



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course Name:	Czech Politics (Relearning Democracy)
Course Number:	POLI 3002 PRAG
Programs offering course:	CES, CNMJ
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Fall 2019

Course Description

This course will compare Czech politics with that of the USA and the EU. It will include both the history of electoral politics in the Czech Lands and Czechoslovakia, and the current state of affairs. Instances of successful and unsuccessful attempts to improve local democracy through community organizing, coalition building, conflict, consensus, whistleblowing, etc. will be included, using examples from both the United States and the Czech Republic. Democracy in transition will be taught since many societies were shaped in times of rapid economic growth, during the change of political or economic systems, or during wars. Local and regional governments, international treaties, and other less visible forms of the Czech legal order will be discussed. Students will also be required to follow on-line reading materials, because English-language textbooks covering contemporary Czech Politics are virtually non-existent. Student participation and concrete examples will be an important part of every lecture. Students will be required to read and discuss articles on the Czech Republic from The Prague Post, The Prague Business Weekly, The Economist, The Spectator, and from other online sources.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course the students will be able to:

- explain and illustrate major trends in Czech politics;
- assess important Czech political events in relation to European and World historical context;
- be able to compare the US and Czech political systems and assess the major differences in both systems; and
- assess reasons for the success or lack of it of different attempts to improve democracy.

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction



Lectures, class discussion, discussion of required readings, presentations.

Assessment and Final Grade

Class participation	20%
Current events presentations	15%
Midterm test	20%
Final paper	30%
Current topics	15%

Course Requirements

Midterm Test

Students will choose from 12 topics, answering 10 of them in the mid-term test. Understanding of the given problem will be more important than memorizing data. **(20% of the final grade)**

Final Paper (2,500 words)

Students will write an essay on the topic of interest from the Czech or Slovak politics. They should show clear understanding of given topic, independent critical thinking, and deeper analysis. Students will be able to choose a topic upon discussion with the tutor in the class. The essay topic and a brief synopsis are due to be announced by week 7, the final essay is due during finals week. **(30% of the final grade)**

Presentation

Students will prepare a presentation of the topic they have chosen for the final paper. The topic and findings will be presented to class. Classmates are expected to provide constructive criticism in order to help the presenting student to improve his/her work before submitting the Final Paper. Presentations will take place during week 10 **(15% of the final grade)**

Current Topics

Two students will present news from a newspaper or other media to the entire class at the beginning of each lecture. Class discussion will follow. Students will be evaluated for their performance. **(15% of the final grade)**

Class Participation

Reading is assigned for each class and participation in class discussion is expected. The course exams will be based on both the materials discussed in class and the reading assigned **(20% of the final grade)**.



Note: The instructor reserves the right to give quizzes on the reading or past lecture content or ask for reading presentation with little or no notification.

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.

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:



<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 to the Czech Politics Required reading: Čornej, Pokorný (2000) Political theory behind voting; voting and elections; direct democracy (plebiscite, Swiss Union); lot – Athens; representative democracy, republic (Rousseau, Madison); rule of law; rule of majority; minority rights; usurpation, succession, ex officio, appointment, competition, acclamation, co-optation, plebiscite, lot, election; loose mandate, imperative mandate; majority system, STV, proportional system, mixed system. Required reading: Krejčí, pp.xv-xliv
Week 2	History of elections in Bohemia and Moravia I; parliamentarism of the estates (English Parliamentarism); Przemyslids and Luxembourgs; Hussite assembly, general assembly of the Czech crown (1327-1620),

estate and absolute monarchy, elections in Austria (1848-1918), elections in Hungary (Slovakia).

Required reading:
Krejčí, pp.1-128

History of elections in Bohemia and Moravia II; the first republic; WWII; the third republic.

Required reading:
Krejčí, pp.129-211; Civic Society and the State, Packet, Chapter 9, pp. 182-end (xerocopied handout - library)

Week 3 The period of bureaucratic socialism

Required reading:
Krejčí, pp. 213-223; Civic Society and the State, Packet, Part II, Chapter 6, pp. 114-end of chapter (xerox handout - library)

Democracy in transition

Required reading:
Krejčí, pp. 227-274; Magstadt, T. Flawed Democracies (xerox handout - library)

Week 4 Elections after 1989; local elections; Magdeburg law.

Required reading:
Krejčí, pp. 345-348.
Current political system in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, USA; division of power; parliamentary democracy, presidential system, directly elected president (Slovakia), electoral college (USA), president elected by the parliament (Czech Republic).

Required reading:
US Constitution, Federalist Papers, The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, and The Czech Constitution.

Week 5 Municipal level of government; Czech Republic, United States; proportionally elected city council; single-district elected city council;

popularly elected mayor; council elected mayor.

Required reading:

Since local structure is very recent and not included in textbooks, a handout will be available at CIEE at least a week in advance.

Regional level of government; Czech Republic, EU, United States; division of power between country, state, region, municipalities.

Required reading:

A handout on regional government structure will be available at CIEE one week in advance.

Week 6
Midterm Exam
Period

Midterm test

Czech Republic in international institutions: EU, NATO, OECD, GATT, IMF etc.; Czech Republic and international treaties – an important part of the Czech legal structure.

Required reading:

Students will read basic information on EU, NATO, OECD, GATT, IMF from the organizations' websites.

Week 7
Midterm Exam
Period

The role of media in Czech society.

Required reading:

Students will follow the Czech media for a week and will write a one-page observational report and do a presentation for the class – English language transcripts can be viewed on HYPERLINK "http://www.praguemonitor.com"www.praguemonitor.com.

Role of media – continuation.

Week 8

Courts; police; employee unions.

Right to know, right to participate, right to justice; from Helsinki conference to the Aarhus Convention.

Required reading:

The Aarhus Convention (available at its website)



- Week 9 Conflict of interest, corruption in the parliament, government, state-owned companies, private companies; accountability; transparency international; corruption index.
- Required reading:
Transparency International website
- Conflict of interest at the local level; municipal corruption; preventing corruption.
- Week 10 Work in Progress. Students will present a paragraph on their final essay as a work in progress. Students must register their essay topic & synopsis in the CIEE essay database by this date!
- Direct democracy; Ancient Greece; De Gaulle; Switzerland; California, EU, Referendum 2000, Tabor Road Referendum.
- Week 11 Environmental policy in the Czech Republic.
- Required reading:
EU-CR Position paper on the environment ([HYPERLINK "http://www.env.cz" www.env.cz](http://www.env.cz))
Environmental policy in Prague.
- Week 12 Civil society -- civic movements and NGOs throughout the Czech Republic.
- Required reading:
Fisher, Getting to yes – Chapter 4, pp. 56-80 - library; Glazer, The Whistleblowers – Chapter 5, pp. 133 – 166 - library.
- Field trip: visit to a Town Hall or Parliament
- Week 13 Final paper presentations.
Final Exam Week End-of-course discussion



Course Materials

Required Reading

Ash, Timothy Garton. *Free World*. Penguin Books, 2004

Henderson, Karen and Neil Robinson. *Post-Communist Politics*. London: Prentice Hall, 1997

Faber, David. *Munich: The 1938 Appeasement Crisis*. Simon & Schuster, 2008

Ines, Abby. *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye*. Yale University Press, 2001

Musil, Jiří (editor). *The End of Czechoslovakia*. Budapest: CEU, 1995

Pontuso, James F. *Vaclav Havel. Civic Responsibility in the Postmodern Age*. Lanham: Boulder, 2004.

Stein, Eric. *Czecho/Slovakia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997

Krejčí, Oskar. *History of Elections in Bohemia and Moravia*. Columbia University Press, 1995

Čornej, Petr and Jiří Pokorný. *A Brief History of the Czech Lands to 2000*, Prague: Práh, 2000. **to be read before the course starts!**

Recommended Reading

Gil, Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi and Eleanor Townsley. *Making Capitalism without Capitalists: The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe*. Verso, 2001.

Holub, Jiří. *Course Reader for Czech Politics*

Pinder, John. *European Union, The Building of a Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.