

List of Possible Topics for Research Papers

Historical Topics:

1. What long-term changes in the Balkans occurred under Ottoman rule? (Consider language, religion, population movement, social classes.)
2. What important events and developments occurred in Serbia between 1804 and 1914?
3. Were the Young Bosnians (whose actions precipitated the outbreak of World War I) terrorists or freedom fighters? Why/how is this still a controversial issue today?
4. Why did the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1919-1941) fail? Consider internal social/political factors, not just the obvious Axis invasion.
5. In what ways was the “Independent State of Croatia” (1941-1945 Bosnia and Croatia) an epicenter of ethnic persecution during World War II? What internal reaction did the persecution cause?
6. How and by whom was the Holocaust implemented in the different parts of the former Yugoslavia?
7. What resistance to the Axis occurred in the former Yugoslavia during World War II?
8. How would you evaluate the role of Tito? What were the successes and failures of the post-war Yugoslavia?

Modern Struggles and Politics:

9. How and why did Bosnia fight a 3-sided civil war during the 1990s?
10. What happened during the siege of Sarajevo from 1992 through 1995? Who besieged the city, what happened during the siege, and what was the nature of international involvement?
11. How effective, in the short-term and the long-run, was the US-brokered peace settlement for the Bosnian War? Would you call it the “Dayton Accord” or, as some Bosnians joke, the “Dayton Discord” – and why?
12. What kind of relations does Kosovo have with its neighbors: Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia?
13. What is Kosovo’s status in the international community? In particular, what kind of relations does Kosovo have with the US?

14. Was the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 justified? Explain why or why not.
15. How has Albania changed in the past few decades?

Culture/Society:

16. How did Serbian epic poetry develop and change over the centuries? What impact did it have on Serbian national identity and sense of “mission”?
17. What are the important elements of Albanian civilization? How are the Albanians of Kosovo different from or similar to those in Albania itself?
18. How is the architecture of Sarajevo a reflection of its complex past? Consider the buildings as a reflection of Bosnia’s history, religions, and culture.
19. How has the Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian language developed over time? Consider the different written traditions, dialects, and vocabularies – as well as the modern controversy over whether it is one language or three.
20. What important role does literature play in Bosnian society? Consider the importance of books (such as the Sarajevo Haggadah), why books/documents were specifically targeted in the last war (fire-bombing of the National Archives and Oriental Institute), and the way in which Bosnia’s most famous writers have described their society.