Knowledge of a host country’s broader historical context is essential for gaining an understanding that country’s modern-day society, its politics, economy, and interpreting attitudes and behavior of its inhabitants. This course provides an overview of the milestones of the history of the Czech Lands going back to primeval times, exploring the highlights of Czech history, such as the empire under Charles IV, religious wars in the Middle Ages, the impact of world wars and the struggle of the Czech people under the communist regime, in the broader cultural context of Europe. It examines the different ethnicities that populated the territory, including Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic tribes, Czechs, Germans, Jews and Slovaks and the general features of their political, social, and cultural life, and their impact on historical developments as well as modern-day Czech Republic.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- demonstrate an overall understanding of historical, social, religious, geographical, and cultural development of the Czech Lands;
- describe and explain the impact of major historical events and milestones which occurred on the territory of the Czech Lands;
- reflect on and interpret their potential effects on contemporary Czech society;
- describe and critically discuss the geopolitical, economic, and cultural development of the Czech Lands within the broader Central European context throughout history.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

Lectures with PowerPoint presentations, discussions, guest lectures, field trips, film screenings and an overnight excursion.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.  Tests                                  15%
2.  Final Exam                             20%
3.  Student Presentation                   15%
4.  Final Essay                            20%
5.  Course Excursion Assignment           10%
6.  Class Participation                   20%
   TOTAL                                  100%

Course Requirements

Tests

Students will take three in-class tests consisting of approximately 10 short questions on basic dates, events, and persons, and 1 essay question covering the curriculum and readings of the particular part of the semester. These
Final Exam

The final in-class exam will consist of approximately 20 short questions on basic dates, events, and persons, and 2 essay questions, covering the curriculum and readings of the particular part of the semester.

Student Presentation

Final Essay

Students will choose a topic of interest and explore it throughout the course. They will present their findings during a 10–15-minute class presentation and submit an essay of a minimum of 2,500 words. The proposed topic and a one paragraph synopsis should be submitted to the professor in advance. Alternatively, students may choose to write a 2,500-word report on a visit to a historical exhibition or monument instead. In both cases at least three published sources must be cited.

Course Excursion Assignment

Students are required to participate in an overnight excursion. In addition to the organized events (visits to museums, castles, etc.), students will be asked to submit their own report on the sites visited, including photographs taken during the trip and collecting information on site. The reports will be submitted via Canvas.

Class Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in discussions and in-class short quizzes as well as presentations. Students are required to read the assigned texts for each class and take notes, which they should bring to class. 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

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
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: 1.1** Introduction: Czech or Bohemian History?

Introduction: Course Requirements; Sources; Geographical Context; Basic Terms; Czech Historical Metanarratives and Stereotypes

**Class: 1.2** Introduction: Czech or Bohemian History?

Medieval Church and the Holy Roman Empire; Arrival of the Slavs; Great Moravia; Mythical Origins of Bohemia – Forefather Čech, Foundation of Prague and Duke Přemysl

**Reading:**

Teich (1998), 23–38 (Course Reader).

Agnew (2004), 9–12.

**Primary sources:**


**Week 2**

**Class: 2.1** Rise and Fall of the Premyslid Dynasty (10th–13th century).

Bohemian Patron Saint – St. Václav (Wenceslaus); Christianization; Bishoprics and Monasteries; Bohemian Game of Thrones; Natives and Foreigners; From Dukes to Kings

**Reading:**

Agnew (2004), 12–18.

Teich (1998), 39–49 (Course Reader).

**Primary sources:**


**Class: 2.2 Premyslid Kings of the 13th century and their Ambitions**

Knightly Culture; Silver Mines; Urbanization; Colonization
Week 3
Class: 3.1  The Luxembourg Dynasty and the Hussite Revolution (14th century–1436).

Golden Era under Charles IV: Strengthening the position of the Kingdom of Bohemia in the Holy Roman Empire; Blossoming of arts.

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

Primary sources:

Test 1: topics up to the Luxembourg Dynasty (inclusive)

Class: 3.2  Jan Hus

The Hussite Movement/Revolution/Wars (1415-1436) - Reasons, Courses, Results

Reading:
Teich (1998), 79–97 (Course Reader).
Šmáhel (1990), s. 190–193 (Course Reader).

Primary sources:
Workman (1904), 262–265, 275–280.

Week 4
Class: 4.1  Monarchy of the Estates and First Habsburgs on the Throne of Bohemia.

Topic 1: Isolated Position of the "Heretic" Kingdom; George of Poděbrady; Jagellonian Dynasty; Dominance of the Estates

Reading:
Teich (1998), 98–116 (Course Reader).

Primary sources:

Class: 4.2  Reformation and Renaissance

Printing Culture, Rudolfinian Intellectual and Cultural Center in Prague

Reading:
Teich (1998), 117–142 (Course Reader).

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

Week 5
Class: 5.1  Bohemian Revolt, Thirty Years' War and the Baroque Era
Crisis of the Monarchy; Uprising of the Bohemian Estates and the Renewed Land Ordinance (1618–1627)

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

**Primary sources:**
Comenius, http://babel.mml.ox.ac.uk/naughton/labyrint/labyrinth_frame.html

Class: 5.2 The Thirty Years’ War and its Consequences

Re-Catholicization and Centralization of the Habsburg Monarchy (1627–1740)

**Reading:**
Agnew (2004), 68–75.

**Primary sources:**

**Week 6**

Class: 6.1 Test 2 and Field Trip to Prague Castle

*Midterm Exam Period*
Consolidation of covered course material.

Class: 6.2 Field Trip 1

Field Trip to Prague Castle

**Week 7**

Class: 7.1 The Enlightenment and Czech National Revival.

*Midterm Exam Period*
1740–1790: Reforms of the Enlightenment and War of the Austrian Succession

**Reading:**

Class: 7.2 Napoleonic Wars

Bach’s Absolutism and National Revival (1790–1848)

**Reading:**
Teich (1998), 182–197 (Course Reader).
Okey (2001), 99–119 (Course Reader).

**Week 8**

Class: 8.1 Revolutions of 1848; First Constitutions

*Making of Modern Civic Society in the Lands of Bohemian Crown (1848–1914).*

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

**Primary sources:**
Beardmore (1947/1948), 303–308.
Week 9
Class: 9.1 Foundation and Building of the Czechoslovak Republic and its Problems (1918–1938)
End of the Belle Époque; World War I; Struggle for National Independence, Czech Hinterland; the Role of Czech-Americans in the struggle for independence

Reading:
Krejčí (1990), 137–155.

Test 3: period of 1740–1918

Week 10
Class: 10.1 Fall of the 1st Czechoslovak Republic, Slovak State, Nazi Occupation and the Struggle for Freedom; Post-War Development; The Cold War and Triumph of Communism in Czechoslovakia
1938–1945: Munich Agreement; The Second Republic; Protectorate and Resistance; Holocaust and Reinhard Heydrich; Slovak National Uprising and Liberation

Reading:
Murray (1988), 143–148 (Course Reader).

Primary sources:

Class: 10.2 Fall of the 1st Czechoslovak Republic
1945–1953: Expulsion of Germans; The Third Republic between London and Moscow; Communist coup d’etat and Stalinist terror; Restructuring of the society

Reading:
Krejčí (1990), 156-171.
At the European Crossorads (2005), 19–23.
Bouška, Pinerová (2009), 9–29.

Primary sources:

Week 11
Class: 11.1 The Golden Sixties, Prague Spring and Soviet Occupation
1953–1968: "Wasted Opportunity" of 1956; Collapse of the Five-year Plan; New Wave during 1960s; Prague Spring

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

Class: 11.2 The Golden Sixties, Prague Spring and Soviet Occupation


Reading:
Bren (2010), 85–111.

Primary sources:

Class: 11.3 Field Trip 2

Security Services Archive

Week 12
Class: 12.1 "Real" Socialism; the Velvet Revolution and the "Velvet Divorce"; End of History?

Shadow Economy, Perestroika, Petition Movement and the Velvet Revolution

Reading:
Teich (1998), 319–323 (Course Reader).

Primary sources:

Class: 12.2 "Real" Socialism; the Velvet Revolution and the "Velvet Divorce"; End of History?

New Political Parties; The Dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Economic Transformation and "Wild Privatization"

Reading:
Teich (1998), 364–379 (Course Reader).
Contributions to Contemporary History (2015), 9–23.
Blaive (2009).

Week 13
Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Review (1648-1993)

Class: 13.2 Final Exam Week
Course Materials

Readings

Primary Sources:

- Letts M. (Ed.), The Travels of Leo of Rozmila 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).

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.