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: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description

The use of nationalist vocabulary in the political debate in countries of Central Europe shows that the issue of nationalism and national identity is not a matter of the past. Instead, it is very present in the public discourse about society and politics as nationalist political parties and movements have recently become central forces in political life. The idea that the ethnic or national group is the most determining factor for one’s identity is a dominant factor again.

This course examines Czech nationalist concepts, a broader perspective of history, the diversity of concepts of national identity, and influences of personalities, movements, and ideologies. In the course we read and discuss texts which provide valuable background information and disclose mentalities behind the developments. The questions explored in the courses include the definition of the Czech national identity, Czech national myths, legends and heroes, the role of the religion in this process, the effect of communism on national identity, the relationship of Czechs to other ethnic groups living in Central Europe, the violence or lack thereof in Czech national, and the relationship between the Czechs and the European Union.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Explain and exemplify 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;
- Critically discuss and compare the different ways and backgrounds of how Czechs think about themselves and about others;
- Discern, analyze and assess the different factors in the self-perceptions of the Czechs;
- Outline and critique backgrounds of current discussions in the Czech society about political and social issues.

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.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Participation in Excursion 10%
2. Presentation 20%
3. Midterm Test 15%
4. Final Test 15%
5. Final Paper
   20%
6. Class Participation
   20%
TOTAL
100%

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.

**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: 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 Vysehrad 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 concept 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:
Hilde, 1999, 647-665

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
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)


