CIEE in Prague, Czech Republic

Course Title: Modern Czech Art
Course Code: AHIS 3003 PRAG
Programs offering course: Central European Studies, Communication, New Media and Journalism, Global Architecture and Design
Language of instruction: English
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Spring 2019

Course Description

This combined seminar and lecture course aims to acquaint students with aspects of Central European visual culture from the modern era onwards. It will introduce major art styles and personalities in Czech modern art (from Art Nouveau’s Alphonse Mucha and the pioneer of abstraction František Kupka, to contemporary provocations of David Černý). Deep changes that occurred in architecture (from Art Nouveau decoration through Functionalist utopia to deconstruction of Postmodernism) will be introduced and discussed. All artworks will be examined within their broader cultural and historical context. Students will be given the opportunity to visit many Prague galleries and museums to encounter and study the originals in detail.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course the students will:
• apply theoretical concepts on modern and contemporary art
• have developed independent and creative interpretative skills;
• analyze selected works of art based on direct exposure to, and personal experience with, the works; and
• be able to illustrate and assess the riches of Prague’s galleries and the city’s exteriors through direct contact and exploration, which is a part of the course.

Course Prerequisites
"Art is for everyone" (Tracy Emin - British contemporary artist), that’s why this course has no specific prerequisites. Students with a deeper interest in the subject will be provided with extra readings and course materials.

Methods of Instruction

The usual structure of the course forms (with some minor exceptions) the combination of in-class lectures and out-class excursions to galleries and exploration of architectural sites. As part of the lectures, Power Point presentations will be used together with music samples and short videos. The course is based on active participation and an interactive approach. Students are encouraged
to discuss the presented works of art. Working sheets, mind maps, and other creative instruments will help students to get involved. Note: Participation will be taken into account for the final grade.

**Assessment and Final Grade**
1. Midterm test 15%
2. Final test 15%
3. Final assignment (essay or project) 30%
4. Gallery journal 10%
5. Homework essays 10%
6. Class participation 20%

**Course Requirements**
1. **MIDTERM TEST**
2. **FINAL TEST**
The form of the tests will be mostly essay-like with comparisons and descriptions of chosen artworks (presentation with artworks will be provided). List of question will be provided in advance. Grading scale forms part of the test template.

3. **FINAL ASSIGNMENT (essay or project)**
   a) **Final essay and in-class presentation**
      - Students are asked to submit a short research paper (app. 7-10 pages, i.e. 2000 – 2500 words) on a chosen subject.
      - There will be a list of recommended themes handed out in the introduction lesson, but students are strongly encouraged to come with their own suggestions.
      - The final paper must include a bibliography featuring books (and other sources) that are not among the required reading (minimum 3 independent sources).
      - Part of the evaluation is a short (5 - 10 minutes) oral presentation of each student’s final essay topic. This presentation should be spoken or read and include visual aids, such as power-point presentations, photocopies, or monographs. The student is expected to provide his peers with a short written summary/handout. The papers (as well as presentations) should most importantly show students’ interest supported by careful research, ability to outline and summarize the characteristics of a chosen style, work of an artist, architect or an art group, and systematic analysis of selected key works.

   b) **Final project and in-class presentation**
      - A group of students will be responsible for organizing an art event with a contemporary Czech artist (at the CIEE premises or in the city of Prague). This participative project serves as an alternative form of the final assignments (further details and important dates will be provided at the beginning of the semester).
      - Part of the evaluation is a short (5 - 10 minutes) oral presentation of the project (see “final essay” for details of presentation).

4. **GALLERY JOURNAL**
Students should also show their own initiative with visiting galleries and museums on their own. Students should keep an exhibition journal throughout the semester with a short (5-10 sentences) description of the exhibits (both Modern Czech Art field trips and independent visits) - **minimum of 10 entries.**

5. **HOMEWORK ESSAYS**
There will be also **two short (each approx. 1 page, min. 250 words)** written homework essays aimed at acquainting students with the methods of structured description and analysis of a selected piece of art and architecture.

6. **CLASS PARTICIPATION**
- Handouts and required readings (as well as one presentation for a selected reading) are compulsory; students are expected to discuss required readings in the class. (10 %)
- The course is based on active participation and an interactive approach. Students are encouraged to discuss the presented works of art. (10 %)
- Attendance at the course trip. **NOTE:** not attending without a doctor’s note is counted as 1 unexcused absence. Do not forget to register for the trip during the **add/drop period.**

**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 unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursions or events, as well as Internship.

Excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students will be marked absent.

Persistent absenteeism (students with unexcused absences exceeding 10% of the total course hours, or violations of the attendance policy in more than one class) will result in a written warning and a possible notification to the student’s home school.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of the Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Equivalent Number of 90-minute / 180-minute Semester Classes</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>up to 10%</td>
<td>two 90-minute classes</td>
<td>participation grade affected as per class requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>one 180-minute class</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–20%</td>
<td>three to four 90-minute classes</td>
<td>participation grade affected as per class requirements; written warning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>two 180-minute class</td>
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<tr>
<td>more than 20%</td>
<td>five 90-minute classes</td>
<td>automatic course failure and possible expulsion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>three 180-minute classes</td>
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**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Missing more than 20% of the TOTAL class hours (excused and unexcused combined) will lead to a course failure, and potential program dismissal.

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.

If missing a class,
- students are responsible for any material covered in class during their absence.
- students will only be entitled to a make-up assignment, test, exam or delivering his/her presentation if the absence is excused by the Student Services Coordinator (SSC).

An absence in a CIEE course will only be excused provided the two below conditions have been met:
- The reason for missing a class is of a serious medical nature that could not be treated outside of the student’s course hours, AND
- the student submitted a local doctor’s note within 24 hours from the class missed. Doctor’s notes may be submitted via e-mail or phone (a scan or photograph are acceptable), however, the student must ensure that the note is delivered to the SSC.
Should a **truly extraordinary situation** arise, the student must contact the SSC immediately. The SSC decides the course of action for all absence cases that are not straightforward. **Always contact the SSC 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 and absences incurred in this way will not be excused.

Course attendance is recorded on individual Canvas Course Sites. Students are responsible for checking their attendance on a weekly basis to ensure the correctness of the records. In case of discrepancies, students are required to contact the SSC 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 Statement**

Presenting work of another person as one’s own, failure to acknowledge all sources used, using unauthorized assistance on exams, submitting the same paper in two classes, or submitting work one has already received credit for at another institution in order to fulfill CIEE course requirements is not tolerated. The penalty ranges from failure in the course to dismissal from the program. The Academic Director should be consulted and involved in decision making in every case of a possible violation of academic honesty.

**Weekly Schedule**

The schedule of field trips is be subject to change due to unexpected changes in exhibition and/or gallery structure.
### WEEK 1

**THEME: Course introduction. Towards modern architecture: conditions of Modernity in Architecture**

**Session 1 (in-class)**
- Introduction of the course: objectives and assignments.
- Prague architecture in the past: From Romanesque style to Historicism. Basic vocabulary; structured description of architecture; various types of eclectic architecture (Classicism, neo-Romanesque, neo-Gothic, neo-Renaissance).

**Session 2 (field trip)**
- Visit to the Mucha Museum, [www.mucha.cz](http://www.mucha.cz)
- Meeting point: at the statue of St. Wenceslas, top of the Wenceslas square,
- How to get there: tram 3, 9, 14, 24 – Vodičkova, – 5 min walk, metro C – Muzeum – 2 min walk.

*Aim of the class:* get acquainted with characteristics of Art Nouveau style in art and architecture, understand the role of Alphonse Mucha in development of the style (independent work in groups).

**HW 1 (reading, questions and write-up) – due Wednesday Week 2:**

a) **Required reading:**

b) **HW Questions:**
   How is Czechness defined in Jiránek’s text? What constitutes national culture today? Can you think of examples of “American” art? Find examples of visual culture that you consider Czech and explain in what way they convey “Czechness”.

### WEEK 2

**THEME: Idea of “Czechness” in art.**

**How to analyze a piece of art: basic terminology for formal analyses.**

**Session 1 (in-class)**
- The “Czechness” of our Art: National Revival in visual arts. Czech art in contemporary global culture: The language(s) of provocation: David Černý and Pode Bal Group.
- Formal analyses: How to analyze painting and sculpture? Which questions to ask? Structured description of an art piece. Coming to terms with the basic terminology.
Session 2 (field trip)

- *How to get there*: Trade Fair Palace, Dukelskych hrdinu 47, Prague 7 - tram 12, 24, 17 – Veletržní palác (entrance is just opposite the tram stop), tram 1, 8, 25, 26 – Strossmayerovo nam., 5 min walk, metro C – Vltavská, 10 min walk.
- *Aim of the class*: understand the historical and national importance of Slav Epic, its visual symbolism and style development (discussion in groups), get acquainted with the ideas of artists “prophets”

**HW DUE**: Written homework from Week 1

**HW 1 (written HW and reading) - due Monday Week 4:**
- a) *Written HW*:
  - Analysis of a chosen artwork (2D – painting, drawing, print) – 1 – 2 pages
- b) *Required readings*:
  - Barnet 1999, 28-53 and 75-76.

**Reading for presentation – due Monday Week 3:**
- a) *Recommended reading (architecture)* –
  - Tietz 1998, 6-17 (Architecture at the Turn of the Century)

**Reading for presentation – due Wednesday Week 3:**
- b) *Recommended reading (art)*
  - Czech Modern Art 1900-60, 1995, 24-50 (Symbolism in Painting and Sculpture)

**WEEK 3**


**Session 1 (in-class)**
- *Definition of Modern Art: its conditions, time period, theory and artists involved.*
- Introduction of the artist Tomáš Moravec (final project)

**HW DUE**: Readings for presentations from Week 2.

**Session 2 (field trip)**

- **Aim of the class**: get acquainted with specifics of Czech impressionism and symbolism (students presentation)

**HW (Final Paper):**
- **Topic and outline for the FINAL PAPER (1/2 – 1 page)** – due **Monday Week 8** – see List of recommended topics in the Moodle
- **Final paper (7 – 10 pages)** - due **Monday Week 12**
- **Short PPT presentation** (5 – 10 slides, 5 – 10 minutes speech, outline 1 – 2 pages) - due **Monday Week 12 or 13**

**Reading for presentation (František Kupka)** – due **Wednesday, Week 4:**
- Czech Modern Art 1900-60 (catalogue) (pp 70-80) – From the figure to Abstraction OR (pp 128-134) - Cosmic Architecture

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**WEEK 4**

**THEME: Czech Symbolism, Decadence and Abstraction.**

**Session 1 (in-class)**
- Czech Impressionism, Symbolism and Decadence – is every turn if the Century decadent?
- Founders and principles of Abstract Art – Malevic, Mondrian, Kandinsky and Kupka – searching for the Universe.

**HW DUE:** Written HW from Week 2 (2D analysis) - **HARDCOPY**. Presentations for reading from Week 3.

**Session 2 (field trip)**
- **Aim of the visit**: get acquainted with principles of abstract art and its birth (working in groups, students presentations), understand the influence of French avant-garde upon Czech Art (Auguste Rodin and Pablo Picasso).

**Reading for Presentation** – due **Wednesday Week 5:**
- Janak, Benson 2002, 86-92
Session 1 (inclass)  
  - Melting pot of Styles: Czech Modernism between Expressionism and Cubism (Filla, Kubišta, Gutfreund)  
  - Prague – the capital of cubism – unique application of cubist forms in architecture and design (Josef Chochol, Pavel Janák, and Josef Gočár).  

HW DUE: Decision about Final Project or Paper. Presentations for readings from Week 4.  

**Session 2 (field trip)**  
  - How to get there: Ovocný trh 19 (corner with Celetna street), Prague 1 – metro B – Náměstí republiky OR tram 5, 8, 24, 26 – Náměstí republiky, 5 min walk.  
  - Aim of the visit: understand the specifics of Czech Cubism – creation of a universal style including applied arts and architecture (working in groups, students presentations).  

**Reading for Presentation** (due Monday Week 6)  
Tietz 1999, 30-39 (Functionalism) -  
- HW Question: What architectural styles formed the basis for what was later named “International Style”? Which countries did they come from and what was their social and political background?  

| WEEK 6 | Midterm Exam | THEME: Towards “new media” – art and architecture of the 1920s – 30s.  
Session 1 (in class)  
  - Constructivist dreams: reality and utopia - Functionalism in European context (Bauhaus, Russian constructivism, Le Corbusier), social aspects and theory of communal housing (Karel Teige).  

HW DUE: Presentation for reading from Week 5.  

## Session 2 (field trip)
- MIDTERM TEST

**HW** (structured 3D analyses) – due Monday Week 10:
  a) **Written HW**
  - Structured analyses of a chosen piece of architecture, 3D artwork or new media (*250-500 words*).
  b) **Required reading**:

### Reading for Presentation (due Monday Week 8)
Mansbach 1999, 72-82 (Surrealism)
- **HW Question**: Why Karel Teige repeatedly refused surrealism during the 1920s? Use two artworks by Jindřich Štýrský (Marriage, 1934, collage and Trauma of birth, 1936, oil painting) to explain what were typical subject-matters and concerns of Czech surrealism.

## WEEK 7


### Session 1 (in-class)

### Session 2 (field trip)
- **Aim of the visit**: understand principles of functionalist architecture and its place in urbanism of the city (working in groups in both exterior and interior), development of modern sculpture.

### HW 1 (reading, questions and write-up – 1 – 2 pages) – due Monday Week 9:
  a) **Required readings**
  - Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s – Jindřich Chalupecký: The Intellectual under Socialism (pp. 29-37)
  b) **HW Question**:
  - What were the various oppressive strategies and controlling mechanisms utilized by the Communist regime? Describe the
position of the intellectual under socialism according to Chalupecký.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 8</th>
<th>THEME: Art of “compulsive beauty”. Strategies of survival: Art in World War II.</th>
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</table>
| Session 1 (in class) | o **Surrealism in Czechoslovakia (Jindřich Štyrský, Toyen, Karel Teige); tradition of the surrealist tendencies up to the present moment.**  
| | o **Strategies of survival: mythology of everyday life (Group 42 and Jindřich Chalupecký), return of expression, reflection of loneliness, ways to escape (Alén Diviš).** |
| HW DUE: | Final paper topic and outline. |
| | o **Aim of the class:** understand the development of **surrealism** and **figurative art (1930s-50s)** and its connection with politics of the time (working in groups, working sheets). |
| HW DUE: | Presentations for readings form Week 6. |
| **Reading for Presentation** (due Monday and Wednesday Week 10) | a) **Required readings:**  
| | • Artist Intervene in Everyday Life (pp. 120-123), Milan Knížák a Jan Maria Mach  
| | b) **HW Question:**  
| | • What do you think of the described project? Do you consider it art? Do you consider it relevant? |

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 9</th>
<th>THEME: Socialist realism and its counterparts – official and unofficial art of the 1950s-60s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1 (in class)</td>
<td>o <strong>Official and non-official art of the second half of the 20th century; socialist realism and its adversaries (Vladimír Boudník, Mikuláš Medek).</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>HW DUE:</td>
<td>Required readings and questions from Week 7 (write-up).</td>
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Session 2 (field trip)
- How to get there: tram Újezd (9, 12, 20, 22) – go back to the river and walk along it in the direction of Charles Bridge (5 – 7 min walk).
- Aim of the class: get acquainted with most important private art collection in Prague, existential and surrealist undercurrents in Czech modern art (working in groups)

WEEK 10

THEME: “Art Leaving Galleries (and coming back)” - Figuration, Abstraction and Experimental art (1960s – 70s)

Session 1 (in class)
- Abstract art and new technological optimism of the 1960s (Zdeněk Sýkora, Stanislav Kolíbal).
- Fluxus, Happening, Performance, Body art (HAPSOC, Actual Group, Milan Knížák, Petr Štembera); Land Art (Zorka Ságlová); Conceptual Art

HW DUE: Written HW (3D analyses) from Week 6. Presentations for readings from Week 8.

Session 2 (field trip)
- Aim of the class: Czech art during the 1960s political “thaw” and after 1968 (new sensibility, new figuration), discover new forms of art: happening, installation, etc.

HW (reading, questions and write-up – 250-500 words) – due Monday Week 11:
  a) Required reading: Přibáň 2013, 15 – 26 (The anomic society of late socialism)
  b) HW Question: How would you describe the situation in Czech society during the late socialist regime of the 1980s? What problems were the artists facing? What visual codes did the artists adopt or what were they forced to avoid?
### WEEK 11

**THEME: “Everything goes” - Postmodern shift in art and architecture.**

**Session 1 (in-class)**
- From prefabricated housing projects to postmodernism; Dancing House (Frank Gehry, Vlado Milunic); organic architecture (Jan Kaplický)
- Postmodern art and its concepts: plurality of meanings, multiple coding, eclecticism, appropriation, deconstruction, etc.

**Session 2 (field trip)**
- *Aim of the class*: get acquainted with principles of postmodernism and its Czech specifics using examples of artworks (students activity in groups)

c) **Recommended reading:**
Pospiszyl, Tomáš. *David Černý - The Fucking Years, The Life and Work of an Artist.*

### WEEK 12

**THEME: Czech Art after the Velvet revolution**

**Session 1 (in-class)**
- Art and politics, art in public space, the role of the context.
- Women in art: strong generation of woman artists – can we talk about “feminist” strategies in art?
- Presentation for the final paper (part 1)

**HW DUE:** Final paper and presentation (PPT and write-up).

**Session 2 (field trip)**
- Visit to an art gallery or exhibition of contemporary art (will be specified)
## WEEK 13
Final Exam Week

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<th>THEME: Assessment of the course, revision, discussion, presentations.</th>
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<td>Session 1 (in-class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Presentation for the final paper and project (part 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW DUE: Presentation for the papers and project (PPT and write-up).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2 (in-class)</td>
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<td>- FINAL TEST</td>
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### Course Materials