



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course Name:	Franz Kafka: A Prague Writer
Course Number:	LITT 3004 PRAG
Programs offering course:	CES, CNMJ
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Fall 2019

Course Description

Franz Kafka (1883–1924) has become recognized as one of the leading figures in world literature. Perhaps more than any other major author, Kafka is associated with one geographical location: the city of Prague. Kafka's works themselves are not explicitly about Prague, nor are they set in Prague. But we cannot say that Prague is irrelevant to Kafka's works, for Kafka spent almost all of his life in this city. Therefore, we cannot "read" Prague through or into Kafka's works, but comparing the two is surely fruitful. The most obvious connection between Kafka's works and the city of Prague is Franz Kafka the historical person. While one always wants to be cautious about biographizing creative work, this course will take into consideration Kafka's life and times in reading and analyzing his fiction. Such an adventure is best undertaken in the city of Prague itself.

Kafka's fiction, which will be read in the course, are organized in a chronological manner, along with relevant critical material for each work. However, less time-bound thematic issues will also be addressed in a less linear fashion, such as the cultural and historical interaction with the fiction, Kafka's development as a writer, the impact of Kafka's biographical story on his stories, Kafka's use of animal characters, and the narrative innovations that Kafka implemented. The course will focus on a selection from Kafka's many well-known short stories and one of his three novels. Kafka's works will be studied in English translation; they were originally written in German.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- summarize Kafka's general biography and describe his innovative writing style
- describe the intersection of German, Jewish, and Czech identities in Prague in the early 20th century.
- articulate how Kafka's writing is connected to his historical and cultural context.
- understand, assess, and analyze the story line and the main issues of each story/novel on the syllabus.
- understand and articulate the main idea of at least one critical article on Kafka
- write an effective literary analysis essay.
- prepare and deliver an effective in-class presentation on a critical article.
- effectively participate in class discussions on literature and literary criticism.



- demonstrate different ways of thinking about literature, culture, and literary analysis.

Course Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. However, the course will mainly appeal to students who have an interest in literature, and in reading and discussing stories. It is more important to have an interest in this type of learning than it is to have experience studying literature.

Methods of Instruction

- Short lectures (often with PowerPoint presentation)
- Open class discussion to interpret literary works
- Small-group activities and discussions
- Student presentations (including PowerPoint presentation)
- Several field trips (Kafka museum, Prague Old Town, etc.)

Assessment and Final Grade

The points given for each assignment in grading are only relevant to gauge performance on that one assignment. The performance on each assignment category is then weighted as noted below in calculating the final semester grade. One point on a reading quiz assignment, for example, is not necessarily equal to one point on an exam assignment.

1. Midterm Exam	15%
2. Final Exam	15%
3. Essay	20%
4. Weekly Insight Assignments:	15%
5. Presentation	15%
6. Participation	20%

Course Requirements

- **Insights assignments:** Students will post a brief response to the reading assigned on the Canvas course site for class each time there is a reading assigned, which is most class meetings. These short written assignments (between .5 and 1 page in length, about 100-300 words) should prepare the student for in-class discussion. Insights posts are graded on a completion basis: students get full points if they complete the assignment satisfactorily (including on time) and get zero points if they do not.
- **Presentation:** one 10–15-minute presentation on a critical work relevant to the literary work(s) being discussed in that class meeting. Students find their own critical works to present to the class, who has not read that work, so the presentation also entails finding, selecting, and reading a text not otherwise assigned as reading for the course. There is a detailed assignment for the presentation on the course Canvas site.



- **Essay:** An argumentative literary-analysis essay of 1500-2200 words (5-9 pages) that focuses on *The Trial*. There is a detailed assignment for the essay on the course Canvas site.
- **Exams:** Both exams will be in-class written essay exams. They will most likely be open-book. The Midterm Exam will focus on the “breakthrough” part of the course, and the Final Exam will focus on the “mid” and “late” parts of the course. The exams will not cover *The Trial*.
- **Participation**

Assessment of students’ participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. 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.

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. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

CIEE Prague Attendance Policy

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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:

<i>Number of 90-minute classes</i>	<i>Equivalent percentage of the total course hours missed</i>	<i>Minimum penalty</i>
one to two 90-minute classes	up to 10%	no penalty
three 90-minute classes	10.1–15%	reduction of the final grade by 3%
four 90-minute classes	15.1–17%	reduction of the final grade by 5%; written warning
five 90-minute classes	17.1–20%	reduction of the final grade by 7%; written warning
six and more 90-minute classes	more than 20%	automatic course failure and possible expulsion

180-minute semester classes:

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

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

- Week 1 ***Introduction, shorter stories***
- Class 1:
Introduction to Kafka's short stories
"Before the Law" (1914), "A Common Confusion" (1916), "A Little Fable" (1920?), "Give it Up!" (1917-1923?)
- Class 2:
Approaches to Kafka's work
Elizabeth Trahan, "A Common Confusion: A Basic Approach to Franz Kafka's World"
Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
- Week 2 ***Breakthrough Kafka***
- Class 1:
Situating Kafka's Judgment and its Analysis
"The Judgment" (written and published 1912)
Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
- Class 2:
Approaches to Kafka's work, cont.
Martin Swales, "Why Read Kafka"
Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
- Week 3 ***Breakthrough Kafka II***
- Class 1:
Situating Kafka's Metamorphosis and its Analysis
"The Metamorphosis" (written 1912, published 1915)
Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
- Class 2:
Literary approach to Kafka's Metamorphosis
Nabokov chapter on "The Metamorphosis"
Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
- Week 4 ***Breakthrough Kafka III***



Class 1:

Situating Kafka's 'In the Penal Colony' and its Analysis

"In the Penal Colony" (written 1914, published 1919)

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

Koelb's Approach to Kafka's scene of Reading

Koelb, "Kafka and the Scene of Reading"

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Week 5

Kafka and Myth

Class 1:

Field Trip: Visit to "The City of K.", a Kafka museum

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

Reflection on the Field trip and contextualization of his work

"The Silence of the Sirens", "Prometheus", Poseidon"

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Week 6

Midterm Exam

Period

Midterm Exam in class

Class 1:

Novel Kafka

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

Situating Kafka's Trial

The Trial (written 1914–1915, published posthumously), to page 53 in the Schocken version).

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Week 7

Midterm Exam

Period

Novel Kafka II

Class 1:

Analysis of the Trial, part 1

The Trial, to page 110 in the Schocken version

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

Analysis of the Trial, part 2

The Trial, to page 165 in the Schocken version



Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Week 8

Novel Kafka III

Class 1:

Analysis of the Trial, part 3

The Trial, complete novel (to page 224 in the Schocken version)

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

How Pure is the Limited Circle?

Smith, "The Limited Circle Is Pure"

Proposal for essay due on Friday

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Week 9

Mid- Kafka

Class 1:

Situating 'A Report to an Academy' and its Analysis

"A Report to an Academy" (written and published 1917)

Recommended:

David Foster Wallace, "This is Water"

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

Situating 'A Country Doctor' and its Analysis

"A Country Doctor" (written 1917, published 1919)

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Week 10

Late Kafka

Class 1:

Situating 'A Hunger Artist' and its Analysis

"A Hunger Artist" (written?, published 1922)

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas

Class 2:

Situating 'Josephine the Singer' and its Analysis

"Josephine the Singer" (1924)

Essay due

Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas



Week 11	Posthumous Kafka and the Writer's Legacy Class 1: <i>Kafka's Legacy I</i> "Description of a Struggle" (1904-09/1936) Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas Class 2: Field Trip: Visit to the Kafka Museum ("The City of K.") Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
Week 12	Posthumous Kafka and the Writer's Legacy II Class 1: <i>Kafka's Legacy II</i> "The Hunger Artist", "Give it Up!", "A Little Fable" (illustrated stories by Peter Kuper) Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas Class 2: <i>Laughing with Kafka?</i> David Foster Wallace, "Laughing with Kafka" Student presentation on critical work Weekly insight due before the class session, submission via Canvas
Week 13 Final Exam Week	Class 1: <i>Course summary and final exam review session</i> Class 2: Final Exam during normal class time

Course Materials

Kafka, Franz. *The Complete Stories*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

---. *The Trial*. New York: Schocken Books, 1998.

Kolb, Clayton. " 'In der Strafkolonie': Kafka and the Scene of a Reading." *The German Quarterly* 55:4 (November 1982) 511-525.

Kuper, Peter. *'Give it up!' and Other Short Stories by Franz Kafka*. New York: Nantier, Beall, Minouschine Publishing inc., 1995.



Nabokov, Vladimir. "Franz Kafka, 'The Metamorphosis'." *Lectures on Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980. 251-284.

Smith, Zadie. "The Limited Circle is Pure." *New Republic*. Nov. 3, 2003.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/67211/the-limited-circle-pure>

Swales, Martin. "Why Read Kafka?" *The Modern Language Review* 76:2 (April 1981) 357-366.

Trahan, Elizabeth. "'A Common Confusion': A Basic Approach to Kafka's World." *The German Quarterly* 36:3 (May 1963) 269-278.

Wallace, David Foster. "Laughing with Kafka." *Harper's Magazine*. July 1998.
<https://harpers.org/wp-content/uploads/HarpersMagazine-1998-07-0059612.pdf>

---. "This is Water." *The Guardian*. September 20, 2008.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/20/fiction>