



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course Name:	Prague-German Literature: Passion, Madness, Murder and Memory
Course Number:	LITT 3003 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 examines German-language literature (in English translation) written in Prague from the late 19th to the late 20th century. The unique cultural and political environment of the Czech lands and Prague at this time fermented one of the richest periods in European literary history. Hailing from a territory historically inhabited by three major populations—Czech, German, and Jewish—the authors covered in this course found themselves consistently confronted with questions of identity, belonging, alienation, and escape. The tumultuous developments going on around them led many of these authors to focus their literary lens on the madness of modern life and the attempt to discover purpose, meaning, fulfillment, and interpersonal connection—although often with tragic results.

A primary goal of the course is to situate well-known authors such as Franz Kafka, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Gustav Meyrink in a broader cultural context, while also exposing students to some lesser-known authors, who provide fascinating insight into the cultural, historical, and literary landscape of Prague in the early 20th century. Progressing more or less chronologically, we will read a variety of texts by these authors: poetry, short stories, reportages, novels, memoirs, etc. The works will be analyzed in the context of major historical developments such as the rise of nationalism in the late 19th century, World War I, the founding of the First Czechoslovak Republic, World War II, the Holocaust, and the nearly absolute disappearance of German-Bohemian literature after the 1940s. The end of the course examines the loss of the German and Jewish populations in Bohemia and considers the legacy of these authors in contemporary Czech society and (Central) European culture more generally.

In addition, we will take advantage of our unique setting in Prague by making several excursions into the city to explore the streets where these authors lived and examine first-hand some key locations described in their works. This will help the literature “come alive” for the students and provide insight into the traces of these literary works still visible in the present day.

Learning Objectives

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

- distinguish major Prague-German authors from the first half of the 20th century and work



- critically discuss the basic socio-cultural context of Prague and the Czech Lands as well as the major issues of the time period, specifically those related to ethnicity, religion, nationality, and modern identity
- analyze each individual author's style and situate each author within the broader literary and cultural context
- engage with and employ 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

The majority of the course is dedicated to engaging with primary literary texts. Several secondary texts will also provide cultural context and analytical frameworks.

Class sessions will be devoted primarily to interactive discussion. As a class, we will all participate in analytical discussions of the texts and the issues that they touch on. Students will occasionally work in small groups to prepare ideas for our larger discussions. Prior to each class session, students will be asked to prepare a brief response text that engages with specific aspects of the text that will be the focus of discussion for that day. On some days, designated students will lead all or part of the discussion. In addition, each student will prepare a short classroom presentation at some point in the semester.

At the beginning of each new section of the course (i.e. when we start working with a new author), a certain part of the session will be dedicated to a short lecture from the instructor to introduce the new material and provide the background information necessary for engaging with the text

The course will also include several outclasses that meet outside of the classroom to go "on location" to actual places around Prague that are depicted in the readings or that display traces of the city's once thriving German cultural community.

Assessment and Final Grade

Participation 15%

Weekly short response assignments (completion) 25%

Presentation (graded) 10%

Midterm exam (graded) 20%

Final paper (graded) 30%

Course Requirements



Weekly responses: Prior to each class session, the student will prepare and submit a brief written text in response to a prompt provided by the instructor. These weekly responses should display critical, analytical thought about the text rather than mere factual comprehension.

Short presentation and leading class discussion: each student is responsible for introducing the reading and leading class discussion for part of one class session during the semester. For this task, the student will prepare a written handout on the reading and prepare topics and questions for discussion.

Midterm exam: The **midterm** exam is composed of essay questions, asking the student to identify key concepts from the readings and engage in critical analysis of major course themes.

Final paper: in the final paper, on a topic of the student's choice, the student must present their own critical analysis of one of the course's literary texts.

Class participation

See the CIEE Class Participation Policy below

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	<p>Introduction: Prague and the Czech lands in the Habsburg Empire</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Intro to course mechanics and topic</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Reading: Cohen, 2006: selections Eisner, 1950: selection</p> <p>Recommended: Tramer, 1964</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
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<p>Week 2</p>	<p>The unique and problematic position of Prague-German authors</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Kisch, 1941: selections Spector, 2000: selections</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Field Trip: German Prague – Old Town and New Town</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>Romanticism, national awakening, mysticism and myth I</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Rilke, 2005: selections</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Reading: Rilke, 1994: “The Siblings”</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>Romanticism, national awakening, mysticism and myth II</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Meyrink, 2011.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Meyrink, 2011 (continued).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
<p>Week 5</p>	<p>Romanticism, national awakening, mysticism and myth III</p>

	<p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Meyrink, 2011 (conclusion).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> <i>Jung-Prag - Decadence and decline I</i></p> <p>Reading: Leppin, 2003: short stories.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 6 Midterm Exam Period	<p><u>First Meeting</u> MIDTERM EXAM</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> <i>Jung-Prag - Decadence and decline II</i></p> <p>Reading: Leppin, 1997: Book 1.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 7 Midterm Exam Period	<p><u>First Meeting</u> Field Trip: The Prague Castle and Mala Strana</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> <i>Jung-Prag - Decadence and decline III</i></p> <p>Reading: Leppin, 1997: Book 2.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 8	<p><u>First Meeting</u> Modernity, alienation, and the absurd</p> <p>Reading: Kafka, 1971 "Description of a Struggle", "Jackals and Arabs", "The Cares of a Family Man."</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u></p>

	<p>New Objectivity, psychology, and pathology I</p> <p>Reading: Ungar, 2009.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 9	<p>New Objectivity, psychology, and pathology II</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Ungar, 2009 (continued).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Reading: Ungar, 2009 (conclusion).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 10	<p><u>First Meeting</u> Reportage, social activism, political engagement</p> <p>Reading: Kisch, 1941.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Lamentation, loss, and memory I</p> <p>Reading: Perutz, 1990.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 11	<p>Lamentation, loss, and memory II</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Perutz, 1990 (continued).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>

	<p><u>Second Meeting</u> Reading: Perutz, 1990 (continued).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 12	<p>Lamentation, loss, and memory III</p> <p><u>First Meeting</u> Reading: Perutz, 1990 (conclusion).</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p> <p><u>Second Meeting</u> Reinerová, 2005.</p> <p>Weekly response due before the class session, submission via Canvas</p>
Week 13 Final Exam Week	<p>End-of-course discussion.</p> <p>Final Paper due</p>

Course Materials

Required readings

Cohen, Gary B. *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (second edition). West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2006.

Eisner, Pavel. *Franz Kafka and Prague*. New York, NY: Golden Griffin Books, 1950.

Kafka, Franz. *The Complete Stories*. Edited by Nahum N. Glatzer. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

Kisch, Egon Erwin. *Sensation Fair*. Translated by Guy Endore. New York: Modern Age Books, 1941.

Leppin, Paul. *Others' Paradise*. Translated by Stephanie Howard and Amy R. Nestor. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2003.

-. *The Road to Darkness*. Translated by Mike Mitchell. Sawtry, UK/Monroe, OR: Dedalus/Ariadne, 1997.

Meyrink, Gustav. *Walpurgisnacht*. Translated by Mike Mitchell. Sawtry, UK: Dedalus, 2011.

Perutz, Leo. *By Night under the Stone Bridge*. Translated by Eric Mosbacher. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990.

Reinerová, Lenka. "No One in the Street." Translated by Gitta Honegger. *Modernism/Modernity* 12.4 (Nov. 2005): 679-694.

Rilke, Rainer Maria [René]. *Larenopfer/Offerings to the Lares*. Translated and commented by Alfred de Zayas. Los Angeles: Red Hen Press, 2005.

-. *Two Stories of Prague: King Bohush, The Siblings*. Introduced and translated by Angela Esterhammer. Hanover and London: UP of New England, 1994.

Segel, Harold B. *Egon Erwin Kisch, The Raging Reporter: A Bio-Anthology*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1997.

Spector, Scott. *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle*. Berkeley, LA, London: U of California P, 2000.

Ungar, Hermann. *The Maimed*. Translated by Kevin Blahut. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2009.

Recommended readings

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Theory and History of Literature, Volume 30. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986.

Meyrink, Gustav. *The Golem*. Translated by Mike Mitchell. Sawtry, UK: Dedalus, 1995.

Tramer, Hans. "Prague – City of Three Peoples." *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9.1. (1964): 305-339.

Ungar, Hermann. *Boys and Murderers*. Translated by Isabel Fargo Cole. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2006.