

# CET Syllabus of Term



**Program:** CET Prague

**Course Title:** Central Europe in Literature

**Course Code:** CE320

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Suggested Cross Listings:** Literature and Culture

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites/Requirements:** Open to all students in spring only

**Professor:** Dr. Daniel Vojtěch

**Email:** danielvojtech@gmail.com

**Class Schedule:** Mondays 9.00–10.30, Wednesdays 10.40–12.10

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## Description of the course

The course focuses modern authors of Central and Eastern Europe, with a special respect to writers who were active in the Czech lands and Vienna. A particular attention is given to the problems of modernity and the Jewish identity representing a specific margin, a limit of the “human condition” of Central Europe and in this sense acquires a universal meaning (“Who made Vienna 1900 the capital of modern culture?”). Following a relative historical chronology, the course-topics cover a changing concept of individual and collective identity before World War I referencing the move from a symbolist conception of a multidimensional world towards the irony of the parable of vanishing meaning in the works of Prague and Viennese writers (A. Schnitzler, H. von Hofmannsthal, K. Hlaváček, P. Leppin, G. Meyrink, F. Kafka), possibilities of coexistence and ideological stereotypes as forms of anti-knowledge – “the world of yesterday” and its collapse (J. Roth, R. Musil, J. Hašek), the situation of breaking-up of European value-systems and forms (H. Ungar, H. Broch, B. Schulz, J. Langer, K. Poláček), representations of the city and the body, notions of decline to chaos, fundamental reduction of existence, social determination in contrast to tradition and memory as a resource of understanding the other. Literary traditions of Central Europe become also the palimpsest of reading and writing in the work of more contemporary writers from the countries of the former Habsburg empire and provide an insight into their post-Holocaust histories (J. Weil, H. Grynberg, D. Kis).

The course is designed as a series of discussions with a support of brief lecture-based introductions into the context of the discussed reading. In addition, guided Prague walks and museum visits will be organized to introduce the city as a space of a living cultural memory.

Amount of reading – around 150 pages per week.

## Objectives:

- Basic knowledge of the situation of Central European modern culture
- Reading of literary modernism both in terms of understanding the means of figurative language, and representation, and as a specific type of knowledge expressing the path of identity-quest
- Understanding the (Jewish) experience of Central Europe related to historical bonds of politics and its institutions, arts and literature, ideology, science and religion

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## Methods of Evaluation

Participation (including two oral presentations – introductions into the discussion of a given text –, and activity in class) – 35 %

3 short response papers (reader's response type of a paper, 1-2 pages double spaced) – 30 %

Final paper (analytical paper, preferably focusing a specific aspect of a text with a discussion of reference materials /where possible/ max. 10 pages double spaced) – 35 %

## Academic Honesty

Although the students are encouraged to exchange ideas in and outside class, everybody is required to submit their own work. That means that copying the work of other students or published materials is strictly prohibited.

## 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**

## 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

## Primary Texts

Hermann Broch: *The Sleepwalkers*. Vintage International Press, 1996. ISBN: 0679764062

Henryk Grynberg: *The Jewish War and The Victory* (Northwestern, Evanston, Ill. 2001)

Jaroslav Hašek: *The Good Soldier Švejk*. London: Penguin Books, 1973.

Karel Hlaváček: *The Vengeful Cantilena* (1898 – available in photocopies).

Franz Kafka: *Collected Short Stories*. New York: Schocken, 1996

Franz Kafka: *A Hunger Artist*. Prague: TSP, 1997

Ladislav Klíma: *The Sufferings of Prince Sternenhoch*. Prague: TSP, 2000.

Jiří Mordechaj Langer: *Nine Gates to the Chasidic mysteries*, translated by Stephen Jolly, Northvale, N. J.: Jason Aronson, 1993 [1937] (available in photocopies, CET library)

Gustav Meyrink: *The Golem* (1995)

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Joseph Roth: *The Radetzky March* (1995)  
Joseph Roth: *The Wandering Jews* (2001)  
Arthur Schnitzler: *Professor Bernhardi*. In: A. Schnitzler: *Round Dance and Other Plays*. Transl. by J. M. Q. Davies. Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 0192804596 (available in photocopies, CET library)  
Arthur Schnitzler: *Lieutenant Gustl*  
Hermann Ungar: *The Maimed*. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2005

### General Reference:

Ernst Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press, 1983, 2006  
William M. Johnston: *The Austrian Mind – An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938*. University of California Press, 1972 (CET library)  
William O. McCagg Jr.: *A History of Habsburg Jews 1670-1918*. Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992 (CET library)  
Steven Beller: *A Concise History of Austria*. Cambridge University Press, 2007  
Steven Beller: *Antisemitism. A Very Short Introduction*. Cambridge University Press,  
Robert B. Pynsent: *Questions of Identity. Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality*. Oxford University Press, 1994

### Literature on the work of Franz Kafka (Course pack 2):

Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund: "Notes On Kafka", in T. W. A.: *Prisms*, transl. by Samuel and Shiery Weber, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1983  
Anderson, Mark M.: "The Traffic of Clothes: *Meditation and Description of a Struggle*" + "'Jewish' Music? Otto Weininger and 'Josephine the Singer'", in M. M. A.: *Kafka's Clothes. Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg Fin-de-siècle*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994, p. 19–49, 194–216  
Benjamin, Walter: "Franz Kafka" + "Some Reflections on Kafka", in W. B.: *Illuminations*, Schocken Books, New York, 1969, p. 111–145  
*The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* (2002)  
Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari, Félix: chapters 1 – 3 from *Kafka. Toward Minor Literature*, University Of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1986  
Gilman, Sander L.: "On Difference, Language, and Mice", in S. L. G.: *Franz Kafka, the Jewish Patient*, Routledge, New York – London, 1995, p. 1–40  
Kahl, Frederick Robert: *Franz Kafka, A Representative Man* (1991)  
Pawel, Ernst: *The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka* (1984)  
Poltzer, Heinz: "Juvenilia: The Artist As a Bachelor" + "The Breakthrough: 1912", in H. P.: *Franz Kafka. Parable And Paradox*, second, revised edition, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1966, p. 23-82  
Robertson, Ritchie: *Kafka: Judaism, Politics and Literature* (1985)  
Salfellner, Harold: *Franz Kafka and Prag* (2002)  
Spector, Scott: *Prague Territories. National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka Fin-de-Siècle*. Los Angeles-Berkeley-London: The University of California Press (2000)

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## Course Schedule

	<b>Topics Covered During Class</b>	<b>Readings or Homework Required for this Class</b>
<b>Week 1</b> January 29, 31	Literatures of Central and Eastern Europe: An Introduction	S. L. Gilman: The Frontier As a Model For Jewish History (Course Pack 2) Joseph Roth: The Radetzky March, Chapters I-V Joseph Roth: The Wandering Jews
<b>Week 2</b> February 5, 7	Modern Intellectual at the Frontier The Man Without a Core	Arthur Schnitzler: Lieutenant Gustl <b>Arthur Schnitzler: Professor Bernhardt</b> <b>Stefan Zweig: “The World of Security” (Course Pack 2)</b> <b>S. L. Gilman: “What Are Stereotypes and Why Use Texts to Study Them?” + “The Madness of the Jews” + “Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Joke” (Course Pack 2)</b>
<b>Week 3</b> Feb. 12, 14	Dissolution of the Self – Symbolic hierarchy of the City	<b>Paul Leppin: The Doors of Life (Course Pack 1)</b> <b>Eli Valley: The Golem of Prague, The Golem Redux (Course Pack 1), Alois Jirásek: Old Czech Legends (Course Pack 1), Gustav Meyrink: The Golem</b> <b>Scott Spector: Sections from Prague Territories (Course Pack 2)</b> <b>TURN IN: Resp. paper</b>
<b>Week 4</b> Feb. 19, 21	Anxiety as a limit of human condition	Franz Kafka: Description of a Struggle,

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Modern Parable of existence

The Judgment, In the Penal Colony, Report for an Academy, The First Sorrow, A Hunger Artist, A Little Woman, Josephine, the Singer or the Mouse People (see Recommended literature on the Works of Franz Kafka (Course Pack 2))

**Week 5**  
March 26, 28

Men of Power? The Power of Language

Ladislav Klíma: The Sufferings of Prince Sternenhoch

**Week 6**  
March 5, 7

The Shapeless Man

**TURN IN:** Resp. paper  
Joseph Roth: The Radetzky March, Chapters 9-13  
J. Hašek: The Good Soldier Švejk. Part I

**Week 7**  
March 12, 14

Personal and Collective Memory: Life as Disintegration

Henryk Grynberg: The Jewish War and The Victory

**Week 8**  
March 26, 28

Psychoanalysis and the reduction of human qualities

Hermann Ungar: The Maimed

**Week 9**  
April 9, 11

Inner Ghetto and the possibilities of communication in the world of chaos; the technique of manipulation and subjection

Egon Hostovský: The Arsonist  
Karel Poláček: What Ownership's All About  
**TURN IN:** resp. paper

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<b>Week 10</b> April 16, 18	Memory and tradition in confrontation with history and modern knowledge	Jiří Langer: Nine Gates Isaac Babel: The Story of My Dovecot, First Love, My First Goose, The Cemetery at Kozin, Berestechko (Course Pack) Bruno Schulz: Cinnamon Shops and The Streets of Crocodiles (Course Pack 1)
<b>Week 11</b> April 23, 25	The disappearance of the empirical and the experience of yesterday's world	Joseph Roth: The Radetzky March, Chapters 13-18 Robert Musil: from The Man Without Qualities (Course Pack 2)
<b>Week 12</b> Apr. 30 May 2	The Relevance of Central European conditions	Hermann Broch: The Sleepwalkers Danilo Kis: Birth Certificate and Variations on the Theme of Central Europe (Course Pack 1)
<b>Week 13</b> May 7, 9	Recording the self and the meaning of contingency in the "totalitarian" times	Jiří Weil: Life With a Star + from Mendelssohn Is On the Roof (in the Course Pack) Heda Margolius-Kovaly: (from) Under a Cruel Star (in the Course Pack) Final Discussion
<b>Week 14</b> May 14		<b>TURN IN: FINAL PAPERS (May 14)</b>