

## Syllabus of Record

**Program:** CET Prague

**Course Code / Title:** (PR/CEST 350) Political and Cultural History of East Central Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

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

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites / Requirements:** Prior coursework in European history or area studies recommended but not required.

### Description

This discussion-based course covers the geographic area comprising former Czechoslovakia (or the Czech and Slovak Republics), Hungary, and Poland, and provides an understanding of the important political, social, and cultural developments of the region during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students explore the establishment of independent nation states during the interwar period, the Nazi occupation, resistance and collaboration, the Holocaust and the expulsion of the Germans, the nature of the Communist system, its final collapse and the post-Communist transformation. Throughout the course, emphasis is given to analytical thinking, examination and synthesizing of the relationship between the Judeo-Christian tradition and the secular world, and how this relationship manifests in the politics and cultural dynamics of the region.

### Objectives

During this course, students:

- Develop their knowledge of East Central European history post-1918 to the present day
- Achieve an overall understanding of the important political events that occurred in east central Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as their causes and effects
- Analyze important political, economic, social, cultural and diplomatic issues in the region
- Learn about the formation of the independent nation states of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland after World War I, World War II, Communism, and the post-Communist eras.
- Focus on discussion-based assignments and seminar format
- Independently explore some of the course topics, including engaging in secondary source research

### Course Requirements

#### Participation

Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class and to participate actively in class, raising thoughtful questions from the assigned readings in order to analyze/synthesize the readings during classroom discussion. Attendance is mandatory, and students are expected to abide by CET's Attendance Policy.

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## *Participation Rubric*

<p><b>Degree to which student integrates course readings and class journals into classroom participation</b></p>	<p>often cites from readings; uses readings to support points; often articulates "fit" of readings with topic at hand <b>(10 points)</b></p>	<p>occasionally cites from readings; sometimes uses readings to support points; occasionally articulates "fit" of readings with topic at hand <b>(7)</b></p>	<p>rarely able to cite from readings; rarely uses readings to support points; rarely articulates "fit" of readings with topic at hand <b>(3)</b></p>	<p>unable to cite from readings; cannot use readings to support points; cannot articulates "fit" of readings with topic at hand <b>(0)</b></p>
<p><b>Interaction/participation in classroom discussions</b></p>	<p>always a willing participant, responds frequently to questions; routinely volunteers point of view <b>(10 points)</b></p>	<p>often a willing participant, responds occasionally to questions; occasionally volunteers point of view <b>(7)</b></p>	<p>rarely a willing participant, rarely able to respond to questions; rarely volunteers point of view <b>(3)</b></p>	<p>never a willing participant, never able to respond to questions; never volunteers point of view <b>(0)</b></p>

### *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.

### Traveling Seminar Assignment

CET Prague's 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. For the assignment, students are expected to reflect at least one topic of the trip or the optional reading in writing (Traveling Seminar Reflection Paper, 600 words) and be prepared to discuss issues related to the Seminar, which are factored into the final grade as outlined below.

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### Class Journals

Students are expected to post a 200-300 words response to the readings, guest lectures, field experiences, and other co-curricular events for every class session.

### Book or Film Review and Class Presentation

Students submit a written book review of at least 600 words that they then present in class. Students select a book or film from the instructor's list (see Additional Resources). Each one provides a different account (journalistic or literary) of specific historical circumstances reviewed in class. The book/film review and accompanying presentation should be polished and thorough and include a complete content summary of the text or film as well as an analysis of its interpretation of historical events.

### Quizzes

Students take a comprehensive midterm and final quiz to ensure they have kept up on and digested material covered during the course. They both consist of open-ended questions, factual exercises, and one essay. The quizzes are administered in class and discussed in a group setting upon completion.

### Group Project Presentation

At the end of the semester groups of 2-3 students research a topic of interest, which they then present in class. Students choose from a curated list of topics, but if interested in a class-related topic which is not part of the list, they may elaborate on it with prior approval from the instructor. The project presentation is held during the last week of the course. Each presentation will be approximately 10 minutes long, plus 5 minutes for a discussion and contextual questions.

## Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Participation                                     | 20% |
| • Traveling Seminar assignment                      | 10% |
| • Class journals                                    | 20% |
| • Book/film review and class presentation (5% each) | 10% |
| • Quizzes (2 at 10%)                                | 20% |
| • Group project presentation                        | 20% |

## Readings

Albright, Madelaine K. *Prague Winter*. HarperCollins, 2012.

Applebaum, Anne. *Gulag. A History of the Soviet Camps*. New York, Penguin Books, 2004.

Andrzejewski, Jerzy. *Ashes and Diamonds*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997.

Ash, Timothy Garton. *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. New York: Vintage, 1993.

Čapek, Karel. *War with the Newts*. Penguin Classics, 2009.

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- Don, Yehuda and Karady, Victor (ed.), *A Social & Economic History of Central European Jewry*. New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishing, 1990.
- Fischer, Tibor. *Under the Frog*. New York: Picador, 2001.
- Gross, Jan T. *The Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. (New York: Penguin, 2002)
- Havel, Václav. *The Power of the Powerless*, 1978.  
[www.vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=eseje&val=2\\_aj\\_eseje.html&typ=HTML](http://www.vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=eseje&val=2_aj_eseje.html&typ=HTML)
- Havel, Václav. *The Garden Party*. London : Jonathan Cape, 1969.
- Hrabal, Bohumil. *Too Loud a Solitude*. London: Abacus, 1990.
- Kenney, Padraic. "The Gender of Resistance in Communist Poland." 399-425.
- Kundera, Milan. *The Joke*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993.
- Lebow, Katherine. "Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s." 199-219.
- Naimark, Norman M. *Fires of Hatred. Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Mannová, Elena, editor. *A Concise History of Slovakia*. Bratislava: HÚ SAV, 2000.
- Paczkowski, Andrzej. *The Spring Will be Ours. Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2003.
- Pánek, Jaroslav and Oldřich Tůma, editors. *A History of the Czech Lands*. Prague: Charles University, 2009.
- Romcics, Ignác. *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*. Budapest: Osiris, 1999.
- Stenning, Alison. "Place (Post-)Socialism: The Making and Remaking of Nowa Huta, Poland." 99-118.
- Wasserstein, Bernard. *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe Since 1945*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Tučková, Kateřina. *Gerta*. Amazon Crossing, 2021.
- Žantovský, Michael. *Havel*. Atlantic Books, 2018.

## Additional Resources

- Burning Bush* (film), dir. Agnieszka Holland, Czech Republic, 2013.
- Elementary School* (film), dir. Zdeněk Svěrák, Czech Republic, 1991.
- Firemen Ball* (film), dir. Miloš Forman, Czech Republic, 1967.
- Lidice / Fall of the Innocent* (film), dir. Petr Nikolaev, Czech / Slovak Republic, 2011

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*Jan Palach* (film), dir. Robert Sedláček, Czech / Slovak Republic, 2018.

*The Power of Good* (film), dir. Matej Mináč, Czech / Slovak Republic, 2002

*Želary* (film), dir. Ondřej Trojan, Czech Republic, 2003.

### Outline of Course Content

#### Topic 1 - World War I and the Establishment of New States

- Pre-war survey: history, population, social structure, nationalist movements
- Peace and post-War Europe
- National and international relations
- Emergence of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland
- Government formation and political parties
- Domestic and international conflicts

#### Topic 2 – East Central Europe during the Interwar Years

- Political systems and governments
- Multi-ethnic composition
- Minorities
- Economies
- Cultures
- National and international relations
- Collapse of the interwar system

#### Topic 3 – East Central Europe during World War II

- Nazi occupation and collaboration
- Sudeten-Germans
- Munich Pact
- Resistance at home and abroad
- Domestic uprisings
- The War front
- The Holocaust, Jews and Romany
- The stories of Terezin, Lidice, and Lety
- Liberation by the West and the Red Army
- Expulsion of Germans

#### Topic 4 - Communization of East Central Europe

- The background
- Provisional governments
- Nationalization
- Coup d'etat or election  
Political parties, nationalism, propaganda, workers and intellectuals

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### Topic 5 – The Nature of the Communist System

- Ideology and the Soviet example
- One party system
- Repression and resistance
- Show trials
- Sovietization: Central Economy, censorship,
- Soviet International system: Warsaw Pact, Comecon
- The story of a dramatist, dissident, political prisoner and president: Václav Havel

### Topic 6 - Crisis of 1956

- Party Reform after 1953 (death of Stalin and Gottwald)
- Social dissatisfaction (riots and reform)
- 1956 CPSU Congress and Khrushchev speech
- Party factions
- Polish October
- Invasion of Hungary

### Topic 7 - Crises of 1968 and 1980

- Poland: reformers, radicals, repression, anti-Semitic campaign, purges
- Czechoslovakia: Prague Spring, reformers, student movements, Warsaw pact invasion
- Normalization
- Character of communism in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia

### Topic 8 – Traveling Seminar

- The Polish Welfare State. Polish-Jewish Relations and Responses to Neighbors. Model of a Communist City: Nowa Huta. Red Vienna.

### Topic 9 - Collapse of Communism in East Central Europe

- Opposition movements, Western sanctions, strikes, roundtable talks, elections
- Berlin Wall
- Solidarity
- Velvet Revolution

### Topic 10 - Post-Communist Transformation

- Velvet Divorce
- Political systems and the emergency of political parties
- Economy
- International Relations
- NATO
- European Union