# CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

**Course title:** The Habsburg Empire - A Political and Cultural History  
**Course code:** HIST 3008 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 2022

## Course Description

This course explores the political and diplomatic history of the Habsburg Empire, from the emergence of the Habsburg dynasty to the dissolution of Austria-Hungary at the end of World War I, emphasizing key turning points, such as the reign of Maximilian I and his marriage policy, the figure of Charles V, the Battle of Mohacs and the birth of a Central European Empire, the Counter-Reformation, the enlightened absolutism of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, the system of Metternich and the reign of Francis Joseph. This provides a framework for an analysis of interdisciplinary questions, such as the role of religion or the multinational Empire, with the aim of bringing to the fore the uniqueness of the culture developed in the Empire.

## Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the history of the Habsburg Empire;  
- contextualize European history through the study of the Empire’s interaction with the major European powers;  
- examine and illustrate the impact of the Habsburgs on the cultural environment in Prague and Central Europe;  
- analyze primary texts involving the history of the Habsburg Empire and critically read the secondary literature on Central Europe;  
- apply this knowledge of the history and analytical skills to produce a research paper.

## Course Prerequisites

None, but general knowledge of European history is helpful. Interest in history is a must, as well as the readiness to use local resources, especially libraries.

## Methods of Instruction

This course is lecture-based (which does not mean that questions and discussions are not strongly encouraged). Chronologies and summaries are provided for each chapter (on Canvas). The required readings are available on Canvas, they amount to an average of about 40 pages/week. They combine primary and secondary sources (in English translation).

This class includes a field trip to discover how the Habsburg rule over Bohemia has shaped Prague’s architecture. Other field trips might be organized (according to the number of students and the cultural program in Prague during the semester). Field trips are part of the regular curriculum.

Participation in the CIEE optional abroad trip to Vienna is strongly recommended.

## Assessment and Final Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Short Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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### Course Requirements

#### Two Short Quizzes

Two unannounced short quizzes will test the students’ knowledge of the significance of main historical events in the Habsburg history and their understanding of the most important points discussed in class.

#### Presentation

Each student will be responsible for researching the history of a specific site related to Habsburg history (the list depends on the number of students enrolled in the class and will therefore be made available at the beginning of the semester) and to present it during the tour of Habsburg Prague. S/he will prepare a one-page handout with a summary of the findings to be distributed to the other students during the tour. The instructor is available to review this handout beforehand but it is the responsibility of each student to have enough copies on the day of the tour.

#### Research Paper

Each student will write a research paper whose topic will be chosen with the help of the lecturer and according to his/her major and interests. For the writing of this paper, the use of Prague libraries (especially of the National Library at the Klementinum) is highly recommended. The paper should have a length of 3000 words (+/- 10%) and respect the following format: Times New Roman 12, spacing 1.5, margins 1 inch. In the course of the semester, each student will submit a proposed topic and bibliography and an outline, before submitting the final paper at the end of the semester.

#### Midterm Exam

#### Final Exam

Midterm and final exams are not cumulative. They last for one session and consist of 2 essays each. They should be prepared with the help of the study questions available on Canvas. Time permitting, review sessions might be organized but the students are strongly encouraged to study regularly, alone, or in groups. The instructor is available for help and advice regarding the study questions.

#### Participation

The participation grade will reflect the engagement of the student in the class, his/her contribution to the learning atmosphere and preparedness for the discussion of primary sources. The primary texts should be studied with the help of reading questions available on Canvas.

#### CIEE Prague Participation Policy

Assessment of students’ participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. 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.

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. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

#### Attendance
To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor’s note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

*N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: Introduction. The Beginnings of Habsburg Austria

Austria from the Romans to the Babenbergs

The Rise of the Habsburgs

Readings

Primary Sources

Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor: Privilegium Minus (1156)

Secondary material


**Week 2**

Class: Tu, Felix Austria, Nube

The Capture of the Imperial Crown

Marriage as a means for diplomacy

Readings

Secondary material


**Week 3**
Week 4
Class: An Empire Divided
Reformation and Counter Reformation
The Road to War
The Thirty Years War
Resumption of the Turkish Wars
Readings
Primary Sources
Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor: Letter of Majesty (1609)
Secondary material
Research paper: topic and bibliography are due

Week 5
Class: The Assertion of the Great Power position
Consolidation in the East: Hungary and Transylvania
Struggle in the West: France and the War of the Spanish Succession
The Pragmatic Sanction and its Consequences
Readings
Primary Sources
Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor: The Pragmatic Sanction (1713)
Secondary material
Kann: (1977): 54-100.

Week 6
Class: Habsburg Prague
Field trip
Midterm exam
Week 7
Class: The Crisis of 1740 and the Consequences
The War of the Austrian Succession
The Diplomatic Revolution
The Beginnings of the Austro-Prussian Rivalry
Readings - Secondary material

Week 8
Class: Enlightened Absolutism
A theory of Enlightened Absolutism
The Reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II and their consequences
Habsburg policy towards the Jews
Readings
Primary Sources
Immanuel Kant: What is Enlightenment? (1782)
Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor: Edict of Tolerance (1782)
Secondary material
Research paper: outlines are due

Week 9
Class: Revolution and the Return of the Old Order
Facing the French Revolution: the clash of political and philosophical orders
The Napoleonic Wars, the Congress of Vienna and the alliance of conservative monarchies
The Metternich Era and the end of Enlightened absolutism
Readings
Primary Sources
Confederation of the Rhine: Dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire (1806)
German Confederation: The Carlsbad Decrees – Confederal Press Law (1819)
Secondary material

Week 10
Class: Revolution, Reaction, Modernization
The rise of nationalism among the Habsburg peoples
The Revolution of 1848
Transition to Constitutional Government and creation of the Dual Monarchy
Emancipation of the Habsburg Jews
The end of the liberal era and the birth of Jewish nationalism

Readings

Primary Sources
František Palacký: Letter to the Frankfurt Parliament (1848)
Austrian Constitution: Fundamental Law Concerning the General Rights of Citizens (1867)
Theodor Herzl: A Solution to the Jewish Question (1896)

Secondary material

Week 11
Class: Primus Inter Pares?
Habsburg Foreign Policy after 1848
The Austro-Prussian struggle for Germany supremacy and the creation of Germany
The fateful German alliance
The end of the Great European Power

Readings

Primary Sources
Austria-Hungary and Germany: The Dual Alliance (1879)
Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia: The Three Emperors’ League (1881)

Secondary material
Johnson (2011): 141-161

Research papers are due

Week 12
Class: Austria Delenda Est
National conflicts and the (imagined?) Serbian threat
The road to World War I
World War I, the Paris Peace Conference and the end of Habsburg Austria

Readings

Primary Sources
Woodrow Wilson: The Fourteen Points (1918)
Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk: The Case for the Successor States

Secondary material

Week 13
Class: Final Exam Week

Review session and Final exam
**Course Materials**

**Readings**

**Primary Sources** (in chronological order)

Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor: “Privilegium Minus” (1156)

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/austria.asp

Luther, Martin: “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation” (1520)

https://history.hanover.edu/texts/luthad.html

Luther, Martin: “Confrontation at the Diet of Worms” (1521)

http://www.personal.ksu.edu/~lyman/english233/Luther-Diet_of_Worms.htm

Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor: “Peace of Augsburg” (1555)


Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor: “The Pragmatic Sanction” (1713)

http://personal.ashland.edu/~jmoser1/enlight/pragmatic.htm

Kant, Immanuel: “What is Enlightenment?” (1782)

https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/kant-whatis.asp

Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor: “Edict of Tolerance” (1782)


Confederation of the Rhine: “Dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire” (1806)

https://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/516/

German Confederation: “The Carlsbad Decrees – Confederal Press Law” (1819)


Palacký, František: “Letter to the Frankfurt Parliament” (1848)

http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/1848/palacky_letter.html

“Austrian Constitution: Fundamental Law Concerning the General Rights of Citizens” (1867)

https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/1443

Austria-Hungary and Germany: “The Dual Alliance” (1879)

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/dualalli.asp

Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia: “The Three Emperors’ League” (1881)


Wilson, Woodrow: “The Fourteen Points” (1918)

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp

**Secondary sources**

Chapters from the following books:


**Recommended Readings**

The following books were also used to prepare the course. Students are not required to read them but they provide a good basis for further study and for the research paper.


