part on your participation in May, when we are in class at Millsaps, and June, when we are in Albania. In May, you will be responsible for

presenting to the other two classes the results of your in-depth study of Albanian archaeology and history. While in Albania, in addition to visiting numerous cultural monuments, there are various ethnographic exercises you will undertake. Your experiences in Albania will be recorded in a daily journal which will be typed and handed in for a grade upon your return to the US. 50% of your grade will be based on participation, and 50% will be based on your journal.

Required Texts

Kadare, I.
1990 *Broken April*. Lanham, MD: New Amsterdam Books.

Gloyer, G.
2006 *Albania* (2nd edition). Bradt Travel Guides.

Reading Assignments

Anderson, B.
1991 *Imagined Communities*. Verso.

Blumi, I.
1998 The Commodification of Otherness and the Ethnic Unit in the Balkans: How to Think About Albanians. *East European Politics and Societies* 12: 527-569.

Elsie, R.
2001 *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture*. London: Hurst and Company.

Hasluck, M.
1967 The Albanian Blood Feud. In *Law and Warfare: Studies in the Anthropology of Conflict*, edited by P. Bohanan, 381-408. Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press.

Hobsbawm, E.
1990 *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Donnell, J.
1999 *A Coming of Age: Albania Under Enver Hoxha*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Saltmarshe, D.
2001 *Identity in a Post-Communist Balkan State: An Albanian Village Study*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Schwandner-Sievers, S.

2002 Narratives of Power: Capacities and Myth in Albania. In *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by S. Schwandner-Sievers and B. Fisher, 3-25. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Vickers, M.

1999 *The Albanians: A Modern History*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Wilkes, J.

1992 *The Illyrians*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Young, A.

1999 Religion and Society in Present-Day Albania. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 14: 5-16.

Class Schedule: May 5-11, 2008

The classes in May will ordinarily (but not always) meet each day from 9-11 and from 1-3 in Sullivan-Harrell hall (room to be determined). Make sure to read the schedule carefully.

Monday, May 5, 2008, 9-11 am The Study of Identity, Nation-States, and Civil Society
Reading Assignment: Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1990

Monday, May 5, 2008, 1-3 pm Identity, Nation-Building, and Civil Society in Albania
Reading Assignment: Blumi 1998; Saltmarsh 2001, Ch. 1; Schwandner-Sievers 2002

Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 9-11 am ARCHAEOLOGY/HISTORY CLASS ONLY:
Archaeology and History of Albania
Reading Assignment: ARCHAEOLOGY/HISTORY CLASS ONLY: Wilkes 1992, Ch. 2;
Vickers 1999, Introduction and Ch. 1

Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 1-3 pm ARCHAEOLOGY/HISTORY STUDENTS REPORT TO
OTHER TWO CLASSES
Reading Assignment: EVERYONE: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/altoc.html>, Ch. 1 (“World War II and the Rise of Communism, 1941-44” and “Communist Albania”)

Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 9-11 am RELIGIOUS STUDIES CLASS ONLY: Religion in
Albania
Reading Assignment: RELIGIOUS STUDIES CLASS ONLY: Young 1999; O’Donnell 1999,
Ch. 9

Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 1-3 pm RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENTS REPORT TO
OTHER TWO CLASSES
Reading Assignment: EVERYONE: Elsie 2001, entries on “Bektashi order of dervishes”,
“Catholicism”, “Islam”, and “Orthodoxy”

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 9-11 am BUS/LAW CLASS ONLY: Economy and Law in Albania
Reading Assignment: BUS/LAW STUDENTS ONLY: Hasluck 1967

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 1-3 pm BUS/LAW STUDENTS REPORT TO OTHER TWO
CLASSES

Reading Assignment: EVERYONE: peruse the World Bank's assessment of the Albanian
economy:

<http://www.worldbank.org.al/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/ALBANIAEXTN/0,,menuPK:301421~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:301412,00.html>

VIDEO: *Albanians of Rrogam*

Friday, May 9, 2008, 9-11 am Albanian Language and Culture: Dos and Don'ts
Reading Assignment: Gloyer 2006, Ch. 2 and Appendix 1

Friday, May 9, 2008, 1-3 pm Travel in Albania: Practical Considerations

Class Schedule, June 8-22, 2008

Reading Assignment: On the way to Albania, you should read Kadare's *Broken April*; when we
arrive in various cities and regions, be sure to read the corresponding section from Gloyer's
Albania.

Saturday, June 7, 2008	Depart US
Sunday, June 8, 2008	Arrive Tirana, opening dinner
Monday, June 9, 2008	Tirana (National Museum, US Embassy)
Tuesday, June 10, 2008	Tirana (Bektashi HQ, Romeo Gurakuqi on Albanian law); drive to Shkodra
June 10-14, 2008 (Tu-Sa)	Shkodra (meet with prefect, visit mosque, Orthodox and Catholic churches, historical museum, Mes bridge, etc.)
June 14-16, 2008 (Sa-Mo)	Ulcinj, Montenegro
Monday, June 16, 2008	Shkodra
June 17-20, 2008 (Tu-F)	Theth, Shala (homestays, trekking, service project)
Friday, June 20, 2008	Shkodra
Saturday, June 21, 2008	Kruja (bazaar, Skanderbeg museum), Tirana (closing dinner)
Sunday, June 22, 2008	Return to US