Robots and Beer Pubs: Czech Culture from 863 to 1989
C223

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Telephone: (812) 855-9906

Meeting Time: 5:45–7
Meeting Place: BH 242
Office Hours: TBA

Description:
The course is a HEADY and INTOXICATING introduction to a people and culture that made ROBOTS and PILSNER BEER household names. We will take a virtual tour of Czech history, literature, film, art and brewmastery in an attempt to answer the central question: Who are the Czechs and why don't people take them more seriously?

THE COURSE WILL CONCLUDE WITH A TOUR OF UPLAND BREWERY.

Course Requirements: 2 exams, 2 essays (5 pages each), a few quizzes.

Format: Class work will consist of lectures and discussion (in English) on the cultural, historical, and political history of the Czechs and their various national instantiations from their origins up to the end of Communist rule. Reading load is between 25 and 200 pages per week.

NO KNOWLEDGE OF CZECH OR ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR REQUIRED

Texts
The following books are available for purchase at the IU Bookstore in the Memorial Union:
Richard Burton, Prague, A Cultural History (Interlink)
Franz Kafka, Complete Short Stories (Schocken)
Karel Čapek, Toward the Radical Center (Catbird)
Jaroslav Hašek, The Good Soldier Švejk (Penguin)
Bohumil Hrabal, Closely Watched Trains (Northwestern UP)
Heda Kovaly: Under a Cruel Star (Holmes & Meier)

Other readings will be posted on Oncourse under RESOURCES and the appropriate week.

Grading: Course grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Exams will be based on both the class lectures and preparatory assignments (readings and videos). It will be clear what will be required for the exams.

Papers are to be at least 1250 words (typically 5 pages double-spaced). Topics and guidelines will be distributed in class.

Participation includes not only attendance but completing reading assignments on time and taking an active part in class discussion.
**Absence policy** -- If you must miss class due to an excused absence (family emergency, illness, religious holiday or participation in an approved academic or athletic event), please let me know (in advance whenever possible) and be prepared to provide follow-up documentation. Note that it is always your responsibility to find out what you missed while absent and make up any missed work. Repeated unexcused absences will be reflected in course grade as below:

1-5 absences – proportionate % subtracted from Attendance Grade
6-14 absences – ½ letter subtracted from overall course grade (i.e., A- > B+)
15 absences – failing grade in course overall

Arriving 15 min. late 4 times = 1 absence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>88-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-87</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>78-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-77</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>68-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-67</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-64</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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Disability Statement
Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability must register with Disability Services for Students first. According to DSS guidelines, only students who have registered their disabilities with DSS are officially eligible for accommodations. When the disability has been registered, the student will receive a letter describing any accommodations necessary which must be presented to the instructor in the first week of classes. Please contact Disability Services for Students at 812-855-7578 in Franklin Hall 096 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. More information is available on the DSS web site (http://dsa.indiana.edu/dss.html).

Disclaimer
All information in this syllabus, including course requirements and daily lesson plans, is subject to change and should not be considered a substitute for attending class or for any information that is provided to you by your instructor.
DAILY ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

WEEK 1   WHO ARE THE SLAVS?

TUESDAY, January 8th
Topic: Course Overview, Things you didn’t know about the Czechs but really should, Stepping the World – Prague

THURSDAY, January 10th
Topic: Legends and Prehistory
Preparation for class:
Read: Karel Čapek, “At the Crossroads of Europe” in A Karel Čapek Reader
Benjamin Kuras, Czechs and Balances: A Nation’s Survival Kit, pp. 10–49 (Oncourse)

In Class:
Geography, Early Slavic Civilization, Slavic languages, Alphabets

WEEK 2   PREHISTORY, LEGENDS & THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

TUESDAY, January 15th
Topic: Medieval Period
Preparation for Class:
Read: Kuras, pp. 52–94 (Oncourse—Week 1)

In Class:
The Middle Ages

THURSDAY, January 17th
Topic: Czech Architecture
Preparation for Class:
Read: Burton, Prague: A Cultural History, pp. 10–54

In Class:
Romanesque, Gothic Architecture, Kutna Hora

WEEK 3   CZECH ARCHITECTURE AND THE MIDDLE AGES

TUESDAY, January 22nd
Topic: Czech Architecture and the Middle Ages
Preparation for Class:
Read: Kuras pp. 111–150 (Oncourse—Week 1)

In Class:
Renaissance Architecture, Baroque Architecture
**THURSDAY**, January 24\(^{rd}\)

**TOPIC:** Czech Folktales  
*Preparation for Class:*

Read: Kuras, pp. 150–162 *(Oncourse—Week 1)*  
Karel Jaromír Erben, *A Bouquet of National Tales* *(Oncourse)*

*In Class:*

Karel Jaromír Erben, Karel Hynek Mácha and the National Revival,  
Poetry: Why you should read it

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**WEEK 4 THE 19\(^{TH}\)-CENTURY NATIONAL REVIVAL**

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**TUESDAY**, January 29\(^{th}\) 
**EXAM I**

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**THURSDAY**, January 31\(^{th}\)

**TOPIC:** Music and the National Revival  
*Preparation for Class:*

Read: Burton, pp. 100–135

*In Class:*

Czech Music, the National Theater, and the National Revival

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**WEEK 5 CZECHS, GERMANS, JEWS: FRANZ KAFKA'S PRAGUE**

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**TUESDAY**, February 5\(^{th}\)

**TOPIC:** Kafka and Prague  
*Preparation for Class:*


*In Class:*

Czech Jews and Germans

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**THURSDAY**, February 7\(^{th}\)

**TOPIC:** Kafka  
*Preparation for Class:*


*In Class: “The Metamorphosis”*

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**WEEK 6 KAFKA, SLACKERS AND ANARCHISTS: THE GOOD SOLDIER ŠVEJK**

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**TUESDAY**, February 12\(^{th}\)

**TOPIC:** Jaroslav Hašek  
*Preparation for Class:*

Read: *The Good Soldier Švejk*, pp. 1–150

*In Class:*

Švejk and the Czech National Character
THURSDAY, February 14th
QUIZ

Topic: Švejk
Preparation for Class:
Read: The Good Soldier Švejk, pp. 150–216
In Class:
Švejk

WEEK 7 THE AVANT-GARDE

TUESDAY, February 19th

Topic: Alfons Mucha, Cubism
Preparation for Class:
Read: Burton, pp. 136–162
In Class:
Alfons Mucha, Cubism

THURSDAY, February 21st

Topic: Surrealism
Preparation for Class:
Read: Wikipedia entries on Surrealism and Arcimboldo.
In Class:
Surrealism, Arcimboldo, and Jan Svankmajer

WEEK 8 ROBOTS & DEATH: KAREL ČAPEK AND THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

TUESDAY, February 26th

Topic: Eternal Life
Preparation for Class:
Read: Karel Čapek, “The Makropulos Secret” in Toward the Radical Center
In Class:
Karel Čapek—Literature and Opera

THURSDAY, February 28th
QUIZ OVER R.U.R. & MAKROPULOS

Topic: Robots
Preparation for Class:
Read: Karel Čapek, “R.U.R.” in Toward the Radical Center
In Class:
Robots
Week 9  

**WWII**

**Tuesday, March 5th**  
Read Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*, pp. 5–51  
*In Class:*  
World War II, *Divided We Fall*

**Thursday, March 7th**  
**1st Paper Due in Class**  
*Topic:* WWII  
*Preparation for Class:*  
Read Kovaly, pp. 52–104  
*In Class:*  
*Divided We Fall*

**Spring Break**

*Week 10  Communism & Stalinism*

**Tuesday, March 20th**  
*Topic:* Czech Communism  
*Preparation for Class:*  
Read: Kovaly, pp. 105–137  
*In Class:*  
Post WWII and the Prague Spring

**Thursday, March 22nd**  
*Topic:* Kovaly  
*Preparation for Class:*  
Read: Kovaly to end  
*In Class:*  
Discuss Kovaly, *Trial in Prague* or *Oratorio for Prague*

*Week 11  Communism, Stalinism & The Prague Spring*

**Tuesday, March 26th**  
*Topic:* Bohumil Hrabal  
*Preparation for Class:*  
Read: Bohumil Hrabal, *Closely Watched Trains*, pp. vi–54 (including Forward by Josef Škvorecký)  
*In Class:*  
Bohumil Hrabal
THURSDAY, March 28th  
TOpic: Closely Watched Trains  
Preparation for Class:  
Read: Hrabal to end  
In Class:  
Closely Watched Trains

WEEK 12  THE CZECHOSLOVAK NEW WAVE

TUESDAY, April 2nd  
TOpic: Czech New Wave Film & Bohumil Hrabal  
Preparation for Class:  
Read: “Media and Cinema” (Oncourse)  
In Class:  
Czech New Wave Film, Closely Watched Trains (film)

THURSDAY, April 4th  
TOpic: Closely Watched Trains  
Preparation for Class: Contemplate your paper  
In Class:  
Closely Watched Trains

WEEK 13  NORMALIZATION

TUESDAY, April 9th  
TOpic: Czech Normalization  
Preparation for Class:  
Read: TBA  
In Class:  
Life Under Normalization

THURSDAY, April 11th  
TOpic: Czech Rock and the End of Communism  
Preparation for Class:  
Read: The Culture and Customs of The Czech Republic and Slovakia, “Performing Arts” (Oncourse)  
In Class: Czech Rock

WEEK 14  TRADITIONS OF MYSTIFICATION—JÁRA CIMRMAN

TUESDAY, April 16th  
TOpic: Czech Mystification  
Preparation for Class:
Read: “Mystification and the Nation” (Oncourse)

In Class:
Who is Jára Cimrman

THURSDAY, April 18th
Topic: TBA
Preparation for Class:
Read: TBA
In Class:

WEEK 15 CZECH BEER

TUESDAY, April 23rd
2nd Paper due in class
Topic: Czech Beer
Preparation for Class:
Read: “Cuisine and Fashion” (Oncourse)
In Class:
Czech Beer with Michael Jackson (no, the other Michael Jackson)

THURSDAY, April 25th
Field Trip to Upland Brewery
Preparation for Class:
Taste

FINAL EXAM
TUESDAY, APRIL 30TH
7:15