The Berlin wall came down more than a quarter of a century ago, and yet, a large number of people in Eastern Europe reflect on the socialist period as "the good old times." From former East Germany to the former Soviet Union to former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and beyond, movies, fiction, autobiographies, and popular culture remember communism not as the hated, oppressive regimes brought down by popular uprisings, but as a time of innocence and the "good life." How could this be? Are they disappointed in what has happened in the 27 years since the fall of socialism? Or are they simply romanticizing the past, the way we humans tend to do? Is communism becoming Eastern Europe's lost glory days, as in that Bruce Springsteen song?

In this course, we will examine the historical, social, and cultural conditions in which postcommunist nostalgia appears; explore differences and similarities of the phenomenon across a number of formerly communist countries; and critically assess the significance, impact, and form postcommunist nostalgia takes across the region. Our assignments will include historical and social readings on the countries in question, fiction and non-fiction, film screenings, art, popular music, and digital media readings and projects.