



University of
New Haven

Czech Society and Culture in Transition

SECTION I: Course Overview

Course Code: SOC110PRG
Subject Area(s): Sociology
Prerequisites: None
Language of Instruction: English
Total Contact Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The year 1989 represents one of the most crucial marks in the history of Czechoslovakia. The collapse of the communist regime triggered a transition to democracy, which has presented the country with unprecedented political, economic, and socio-cultural challenges and opportunities. This course examines how the demise of communism and the transition to democracy have impacted virtually all realms of Czech people's life and culture. The course assesses the socio-cultural impact of transition from various perspectives, including gender, education, environment, arts as well as the transformation of living spaces, and political or consumer attitudes. The theoretical background acquired from the course readings and class lectures is complemented with field studies which provide vivid first-hand accounts and impressions of contemporary Czech society and culture. These glimpses into various realms of life and culture of the Czech society help foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the massive, remarkable, and challenging transformations of the Czech Republic, many of which are still ongoing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain how the legacies of communism have impacted the Czech society and culture
- Compare and contrast Czech life during communism and after 1989
- Describe how Czech society has transformed over the past four decades
- Give examples of the most recent socio-cultural transformations within the context of today's changing Europe

SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Name: | TBA |
| Contact Information: | TBA |
| Term: | SEMESTER |

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class will meet once weekly for 150 minutes each session. All students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared for the day's class session.

CEA enforces a mandatory attendance policy. You are therefore expected to attend all regularly scheduled class sessions, including any field trips, site visits, guest lectures, etc. that are assigned by the instructor. The table below shows the number of class sessions you may miss before receiving a grade penalty.

| ALLOWED ABSENCES – SEMESTER | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Courses Meeting X day(s) Per Week | Allowed Absence(s) | Automatic Failing Grade at X th absence |
| Courses meeting 1 day(s) per week | 1 Absence | 4 th Absence |

For every additional absence beyond the allowed number, your final course grade will drop down to the subsequent letter grade (ex: A+ to A). As a student, you should understand that the grade penalties will apply if you are marked absent due to tardiness or leaving class early. In the table below, you will find the grade penalty associated with each excessive absence up to and including automatic course failure.

| ATTENDANCE DOCKING PENALTIES | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Absence | 1 st | 2 nd | 3 rd | 4 th |
| Penalty | No Penalty | 0.5 Grade Docked | 1 Grade Docked | Automatic Failure |
| HIGHEST POSSIBLE GRADE AFTER ATTENDANCE PENALTIES | | | | |
| Grade | A+ | A | A- | F |

CEA does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. As such, no documentation is required for missing class. Similarly, excessive absences, and the grade penalty associated with each, will not be excused even if you are able to provide documentation that shows the absence was beyond your control. You should therefore only miss class when truly needed as illness or other unavoidable factors may force you to miss a class session later on in the term.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Class Participation | 10% |
| Field Study Report | 10% |
| Group Research & Presentation | 20% |
| Interview Report | 20% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Final Exam | 20% |

The instructor will calculate your course grades using the CEA Grading Scale shown below. As a CEA student, you should understand that credit transfer decisions—including earned grades for courses taken abroad—are ultimately made by your home institution.

| CEA GRADING SCALE | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Letter Grade | Numerical Grade | Percentage Range | Quality Points |
| A+ | 9.70 – 10.0 | 97.0 – 100% | 4.00 |
| A | 9.40 – 9.69 | 94.0 – 96.9% | 4.00 |
| A- | 9.00 – 9.39 | 90.0 – 93.9% | 3.70 |
| B+ | 8.70 – 8.99 | 87.0 – 89.9% | 3.30 |
| B | 8.40 – 8.69 | 84.0 – 86.9% | 3.00 |
| B- | 8.00 – 8.39 | 80.0 – 83.9% | 2.70 |
| C+ | 7.70 – 7.99 | 77.0 – 79.9% | 2.30 |
| C | 7.40 – 7.69 | 74.0 – 76.9% | 2.00 |
| C- | 7.00 – 7.39 | 70.0 – 73.9% | 1.70 |
| D | 6.00 – 6.99 | 60.0 – 69.9% | 1.00 |
| F | 0.00 – 5.99 | 0.00 – 59.9% | 0.00 |
| W | Withdrawal | N/A | 0.00 |
| INC | Incomplete | N/A | 0.00 |

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

Class Participation (10%): Student participation is mandatory for all courses taken at a CEA Study Center. The instructor will use the rubric below when determining your participation grade. All students should understand that attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively toward the participation grade.

| CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADING RUBRIC | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Student Participation Level | Grade |
| You make major & original contributions that spark discussion, offering critical comments clearly based on readings, research, & theoretical course topics. | A+ (10.0 – 9.70) |
| You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings & independent research. | A/A- (9.69 – 9.00) |
| You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings. | B+/B (8.99 – 8.40) |
| You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings. | B-/C+ (8.39 – 7.70) |
| You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings. | C/C- (7.69 – 7.00) |
| You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject. You are not prepared for class and/or discussion of course readings. | D (6.99 – 6.00) |
| You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion. You are consistently unprepared for class and/or discussion of the course readings. | F (5.99 – 0.00) |

Field Study Reflection Report (10%) You will have the opportunity to explore at first-hand various sites of life and exhibitions in Prague dedicated to Czech life and culture during communism and transition. You are to submit one written reflection report on a field study of your choice. You are encouraged to reflect on your impressions and direct observations that may arise during and after this visit in which you should reflect on how the object/place of study embodies, challenges, or relates to Czech life and culture during communism and the transition period. You should also connect your empirical observations to the analytical concepts and themes represented in our course readings (reference 1-2 sources) and course discussions.

Group Presentation (20%): In groups of 3-4, you will examine a selected realm of Czech life and culture (topic choices to be confirmed with course instructor). You will research, observe, and study its features, characteristics, and manifestations during communism and will critically analyze how the selected realm has been challenged and/or transformed during the transition period. Your research should include reviewing relevant literature on the topic but also an active first-hand exploration of the examples/manifestations of changes within your examined realm of Czech life and culture. Your group is to deliver an oral presentation accompanied by a visual presentation and should prepare possible questions to help facilitate follow-up discussion. Further instructions and rubric will be provided in class a few weeks prior to the assignment.

Interview Report (20%): In pairs, you will conduct an oral interview with a local resident (either Czech or a longer-term foreign resident) with an aim to learn more about Czech society and culture. Some of your interviewees maybe also be able to provide a comparative perspective, having experienced both communism and transition to democracy. Others may provide a more contemporary perspective in which case you could also examine how the discussed aspects of Czech life and culture differ from and/or are similar to those in your own culture. While you are encouraged to ask various questions that may arise naturally, you must prepare 5-7 targeted interview questions to get the most from your interview. Following your interview, prepare a bulleted written summary of your main findings which you will present to class in a 15-minute oral summary presentation. Further instructions and rubric will be provided in class a few weeks prior to the assignment.

Midterm and Final Exam (20% each): The midterm and final exams are designed to establish and communicate to you the progress you are making towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. They are comprised of questions and exercises that test your abilities in three important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course. The midterm exam will cover concepts covered in course readings, in-class discussions, and field visits and will have multiple choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay-response question.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES (AICAP)

CEA courses are designed to include a variety of experiential learning activities that will take you out of the classroom and allow you to explore your local, host city. These activities may include field studies, guest lectures and/or activities offered through our Academically Integrated Cultural Activities Program (AICAP). Please check the Forms of Assessment section to find out if AICAP activities are related to any specific form of assessment. The following experiential learning activities are recommended for this course:

- Museum of Communism
- Kotva Department Store/Palladium Mall
- Vystaviste Holesovice exhibition area & DOX Centre for Contemporary Art
- Vitkov National Memorial & “Panelak” Housing
- Museum of Romani Culture

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments for this course will come from the required text(s) and/or the selected reading(s) listed below. All required readings—whether assigned from the text or assigned as a selected reading—must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor.

- I. **SELECTED READING(S):** The selected readings for this course are listed below. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format).

Bancroft, A. “Gypsies to the Camps!: Exclusion and Marginalization of Roma in the Czech Republic” in *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 4, Issue 3, 1999, pp. 206-219.

Brodsky, J. “Czech Identity and Returning to Europe” in Vol. 1, Issue 2, *Sien Quarterly*, 2003-2004, pp. 9-22.

Buchowski, M. “Anthropology in Postsocialist Europe” in Kockel, U. et. al. *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*, New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, 2012, pp. 68-87.

Drbohlav, D. “The Czech Republic” in Wallace, C., Stola, D. (eds.) *Patterns of Migration in Central Europe*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, pp. 203-226.

Fagin, A. “Environment and Transition in the Czech Republic” in *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, 1994, pp. 479-494.

Harris, A. “Something like Happiness: Post-1989 Cinematic Portrayals of the Czech Industrial North” in *East European Politics, Society and Culture*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, pp. 447-453.

Hendrichova, J. Higher Education in Czechoslovakia: Some Problems of the Transition Period” in *Higher Education in Europe*, Vol. 16, Issue 3, 1991, pp. 46-56.

Horvat, K. "Memory, Citizenship, and Consumer Culture in Postsocialist Europe" in Kockel, U. et. al. *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*, New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, 2012, pp. 145-162.

Illner, M. "The Changing Quality of Life in a Post-Communist Country: The Case of Czech Republic" in *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 43, 1998, 141-170.

Just, D. "Art and everydayness: Popular Culture and daily life in the communist Czechoslovakia" in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 15, Issue 6, 2012, pp. 703-720.

Kopecky, P. "An Awkward Newcomer? EU Enlargement and Euroscepticism in the Czech Republic" in Harmssen, R., Spiering, M. (eds.) *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 225-245.

Mahoney, W. "The Postwar Era and the Communist Regime" in Mahoney, M. *The History of the Czech Republic and Slovakia*, Oxford: Greenwood Publishing, 2011, pp. 193-230.

Musil, J. "Czechoslovakia in the Middle of Transition" in *Czechoslovak Sociological Review*, Vol. 28, 1992, pp. 5-21.

Pavlinek P., Pickles, J. "Environmental Change and Post-Communist Transformations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia" in *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, Vol. 40, Issue 5, 1999, pp. 354-382.

Raabe, P. "Women, work and family in the Czech Republic- and the comparisons with the West" in *Community, Work and Family*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1998, pp. 51-63.

Rabusic, L. "Value Change and Demographic Behavior in the Czech Republic" in *Czech Sociological Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2001, pp. 99-122.

Ross, A. "Controversies and Generational Differences: Young People's Identities in Some European States" in *Education Sciences*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2012, pp. 91-104.

Skalnik, P. "Political anthropology of the postcommunist Czech Republic: Local-national and rural-urban scenes" in Kuerti, L., Skalnik, P. (eds.) *Postsocialist Europe: Anthropological Perspectives from Home*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009, pp. 227-251.

Skinner, B., Bryant, R. "From Communism to Consumerism" in *The New Presence*, Issue 4, 2007, pp. 22-25.

Small, R. "Buying In: The Rise of Malls in the Czech Republic" in *The New Presence*, Issue 4, 2001, pp. 120-128.

Sobotka, T. et. al. "Czech Republic: a rapid transformation of fertility and family behavior after the collapse of state socialism" in *Demographic Research*, Vol. 19, Issue 14, 2009, pp. 403-454.

Zarecor, K. "Socialist Neighborhoods After Socialism: The Past, Present and Future of Postwar Housing in the Czech Republic" in *East European Politics, Society, and Culture*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, 2012, pp. 486-509.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The recommended reading(s) and/or text(s) for this course are below. These recommended readings are not mandatory, but they will assist you with research and understanding course content.

Bolton, J. *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe and Czech Culture Under Communism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012, 360 pp.

Brada, J. "The Economic Transition of Czechoslovakia from Plan to Market" in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1991, pp. 171-177.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this syllabus as needed

Eckman, J., Linde, L. "Communist Nostalgia and the Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe" in *Journal of Communist Studies & Transition Politics*, Vol. 21, Issue 3, 2005, pp. 354-374.

Fagan, A. *Environment and Democracy in the Czech Republic: The Environmental Movement in the Transition Process*. Northampton: Edward Elgar Press, 2004, 195 pp.

Hanley, E. "Centrally Administered Mobility Reconsidered: The Political Dimension of Educational Stratification in State-Socialist Czechoslovakia" in *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 2001, pp. 25-43.

Holy, L. *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 240 pp.

Kaniok P., Havlik, V. "Populism and Euroscepticism in the Czech Republic: Meeting Friends or Passing By?" in *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2006, pp. 20-35.

Kindlerova, R., Lyons, P. (eds). *Contemporary Czech Society*. Prague: Sociologicky Ustav AV CR., 2016, 552 pp.

Kuerti, L., Skalnik, P. (eds.) *Postsocialist Europe: Anthropological Perspectives from Home*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009, 336 pp.

Rose, R., Carnaghan, E. "Generational Effects on Attitudes to Communist Regimes: A Comparative Analysis" in *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, 1995, pp. 28-56.

Vanek, M., Muecke, P. *Velvet Revolutions: an Oral history of Czech Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 251 pp.

True, J. *Gender, Globalization, and Postsocialism: the Czech Republic After Communism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, 272 pp.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In order to ensure your success abroad, CEA has provided the academic resources listed below. In addition to these resources, each CEA Study Center provides students with a physical library and study areas for group work. The Academic Affairs Office at each CEA Study Center also compiles a bank of detailed information regarding libraries, documentation centers, research institutes, and archival materials located in the host city.

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA student, you will be given access to the online library of CEA's School of Record, the University of New Haven (UNH). You can use this online library to access databases and additional resources while performing research abroad. You may access the UNH online library [here](#) or through your MyCEA Account. You must comply with UNH Policies regarding library usage.
- **CEAClassroom – Moodle:** CEA instructors use Moodle, an interactive virtual learning environment. This web-based platform provides you with constant and direct access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources. Moodle includes the normal array of forums, up-loadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the learning objectives listed in this syllabus.

During the first week of class, CEA academic staff and/or faculty will help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus, you should always check Moodle for the most up-to-date information regarding this course. The instructor will use Moodle to make announcements and updates to the course and/or syllabus. It

is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials and that you monitor Moodle daily in case there are any changes made to course assignments or scheduling.

To access Moodle: Please log-in to your MyCEA account using your normal username and password. Click on the “While You’re Abroad Tab” and make sure you are under the “Academics” sub-menu. There you will see a link above your schedule that says “View Online Courses” select this link to be taken to your Moodle environment.

- **Online Reference & Research Tools:** The course instructor has identified the resources below to assist you with understanding course topics. You are encouraged to explore these and other avenues of research including the databases available via the UNH online library.

www.socialismrealised.eu

www.postbellum.cz

COURSE CALENDAR
Czech Society and Culture in Transition

| SESSION | TOPICS | ACTIVITY | READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS |
|---------|---|---|--|
| 1 | Course Introduction: Review Syllabus, Classroom Policies Where are we? An Introduction to Czech Republic | Course Overview Lecture & Discussion | Reading: Buchowski, pp. 68-87 |
| 2 | Czech Politics, Economics, Society & Culture under Communism | Lecture & Discussion <i>Field Study: Museum of Communism</i> | Reading: Mahoney, pp. 193-230 |
| 3 | Not all Velvet: Challenges & Opportunities of Transition | Lecture & Discussion | Reading: Musil, pp. 5-21 Illner, pp. 141-170 |
| 4 | <i>Homo Sovieticus</i> vs. <i>Homos Oeconomicus</i> : From Planned Market to Consumerism | Lecture & Discussion <i>Field Study: Kotva, Palladium</i> | Reading: Horvat, pp. 145-162 Skinner & Bryant, pp. 22-25 Small, pp. 120-128 |
| 5 | Legacies of Environmental Apathy & Activism | Lecture & Discussion | Reading: Fagin, pp. 479-494 Pavlinek & Pickles, pp. 354-382 |
| 6 | Education & Arts | Lecture & Discussion <i>Field Study: Vystaviste Holesovice & DOX</i> | Reading: Hendrichova, pp. 46-56 Just, pp. 703-720 |
| 7 | Center & Periphery Perspectives | Lecture & Discussion Interview Reports & Discussions | Reading: Skalnik, pp. 227-251 *Interview Report Due Prepare for Midterm Exam |

The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this syllabus as needed

| | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| 8 | MIDTERM EXAM | | |
| 9 | The EU Life: Freedom of Movement & Beyond | Lecture & Discussion | Reading: Brodsky, pp. 9-22 Kopecky, pp. 225-245 |
| 10 | Communist Brutalism: Transformation of Architecture & Living Spaces | Lecture & Discussion <i>Field Study: Vitkov, panelak</i> | Reading: Zarecor, pp. 486-509 Harris, pp. 447-453 |
| 11 | Re-Defining Gender Roles After Socialism | Lecture & Discussion | Reading: Raabe, pp. 51-63 Sobotka, T., pp. 403-454 |
| 12 | Immigration & Minorities: Who Belongs to the Country? | Lecture & Discussion <i>Field Study: Museum of Romani Culture</i> | Reading: Drbohlav, pp. 203-226 Bancroft, pp. 206-219 *Last day to submit Field Study Report |
| 13 | Generational Gap: Political Attitudes & Civic Engagement | Lecture & Discussion | Reading: Ross, pp. 91-104 Rabusic, pp. 99-122 |
| 14 | GROUP PRESENTATIONS | Group presentations & discussion | *Group presentation due Prepare for Final Exam |
| 15 | FINAL EXAM | | |

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SECTION III: CEA Academic Policies

The policies listed in this section outline general expectations for CEA students. You should carefully review these policies to ensure success in your courses and during your time abroad. Furthermore, as a participant in the CEA program, you are expected to review and understand all CEA Student Policies, including the academic policies outlined on our website. CEA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. For the most up to date policies, please review the policies on our website.

Class & Instructor Policies can be found [here](#)

General Academic Policies can be found [here](#)