**Course Description**

This course examines the Jewish experience in the Czech Lands and the other countries of Central Europe. It touches upon the history of Jews in Russia, in addition to Central Europe, since Russia shares some commonalities with the history of Jews in Poland and the Czech Lands. The History of Jews in Central Europe is not only a story of prejudice and contempt, but also a story of hope and suffering which culminates in the worst tragedy of the Jewish people in history, the Holocaust. However, the issue of the Holocaust is not principal in this course. This course aims to provide students with insights into the most flourishing center of Jewish life of Prague and Central Europe, exploring its many different facets. Although the course presents some Jewish philosophical ideas and practices, it is not primarily a course in the Jewish Religion.

**Learning Objectives**

By completing this course, students will:

- Critically discuss Jewish experience in Prague and other Central European centers;
- Identify, analyze and assess the main obstacles in the life of Central European Jewry;
- Acquire the knowledge and skills to contextualize the existence of Jewish population within plurality of cultures in the region;
- Compare and contrast the situation in the presented Central European countries during the key historical periods and events discussed in class;
- Research and present a topic of their choice and defend their findings.

**Course Prerequisites**

None

**Methods of Instruction**

Experiential excursions, presentations, group discussions, research.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Presentation on an Assigned Topic 15%
2. Tests 20%
3. Final Paper and Presentation 20%
4. Reading Checks 20%
5. Group Presentation during a Day Excursion 5%
6. Class Participation 20%

**Course Requirements**

**Presentation on an Assigned Topic**

A mandatory 30-40 minutes presentation on an assigned topic. This task includes a PowerPoint presentation with information about the author(s) of the reading(s) used, multiple slides with content presentation with difficult points explained and final slides with questions and polemic points for moderating the debate. Grading takes into
account the accuracy in delivering main issues to the class and success in stimulating discussion. Assessed areas are: clarity, delivery, organization and capacity to engage fellow students.

Schedule of presentations will be determined at the beginning of the semester.

Tests

In addition to two tests (dates specified in the Weekly Structure), the study groups prepare and exchange tests on the content of the previous class at the beginning of most classes.

Final Paper and Presentation

1,500-2,000 words, spacing 1.5 lines. The projects are evaluated according to the quality of research and ability to add your own commentary. The work MUST have resonance with topics and readings covered in class. The topic must be consulted with the lecturer and approved by the lecturer in advance. A presentation of a research paper takes approximately 10-15 minutes.

Reading Checks

There will be ten readings requiring a reading check. Each check is worth up to 10 points. It is part of a consistent preparation for the class. First page - check: Author, title (event/ exhibition, etc.), year (if relevant). Bullet points with quotes, names, and data. One question for whole class discussion. Second page – reaction: your evaluation, polemics, criticism, etc. Only accepted BEFORE class. Submit by Sunday 10:00 p.m. on Canvas and bring a printed version to the class.

Group Presentation during a Day Excursion

A 30-minute group presentation on an assigned topic. This task includes outdoor presentations. Assessed areas are: clarity, delivery, organization and capacity to engage fellow students.

Class Participation

Class participation involves more than mere attendance. A consistent acquaintance with SOURCES and readings is required as well as an active participation in class discussions. Field trip checks include: place(s) visited, time of construction, a text including learned facts. Length: min 500 words. Guest lecture checks: there will be two guest lectures held during the semester. A guest lecture check must include: the name of the Holocaust survivor, bullet points learned, second page: how it was for you.

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.
If you will miss a class for any reason, notify the Program Coordinator and your instructor beforehand via Canvas. You are responsible for any materials covered in class during your absence, and except in the specific cases listed below, credit will not be granted for missed assessments.

Excessive absences will result in a notification letter, and finally a warning letter, sent to you and your home school, based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of course hours missed</th>
<th>Number of CIEE classes</th>
<th>Minimum penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>One to Three 90-min. classes; or One 180-min. class</td>
<td>No penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - 20%</td>
<td>Four 90-min. classes</td>
<td>Written notification* to the student, followed by a warning letter to the student and home school; 3% reduction in the final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five 90-min. classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two 180-min classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Six 90-min. classes; or Three 180-min. classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion with notification to the home school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The notification letters are intended to ensure that you are well advised in advance of any potential for failure or dismissal, so that you can take steps to avoid this.

As the table shows, **missing more than 20% of any class (e.g., due to undocumented illness, travel delays, flight cancellations, over-sleeping, etc.) results in automatic failure of the course.**

If you miss an assessment in class due to an absence, you will be able to make it up in the following instances:

- You provide a relevant doctor's note from a local medical professional to your Program Coordinator within 24 hours of your absence (a scan or photograph sent via e-mail are acceptable)
- A CIEE staff member verifies that you were too ill to attend class.
- You provide evidence of a family emergency to your Program Coordinator.
- You have an approved absence related to the observance of a religious holiday from the Academic Director based on a request submitted before you arrived onsite.

**Please note:** Absences incurred due to documented illness, documented family emergency or the observance of a religious holiday approved before arrival onsite do not count towards the total of absences. Students may self-certify one absence due to illness without providing a doctor’s note as long as they notify the Program Coordinator within 24 hours of their absence by e-mail or a text message.

**Other attendance-related policies**

If you transfer from one CIEE class to another during the Add/Drop period, you will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of the new class provided you were marked present for the first session(s) of the original class.

If you are over 15 minutes late for a class, the instructor is required to mark you absent.

In case of class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips and make-up classes), always contact the Academic Department to decide the appropriate course of action.

Please remember to track your attendance on the Canvas Course Sites and report any errors in the record to the Academic Department within one week of the discrepancy date, as later claims may not be considered.

These attendance rules also apply to any required co-curricular excursion, activity, or event, and to for-credit internships.

CIEE staff does not manage absences at partner institutions providing direct enrollment classes (FAMU, ECES and FSV), but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

**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: Jews in the Ancient world and in the Middle Ages, Ashkenazim
Week 2
Class: Crusades, medieval antisemitism, status of Jews in the Middle Ages

Discussion: Blood Libel and other accusations

Sources: Thomas of Monmouth’s account of the Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich (a ritual murder accusation from 1173);
A ritual murder accusation from Blois, 1171;
Accusations of well-poisoning levelled against Jews during the Black Death (c. 1346-52)

Readings (reading checks due):

Presentations:
1. Crusades and Blood Libel Accusation
2. Host Desecration and Ritual Murder
3. Black Death

Week 3
Class: Jewish mysticism and Hassidism, Jews in the 17th and 18th centuries

Reading:

Reading Check:

Presentation:
4. Jewish Mysticism

Field trip to the Old-New Synagogue

Class Excursion:
Kolin: one of the main centers of Jewish life in Bohemia since the 14th century. The 15th century Jewish cemetery is the second most important one in the country after the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague.

Group presentations:
1. Medieval antisemitism and representations of Jews
2. Architecture of a synagogue
3. Maharal and his followers


Week 4
Class: Sources in: Mendes-Flohr, Reinharz 1995:
The French National Assembly: Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, 1789
The French National Assembly: Debate on Eligibility of Jews for Citizenship, 1789
Moses Mendelsohn, The Right to be Different, 1789
Joseph II: Edict of Tolerance, 1782

Reading (reading check due):
V. Laquer 2003.
Week 5
Class: Field trip to the Jewish Museum in Prague

Reading: Kling 1999, pp. 22-58.

Week 6
Class: Midterm Exam Period

Test 1

Film: Yaakov Lifshin, The Way of Man – on Martin Buber

Week 7
Class: The Pale of Settlement / Midterm Exam Period

Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th Century

Sources in: Mendes-Flohr, Reinhartz 1995:

Alexander I: Statutes Concerning the Organization of Jews, 1804
Nicholas I: Statutes Regarding the Military Service of Jews, 1827
Nicholas I: Delineation of the Pale of Settlement, 1835
Map of the Jewish Pale of Settlement, 1835-1917

Reading: Beller 2007.

Week 8
Class: 19th Century Antisemitism, Sionism, Modern Racial Theories, Blood Libel

Sources in: Mendes-Flohr, Reinhartz 1995:

Moses Hess: Returning Home, 1862
The Bilu: Manifesto, 1882
Theodor Herzl: A Solution of the Jewish Question, 1896
The First Zionist Congress: The Basle Program, 1897
N. Tchaykovsky: The Massacre of Jews at Kishniev, 1903
The Beilis Trial, 1913

Reading (reading check due):

VI. Bronner 2004, 81-94.

Week 9
Class: Interwar Situation in Central Europe

Readings (reading check due):


Presentation:

6. Various aspects of pre-war antisemitism

Reading: Mendelsohn 1983, 131-169.
Sources in: Mendes-Flohr, Reinhart, 1995:
Hitler 1923.
Security Service Report on the Kristallnacht, 1938
Decree for the Elimination of the Jews from German Economic Life, 1938
Numerus Nullus in Schools, 1938
Protocols of the Wansee Conference, 1942
Estimated Numbers of Jews Killed by the Nazis

Readings (reading checks due):
VIII. Peukert 1994, 274-299.
IX.&X. Bronner 2000, 1-70. (worth 2 checks)

Presentations:
7. Protocols of the Elders of Zion
8. Germany and Colonialism
9. Modernity, Science and the Holocaust
10. Eugenics and Genocides

Research paper due on Sunday, 11:59 p.m., Prague time

Week 11
Class: Postwar situation in Central Europe and Jews under Communism
Guest lecture: A Holocaust survivor
Film screening on Sir Nicholas Winton, Matěj Mináč, The Power of Good

Week 12
Class: Test 2
Field trip: Jerusalem synagogue

Week 13
Class: Final presentations of research papers
End-of-course discussion

Course Materials
Readings
All readings are available on Canvas or provided by the lecturer.

Required:
- Brustein, William I. Roots of Hate, Antisemitism in Europe before the Holocaust, Cambridge University Press,
Online Resources

Accusations of well-poisoning levelled against Jews during the Black Death (c. 1346-52)

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/1348- jewsblackdeath.asp

A ritual murder accusation from Blois, 1171 - http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1171blois.asp

Thomas of Monmouth’s account of the Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich (a ritual murder accusation from 1173) - http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1173williamnorwich.asp

Media Resources

Films
