CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title: American Media's Impact on Post-Communist Czech Media
Course code: COMM 3004 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: Fall 2020

Course Description

This course will examine the influence of American culture, specifically the American media model, on media in the Czech Republic after the fall of communism in 1989. The course will, in this context, focus on all aspects of the media, presenting specific examples. The course will begin with an introduction to American cultural influence on European culture and how this developed after the end of World War II in Western Europe, and after 1989 in Central Europe. The course will briefly cover the subject of life under communism in order to understand the contrast between the East and the West in Europe. The course will also focus on the different existing media models and students will be asked to create an “American media model” with its specific characteristics. Through studying literature and news items in both the United States and the Czech Republic, students will be challenged to answer questions such as:

- In what ways does American culture influence countries in Europe, specifically in Central Europe?
- What falls under the definition of the (North) American Media Model?
- Has this media model influenced the development of the media in the Czech Republic?
- In what way does this influence affect the Czech news?
- Does the Czech news have its own identity? If so, how can it be described?
- Is this identity in danger because of the American influence?
- Is this a one-way influence, or is the American media influenced by European factors as well?
Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- They will articulate the forms of American cultural influence in Europe, specifically in Central Europe after 1989.
- They will analyze and characterize both the American and Czech media based on the literature they studied and using examples discussed in class.
- They will have complex understanding of the difference between the media in these two countries and explore the implications of how the news and facts are presented in both countries.
- They will develop and demonstrate new analytical skills to be able to study the news differently.

Course Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites, however, students should be interested in the different ways news is presented based on cultural and historical backgrounds, and the importance of this.

Methods of Instruction

The classes will combine lectures with interactive teaching methods such as group and pair work, class discussions, discussion over assigned readings and written assignments. The class will be informal and interactive, with a heavy emphasis on class participation and presentations.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Group Presentation 20%
2. Case Study Analysis 15%
3. Mid-Term Essay 20%
4. Final Paper 25%
5. Class Participation 20%
   TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Group Presentation
Working in small groups (maximum of three persons), students will analyze and characterize the American media and create an American Media Model. The characteristics should be described during a 15-to-20-minute presentation.

Case Study Analysis

Each student will submit and present in class one case study analysis. Students are expected to employ theories covered in class and demonstrate analytical skills.

Mid-Term Essay

Students will write a midterm essay describing Americanization in Europe and their views of this. Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the material covered in the course.

Final Paper

On the space of 2,500–3,000 words, students will discuss the impact of American Media is on Post-Communist Czech media and expand on whether they believe that the identity of the Czech media is in danger because of American influence. They should examine the extent of the American cultural influence and then describe the identity of the Czech media. They will be encouraged to express their own ideas and findings, based on the knowledge that they gained in this course.

Class Participation

Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions and complete all virtual classroom discussions and assignments published on Canvas. They are also required to do the required reading before class, which will be always discussed during the class.

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.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for short-term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

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.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or
event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences will lead to the following penalties:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; grade penalty &amp; <strong>written warning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Automatic <strong>course failure</strong>, and possible expulsion</td>
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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.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

**Class 1.1 Class Introduction**

Explanation of the content of the course, the learning goals, what is expected of the students, teaching methods and literature that will be used.

**Class 1.2 American Cultural Influence in Europe after 1945:**
A first introduction based on the reading.

Reading: Pells 2008, Chapter Six.

Quiz about the reading.

Week 2
Class 2.1 American Cultural Influence in Europe 2

Reading: Campbell and Kean 2016

Quiz about the reading

Documentary: ‘The Cola Conquest Part II’

Written assignment about the documentary

Class 2.2 Assignment: Observing American culture around you

Week 3
Class 3.1 Discussion of (American) identity

Written assignment and class discussion about the assignment

Class 3.2 Reading: Pells 2008, Chapter Eight.

Quiz about the reading.

Preparations for the group presentations.

Week 4
Class 4.1 Group presentations followed by discussions

Class 4.2 Reading: Kroes 2003

This is an in-class reading. Class discussion about the reading + written assignment
Week 5
Class 5.1 Introduction to life under communism

A short lecture and showing of the documentary “The Lost World of Communism.”

Information about the mid-term essay.

Class 5.2 Visit to the Museum of Communism

Reflection paper due after the visit

Week 6
Class 6.1 Life under communism: showing of the movie ‘Goodbye Lenin’

Midterm Period

Class 6.2 Film "Goodbye Lenin"

Written assignment and discussion of the assignment

Midterm exam week; essay due at the end of the week

Week 7
Class 7.1 Class discussion of the midterm essays.

Midterm Period

Reading: Shepherd 2000

Class 7.1 TBA; possible trip to Radio Free Europe

Midterm evaluations

Week 8
Class Class Trip to Radio Free Europe
Class discussion about the trip + written assignment

Characterizing the Czech media after 1989

Reading: Jakubowicz 2004

Written assignment + class discussion

Week 9
Class 9.1.

Reading: Becker 1995

Written assignment + class discussion

Class 9.2 The current state of the Czech media

Interactive reading: Jan Culik

Week 10
Class 10.1 Guest speaker

Reflection paper due on the topic presented by the guest speaker for the Second meeting

Class 10.2 Examples of Czech media and television clips

Class discussion about the examples

Reading: Jirák, Köpplová 2008

Quiz for next class

Week 11
Class.

Reading 1: Jirák, Köpplová 2008
Reading 2: Wyka-Podkowka 2014

Quiz for next class

Time for questions about the discussed topics and literature

Week 12
Class  12.1  The influence of oligarchs

Two short in-class readings followed by discussion

Class  12.2  A closer look at Czech identity

reading and discussion of New York Times article

Final paper due at the end of the week

Week 13
Class  13.1  Final Exam Week

Student presentations of final papers

Class  13.2  Final Exam Week

Wrap-up class with final discussion about the different topics that were presented in the course.

Course Materials
Readings

Required readings


• Wyka-Podkowka, Angelika W. “Twenty-Five Years after the Fall: From Communist Monopoly to Foreign Control over Local Owners: Media Ownership and Its Effects on Journalism in Central Europe”. The Political Economy of Communication 2 (1), 2014.

Media Resources

Films


Documentary: The Lost World of Communism: The Kingdom of Forgetting | Producer: BBC; Peter Molloy, Lucy Hetherington | Produced in: 2009

Film: Goodbye Lenin | Director: Wolfgang Becker | Producer: Stefan Arndt | Produced in: 2003