

Art History and Spiritual Values in Central Europe

Lecturer: Petr Mucha, Ph.D.

Contact: petr.mucha@cerge-ei.cz

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the most important artistic movements in history and their architectural expression. It is based on excursions to the most beautiful and valuable architectural monuments of Prague and their interpretation in the context of the cultural history of Central Europe. Shared values have always had a major influence on the forms of art and architecture. Particular attention is therefore paid to spiritual and societal values that stood behind individual artistic trends. Prague represents a unique collection in this sense. Through presentations followed by guided tours of the most representative sites, students learn not only to recognize the main artistic styles, but also to read and interpret the values they represent.

Course Objectives:

The course will provide students with an overview of the most important artistic and architectural periods of Prague in the context of Central European art history. It will also enhance their competence to recognize individual artistic styles and identify their value contexts.

Course Structure and Requirements:

Sessions are composed of presentations, class discussions and guided tours to relevant sites in Prague. The course is open to all students and there are no special prerequisites. Students are expected to actively participate in all class activities, including discussions and field trips, and to study the assigned study resources (available online). Other requirements include response paper and a final project.

Grading Policy:

Class participation	20%
Response paper	20%
Final project	35%
Multiple-choice test	25%

Mandatory Completion Policy

Note that all mandatory assignments and exams must be completed to the best of your ability in order for your final grade to be issued. Failure to complete a mandatory assignment or exam may result in a failing grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	97-100	Excellent Work
A	93-97	Outstanding Work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

AEP Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of knowledge and learning is encouraged at many stages of the learning process. While we value technology for educational purposes, we also value originality and the retainment of knowledge, and thus using AI for assignments and examinations, even if rephrased, is strictly prohibited and considered an academic integrity violation, unless the instructor explicitly allows for it in the context of evaluated work

AEP Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The AEP program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristics, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

AEP Diversity Policy

AEP is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community that values diversity in all its forms. We believe that one of the most meaningful lessons of studying abroad is learning to navigate and appreciate differences with curiosity and an open mind. While engaging across differences can sometimes be challenging or uncomfortable, these moments are essential for growth and learning. We recognize that every member of our community, even with the best intentions, may occasionally make missteps. Our commitment is to provide a supportive environment where respectful and honest dialogue helps us learn from these experiences, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive and broaden their perspective.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

CEE Introductory Lecture Series

AEP CEE Introductory Lecture Series

Week 2

Course Introduction

Thematic introduction and historical overview

Week 3

Roman and Romanesque: Values and Art

Tour:

Artistic Roots at Vyšehrad Castle

Week 4

Medieval Spirituality in Gothic Architecture Tour:

Gothic Themes in Old Town Prague

Week 5

Language of Art in the High Middle Ages

Tour of Prague Castle:

Spirituality of Basilica and Cathedral

Week 6

Renaissance Artistic Revolution

Tour:

Renaissance Motives in Architecture

Week 7

Spiritual Grandeur and Beauty of Baroque

Tour:

Best of Baroque Prague

Week 8

Classicism: Rediscovering the Values of Antiquity

Tour:

Classicist Pearls of the Prague City Center

Week 9

Historicism and Principles of Romanticism

Tour:

Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance Collection

Week 10

Novelty of Art Nouveau

Tour:

From Mucha Style to Municipal House

Week 11

New Perspectives: Cubism, Art Deco

Tour:

Czech Rondocubism and Art Deco

Week 12

Modernism and Progressive Ideas

Tour:

From Sacred Heart to Brutalism

Week 13

New Paradigms of Postmodernism

Tour:

Flagship of Prague's Postmodern Design

Study sources consist of readings and visual materials (videos, pictures). They will be available before each session in the online learning system.