

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Prague

Course Code / Title: (PR/INTR 350) Central and Eastern European Security in an Insecure World

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: International Relations / Global Studies, History, Political Science, Central European Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: Prior coursework in International Relations is recommended but not required.

Description

The 21st century has brought a wide range of security challenges and threats on both systemic and regional levels. New threats and risks are emerging, while old remain, but their nature is constantly changing. Advances in technology open new possibilities that are being exploited by various actors, such as terrorist groups or authoritarian states to create insecurity and instability. Russian aggression against Ukraine and the hybrid warfare tactics require Europe and the Western World to significantly shift their security policies to be able to cope with present and future threats. The democratic world faces challenges unprecedented since the end of the Cold War.

The course focuses on European security in an insecure world with special emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe, where recent developments cast shadows from the region's turbulent and often tragic history. Students examine how Central and Eastern European states view their security and how they prioritize threats. Issues such as securitization of migration, hybrid, informational and asymmetric warfare or democratic backsliding are discussed and put into context.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students:

- Analyze the present security environment in Central and Eastern Europe within the larger systemic and historical context
- Examine pillars of contemporary European security architecture and their inadequacies
- Identify the main security threats Europe is facing
- Understand how Central and European States in particular view the world and how they perceive and prioritize threats to their security
- Strengthen their holistic understanding of society, politics, and history of Central and Eastern Europe

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Course Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the relevant class session and come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments are generally 20-30 pages per class session.

Participation

For the purpose of course grading, “participation” does not mean a mere passive presence in classes. Participation means active participation in the course discussions based on assigned readings and student’s own sources. Students should always be ready to answer any of the questions/tasks related to weekly assignments in the syllabus. All course components are considered, including the Traveling Seminars and field experiences.

Students’ active participation will be evaluated on the scale “always/nearly always participating” (50-41) – “often participating” (40-31) – “occasionally participating” (30-21) “rarely participating” (20-11) – “very rarely/never participating” (10-0).

Participation for mandatory excursions and Traveling Seminar sessions

Participation is required for the day-long excursion and all Traveling Seminar sessions associated with this course – this includes the Traveling Seminar predeparture information sessions and guest lecture. Absences for these events do not fall under the CET Attendance Policy but are factored into the Participation grade for the course.

Homework (weekly assignments)

There are weekly short response papers to help students prepare for classroom discussions

Presentation

Each student will prepare a 10-minute presentation for the class, with 5 minutes for questions, using case studies to illustrate concepts discussed in the assigned reading and in the course

Traveling Seminar assignment

The Traveling Seminar is a required, credit-bearing, field study course component. Students are expected to participate in all components of the travel and complete required assignments (readings, written, oral) related to the Seminar, which are factored into the final grade as outlined below. In this assignment, students reflect on how the Traveling Seminar has contributed to their understanding of the security situation in (Central) Europe. The reflection must be 2-3 pages long and use specific examples and quotes from the lectures and site visits included in the Traveling Seminar.

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Final research paper

The final paper comprises 8-10 pages on a topic determined in consultation with the instructor.

Final quiz

The final quiz covers the understanding of key themes and assigned readings from the entire course.

Grading

Example:

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation 20%
- Homework 20%
- Presentation 10%
- Traveling Seminar assignment 10%
- Final paper 20%
- Final quiz 20%

Readings

Ágh, Attila. *Declining Democracy in East-Central Europe: The Divide in the EU and Emerging Hard Populism*. Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2019.

Austin, Robert C. *A History of Central Europe: Nations and States Since 1848*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.

Averre, Derek and Kataryna Wolczuk (eds.). *The Ukraine Conflict: Security, Identity, and Politics in the Wider Europe*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Blacker, Uilleam. *Memory, The City and the Legacy of World War II in East Central Europe: The Ghosts of Others*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019.

Brix, Emil and Erhard Busek. *Central Europe Revisited: Why Europe's Future Will Be Decided in the Region*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2022.

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Charap, Samuel and Timothy J. Colton: *Everyone Loses: The Ukraine Crisis and the Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia*. London: Routledge, 2017.

D`Anieri, Paul, Robert Kravchuk, Taras Kuzio. *Politics and Society in Ukraine*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Džankić, Jelena, Soeren Keil and Marko Mezić. *The Europeanization of the Western Balkans: A Failure of EU Conditionality?*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Górka, Marek. „The Cybersecurity Strategy of the Visegrad Group Countries“. *Politics in Central Europe*, 14, 2 (2018): 75-98.

Léonard, Sarah and Christian Kaunert. *Refugees, Security and the European Union*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Mason, David S. *Revolution and Transition in East-Central Europe*. New York: Routledge, 1992 (2nd ed.)

Ostrowski, Wojciech, and Eamonn Butler (eds.). *Understanding Energy Security in Central and Eastern Europe: Russia, Transition and National Interest*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018.

Redžić, Ena and Judas Everett. „Cleavages in the Post-Communist Countries of Europe: A Review“. *Politics in Central Europe*, 16, 1 (2020): 231-258.

Ušiak, Jaroslav. „The Security Environment of the V4 Countries“. *Politics in Central Europe* 14, 2 (2018): 21-37. <https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2018-0007>

Vachudova, Milada Anna. „Ethnopoliticism and democratic backsliding in Central Europe“. *East European Politics*, 36, 3 (2020): 318-340.

Van Den Doel, Theo. *Central Europe: The New Allies?: The Road from Visegrad to Brussels*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Varda, Tamás Csiki. “Security perception and security policy in Central Europe, 1989-2019.” *Defense & Security Analysis* 37, 1 (2021): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2020.1831224> (other relevant texts in this issue)

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 – Two World Wars and their impact on Central and Eastern Europe

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Topic 2 – Central and Eastern European (in)security during the Cold War

Topic 3 – Collapse of Yugoslavia and ethnic bloodshed in the Balkans

Topic 4 – NATO's eastward expansion and its consequences

Topic 5 – Ethno-nationalism, populism and securitization of migration

Topic 6 – Democratic backsliding and social polarization in CE

Topic 7 – Russia, geopolitics and post-Soviet conflicts in Eastern Europe

Topic 8 – Russian hybrid warfare strategies

Topic 9 – Energy security in Central and Eastern Europe

Topic 10 – How do Central Europeans see the World's problems? Case of V4-Israel relations

Topic 11 – Contemporary security architecture of Europe and new challenges

Topic 12 – Russia-Ukraine War and its consequences for Central and European security

The course will include a visit into a Czech military base (and possibly other relevant institutions) to further learn about contemporary security issues, threats, and readiness to counter them.