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: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Fall 2020

Course Description

This course examines the influence of American culture, specifically the American media model, on media in the Czech Republic after the fall of communism in 1989. Within this context, the course focuses on all aspects of the media, presenting specific examples. Following an introduction to the American cultural influence on European culture and the developments after World War II in Western Europe, and after 1989 in Central Europe, life under communism is explored to illustrate the contrast between the East and the West in Europe. The course also covers the different existing media models and invites students 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 are challenged to answer questions about the methods and scope of the American culture's influence on European countries, and specifically about the influence of the American media model on the media in the Czech Republic, and explore the identity of the Czech news and its challenges within this framework.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Analyze the forms of American cultural influence in Europe, specifically in Central Europe after 1989;
- Employ theories and notions studied in the course to characterize the American and Czech media and support their arguments through illustrative examples;
- 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;
- Have developed and demonstrate new analytical skills to be able to study the news in a critical manner.

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
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.

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:
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: 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.
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
Midterm evaluations

Week 8
Class: 8.1 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: 11.1

**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**
Course Materials

Readings

Required:

- 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