

# Czech History in Context: Narratives and Memories

Lecturer: Dr. Adéla Muchová

## Course Description:

This course examines the tumultuous Czech history of the past millennium through individual and collective narratives and field study of relevant sites. Following key historical periods from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we will see how collective memory formed national identity as seen today. We will investigate how men and women—rulers, politicians, writers, and artists—influenced the past and constituted the present. We will follow the complex social, political, and cultural forces that shaped this region by visiting sites and memorials in public spaces, studying primary sources, and analyzing historical echoes.

## Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

This course will enable students to explore the evolution of Czech identity and understand pivotal historical periods and figures. The students will be able to recognize and analyze the role of culture in various social landscapes and assess how history influences contemporary society through narratives and memories.

## Course Requirements:

The course is available to all students without any specific prerequisites. Weekly sessions include presentations, discussions, and tours of related historical locations. All participants are expected to actively participate in discussions and site visits and engage with assigned study materials. Course assignments include a presentation, a mid-term test, and a final project.

### Grading Policy:

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Class participation | 20% |
| Presentation        | 20% |
| Mid-term test       | 30% |
| Final project       | 30% |

### 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.

## AEP Academic Integrity Policy

| 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 |

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 Introductory Lecture Series

### Week 2

#### *History in Context*

|             |                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Topics      | Disciplinary framework for exploring history, society, and culture. Overview of course topics, study resources, and assignments |
| Field visit | Memorials as cultural heritage                                                                                                  |

### Week 3

#### *The Royal Rush Hour: Kings, Gold, and Getting Official (13<sup>th</sup> Century)*

|             |                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure      | Agnes of Bohemia                                     |
| Topics      | Bohemian royal kingdom, colonization, and settlement |
| Field visit | Convent of St Agnes of Bohemia                       |

### Week 4

#### *Charlie's Golden Ticket: Emperors, Universities, and a Very New Town (14<sup>th</sup> Century)*

|              |                                                                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | Charles IV                                                                           |
| Topics       | Holy Roman Empire, Carolingian era, prosperity, growth, religious orders, university |
| Field visit  | Prague of Charles IV Museum                                                          |
| Presentation | Statue of St Wenceslas                                                               |

### Week 5

#### *The Hussite Revolution: Religious Reform and the Crucible of War (15<sup>th</sup> Century)*

|              |                                            |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | Jan Hus                                    |
| Topics       | Reformation, Hussite movement, nationalism |
| Field visit  | Bethlehem Chapel & City Hall               |
| Presentation | Statute of Charles IV                      |

## Week 6

### **Rudolf's Renaissance Rhapsody & The Counter-Reformation (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century)**

|              |                                                                |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | Jan Amos Komenský                                              |
| Topics       | Cultural boom, education, social and religious transformations |
| Field visit  | National Pedagogical Museum                                    |
| Presentation | Statue of Jan Zizka                                            |

## Week 7

### ***Wigs, Reforms, and Music (18<sup>th</sup> Century)***

|              |                                                                       |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | Maria Theresa                                                         |
| Topics       | Enlightenment, state transformation, centralization, education, music |
| Field visit  | Habsburg State                                                        |
| Presentation | Statue of Judah Loew ben Bezalel                                      |

## Week 8

### ***Steam Engines and Singing in Czech: The Big National Comeback (19<sup>th</sup> Century)***

|              |                                                                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | František Palacký                                                                    |
| Topics       | National Revival, industrialization, cultural revival, and the struggle for autonomy |
| Field visit  | National Theater & Jungmann Memorial & Žofín                                         |
| Presentation | Statue of Maria Theresa                                                              |

### ***Mid-term test***

## Week 9

### ***Building a Dream, Facing a Nightmare (20<sup>th</sup> Century I.)***

|              |                                                                              |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | Karel Čapek                                                                  |
| Topics       | Czechoslovak State, Nazi Protectorate and World War II, resistance movements |
| Field visit  | The National Memorial to the Heroes of the Heydrich Terror                   |
| Presentation | Statue of František Palacký                                                  |

## Week 10

### ***Red Star Blues and a Velvet Touchdown: Journey from East to West (20<sup>th</sup> Century II.)***

|             |                                                                         |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure      | Milada Horáková                                                         |
| Topics      | Communism, Cold War, cultural dissent and resistance, Velvet Revolution |
| Field visit | Exposition of Communism                                                 |

Presentation Winton Monuments at Main Station

## **Week 11**

### ***From Velvet Divorce to Brussels and Beyond: Czechia Charts Its 21st Century Course***

|              |                                                                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Figure       | Václav Havel                                                                   |
| Topics       | Cultural legacy, historical knowledge, and perspectives. The Memory of Nations |
| Field visit  | 1989 Memorial & Heart for Havel at Národní třída                               |
| Presentation | Victims of Communism Memorial                                                  |

## **Week 12**

### ***Unbound Chapters***

|              |                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Topics       | Heritage and historical insights |
| Presentation | Class viewing of final projects  |

### ***Final Projects due***

## **Week 13**

### ***Memory Forever***

|        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Topics | Conclusion, remarks, and evaluation |
|--------|-------------------------------------|

## Readings:

- Bažant, Jan; Nina Bažantová, and Frances Starn (eds). *The Czech Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Demetz, Peter. *Prague in Black and Gold: Scenes in the Life of a European City*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.
- Pánek, Jaroslav; Oldřich Tůma et al. *A History of the Czech Lands*. Praha: Karolinum 2018.
- Snyder, Timothy. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. London: Penguin, 2017.