CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title: Czech and Central European History
Course code: CEAS 3001 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: Spring 2021

Course Description

The course focuses on the history of what is now the Czech Republic (Bohemia and Moravia) from the primeval times to the present (prehistoric times, medieval Czech state, Early Modern Ages, Bohemian Crownlands under the Habsburg Monarchy, Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic) considering the historical-geographical context. It also covers the history of the inhabitants of this territory (ancient prehistoric cultures, Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic tribes, Czechs, Germans, Jews, Slovaks and others) as well as a description of the general features of their political, social and cultural life. The basics of Central European history are included, especially in the case of periods when historical events of Bohemia and Moravia were closely connected to the contemporary international situation.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

• Describe historical, social, religious, geographical, national, and cultural development of the Bohemian Crownlands (the nowadays territory of the Czech Republic);
• Analyze and explain causes and consequences of all major historical events which occurred in the territory of the Bohemian Crownlands during the course of medieval, early modern, modern and present times;
• Determine the position of the Bohemian Crownlands in the Central European context within the specific historical periods;
• Compare the geopolitical, economic and cultural standing of the Bohemian Crownlands with their Central European neighbors throughout the history;
• Describe and analyze historical roots of present politics and culture of the Czech people (causes of historical resentments and national identity).

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

Lectures with PowerPoint presentations, discussions, field trips, film screenings.

Field Trips:

Visit to the historical halls of the Strahovy Library.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. In-Class Tests 40%
2. Homework Assignments 15%
3. Field Trip Assignment 5%
4. Paper 20%
5. Class Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements
In-Class Tests

There will be a total of four in-class (4 x 10%) test administered throughout the semester. Each test will consist of approximately 10-12 open-ended questions assessing students’ knowledge and understanding of basic dates, events, and figures covering the curriculum and readings of the particular part of the semester.

Homework Assignments

Students will submit three homework assignments in which they will express and justify their view of important milestones of Czech history significance/impact of which can be understood and interpreted in different ways. Assignments are based on readings and knowledge gained in lectures. Each assignment will be worth a maximum of 5 percentage points. The assignments of at least 350 words will be submitted through the Canvas course site.

Field Trip Assignment

The class field trip to the Library of the Strahov Monastery, one of the most valuable and best-preserved historical libraries. The assignment – a reflection of a minimum of 500 words – will focus on the role of books and censorship throughout history. Detailed description of the assignment requirements will be published on the Canvas community site.

Paper

Students will choose a topic of interest and explore it throughout the course. At the end of the semester students will submit an essay presenting their findings. The essay should be a minimum of 2,500 words long. A proposed topic and one-paragraph outline should be submitted via Canvas course site in Week 6.

Alternatively, students may choose to write a 2,500-word report on their visit to a historical exhibition or monument instead, exclusive of the Strahov Library. In both cases at least three published sources must be cited.

The final draft of the Paper must be submitted via Canvas course site during the last week of the semester.

Class Participation

Participation includes preparation for classes and active attitude in class. Students have to read texts for each class in advance. They are expected to complete short quizzes concerning readings and to participate in discussions.

All readings, mandatory as well as complementary, are available on the Canvas course site.

Class participation is assessed four times during the semester, at the end of week 4, 7, 10 and 13.

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>
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</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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five 90-min. classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two 180-min. classes</td>
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<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>
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* 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 Introduction

Course learning objectives, course requirements and sources.

**From Prehistory to History**: archaeological impact of prehistory in the present-day Czech Republic. Explanation of famous prehistorical moments in Central Europe including the Celtic tribe legacy based on material as well as non-material resources like DNA and languages.

**Reading**:

Teich (1998), 23–38 (Course Reader).

Agnew (2004), 9–12.

**Primary sources**:


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Class: 1.2 Rise of the Přemyslid Dynasty (10th–12th century)

This class focuses on the role of Eastern and Western Christianity in early Czech history, specifically comparing the pre-Christian Greater Moravia, the first state on the territory of the Czech Republic, and the Principality of Bohemia, with a special focus on the Bohemian Patron Saint – St. Václav (Wenceslaus). In addition to the political and theological aspects, Romanesque art is discussed.

**Reading**:

Pánek – Tůma et al. (2014), 65–79.

Teich (1998), 39–49 (Course Reader).


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Week 2

Class: 2.1 Přemyslid Kings of the 13th Century and Their Ambitions

This class explores the transformation of the Bohemia principality into a kingdom and the contextualization of this political act within social evolution, urbanization, colonization and West European culture impulses.

**Reading**:

Teich (1998), 49–58 (Course Reader).


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Class: 2.2 Luxembourgs. From Kings to Emperors (14th century – 15th century)

The class focuses on the Golden Era, analyzing the role of Charles IV in the strengthening of the position of the Kingdom of Bohemia in the Holy Roman Empire and the consequences of his state-forming acts. Gothic art is discussed as a political tool.

**Reading**: Teich (1998), 59–78 (Course Reader).

**Primary sources**: Nagy (2001), 58–81.

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Week 3

Class: 3.1 Jan Hus and His Reforms

This class focuses on the role of Jan Hus, assesses his effort to reform the Roman Catholic Church and evaluates his punishment from different perspectives. Further it explores how the Hussite Movement/Revolution/Wars (1415–1436) resonated within the whole society of medieval Bohemia and explore Jan Hus’s impact on Czech history.

**Reading**: Teich (1998), 79–97 (Course Reader).
### Class: 3.2 Jan Hus’ Followers

This class analyzes and assesses acts by Jan Hus’s followers, including the Hussite contribution to military history as a part of a national myth. It compares the perception of the Hussites before and after the Basel Compacts of 1436 and discusses rise of the Unity of Bohemian Brethren. It assesses the status of the isolated "heretic" Kingdom of Bohemia and attempts of King George of Poděbrady to restore the position of Bohemia in Christian Europe.

**Reading:**
- Šmahel (1990), s. 190–193 (Course Reader).

**Primary sources:** Fudge (ed. 2002), 66–68.

### Homework Assignment #1 due

## Week 4

**Class: 4.1 Jagellonian Dynasty**

This class analyzes the development of the political establishment of the Estate monarchy fully developed under the Jagellonian Dynasty.

**Reading:** Agnew (2004), 55–63.

**Primary sources:** Letts (2016), 19–24.

**Test 1: from the beginning up to the Luxembourg Dynasty (inclusive)**

**Class: 4.2 Reformation Movements and Renaissance Art**

This class compares and assesses Reformation movements in Europe with the Bohemian Crownlands as the most complicated focus of European religious variability. In addition it explores Renaissance art based on Rudolfine intellectual and cultural center in Prague.

**Reading:**

**Primary sources:** Bažant J., Bažantová N., Stam F. (2010), 219–222

## Week 5

**Class: 5.1 Monarchy Crisis**

This class focuses on the crisis of the monarchy including the uprising of the Bohemian Estates, assesses the impact of the Renewed Land Ordinance and analyzes the substantial transition of the Czech society (1618–1627).

**Reading:** Teich (1998), 143–163 (Course Reader).

**Primary sources:** Comenius, link. Select one chapter according to your choice.

**Class: 5.2 The Thirty Years’ War and Its Consequences**

This class assess the results of re-Catholicization and centralization of the Habsburg monarchy (1627–1740), explains the functioning of the Baroque Absolutism and the role of Baroque art.

**Reading:** Agnew (2004), 68–75.

**Primary sources:** Bažant J., Bažantová N., Stam F. (2010), 96–99.

## Week 6

**Class: 6.1 1740–1790: Reforms of the Enlightenment and War of the Austrian Succession**
This class outlines the political context of broad reforms of the Enlightened Absolutism in the dawn of the Modern Age and explores the impact of this period on the present-day society.


**A proposed one-paragraph outline of final essay due**

Class:   6.2  
Field Trip to the Historical Halls of the Strahov Library

**Week 7**

Class:   7.1  
Czech National Revival

This class explains the rise and role of Czech National Revival in the context of nationalistic ideology and analyzes Bach’s Absolutism as a consequence of Napoleonic Wars and an example of the temporary victory of monarchism in Europe.

**Reading**:

- Teich (1998), 182–197 (Course Reader).
- Okey (2001), 99–119 (Course Reader).

**Primary sources**: Trencsényi – Kopeček (eds), 97–103

Class:   7.2  
Midterm Exam Period

Consolidation of covered course material and Test No. 2

**Test 2: period of 1415–1620**

**Week 8**

Class:   8.1  
Formation of Czech Political Life

*Revolutionary Year 1848 in Europe and its Consequences in the Lands of the Bohemian Crown (1848–1860s)*

This class analyzes the reasons for a democratic revolution in the Austrian Empire and the beginnings of political life in the Bohemian Crownlands, comparing the aims of Czech-speaking and German-speaking political elites.

**Primary sources**: Trencsényi – Kopeček (eds), 97–103; 322–329

**Field Trip Assignment due**

Class:   8.2  
Struggle for Emancipation

This class explores the evolution of the political establishment of the Austrian Empire from absolutism to constitutional monarchy, including the first political parties and a later political diversification (1860s–1914).

**Reading**:

- Okey (2001), 283–309 (Course Reader).
- Teich (1998), 198–214 (Course Reader).

**Week 9**

Class:   9.1  
Creation of Czechoslovakia

This class explains the position of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown within Austria-Hungary in the context of the end of the Belle Époque, explores the Czechs’ and Slovaks’ fight for independence in World War I, and analyzes the role of Czechoslovak Legionnaires and the support of Czech-Americans in this struggle.

**Reading**:

- Krejčí (1990), 137–155.
- Zudová-Lešková (2015), 122–125; 133–143.
This class focuses on minority groups in Czechoslovakia and their attitude to the new state, explores Czechoslovakia’s political system, the country's international position, economic developments and culture (1918–1938). In addition it examines the causes of the Munich Agreement of 1938.

**Reading:**
- Krejčí (1990), 137–155.
- Teich (1998), 244–266 (Course Reader).

**Week 10**

**Class: 10.1 2nd Czechoslovak Republic (1938–1945)**

This class explores the situation in the Second Czechoslovak Republic and its occupation by Nazi Germany, including the installment of Nurnberg Laws and German occupation administration. It assesses the role of the Operation Anthropoid and resistance movement in the context of Nazi terror represented by Reichsprotector Reinhard Heydrich. In addition, it compares the situation in Slovakia and the Protectorate and examines the Slovak National Uprising and Liberation.

**Reading:**
- Murray (1988), 143–148 (Course Reader).
- Primary sources:

**Homework Assignment #2 due**

**Class: 10.2 The 3rd Czechoslovak Republic and Triumph of Communism in Czechoslovakia**

This class explains the political establishment of the Third Republic and examines its position between London and Moscow. It discusses development of the country from the expulsion of Germans and broad nationalization of private enterprises through the communist coup d’état and Stalinist terror to the restructuring of the society and new constitution of 1960.

**Reading:**
- Krejčí (1990), 156-171.
- Smetan (2005), 19–23.
- Bouška, Pinerová (2009), 9–29.

**Primary sources:** Bažant J., Bažantová N., Starn F. (2010), 349–350.

**Week 11**

**Class: 11.1 From the Prague Spring to the Velvet Revolution**

*The Relaxation after the Cold War, Reforms of Prague Spring Dissolved by Soviet Occupation (1960–1970)*

This class analyzes the consequences of the collapse of the Five-Year Plan and the effects of the worsening economic standards, which led to a critical reaction by artists (1960s’ New Wave) as well as general public. It discusses the Prague Spring reforms of 1968 and their brutal termination by the invasion of Warsaw Pact armies, following by the process of “Normalization”.

**Reading:** Teich (1998), 313–317 (Course Reader).

**Primary sources:** Bažant J., Bažantová N., Starn F. (2010), 376–382.


This class discusses the impact repressions after 1968 on the society, including massive emigration and attempts to uphold civil rights by Charter 77, comparing the situation with the civil right
movements in Perestroika in the USSR.

Reading:
- Bren (2010), 85–111.

Primary sources:

Homework Assignment #3 due

Week 12
Class: 12.1 The Velvet Revolution

This class discusses the new generation and petition movement in the context of the Communist Bloc crisis as a path to the Velvet Revolution and the restoration of pluralist democracy. Czechoslovakia is Dead, Long Live Czechia!

Reading:
- Teich (1998), 364–379 (Course Reader).

Class: 12.2 Review

Review, discussion and a Q&A session.

Paper due

Week 13
Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Test and Course Wrap-up

Test 4: period of 1918–1992

Course Materials
Readings

Primary Sources:
- Letts M. (Ed.), The Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465–1467, NY 2016 (Reprint).

Secondary Sources:


Murray W., Munich at Fifty, Commentary 1988, s. 25-30, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/munich-at-fifty/


Šmahel F., Jan Hus - Heretic or Patriot?, History Today, August 1990, pp. 27-33 (Course Reader).


Zudová-Lešková Z. et al., Undaunted by Exile! The Victims of Religious, Political and Racial Persecutions in Central Europe between 16th and 20th Century with an Accent on the Czech Lands, Prague 2015

Textbooks:


Recommended Readings:


Ripellino A. M., Magic Prague, UCP 1993.
Yurchak A., Everything was Forever until it was no more: The last Soviet generation, Princeton 2005.