

First Year Seminar: Questions to consider for session on national identity
Kille/Nurse joint session - Fall 2005

*Reminder: Class on November 10 will be held in Bornhuetter Multi-Purpose Room.

In preparation for class on November 10, be sure to read the on-line reserve reading from Barrington and Smith. In addition, you must attend the Forum talk on Tuesday November 8 by Richard Heinzl, founder of Doctors Without Borders-Canada. For Kille's students, also be sure to bring examples from your news journals on nationalism/national identity (Nurse's students are also encouraged to bring news examples).

Richard Heinzl's talk is titled "Making a Difference: The Opportunities of a Borderless World." This title appears to assume that we live in a borderless world. However, many people around the world still strongly cling to their national identity, which suggests that we may still be far from living in a truly "borderless world." Reflect on these contrasting dimensions and come prepared to discuss the following points:

1. Barrington (1997) opens his article by arguing, "One of the essential starting points of any branch of science is a consistent, broadly understood terminology" (p. 712), so that is where we will start the class as well. What is a nation? What is nationalism? What are the misuses of these terms identified by Barrington? Where does Smith's (1995) focus on "ethnie" fit into the definitional debate over these terms?
2. According to Smith, how do national identities form? How do the different routes to nation formation bring about varying forms of national identity?
3. Smith argues that "national identities are unlikely to wither away or be easily transformed into higher order political unions" (p. 153). What are the implications of this assertion in relation to considering a "borderless world"?
4. What are the core points that Heinzl presents at his talk Tuesday night? How does his presentation make you think about the place of a "borderless world"? What are the possible national identity implications that can be derived from this?