

CET Syllabus of Term



Program: CET Prague

Course Title: Central European Film

Course Code: CE310

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Suggested Cross Listings: Film Studies, Central European Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: Open to all students

Professor: Petra Dominková, Ph.D.

Email: petra.dominkova@gmail.com

Class Schedule: Mondays 4.15 – 7.15 pm

Description of the course

The aim of the course is to show the most important trends and movements in the history of Czech and Central European cinematography and also to put the films within their historical (political and cultural) context.

Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- explain the most powerful forms of the Czech/Central European (CE) cinematography;
- define the Czech New Wave, Polish Cinema of Moral Concern and other movements;
- explain which genres are typical for Czech/CE cinematography and why;
- analyze a Czech/CE film of interest in its socio-cultural context;
- apply the theoretical thoughts to the writing about film
- understand the most important terms from the film theory

Course Requirements

Class Attendance and Participation: Participation means a meaningful contribution in the classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared, as directed, in advance of each class session. Particularly, students will read the text(s) required for each lesson and **will come to the class prepared with an excerpt from the text and comments how it refers to the film seen.** All students will be ready to discuss the readings in the class. Lively discussion is expected.

Students are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is not allowed unless it is explicitly required by the professor (that may happen in some specific situations). Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations.

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Presentation: Around half of the class time (i.e. 90 minutes) will be devoted to discussion. We will discuss **the film and the reading(s)** that are assigned for that very day. While all the students will be familiar with the film and the reading(s), one student will have a special task to be a “leader of discussion”. S/he will prepare the handout for each student that will include the close analysis of the film based on the reading (not exclusively, student may add whatever else s/he will find important for understanding the film) OR the presentation (using Powerpoint, Prezi or any other tools). The handout/presentation will include **AT LEAST 5 questions for class**. Those questions should be rather complicated, can be even controversial, encouraging the students to think about the film more intensively (not “Did you like the film?”). Since everybody in class will be prepared, the “leader” will encourage all students to talk. The handout/presentation should NOT include the factual information as is the names of the cast and crew (with exception of director and DP when relevant), the number of awards and prizes the film get, the names of the production/distribution companies associated with the film, the titles of the director’s other films etc, unless it is particularly relevant. You should instead focus on YOUR OWN analysis and/or interpretation of the film (with the help of readings assigned) and perhaps also on the additional reviews/analysis of that film available at Internet.

!! Send me the handout or presentation at least 24 hours before the class begins! !!

A student will not write a midterm essay on film s/he has a presentation on.

Midterm essay (4 pages minimum, i.e. 1.400 words): An essay about chosen Czech/Slovak/Hungarian/Polish film(s). The students will receive the topics for the midterm essay ahead.

Due: Mar-16

Final essay (6 pages minimum, i.e. 2.100 words): On a chosen topic that corresponds to the material covered in the course; the usage of at least one obligatory reading is expected and the application of your own background is encouraged. The presentation of a final project (**May-04**) creates 10% of the final essay grade. **Due: May-11**

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Class participation	25% = 250 points
Presentation	25% = 250 points
Midterm essay	25% = 250 points
Final essay	25% = 250 points
Total	100% = 1000 points

Grading scale

A:	93-100%	C+:	77-79%
A-:	90-92%	C:	73-76%
B+:	87-89%	C-:	70-72%
B:	83-86%	D+:	67-69%
B-:	80-82%	D:	60-66%
		F:	59% and below

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Attendance Policy:

Mandatory attendance is a primary requirement for a responsible learning experience. Please consider that every absence has the potential to lower the final grade, as it may affect the “attendance and participation” portion of your grade or result in missing key information that could appear on quizzes or exams. In addition, professors take attendance at the beginning of the class. If you are more than 10 minutes late, professors mark one hour of absence from class. Onsite visits count as regular class hours. A no-show to a site visit counts as an absence. Detailed information about the Attendance you will find in the **CET Prague Academic Policies**

Required Reading:

Czech/CE Cinema Reader (available in the office):

* Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*. [Film Art] The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2010, 118–140, 142–146. [MISE-EN-SCENE]

* Hillman, Roger, “Goodbye Lenin (2003): History in the Subjunctive.” [Rethinking History](#) 10, No. 2 (June 2006), pp. 221–237.

Will be discussed with **Goodbye Lenin February 12**

* *Film Art*, pp. 186-212. [FRAMING]

* Grimes Topping, Christine, “The world is out of control: Nimrod Antal's *Kontroll* (2003) as a socio-political critique of powerless individuals in a postmodern world.” [Studies in European Cinema](#) 7, No. 3 (December 2010), pp. 235–245.

* Jobbitt, Steve, “**Subterranean Dreaming: Hungarian Fantasies of Integration and Redemption.**”

Available at <http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/7/kontroll.shtml>

Will be discussed with **Control February 19**

* Hirsch, Joshua Francis, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust*. Blackwell PublisTemple University Press, 2004, pp. 1–27.

Will be discussed with **Ida February 26**

* *Film Art*, pp. 78-86, 90-97, 100-101. [NARRATION]

* Freeland, Cynthia, “Explaining the Uncanny in *The Double Life of Véronique*.” In *Horror in film and psychoanalysis: Freud's worst nightmare*, edited by Steven Jay Schneider, 87–105. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Will be discussed with **The Double Life of Véronique March 5**

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* Schmitt, Christian, "Beyond the Surface, Beneath the Skin: Immanence and Transcendence in Gyorgi Palfi's Films." In *Iconic Turns : Nation and Religion in Eastern European Cinema since 1989*, edited by Liliya Berezhnaya, and Christian Schmitt, 183–198. BRILL, 2014.

* Imre, Anikó, "The Politics of Hiccups." *Cineaction* 64 (August 2004), pp. 8–17.

*Will be discussed with **Huckle March 12***

* Mulvey, Laura, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Patricia Erens, 28–40. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

* Smelik, Anneke, "Feminist Film Theory." In *The Cinema Book*, edited by Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink. 353–365. London: British Film Institute, 1999. Available at <http://www.annekesmelik.nl/TheCinemaBook.pdf>

*Will be discussed with **Loves of a Blonde March 26***

* Film Art, pp. 223-255. [EDITING]

* Lim, Bliss Cua, "Dolls in Fragments: Daisies as Feminist Allegory." *Camera Obscura* 16, No. 2, pp. 36–77.

* Hatherley, Owen, "Decadent Action." Available at <http://themeasurestaken.blogspot.cz/2006/01/decadent-action.html>

*Will be discussed with **Daisies April 9***

* Owen, Jonathan: "Slovak bohemians: revolution, counterculture and the end of the sixties in Juraj Jakubisko's films." *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 1, No. 1, 2010, pp. 17–28.

*Will be discussed with **Birds, Orphans, and Fools April 9***

* Girelli, Elisabetta, "Subverting space: Private, public and power in three Czechoslovak films from the 1960s and 70s." *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 2, No. 1, 2011, pp. 49–59.

*Will be discussed with **Ear April 16***

* Film Art, pp. 269-285, 288-298. [SOUND]

*Will be discussed with **Conspirators of Pleasure April 23***

* Imre, Anikó, "Play in the Ghetto: Global Entertainment and the European 'Roma Problem'." *Third Text* 20, No. 6 (November 2006), pp. 659–670.

*Will be discussed with **District April 30***

*** TBA**

*Will be discussed with **Pigs May 07***

Weekly schedule:

Week 2 [Mon, Feb-05]

Theme: Introduction + Chronology I / MISE-EN-SCENE

- course introduction: course objectives, reading, assignments, approach, etc.

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- chronology of the Czech / Central European Cinema
- common history / common topics
- What is mise-en-scene and how it can influence the perception of a movie?

Week 3 [Mon, Feb-12]

Theme: Chronology II / FRAMING

- "Velvet" (and other) revolutions and the changes they brought about in the cinema.
- What is framing and why is it important in the movies?

Discussion: Goodbye Lenin (Wolfgang Becker, Germany, 2003, 121', color)

Reading: Hillman + Film Art, 118-140, 142-146 (MISE-EN-SCENE)

Week 4 [Mon, Feb -19]

Theme: Workshop: How to write an essay / EDITING

- Do's and don'ts: what to avoid in writing an essay.
- (dis)continuity editing

Discussion: Control (Kontroll, Hungary, Nimród Antal, 2003, 105', color)

Reading: Film Art, 186-212 (FRAMING) + Jobbitt <http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/7/kontroll.shtml> + Grimmes Topping.

Topics for midterm essay (**deadline March 12**)

Week 5 [Mon, Feb -26]

Theme: WWII and Holocaust in the movies / NARRATION

- WWII and Holocaust in the Central European Cinema
- narration and narrator / plot vs. story

Discussion: Ida, dir. Pawel Pawlikowski (Poland, 2013, 82')

Reading: Hirsch.

Week 6 [Mon, Mar -05]

Theme: Polish Cinema / TRANSCENDENTAL CINEMA

- chronology, Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Roman Polanski

Discussion: The Double Life of Veronique (Krzysztof Kieslowski, France, 1991, 98', color)

Reading: Film Art, 78-100 (NARRATION) + Freeland.

Week 7 [Mon, Mar-12]

Theme: Hungarian Cinema / PRINCIPLES OF FILM FORM

- chronology
- Miklós Jancsó / Béla Tarr / György Pálfi
- principles of film form: function / similarity and repetition / difference and variation / development / unity and disunity
- transcendental style

Discussion: Huckle (György Pálfi, 2002, 78, color)

Reading: Schmitt + Imré (2004)

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Week 8 [Mon, Mar-19]

NO CLASS

Week 9 [Mon, Mar-26]

Theme: Czechoslovak New Wave + Miloš Forman / FEMINIST FILM THEORY

- Miloš Forman a his CS and US career
- New Wave – its social and cultural roots, international links, the inspiration
- traits of CNW: existentialism, sexuality, etc.
- the directors of “Czechoslovak New Wave”: Věra Chytilová, Jiří Menzel, Juraj Jakubisko, etc.
- feminist film theory: its premises and goals

Discussion: Loves of a Blonde (Lásky jedné plavovlásky, Miloš Forman, 1965, 88', b&w)

Reading: Mulvey + Smelik.

Midterm essay is due

Week 10 [Mon, Apr-02]

NO CLASS

Week 11 [Mon, Apr-09]

Discussion: Daisies (Sedmikrásky, Věra Chytilová, 1966, 74', color)

Reading: Film Art, 223-242, 256-262 (EDITING) + Lim + Hatherley

(<http://themeasurestaken.blogspot.cz/2006/01/decadent-action.html>).

Discussion: Birds, Orphans and Fools (Vtáčkovia, siroty a blázni, Juraj Jakubisko, Slovak Republic, 1969, 78', color)

Reading: Owen.

Topics for final essay (**deadline May 11**)

Week 12 [Mon, Apr-16]

Theme: Czech Cinema in the 1970s and 1980s / SOUND

- obstacles of Czech New Wave directors in the 1970s and 1980s
- similarities with the 1950s; ideology and socialistic realism

Discussion: Ear (Ucho, Karel Kachyňa, 1970, 91', b&w)

Reading: Girelli.

Week 13 [Mon, Apr-23]

Theme: Experimental Cinema / AUTEUR

- surrealism: Jan Švankmajer
- experimental films

Discussion: Conspirators of Pleasure (Spiklenci slasti, Jan Švankmajer, 1996, 85', color)

Reading: Film Art, 269-285, 288-298 (SOUND)

Week 14 [Mon, Apr-30]

Theme: Animated Cinema / COLOUR

- Karel Zeman + Jiří Trnka (pioneers)

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- Michaela Pavlátová + Jiří Barta + Aurel Klimt

Discussion: District (Nyócker, Áron Gauder, Hungary, 2004, 87', color)

Reading: Imré (2006).

Week 15 [Mon, May -07]

Theme: Genre Cinema in East Europe / GENRE

- genre cinema in the communist era and today

Discussion: Pigs (Psy, Wladyslaw Pasikowski, Poland, 1992, 104', color)

Reading: TBA.

Week 16 [Mon, May-14]

Theme: The Final Essays – Presentations + Feedback

- presentation of the students' final papers and class discussion (each student will have a presentation /approx. 10-15 minutes long/, others will give him/her feedback)

- class discussion about the lecture (what did you learn?, what did you miss?, what was your best experience?,)

- Bingo (names / titles / years / terms)

Final essay is due Tuesday, May-15.