



# Media and Political Crisis

COURSE DIRECTORS: *Marsha Siefert* (CEU, Budapest)  
*Miklós Sükösd* (CEU, Budapest)

RESOURCE PERSONS: *Peter Gross* (California State University, Chico), *Karol Jakubowicz* (University of Warsaw; Chief Advisor to the National Broadcasting Council of Poland and Deputy Chair of the Board of Directors, Polish Television), *Graham Murdock* (Loughborough University and University of Bergen, Norway)



## Purpose of the Course:

"Open media systems" are thought to be at the heart of successful democratic societies. Since 1989, the restructuring of media systems throughout Central Europe and the former Soviet Union has fostered an important discussion of emerging journalism norms and ethics, as well as several efforts to debate and refine journalism education. However, as has been experienced in Western democracies, the test of "open media systems" is in times of political crisis. In these times, governments, parties in power, or other media institutions are tempted to suspend normal operations and supersede the rules of open media practice in the name of "national security" or extraordinary circumstances. At the same time, media professionals and citizens have used new media technologies like cassettes, faxes and satellite television to challenge official channels and control of information. The purpose of this course is for participants, directors, and visiting lecturers to explore the meaning of "open media" and the sources of threats to its practice.

## Course Description:

This two-week course will begin with a discussion and debate on the norms and ethics of open media in democratic societies. Over the next two days, we will examine media coverage during times of political crisis in Western democracies from an historical and case study method. Included will be case studies, the role of the print press in the French Revolution, British press and television coverage of political violence in Northern Ireland, press and television coverage of political violence in Israel, and US and South African coverage of "black on black political violence." At the end of the first week, we will discuss the critical topics of media and terrorism, and government and media censorship, using as examples press censorship during the "invasion" of Grenada and during the Gulf War.

During the second week, we will focus particularly on media and political crisis in emerging democratic societies in the region. We will first examine what open media means for media systems in our region and its relation to democratic theory. As case studies we will look at domestic and international media coverage of historically important political crises in the region, including the Russian revolution of 1917, Hungary in 1956, Prague Spring 1968 and Solidarity in Poland in the 1980s. We will also analyze the "tele-revolution" in Romania and the role of the media in the "velvet revolution" in Czechoslovakia, the breakup of East Germany (1989-90) and the democratic transformation of Poland and Hungary (1989-90). The final days will focus on the media and crisis in the present decade, including media coverage (and non-coverage) of the 1991 Russian coup, Chechnya, the Georgian "civil war," the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Hungarian taxi drivers' blockade, and ethnic crises in Romania.

Course Dates:  
July 2-15, 1996

Application Deadline:  
April 1, 1996

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Prof. Guozden Flego, Director ▲ Miriam J. Green, Program Coordinator

**Course Description (continued):**

*Various Forms of Minority Autonomies in Europe* (ten class hours)

*Case Study: The Workshop on Minority Rights in Vojvodina* (ten class hours)

**Institutional Co-Organizers or Co-Sponsors:**

Minority Rights Group (British Institute of Human Rights, London)

**Course Dates:**

July 1-12, 1996

**Application Deadline:**

April 1, 1996