

*A Tale of Two (Four?) Cities:  
Danzig/Gdańsk and Wilno/Vilnius in History and Culture  
David Frick  
Mondays, Seminar Room 1.23, 4–6 pm  
Office Hours: by email appointment  
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Among the many contested cities over time, but especially in the twentieth century, several lie in the Baltic Basin and were significant capitals and Free Cities of states, the borders of which would themselves be contested and redrawn with some frequency and considerable violence and where conditions of rule would change with similar regularity.

**Course requirements:** attendance, active participation in discussion of the readings and the films/images, a research project culminating in a twenty-minute in-class presentation. The purpose of the presentations is to help prepare you for the experience of presenting your work at international scholarly conferences in the Humanities and Social Sciences (where the time allotted is typically twenty minutes and the language—for better or worse—is English).

You should discuss your proposed research project with me sometime earlier in the semester. It can be anything in the Humanities or Social Sciences that has some general connection with the topic of the course.

The week before your presentation, you should present the entire class (including me) with a list of ca. 10 most important sources (even if you are unable to use them all fully in the course of the semester) as well as an abstract of ca. 150 words (also common practices at such conferences). I would like to have electronic copies of your final papers for myself. Twenty minutes of oral presentation means fewer pages than you may think. As a rule, 7–8 pp. read at a reasonable speed (not too fast!) will result in a 20-minute presentation. Practice by reading your paper out loud, preferably for someone, in order to any remaining problems in your argumentation and to test the length of your performance.

Some of the scanned readings are longer than others. A few take up more than one week. I am guessing that your levels of fluency in English differ. Read what you can, a minimum of 20 pp. per week. I will introduce some images in class without giving you the web address in advance. (I will give them to you by email after the class.) The images are meant to supplement our discussion of the readings, and we will “pick them apart” on the spot during our meetings.

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Week 1 (4 April):

Introduction, instructor's presentation

Week 2 (11 April):

Timothy Snyder, "National Myths and International Relations: Poland and Lithuanian, 1989–1994"

Week 3 (18 April):

Film: Völker Schlöndorff, *The Tin Drum*

Reading: Günter Grass, *The Tin Drum*, "Niobe"

Week 4 (25 April):

Film: Völker Schlöndorff, *The Tin Drum*

Reading: Günter Grass, *The Tin Drum*, "He Lies in Saspe"

In-class discussion of *The Tin Drum*

Week 5 (2 May):

Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm*, "Nationalities," "City of My Youth"

Week 6 (9 May):

Ričardas Gavelis, *Vilnius Poker* (excerpts)

Week 7 (16 May):

Holiday, no class

Week 8 (23 May):

Ričardas Gavelis, *Vilnius Poker* (excerpts)

Week 9 (30 May):

Günter Grass, *The Call of the Toad* (excerpts)

Week 10 (6 June):

Günter Grass, *The Call of the Toad* (excerpts)

Week 11 (13 June):

Paweł Huelle, *Mercedes-Benz: From Letters to Hrabal* (excerpts)

Week 12 (20 June):

Paweł Huelle, *Mercedes-Benz: From Letters to Hrabal* (excerpts)

Week 13 (27 June):

Presentations

Week 14 (4 July):

Presentations

Week 15 (11 July):

Presentations