



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course Name:	American Media's Impact on Post-Communist Czech Media
Course Number:	COMM 3004 PRAG
Programs offering course:	CES, CNMJ
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

Course Description

This course will examine the influence of American culture, specifically the American media model, on media in the Czech Republic after the fall of communism in 1989. The course will, in this context, focus on all aspects of the media, presenting specific examples. The course will begin with an introduction to American cultural influence on European culture and how this developed after the end of World War II in Western Europe, and after 1989 in Central Europe. The course will briefly cover the subject of life under communism in order to understand the contrast between the East and the West in Europe. The course will also focus on the different existing media models and students will be asked to create an "American media model" with its specific characteristics. Through studying literature and news items in both the United States and the Czech Republic, students will be challenged to answer questions such as:

- In what ways does American culture influence countries in Europe, specifically in Central Europe?
- What falls under the definition of the (North) American Media Model?
- Has this media model influenced the development of the media in the Czech Republic?
- In what way does this influence affect the Czech news?
- Does the Czech news have its own identity? If so, how can it be described?
- Is this identity in danger because of the American influence?
- Is this a one-way influence, or is the American media influenced by European factors as well?

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will have achieved the following:

- They will articulate the forms of American cultural influence in Europe, specifically in Central Europe after 1989.
- They will analyze and characterize both the American and Czech media based on the literature they studied and using examples discussed in class.
- They will have complex understanding of the difference between the media in these two countries and explore the implications of how the news and facts are presented in both countries.



- They will develop and demonstrate new analytical skills to be able to study the news differently.

Course Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites, however, students should be interested in the different ways news is presented based on cultural and historical backgrounds, and the importance of this.

Methods of Instruction

The classes will combine lectures with interactive teaching methods such as group and pair work, class discussions, discussion over assigned readings and written assignments. The class will be informal and interactive, with a heavy emphasis on class participation and presentations.

Assessment and Final Grade

Class participation: 20%

Group presentation: 20%

Case Study Analysis: 15%

Mid-term essay: 20%

Final paper: 25%

Course Requirements

Class participation and attendance: students are expected to actively engage in class discussions and complete all virtual classroom discussions and assignments published on Canvas. They are also required to do the required reading before class, which will be always discussed during the class.

Group presentation: working in small groups (maximum of three persons), students will analyze and characterize the American media and create an American Media Model. The characteristics should be described during a 15-to-20-minute presentation.

Case study analysis: each student will submit and present in class one case study analysis. Students are expected to employ theories covered in class and demonstrate analytical skills.

Midterm essay: students will write a midterm essay describing Americanization in Europe and their views of this. Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the material covered in the course.



Final paper: on the space of 2,500–3,000 words, students will discuss the impact of American Media is on Post-Communist Czech media and expand on whether they believe that the identity of the Czech media is in danger because of American influence. They should examine the extent of the American cultural influence and then describe the identity of the Czech media. They will be encouraged to express their own ideas and findings, based on the knowledge that they gained in this course.

CIEE Prague Participation Policy

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

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	<p><i>First meeting:</i> class introduction: explanation of the content of the course, the learning goals, what is expected of the students, teaching methods and literature that will be used.</p> <p><i>Second meeting:</i> American Cultural Influence in Europe after 1945: a first introduction based on the reading.</p> <p>Reading: Pells 2008, Chapter Six. Quiz about the reading.</p>
Week 2	<p><i>First meeting:</i> American Cultural Influence in Europe 2 Reading: Campbell and Kean 2016 Quiz about the reading</p> <p>Documentary: ‘The Cola Conquest Part II’ <i>Written assignment about the documentary</i></p> <p><i>Second meeting:</i> assignment: observing American culture around you</p>
Week 3	<p><i>First meeting:</i> discussion of (American) identity</p>



Written assignment and class discussion about the assignment

*Second meeting: **Reading:** Pells 2008, Chapter Eight.
Quiz about the reading.*

Preparations for the group presentations.

Week 4

First meeting: group presentations followed by discussions

*Second meeting: **Reading:** Kroes 2003
*This is an in-class reading. Class discussion about the reading + written assignment**

Week 5

*First meeting: Introduction to life under communism
A short lecture and showing of the documentary "The Lost World of Communism."*

Information about the mid-term essay.

*Second meeting: Visit to the Museum of Communism
Reflection paper due after the visit*

Week 6

Midterm Period

First meeting: life under communism: showing of the movie 'Goodbye Lenin'

*Second meeting: film 'Goodbye Lenin'
Written assignment and discussion of the assignment*

*Midterm exam week; **essay due at the end of the week***

Week 7

Midterm Period

*First meeting: Class discussion of the midterm essays.
Reading: Shepherd 2000*

Second meeting: TBA; possible trip to Radio Free Europe

Midterm evaluations

Week 8

*Class Trip to Radio Free Europe
Class discussion about the trip + written assignment*

Characterizing the Czech media after 1989



Reading: Jakubowicz 2004
Written assignment + class discussion

Week 9

First meeting:
Reading: Becker 1995
Written assignment + class discussion

Second meeting: the current state of the Czech media
Interactive reading: Jan Culik

Week 10

First meeting:
Guest speaker
Reflection paper due on the topic presented by the guest speaker for the Second meeting

Second meeting: examples of Czech media and television clips
Class discussion about the examples

Reading: Jirák, Köpplová 2008
Quiz for next class

Week 11

Reading 1: Jirák, Köpplová 2008

Reading 2: Wyka-Podkowska 2014
Quiz for next class

Time for questions about the discussed topics and literature

Week 12

First meeting: The influence of oligarchs. Two short in-class readings followed by discussion

Second meeting: a closer look at Czech identity; reading and discussion of New York Times article

Final paper due at the end of the week

Week 13

Final Exam Week

First meeting: **Student presentations of final papers**

Second meeting: Wrap-up class with final discussion about the different topics that were presented in the course.

Course Materials

Required readings

- Becker, Jörg. “Between Censorship and Commercialization: Structural Changes in the Public Sphere in Eastern Europe”. *Réseaux. The French Journal of Communication* 3 (1995).
- Campbell, Neil and Kean, Alasdair. “The Transmission of America Culture”. In *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Čulík, Jan. “The Czech Media: A Post-Communist Model?” *Britské listy* (2001). <https://legacy.blisty.cz/art/9304.html> (retrieved in 2003).
- Jakubowicz, Karol. “Post-Communist Media Development in Perspective”. *Europäische Politik* 122 (2004).
- Jirák, Jan and Barbara Köpplová. “The Reality Show Called Democratization: Transformation of the Czech Media After 1989” *Global Media Journal – Polish Edition* 1 (4), 2008.
- Kroes, Rob. “Americanization, What Are We Talking About” In *If You’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen the Mall*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Pells, Richard. “Mass Culture: The American Transmission”. In *Not Like Us. How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.
- Pells, Richard. “Transatlantic Misunderstandings: European Views of America”. In *Not Like Us. How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.
- Shepherd, Robin H.E. “Civilizing Society”. In *Czechoslovakia: the Velvet Revolution and Beyond*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000.
- Wyka-Podkowka, Angelika W. “Twenty-Five Years after the Fall: From Communist Monopoly to Foreign Control over Local Owners: Media Ownership and Its Effects on Journalism in Central Europe”. *The Political Economy of Communication* 2 (1), 2014.

Films

Documentary: The Cola Conquest, Part III: Coca-Colonization: **Director:** Irene Angelico | **Producer:** Abbey Neidik, Irene Angelico | **Produced In:** 1998

Documentary: The Lost World of Communism: The Kingdom of Forgetting | **Producer:** BBC; Peter Molloy, Lucy Hetherington | **Produced in:** 2009

Film: Goodbye Lenin | **Director:** Wolfgang Becker | **Producer:** Stefan Arndt | **Produced in:** 2003

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