



CET ACADEMIC
PROGRAMS

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Prague

Course Code / Title: (PR/CEST 355) Resistance and Dissent: Punk and Alternative Culture from Nazism to Communism in the Czech Lands

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Central European Studies / Sociology, Political Science, History

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: Open to all students

Description

This course provides critical insights into the Czech expressions of resistance: underground, dissident and postmodern/contemporary bohemian. Students start with the World War II movement against the German occupation, and continue into the 1950s underground embodied by the free-wheeling trio of graphic artist Boudnik, philosopher Bondy and writer Hrabal. Later, the rebel role is taken up by the “Big Beat” music movement, exemplified by the phenomenon of The Plastic People of the Universe and their later connection to Charter 77, the civic rights movement headed by the then dissident Václav Havel. The role of the Czech “alternative scene” of the 1980s is discussed vis-à-vis music (UJD, Psi vojáci, MCH Band, etc.), theater and film (Prague 5). The post-89’ resistance against “consumer culture” trends is traced in hip hop and graffiti, anarchism, the alter-globalization movement, squatting and other current phenomena. Focus is on the “politics” of resistance and disclosures of power mechanisms.

Visuals and field trips are a part of this course.

Objectives

In this course, students learn how to:

- Conceptualize and contextualize expressions of resistance
- Apply critical imagination in decoding resistance
- Read resistance in consumer culture
- Use critical theory to “read” music and popular culture
- View Czech history from the underground
- Understand contemporary Czech society

Course Requirements

Class participation. Students are required to attend class regularly and complete readings (averaging 50 pages per class session) and other assignments on time. Students are responsible for all required material and are expected to come to class prepared and participate in class discussion.

Syllabus of Record

Reading debate leader. Each student signs up to provide a brief summary of one of the readings and initiate class debate with three well-constructed questions. Students should submit a written copy of the summary and questions at the start of class. The author of the reading should be introduced in the summary. Students should keep in mind that they are presenting the content of the reading, not their own views about it.

Research paper case study: My Resistance Hero. This is a paper of 1,200 words along with an accompanying oral presentation. During the course, students learn about various resistance figures and movements. For this assignment, students research, using secondary sources, this “underground” figure or movement in his/her/its socio-historical context.

Midterm examination. This is a comprehensive midterm comprising multiple-choice questions and two essay questions.

Open Mic. This is a live presentation of student poetry, songs, etc. Performers can engage in free form or genre, as individuals or in small groups. Performance can be original poetry, song, film, theater, projection, short story, stand-up comedy, cut-ups, etc. The length should be about 5 minutes per person. Each performer should submit a two page description of the project, "drawing the meaning out of" the given text, artwork, film etc. All audience members submit an anonymous peer evaluation for each performance that attempts to judge the artistic level, the amount of preparation and overall impact.

Final research paper: Graffiti and Street Art. This is a research paper of 3,000 to 3,500 words, cited in the MLA format. The projects are evaluated according to the quality of research and ability of students to add their own commentary. The work must respond to readings covered in class. A short in-class oral presentation of the project is also required. Students must select one of the Czech crews (CAP, WAF, NNK), artists (onpoint.cz, POISE) or street artists and research, interview, photo, interpret, comment, compare, etc.

Students are expected to abide by CET’s attendance policy.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

Class participation	10%
Reading debate leader	10%
Research paper case study	20%
Midterm examination	20%
Open mic	20%
Final research paper	20%

Readings

Primary Texts:

Banksy. *Wall and Piece*. London: Random House, 2005.

Grof, Stanislav. *Heuristic Value of Psychedelic Research*. Downloaded from erovid in 2006.

Havel, Vaclav. *The Power of the Powerless*. Charles University Press, Prague: 1985.

Syllabus of Record

Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*. London: Methuen, 1979.

Kaláb, Jan, Barenthin Lindblad, Tobias. 10-15 in: *Names*. Praha, Trafačka, 2008.

Machovec, Martin. "Czech Underground Literature, 1969-1989 A Challenge to Textual Studies." In *Voice, Text, Hypertext, Emerging Practices in Textual Studies*. Modiano Raimonda et al. (ed.) Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003.

Magid, Václav. In: *Crew Against People* (Bley, Crap, Dize, Key, Kto, Masker, Mosd). Praha, Bigg Boss, 2007.

Martin Machovec (ed.) *Views From the Inside. Czech Underground Literature and Culture (1948-1989)*. Praha: FFUK, 2006: 1. Ivan Martin Jirous –Music Revival; 2. Paul Wilson; 3. Egon Bondy – the Roots; Ivan Martin Jirous – Literature; Jachym Topol – Revolver Revue.

Manifesto of Charter 77

Pospiszyl, Tomáš, Lékó, István. 1-19 in: *Street Art Praha*. Praha, Arbor vitae, 2007.

Ramet, Sabrina Petra (ed.). *Rocking the State*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1994.

Reynolds, Simon "In Our Angelhood: Rave as Counterculture and Spiritual Revolution." In: *Generation Extasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave*. Little Brown, Boston: 1999.

Reynolds, Simon. *Notes on the Noughties: When will Hip Hop Hurry up and Die?*(Guardian online, 2009).

Reynolds, Simon. *Rip It Up and Start Again. Postpunk 1978-1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005. Prologue xii –xxx.

Riedel, Jaroslav (ed.). *The Plastic People of the Universe. Lyrics*. Praha: Maťa, 1997.

Roszak, Theodore. Counterfeit Identity in: *The Making of a Counter Culture*. New York:Doubleday and Company, 1969.

Spencer, Lloyd. "Postmodernism, Modernity and the Tradition of Dissent" in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. Ed. Sim, Stuart. London, 2005.

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Two Totalitarianisms" *London Review of Books*, 2005.
<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n06/slavoj-zizek/the-two-totalitarianisms>.

Supplementary Texts

Steiner, Petr. *The Deserts of Bohemia*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Stoppard, Tom. *Rock´n´Roll*. London: Faber and Faber, 2006.

Zábransky, Tomáš. (2007). "Methamphetamine in the Czech Republic." *Journal of Drug Issues*, 37(1), 155-180. Retrieved Sept.27, 2007.

Recommended listening:

R1, myspace: Raduza, Gipsy.cz, Gaia Mesiah, Vypsana Fixa, Oldrich Janota, UJD, Cechomor, Yellow

Syllabus of Record

Sisters, BBP, New Kids Underground, Birds Build Underground, Priesnitz, Jablkon, Rudovous, DG 307, Budoar stare damy, Ještě jsme se nedohodli, Chadima, Richter, Jasna paka, Psi vojaci, Tata boys, Traband, Toxic, etc.

Outline of Course Content

Note: Students cover approximately 1 topic every week or two.

Topic 1 - WWII resistance: Dying We Live Introductions. Definitions of resistance Political Center (*Politické ústředí*, PÚ), the Committee of the Petition “We Remain Faithful” (*Petiční výbor Věrní zůstaneme*, PVVZ), and the Nation’s Defense (*Obrana národa*, ON), Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Operation Anthropoid and Lidice. Slovak National Uprising, Prague Uprising. Jesenská, Fučík, Kudeřínková.

Topic 2 - Postwar Resistance, 1950s

Alternative, avant-garde, underground, subcultures. Theorizing popular culture. Frankfurt and Birmingham School.

Czech Roots: Between the avant-garde and the underground. The 50s, socialist realism and the postmodern reflection of the 50s. Between the avant-garde and the underground.

Hrabal, Boudník, Bondy.

Topic 3 - The Invasion of August 21, 1968, Jan Palach Film excerpts: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* Charter 77, *samizdat*

Topic 4 - Mixing Pop and Politics: PPU and Charter 77

The Plastic People of the Universe, their history, role in creation of Charter 77 and relevance for today. What is the connection between music and politics? What is the influence of the PPU on Charter 77? What forced them underground? The leading personalities and their strategies for keeping the culture alive in the midst of persecutions.

Topic 5 - Punk, the Last Subculture/Resistance

Specifics of Czech Punk FPB, UJD. Anarchism in Bohemia, squatting. Why is punk is of such high interest to cultural scholars?

Topic 6 - Czech Alternative Music Scene Is there resistance post 1989? DIY

The pre- and post-89’ situation for Czech bands. How do the specific poetics compare to US bands? Typical band names of the period. How East block bands reach audiences in the West. Major trends in Czech alternative music.

Topic 7 - Introduction: Resistance in Postmodernity

What is modernity—postmodernity—post-postmodernity? Postmodern movements.

Topic 8 - Resistance from Within: Psychedelic Research Psychology—research on the unconscious.

Therapy and its affects on popular culture.

Syllabus of Record

Topic 9 - Graffiti Readings and films *Kick the Shit, Style Wars, The Can*. Street Art. Movements in the West vs. East.

Topic 10 - Visual Resistance

New Czech political art collectives: Guma Guar, Ztohoven, David Cerny. Josef Bolf, Darina Alster, Radim Labuda.

Squatting as a new form of resistance?