

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: CET Prague

Course Code / Title: (PR/JWST 357) Jews, Antisemitism, and Holocaust Memory in Central Europe

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Jewish Studies / Religious Studies, Central European Studies, Genocide Studies, History

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

This course explores the recent history and contemporary sociological landscape of Jews, antisemitism, and the memory of the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe. With special emphasis on the history of Jews in the multi-ethnic setting of the Czech lands, and the different aspects of their cohabitation with Czechs and Germans, the course examines the influence of nationalist conflict between Czechs and Germans on the course of modern Jewish history in this region. Varying historical analyses are discussed—some historians offer very dire descriptions of how Jews were inevitably caught between the fronts of the Czech-German conflict, while others stress Jewish cultural productivity as double-outsiders and attach great significance to the Jewish mediation between both cultures.

The course traces the rise of modern antisemitism, explores the visual representation of the Jews in satirical press, and examines the consequences of the break-up of the multi-national Habsburg empire and the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic. In so doing, the course also examines the various and conflicting ways of researching, remembering and memorializing the persecution and genocide of Jews within the framework of scholarly and popular, official and civic approaches to the Holocaust. How was the topic of the Holocaust discussed and memorialized under the domination of the Communist ideology and what role did it play in the post-Communist transformation of the Czech Republic? This course includes discussions of historiography and national historical narratives, memorials and restitution, and includes visits to the Jewish Museum as well as walks through some of the memorials in Prague. The uneasy relationship between the memory of the Holocaust and the post-WWII expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia and other countries is discussed as well as are contemporary examples of antisemitism in the Czech Republic and the region.

Objectives

In this course, students:

- Learn about the history of Jews, antisemitism, ethnicity and nationalism in Bohemian lands, with a view to contemporary Czech society
- Understand the ongoing process of re-interpretation of Czech-German-Jewish history, the Holocaust and its legacy
- Learn to use and interpret historical sources
- Examine the notions of identity formation under the influence of nationalism and ethnic conflict.

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Course Requirements

Students are expected to come to class having read all assignments (readings average 75-100 pages per class session) and prepared to engage in class discussion. At least two quizzes (without prior announcement) check that students have completed the obligatory weekly reading.

Students submit a midterm paper based on research in the oral history archive of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute (accessible through the Malach Center in Prague). Students also submit a final research paper, which they continuously prepare over the course of the term. A substantial research effort is expected. Students must read, as a bare minimum, one scholarly monograph and two other substantial sources. The midterm and final papers must be 1,000 and 3,000 words respectively and should make proper reference to sources used. In each paper, students should demonstrate both their comprehension of sources and their ability to formulate new ideas. There is a final exam that tests students' mastery of the major themes and topics covered in class.

Attendance and active participation in class are required and students are expected to abide by CET's Attendance Policy.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation 10%
- Quizzes based on weekly readings 10%
- Midterm paper 20%
- Final examination 20%
- Final paper 40%

Readings

Agnew, Hugh. "Czechs, Germans, Bohemians? Images of Self and Other in Bohemia to 1848." *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, Nancy M. Wingfield, 56-77. New York: Berghahn Books, 2003.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Brantford, Ont.: Penguin Classics, 2006.

Bankier, David. *The Jews are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to Their Countries of Origin after WW II*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Bondy, Ruth. *"Elder of the Jews": Jakob Edelstein of Theresienstadt*. New York: Grove Press, 1989.

Bondy, Ruth, and Chaya Naor. *Trapped: Essays on the History of Czech Jews, 1939-1943*. Jerusalem, 2008.

Butler, Judith. *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Chad, Bryant. *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

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- Caestecker, Frank, and Bob Moore, eds. *Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.
- Cohen, Gary B. "Jews in German Society: Prague, 1860-1914." *Central European History* 10, no. 1, 1977.
- Diner, Dan, and Gotthart Wunber. *Restitution and Memory. Material Restoration in Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007.
- Ehrmann, František, and Otta Heitlinger, and Rudolf Illtis, eds. *Terezín. Prague: The Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands*. Prague: Czech, 1965.
- Finkelstein, Norman G. *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*. New York: Verso, 2014.
- Franková, Anita. *World without Human Dimensions. Four Women's Memories*. Prague: State Jewish Museum, 1991.
- Frommer, Benjamin. *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Giustino, Cathleen. *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics Around 1900*. Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003.
- Giustino, Cathleen. "Municipal Activism in Late-Nineteenth-Century Prague: The House Numbered 207-V and Ghetto Clearance." *Austrian History Yearbook* 34, 2003.
- Hahn, Fred. "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Czechoslovakia (The Czech Republic)." *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, Randolph L. Braham, 57-77. New York, 1994.
- Heitlinger, Alena. *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews since 1945*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006.
- Holian, Anna. *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011.
- Jelinek, Yeshayahu A. "Capturing the Public's Imagination: Publications on Jewish Themes in Slovakia and the Czech lands, 1989-1995." *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 108-119.
- Kieval, Hillel J. *The Making of Czech Jewry. National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870-1918*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Kieval, Hillel J. "Negotiating Czechoslovakia. The Challenges of Jewish Citizenship in a Multiethnic Nation-State." *Insiders and Outsiders. Dilemmas of East European Jewry*, Richard I. Cohen, Jonathan Frankel and Stefani Hoffman, eds, 103-119. Oxford: Littman Library, 2010.
- Lániček, Jan. *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938-1948: Beyond Idealisation and Condemnation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Lederer, Zdeněk. *Ghetto Theresienstadt*. London, Edward Goldston & Son Ltd, 1953.

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- Mendelsohn, Ezra. *The Jews of East Central Europe between the world wars*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- Miller, Michael L. "Crisis of Rabbinical Authority: Nehemias Trebitz as Moravian Chief Rabbi, 1832-1842." *Judaica Bohemiae*, vol. 43, 65-91. Prague: Jewish Museum, 2008.
- Munk, Jan. "The Terezín ghetto memorial today and tomorrow." *Review of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews*, Vol. 5, 127-134. 1992-1993.
- Nečas, Ctibor. *The Holocaust of Czech Roma*. Prague: Prostor, 1999.
- Rothkirchen, Livia. *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia Facing the Holocaust*. Yad Vashem: Jerusalem and Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2005.
- Rothkirchen, Livia. "State-sponsored Anti-Semitism in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989." *Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust*, Rolf Steininger, eds. Wien, 1994.
- Rozenblit, Marsha L. *Reconstructing a National Identity. The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*. Picador, 2000.
- Shafir, Michael. *Between Denial and 'Comparative Trivialization': Holocaust Negationism in Post-Communist East Central Europe*. Jerusalem, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002.
- Sniegoň, Tomáš. "Their Genocide, or Ours? The Holocaust as a Litmus Test of Czech and Slovak Identities." *Echoes of the Holocaust. Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe*, : Klas-Göran Karlsson, Ulf Zander, eds. Lund, 2003.
- Spector, Scott. "Mittel-Europa? Some Afterthoughts on Prague Jews, Hybridity, and Translation." *Bohemia*, Vol.46, no. 1. 2006.
- Schulze Wessel, Martin. "Czech Anti-Semitism in the Context of Tensions Between National and Confessional Programs, and the Foundation of the Czechoslovak National Church." *Bohemia*, Vol.46, no. 1. 2006.
- Young, James E. *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Supplementary Readings (Recommended, not Required)*
- Cohen, Gary B. *The Politics of Ethnic Survival. Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Judson, Pieter M. *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Kieval, Hillel J. *Languages of Community. The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*. Los Angeles: University of California, 2000.
- King, Jeremy. *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans. A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

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Kisch, Guido. "Linguistic Conditions Among Czechoslovak Jewry. A Legal-Historical Study." *Historia Judaica*, Vol. 8, no.1, 1946.

Miller, Michael L. *Rabbis and Revolution. The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011.

Munk, Jan. *60 let Památníku Terezín / 60 Years of the Terezín Memorial*. Památník Terezín, 2007.

Pavlát, Leo. *The Treatment of Jewish Themes in Czech Schools*. New York, 1998.

Schapiro, Raya Czerter, and Helga Czerter Weinberg. *Letters from Prague*. Chicago: Chicago Academy Publishers, 1991.

Zahra, Tara. *Kidnapped Souls. National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Additional Resources

Selected articles from the following sources:

Judaica Bohemiae

Review of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews

Leo-Baeck Institute Yearbook

Yad Vashem Studies

Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Polin

The Jews of Czechoslovakia, vols. I-III. New York - Philadelphia 1968-84

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 – Historical Overview: National Conflict and Jewish Society in the Czech Lands

- Cultural geography of Austro-Hungarian Empire
- Jewish Emancipation
- Rise of nationalism and the modern nation
- The First Republic
- The Czech-German nationality conflict

Topic 2 – The Rise of Modern Antisemitism

- Historical roots of antisemitism in Central Europe
- Visualizing the "Other"
- Ritual Murder (Hilsner Affair) and anti-Jewish violence

Topic 3 - Prague as a Jewish metropolis

- Jewish intellectuals, writers, and voices in the political arena
- The clearance and reconstruction of the Jewish Ghetto

Topic 4 – The First World War and Jews in Interwar Central Europe

- Refugees, loyalty, and citizenship
- Minority politics in post-war Central Europe
- The myth of Czechoslovak democracy

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Topic 5 – The End of Democracy, War, and Genocide

- Czechoslovakia as a place of asylum
- The Reich, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and occupied territories
- The role of local populations in Nazi genocide

Topic 6 – The Theresienstadt Ghetto and the extermination camps

- Everyday life in the ghetto
- The ghetto in Nazi propaganda
- The role of the Elders
- “Ghetto in an annihilation camp”
- Extermination camps in Central Europe

Topic 7 - Sources/Documentation: The Witness and the Archive

- Oral history workshop: sources, methods, and uses
- The Malach Center

Topic 8 – Coming back?

- Holocaust survivors in post-war Czechoslovakia and Central Europe
- Early documentation
- Post-war justice and retribution against Nazi collaborators

Topic 9 - Holocaust Memory in State Socialism and Beyond

- Jews and Holocaust commemoration under Communism
- The Slánský trial
- Central Europe and Israel
- National memory vs. Jewish memory
- The Holocaust in Central European Cinema

Topic 10 – Places of Memory

- World War II memorials
- Holocaust memorials, memorialization, and meaning
- Post-1989 Narratives and Remembrance of the Holocaust

Topic 11 - Antisemitism and Jewish Social Engagement in Central Europe Today

- Antisemitism in contemporary Czech Republic and Europe
- Holocaust denial and Holocaust awareness