CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title: Nationalism, Democracy and Conflict in Central Europe: the Czech Case
Course code: POLI 3015 PRAG
Programs offering course: Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

The use of a nationalist vocabulary in the political debate in countries of Central Europe shows that the issue of nationalism and national identity is not something of the past. Instead, it is very present in the public discourse about society and politics. The dominant idea in these countries is that the ethnic or national group is the most determining factor for one’s identity.

This course examines Czech nationalist concepts, a broader perspective of history, the diversity of concepts of national identity, and influences of personalities, movements, or ideologies. In the course we read and discuss texts which give valuable background information and disclose mentalities behind the developments. Essential questions to understand the Czech discourse on national identity and nationalism are:

- How was/is national identity defined in the Czech case?
- What is the relationship between Czechs to other ethnic groups living in Central Europe?
- What are the national myths, legends, and heroes?
- How violent was/is Czech nationalism?
- What was the effect of communism on national identity?
- What was the role of religion in this process?
- What is the relationship between the Czechs and the European Union?

Learning Objectives
By completing this course, students will:

- Explain the processes and dynamics of nation building, ethnic identification, and ethnic cleansing, especially in the case of the Czechs;
- Analyze the history of Czech nationalism and its present forms;
- Analyze the different ways and backgrounds of how Czechs think about themselves and about others;
- Analyze the different factors in the self-perceptions of the Czechs;
- Analyze backgrounds of current discussions in Czech society about the political and social field

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

The course combines lectures, PowerPoint presentations, class discussions, and cooperative and interactive in-class activities. Sessions of the course are divided in two parts: a presentation by one or more participants and an introduction of a topic connected to the theme. Participants are encouraged to use multimedia methods and approaches in their presentation.

This course also includes a one-day mandatory excursion to the region of Most, Northern Bohemia.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Participation in Excursion 10%
2. Presentation 20%
3. Midterm Test 15%
4. Final Test 15%
5. Final Paper 20%
Course Requirements

Participation in Excursion

The excursion to the region of Most in Northern Bohemia provides students with insights into local impacts of nationalism. Students write a reflection paper of 250-500 words. The excursion is a mandatory part of the course.

Presentation

Every student is required to give a presentation about a topic to be chosen during the first class sessions. Presentations are graded according to (a) accuracy in summarizing the given material, (b) creativity in presenting, and (c) originality in assessment.

Midterm Test

The midterm test includes short answer question and an analytical question concerning interpreting a short text related to the course.

Midterm test: Week 6

Final Test

The Final Test includes short answer question and an analytical question concerning interpreting a short text related to the course.

Final Test: Week 13

Final Paper

At the end of the course students submit a paper of 1300 words about a topic to be selected after the midterm. Detailed instructions are provided in week 7.

Final Paper due: Week 12
Class Participation

Participation includes active engagement in class sessions, field trips, class excursion and also responses to required readings. Participation is assessed four time throughout the semester.

CIEE Prague Class Participation Policy

Assessment of students' participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared, as directed, in advance of each class session. This includes valued or informed engagement in, for example, small group discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students’ active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

CIEE Prague Attendance Policy
Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences are treated equally regardless of reason for any affected CIEE course. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursions or events, as well as Internship.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

Missing classes will lead to the following penalties:

90-minute semester classes:

 Persistent absenteeism (students approaching 20% of the total course hours missed, or violating the attendance policy in more than one class) will result in a written warning, a notification to the student’s home school, and possibly a dismissal from the program.

Missing more than 20% of the total class hours will lead to a course failure, and potential program dismissal. This is a CIEE rule that applies to all CIEE courses and is in line with the Participant Contract that each CIEE student signs before arriving on-site.
Late arrival to class will be considered a partial (up to 15 minutes late) or full (15 or more minutes late) absence. Three partial absences due to late arrivals will be regarded as one full class absence.

Students must notify their professor and Program Coordinators (PC) beforehand if they are going to miss class for any reason and are responsible for any material covered in class in their absence.

If missing a class during which a test, exam, the student’s presentation or other graded class assignments are administered, make-up assignment will only be allowed in approved circumstances, such as serious medical issues. In this case, the student must submit a local doctor’s note within 24 hours of his/her absence to the PC, who will decide whether the student qualifies for a make-up assignment. Doctor’s notes may be submitted via e-mail or phone (a scan or a photograph are acceptable), however the student must ensure that the note is delivered to the PC.

Should a truly extraordinary situation arise, the student must contact the PC immediately concerning permission for a make-up assignment. Make-up assignments are not granted automatically! The PC decides the course of action for all absence cases that are not straightforward. Always contact the PC with any inquiry about potential absence(s) and the nature thereof.

Personal travel (including flight delays and cancelled flights), handling passport and other document replacements, interviews, volunteering and other similar situations are not considered justifiable reasons for missing class or getting permission for make-up assignments.

For class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips, make-up classes and other instances), always contact the Academic Assistant to decide the appropriate course of action.

Course attendance is recorded on individual Canvas Course Sites. Students are responsible for checking their attendance regularly to ensure the correctness of the records. In case of discrepancies, students are required to contact the Academic Assistant within one week of the discrepancy date to have it corrected. Later claims will not be considered.
CIEE staff does not directly manage absences at FAMU and ECES, but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

CIEE Academic Honesty Policy

CIEE subscribes to standard U.S. norms requiring that students exhibit the highest standards regarding academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism in any course assignment or exam will not be tolerated and may result in a student failing the course or being expelled from the program. Standards of honesty and norms governing originality of work differ significantly from country to country. We expect students to adhere to both the American norms and the local norms, and in the case of conflict between the two, the more stringent of the two will preside. Three important principles are considered when defining and demanding academic honesty. These are related to the fundamental tenet that one should not present the work of another person as one’s own.

The first principle is that final examinations, quizzes and other tests must be done without assistance from another person, without looking at or otherwise consulting the work of another person, and without access to notes, books, or other pertinent information (unless the professor has explicitly announced that a particular test is to be taken on an “open book” basis).

The second principle applies specifically to course work: the same written paper may not be submitted in two classes. Nor may a paper for which you have already received credit at your home institution be submitted to satisfy a paper requirement while studying overseas.

The third principle is that any use of the work of another person must be documented in any written papers, oral presentations, or other assignments carried out in connection with a course. This usually is done when quoting directly from another’s work or including information told to you by another person. The general rule is that if you have to look something up, or if you learned it recently either by reading or hearing something, you have to document it.

The penalty ranges from an F grade on the assignment, failure in the course to dismissal from the program. The Academic Director is consulted and involved in decision making in every case of a possible violation of academic honesty.
Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class Where and How Do We Find Czech National Identity?

- Introduction to the subject, definitions and comparisons.
- Analysis of some of Alois Jirasek’s “Old Czech Legends”.
- Field trip to Vyšehrad Cemetery.

Required reading:

Bryant, 2005.

Selected current texts about the nationalist mood in Central Europe

Week 2
Class How Nationalism Changes Borders

- The theoretical framework of the debate on nationalism
- Nationalism changes the map

Presentation 1:

Options:

- Gellner, 1983.

Required reading:

Jaskulowski, 289-303.


Week 3
Class Nationalism and Czech History

- Inventing the history of the Czech nation
Three concepts of Czech national identity: the Catholics, the Liberals and the Protestants.

The dream of Pan-Slavism

Presentation 2: Pynsent, 1994, 44-100.

Required reading:


One-day class excursion to North-Western Bohemia: The Showcase of Czech Social and Environmental Destruction

Week 4

Class The Czech Founding Fathers

- The moral concept of national identity of the founder of Czechoslovakia
- T.G. Masaryk: Who was Masaryk? His inspiration from the “Father of the Czech Nation” Palacký.

Presentation 3: The relation of Masaryk to America

Required reading:


Week 5

Class Why Czechoslovakia Broke Up

- The significance of Masaryk for Czech politics and society
- The failure of Masaryk’s political philosophy

Presentation 4: Heimann, 2009

Required reading:
Week 6
Class Czech Identity and Religion

Midterm Exam Period

- The role of religion in national identity.

Midterm Test


Required reading:


Week 7
Class Feminism and Nationalism / The Ethnic Conflict between Czechs and Germans

- The role of women in Czech nationalism
- The roots and developments of the relations between Czechs and Germans.


Required reading:

Glassheim.

Tharsen, 2005, 117-142.

Week 8
Class 8.1 Ethnic Cleansing and Its Aftermath

- Continuation of theme ‘Czechs and Germans.’

Presentation 7
Options:

- Zayas,
- King, 2005, 83-156.

Required reading:


Week 9
Class Communism and National Identity

- The communist manipulation of national identity.

Presentation 8: Abrams, 2004, ch. 1, 4, 6, 8.

Required reading:


Week 10
Class Václav Havel and Identity

- Václav Havel, the Czech dissidents and Czech identity.


Required reading:

Kundera

Havel

Week 11
Class The Relationship between the Czech Majority and Some Minorities

- Ethnic and religious minorities.
Presentation 10

Options:

- Crowe, 1996.
- Krejčová, 344-363

Required reading:

Crowe, 2008, 522-552.

Cashman, 2008, 595-618.

Week 12

Class Czechs and the European Union

- The role of the Czech identity in the European Union.

Presentation 11: The European Union and (Czech) National Identity.

Final Paper due

Required reading:


Week 13

Class Final Test

End-of-course discussion

Course Materials

Readings


Glassheim, Eagle. “The expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia” (Text available on the Canvas course website)

Havel, Václav. “The Czech Fate?” (Text available on the Canvas course website)


Kundera, Milan. “The Czech Fate.” (Text available on the Canvas course website)


