CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course Name: Communism and Nazism Reflected in the Arts
Course Number: ARTS 3001 PRAG / POLI 3019 PRAG
Programs offering course: CES, CNMJ
Language of instruction: English
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Fall 2019

Course Description
Film, literature, and the arts have always played a central role in reflecting the attitudes towards the twin ideologies of Nazism and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe. They were central to propagandizing these ideologies and building their strength after World War One. However, they also provided the most vibrant forum for those challenging the totalitarian regimes established by Nazis and Communists. In the period since their fall, politics and academia have frequently failed to enable an accessible debate on their legacy. Thus, film and literature remain the site of a debate.

This course will explore this theme in a multi-disciplinary way, drawing on history, political science, literature, film studies, and psychology. There is a broad and deep amount of material to draw upon which will allow students to easily inquire into areas of particular interest to them. In order to reinforce the point that the issues we are examining have meaning across regions and times, we will work thematically rather than chronologically. In this course we will be mixing approaches to how we explore the issues. Prague is one of the few capitals that experienced liberal democracy, Nazism, Communism, and a return to liberal democracy in little more than 50 years. Therefore, many opportunities emerge to meet people and visit events which can increase our understanding of the topic.

Learning Objectives
Drawing on a significant engagement with the core films, literature, and art, students will develop a significant understanding of and critically engage with different aspects of life and resistance in the region during the last century. In particular, students will assess and illustrate the origins and experience of totalitarianism, the origins and experience of civil resistance to Nazi and Communist totalitarianism, and the role of artists reflecting it as part of a common discourse and memory.

Course Prerequisites
The principal requirement for this course is a willingness to engage with the issues that will be raised and to use the opportunity of being in Prague to go beyond the material discussed in class.
Methods of Instruction
This is a flexible and participative course. In class we will watch and discuss films, explore ideas contained in literature, hear from those who have deep personal experiences of Nazism and Communism and use the opportunity of the active life of Prague to attend any relevant events that occur during the semester. The specific topics and order of classes will change to reflect both the opportunities for visits and guests as well as the interests of the students. Where a film is the principal instruction aid for a class it will only be shown in excerpt to illustrate the wider topic under discussion. Should students wish to see the complete film, most are available on DVD and loanable.

Assessment and Final Grade
1. Midterm Examination 25%
2. Final Examination 25%
3. Individual Assignment (see “Course Requirements”) 25%
4. Class participation: 25%

Course Requirements

Participation
Class participation is an essential element of this course. It is through the interaction of the instructor and guests with students that most of the ideas will be explored effectively. Class participation also includes regular preparation for class, including mandatory readings and film viewing.

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.

Exams
There will be midterm and final examinations that will be held in class and involve a review of the core themes covered in the class. Details will be provided via Canvas course site.

Assignment
Each student will choose one film, book, or artist and either write an essay (2500 words) on a relevant topic or present an excerpt from the work and discuss it with the class (total time 15 minutes including a 10-minute exposition). Details will be provided via Canvas course site.

Class participation is an essential element of this course. It is through the interaction of the instructor and guests with students that most of the ideas will be explored effectively. There will be midterm and final examinations that will be held in class and involve a review of the core themes covered in the class.

In addition, each student will choose one film, book, or artist and either write a short essay (maximum 1500 words) on a relevant topic or present an excerpt from the work and discuss it with the class (total time 15 minutes including 10 minutes exposition).

CIEE Prague Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences are treated equally regardless of reason for any affected CIEE course. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursions or events, as well as Internship.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

Missing classes will lead to the following penalties:

90-minute semester classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of 90-minute classes</th>
<th>Equivalent percentage of the total course hours missed</th>
<th>Minimum penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 180-minute semester classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of 180-minute classes</th>
<th>Equivalent percentage of the total course hours missed</th>
<th>Minimum penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one 180-minute class</td>
<td>up to 10%</td>
<td>no penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two 180-minute classes</td>
<td>10.1–20%</td>
<td>reduction of the final grade by 5%; written warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three and more 180-minute classes</td>
<td>more than 20%</td>
<td>automatic course failure and possible expulsion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Persistent absenteeism (students approaching 20% of the total course hours missed, or violating the attendance policy in more than one class) will result in a written warning, a notification to the student’s home school, and possibly a dismissal from the program.

**Missing more than 20% of the total class hours** will lead to a course failure, and potential program dismissal. This is a CIEE rule that applies to all CIEE courses and is in line with the Participant Contract that each CIEE student signs before arriving on-site.

**Late arrival to class** will be considered a partial (up to 15 minutes late) or full (15 or more minutes late) absence. Three partial absences due to late arrivals will be regarded as one full class absence.

**Students must notify their professor and Program Coordinators (PC) beforehand if they are going to miss class for any reason** and are responsible for any material covered in class in their absence.

If missing a class during which a test, exam, the student’s presentation or other graded class assignments are administered, **make-up assignment will only be allowed in approved circumstances**, such as serious medical issues. In this case, the student must submit a local doctor’s note within 24 hours of his/her absence to the PC, who will decide whether the student qualifies for a make-up assignment. Doctor’s notes may be submitted via e-mail or phone (a scan or a photograph are acceptable), however **the student must ensure that the note is delivered to the PC**.

Should a truly **extraordinary situation** arise, the student must contact the PC immediately concerning permission for a make-up assignment. Make-up assignments are not granted...
automatically! The PC decides the course of action for all absence cases that are not straightforward. **Always contact the PC with any inquiry about potential absence(s) and the nature thereof.**

**Personal travel** (including flight delays and cancelled flights), handling passport and other document replacements, interviews, volunteering and other similar situations are not considered justifiable reasons for missing class or getting permission for make-up assignments.

**For class conflicts** (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips, make-up classes and other instances), **always contact the Academic Assistant** to decide the appropriate course of action.

Course attendance is recorded on individual Canvas Course Sites. **Students are responsible for checking their attendance regularly to ensure the correctness of the records.** In case of discrepancies, students are required to contact the Academic Assistant **within one week of the discrepancy date** to have it corrected. Later claims **will not** be considered.

CIEE staff does not directly manage absences at FAMU and ECES, but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

**CIEE Academic Honesty Policy**

CIEE subscribes to standard U.S. norms requiring that students exhibit the highest standards regarding academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism in any course assignment or exam will not be tolerated and may result in a student failing the course or being expelled from the program. Standards of honesty and norms governing originality of work differ significantly from country to country. We expect students to adhere to both the American norms and the local norms, and in the case of conflict between the two, the more stringent of the two will preside. Three important principles are considered when defining and demanding academic honesty. These are related to the fundamental tenet that one should not present the work of another person as one’s own.

The **first principle** is that final examinations, quizzes and other tests must be done without assistance from another person, without looking at or otherwise consulting the work of another person, and without access to notes, books, or other pertinent information (unless the professor has explicitly announced that a particular test is to be taken on an “open book” basis).

The **second principle** applies specifically to course work: the same written paper may not be submitted in two classes. Nor may a paper for which you have already received credit at your home institution be submitted to satisfy a paper requirement while studying overseas.

The **third principle** is that any use of the work of another person must be documented in any written papers, oral presentations, or other assignments carried out in connection with a course. This usually is done when quoting directly from another’s work or including information told to you by another person. The general rule is that if you have to look
something up, or if you learned it recently either by reading or hearing something, you have to document it.

The penalty ranges from an F grade on the assignment, failure in the course to dismissal from the program. The Academic Director is consulted and involved in decision making in every case of a possible violation of academic honesty.

**Weekly Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overview of the course, its structure, papers to be prepared, reading and viewing required and recommended.</td>
<td>The nature and significance of civil resistance facing totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The notion of absurdity of any given totalitarian regime, the exploration of the situation of an innocent individual being treated as a potential criminal or enemy of the state, being young in Central Europe.</td>
<td>Intelligent individuals trusting and serving a dictatorship e.g. in the communist Soviet Russia under Stalin and realizing too late what the real foundations of such a regime are.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another option for an intelligent, honest person in the Soviet Russia – trying to stay out of the historical events, an impossible attempt to live without either compromising with the regime or fighting it.</td>
<td>The general analysis of a non-democratic, oppressive system, whether it is Communism or Nazism and the striving of individuals for love, freedom, and truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The appeal of totalitarian ideology to some artists and intellectuals – by opportunism, by conviction? Leni Riefenstahl and Albert Speer serving the Nazi regime and their different perception of guilt later on. 
“The Triumph of the Will” and Gita Sereny’s biography of Albert Speer. |
|--------|---------|
| Class 2 | An opposite reaction of students fighting the same oppressive regime and believing in democracy as a fair social environment. 
| Week 5 | Class 1 |
How totalitarian ideology deals with its real or imagined opponents. Mass human rights abuses in Soviet Russia and witnesses who had difficulties to be trusted in Western liberal democracies. 
| Class 2 | Another example of an abusive regime dealing not only with its opponents, but other groups as well – Jews, Slaves, Romas, handicapped mentally or physically. Individual versus collective guilt. 
| Week 6 | Midterm Exam Period |
Surviving inhuman conditions of war, occupation, ghettos, and concentration camps. The notion of human solidarity, believing in good as a realistic concept after all, as well as friendship and love. The notion of guilt and shame. 
| Week 7 | Midterm Exam Period |
A more skeptical vision of people conforming to occupation and rules of the dictatorship. 
| Class 2 | Jews as a persecuted group, the psychology of victimization and marginalization of a given social group by the majoritarian society. 
Week 8

Class 1

Class 2
Methods generally used by any totalitarian ideology whether it is Communism or Nazism or any current extremist movement. Brain washing, psychological humiliation, physical torture, attacks on one's beliefs and morals, isolation from the outside world. Arthur London: “The Confession” (1970)

Week 9

Class 1

Week 10

Class 1
What is it like to live in a society that is essentially not free and how do people react towards power. Conformity versus protest. Agnieszka Holland: “The Burning Bush” (2013)

Class 2

Week 11

Class 1
A very different look at the social reality of the 80's – although the abuse of power is omnipresent, a revolt is possible. Background of the Gdansk events just before the declaration of the martial law. Andrzej Wajda: “The Man of Iron” (1977)

Class 2
Walking visit of the key central Prague sites of the November 1989 revolution and discussion of the dynamic of the sparking of a revolution.

Week 12

Class 1

Class 2
Secret police and its collaborators as an omnipresent control of people’s lives. Personal files and their critical evaluation. Visit to the European Platform for Studying Totalitarian regimes which published extensive studies on both the Communist and the Nazi periods.

Course Materials

In addition to works mentioned with each class, the following represents a fuller range of texts which can help explore the themes addressed. A reader of select texts will be made available.

Secondary Sources


Gorbachev, Michail. *Glasnost and Perestrojka in the USSR*


**Primary Sources (Books)**


Patočka, Jan; Hájek, Jiří; Havel, Václav. *The Charter 77 Declaration*

**Films & Documentaries**


