



## CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

<b>Course title:</b>	Modern Czech Art
<b>Course code:</b>	AHIS 3003 PRAG
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Business, Arts and Sciences, Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism, Global Architecture and Design
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3.00
<b>Contact hours:</b>	45.00
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2023

### Course Description

This course aims to acquaint students with significant aspects of Central European visual culture from the modern era onward. It introduces major art styles and personalities in Czech modern art, from Art Nouveau's Alphonse Mucha and the pioneer of abstraction František Kupka, to the contemporary provocations of David Černý. Deep changes that occurred in architecture, from Art Nouveau decoration through Functionalist utopia to the Postmodern deconstruction, are introduced and discussed. Many of the artworks examined within their broader cultural and historical context are exhibited in galleries and museums in Prague, which gives the students an opportunity to study the originals, rather than reproductions, during many field trips incorporated into the course.

### Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- apply theoretical concepts on modern and contemporary art;
- develop independent and creative interpretative skills;
- analyze selected works of art based on direct exposure to, and personal experience with the works;
- illustrate and assess the riches of Prague's galleries and the city's exteriors through direct contact and exploration.

### Course Prerequisites

"Art is for everyone" (Tracy Emin, British contemporary artist), that is why this course has no specific prerequisites. Students with a deeper interest in the subject will be provided with extra readings and course materials.

### Methods of Instruction

The usual structure of the course forms (with some minor exceptions) the combination of in-class lectures and out-class excursions to galleries and exploration of architectural sites. As part of the lectures, Power Point presentations will be used together with music samples and short videos.

### Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Midterm Test	15%
2.	Final Test	15%
3.	Final Assignment (essay or project)	30%
4.	Gallery Journal	10%
5.	Homework Essays	10%
6.	Class Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

### Course Requirements

#### Midterm Test

## Final Test

The form of the tests will be mostly essay-like with comparisons and descriptions of chosen artworks (presentation with artworks will be provided). List of question will be provided in advance. Grading scale forms part of the test template.

## Final Assignment (essay or project)

### a) Final essay and in-class presentation

- Students are asked to submit a short **research paper (app. 7-10 pages, i.e. 2000 – 2500 words)** on a chosen subject.
- There will be a list of recommended themes handed out in the introduction lesson, but students are strongly encouraged to come with their own suggestions.
- The final paper must include a bibliography featuring books (and other sources) that are not among the required reading (minimum **3 independent sources**).
- Part of the evaluation is a **short (5 - 10 minutes) oral presentation** of each student's final essay topic. This presentation should be spoken or read and include visual aids, such as power-point presentations, photocopies, or monographs. The student is expected to provide his peers with a short written summary/handout. The papers (as well as presentations) should most importantly show students' interest supported by careful research, ability to outline and summarize the characteristics of a chosen style, work of an artist, architect or an art group, and systematic analysis of selected key works.

### b) Final project and in-class presentation

- A group of students will be responsible for organizing an art event with a contemporary Czech artist (at the CIEE premises or in the city of Prague). This participative project serves as an alternative form of the final assignments (further details and important dates will be provided at the beginning of the semester).
- Part of the evaluation is a **short (5 - 10 minutes) oral presentation** of the project (see "final essay" for details of presentation).

## Gallery Journal

Students should also show their own initiative with visiting galleries and museums on their own. Students should keep an exhibition journal throughout the semester with a short (5-10 sentences) description of the exhibits (both Modern Czech Art field trips and independent visits) - **minimum of 10 entries**.

## Homework Essays

There will be also **two short (each approx. 1 page, min. 250 words)** written homework essays aimed at acquainting students with the methods of structured description and analysis of a selected piece of art and architecture.

## Class Participation

- Handouts and required readings (as well as one presentation for a selected reading) are compulsory; students are expected to discuss required readings in the class. (10 %)
- The course is based on active participation and an interactive approach. Students are encouraged to discuss the presented works of art. (10 %)
- Attendance at the course trip. NOTE: not attending without a doctor's note is counted as 1 unexcused absence. Do not forgot to register for the trip during the add/drop period.

## Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided

- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

***N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.***

### **Weekly Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

Class: Course Introduction

#### **Towards modern architecture: conditions of Modernity in Architecture**

##### **Session 1 (in-class)**

- *Introduction of the course: objectives and assignments.*
- *Prague architecture in the past: From Romanesque style to Historicisms. Basic vocabulary; structured description of architecture; various types of eclectic architecture (Classicism, neo-Romanesque, neo-Gothic, neo-Renaissance).*

Class: 1.2 .

##### **Session 2 (field trip)**

- Visit to the **Mucha Museum**, [www.mucha.cz](http://www.mucha.cz)
- *Meeting point:* at the statue of St. Wenceslas, top of the Wenceslas square,
- *How to get there:* tram 3, 9, 14, 24 – Vodičkova, – 5 min walk, metro C – Muzeum – 2 min walk.

*Aim of the class:* get acquainted with characteristics of Art Nouveau style in art and architecture, understand the role of Alphonse Mucha in development of the style (independent work in groups).

#### **HW 1 (reading, questions and write-up) – due Wednesday Week 2:**

a) *Required reading:*

- Jiránek 2002, 56-57.

b) *HW Questions:*

How is Czechness defined in Jiránek's text? What constitutes national culture today? Can you think of examples of "American" art? Find examples of visual culture that you consider Czech and explain in what way they convey "Czechness".

#### **Week 2**

Class: 2.1 Idea of "Czechness" in art.

##### **Session 1 (in-class)**

- *The "Czechness" of our Art: National Revival in visual arts. Czech art in contemporary global*

language: *The language(s) of provocation: David Černý and Póde Bal Group.*

- *Formal analyses: How to analyze painting and sculpture? Which questions to ask? Structured description of an art piece. Coming to terms with the basic terminology.*

Class: 2.2 .

### **Session 2 (field trip)**

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - **The Slav Epic Exhibition** (ground floor)
- *How to get there:* Trade Fair Palace, Dukelských hrdinů 47, Prague 7 - tram 12, 24, 17 – Veletržní palác (entrance is just opposite the tram stop), tram 1, 8, 25, 26 – Strossmayerovo nám., 5 min walk, metro C – Vltavská, 10 min walk.
- *Aim of the class:* understand the historical and national importance of Slav Epic, its visual symbolism and style development (discussion in groups), get acquainted with the ideas of artists “prophets”

**HW DUE:** Written homework from Week 1

### **HW 1 (written HW and reading) - due Monday Week 4:**

a) *Written HW:*

- Analysis of a chosen artwork (2D – painting, drawing, print) – **1 – 2 pages**

b) *Required readings:*

Barnet 1999, 28-53 and 75-76.

### **Reading for presentation – due Monday Week 3:**

a) *Recommended reading (architecture) –*

- Tietz 1998, 6-17 (Architecture at the Turn of the Century)

### **Reading for presentation – due Wednesday Week 3:**

b) *Recommended reading (art)*

- Czech Modern Art 1900-60, 1995, 24-50 (Symbolism in Painting and Sculpture)

## **Week 3**

Class: Towards Modern art: from Romanticism to Symbolism.

### **Art and Architecture of Art Nouveau.**

#### **Session 1 (in-class)**

- Definition of Modern Art: its conditions, time period, theory and artists involved.
- New materials in architecture: Art Nouveau.
- Introduction of the artist Tomáš Moravec (final project)

**HW DUE:** Readings for presentations from Week 2.

Class: 3.2 .

#### Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - Czech Impressionism and Symbolism, František Kupka (part 1) (permanent collection, 4th floor)
- Aim of the class: get acquainted with specifics of Czech impressionism and symbolism (students presentation)

#### **HW (Final Paper):**

- Topic and outline for the FINAL PAPER (1/2 – 1 page) – due Monday Week 8 – see List of recommended topics in the Moodle

- Final paper (7 – 10 pages) - due Monday Week 12
- Short PPT presentation (5 – 10 slides, 5 – 10 minutes speech, outline 1 – 2 pages) - due Monday Week 12 or 13

**Reading for presentation (František Kupka) – due Wednesday, Week 4:**

- Czech Modern Art 1900-60 (catalogue) (pp 70-80) – From the figure to Abstraction OR (pp 128-134) - Cosmic Architecture

**Week 4**

Class: 4.1 Czech Symbolism, Decadence and Abstraction

**Session 1 (in-class)**

- Czech Impressionism, Symbolism and Decadence – is every turn of the Century decadent?
- Founders and principles of Abstract Art – Malevic, Mondrian, Kandinsky and Kupka – searching for the Universe.

**HW DUE:** Written HW from Week 2 (2D analysis) - **HARDCOPY.**

Presentations for reading from Week 3.

Class: 4.2 .

**Session 2 (field trip)**

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - **František Kupka (part 2), French Collection and its influence on Czech Art Czech Expressionism and Cubism** (permanent collection – 4th and 3rd floor)
- *Aim of the visit:* get acquainted with principles of abstract art and its birth (working in groups, students presentations), understand the influence of French avant-garde upon Czech Art (Auguste Rodin and Pablo Picasso).

**Reading for Presentation – due Wednesday Week 5:**

- Janak, Benson 2002, 86-92

**Week 5**

Class: 5.1 "Scream Mouth!" – philosophy of Czech Expressionism.

**Poetry of hard edges – the Phenomena of Czech Cubism in Art and Architecture.**

**Session 1 (inclass)**

- Melting pot of Styles: Czech Modernism between Expressionism and Cubism (Filla, Kubišta, Gutfreund)
- Prague – the capital of cubism – unique application of cubist forms in architecture and design (Josef Chochol, Pavel Janák, and Josef Gočár).

**HW DUE:** Decision about Final Project or Paper.

Presentations for readings from Week 4.

Class: 5.2 .

**Session 2 (field trip)**

- Visit to the permanent collection of **Czech Cubism**, House at the Black Madonna, <http://www.czukubismus.cz/en/the-house-at-the-black-madonna>
- *How to get there:* Ovocný trh 19 (corner with Celetná street), Prague 1 – metro B – Náměstí republiky OR tram 5, 8, 24, 26 – Náměstí republiky, 5 min walk.
- *Aim of the visit:* understand the specifics of Czech Cubism – creation of a universal style including applied arts and architecture (working in groups, students presentations).

**Reading for Presentation (due Monday Week 6)**

Tietz 1999, 30-39 (Functionalism) -

- *HW Question:* What architectural styles formed the basis for what was later named "International Style"? Which countries did they come from and what was their social and political background?

## Week 6

Class: 6.1 Towards "new media" – art and architecture of the 1920s – 30s.

Session 1 (in class)

- *Association Devětsil: "Poetization" of the everyday, "art for all senses", Karel Teige: I'enfant terrible of the avant-garde.*
- *Constructivist dreams: reality and utopia - Functionalism in European context (Bauhaus, Russian constructivism, Le Corbusier), social aspects and theory of communal housing (Karel Teige).*

**HW DUE:** Presentation for reading from Week 5.

Class: 6.2 .

### Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to Muller Villa, <http://en.muzeumprahy.cz/villa-muller/>
- **HW (structured 3D analyses) – due Monday Week 10:**
  - Written HW
    - Structured analyses of a chosen piece of architecture, 3D artwork or new media (250-500 words).
  - Required reading:
    - Barnett 1999, 53-61.

### Reading for Presentation (due Monday Week 8)

Mansbach 1999, 72-82 (Surrealism)

- HW Question: Why Karel Teige repeatedly refused surrealism during the 1920s? Use two artworks by Jindřich Štýrský (Marriage, 1934, collage and Trauma of birth, 1936, oil painting) to explain what were typical subject-matters and concerns of Czech surrealism.

## Week 7

Class: 7.1 Architecture of Trade Fair Palace

### Between Constructivism and Functionalism. Development of Modern Sculpture.

#### Session 1 (in-class)

- **MIDTERM TEST**

Class: 7.2 .

#### Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - **Architecture of the Trade Fair Palace, Art of the 1920s** - permanent collection (3rd and 2nd floor).
- *Aim of the visit:* understand principles of functionalist architecture and its place in urbanism of the city (working in groups in both exterior and interior), development of modern sculpture.

### HW 1 (reading, questions and write-up – 1 – 2 pages) – due Monday Week 9:

- Required readings
  - Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s – Jindřich Chalupský: The Intellectual under Socialism (pp. 29-37)
- HW Question:
  - What were the various oppressive strategies and controlling mechanisms utilized by the Communist regime? Describe the position of the intellectual under socialism according to Chalupský.

## Week 8

Class: 8.1 Art of "compulsive beauty". Strategies of survival: Art in World War II.

Session 1 (in class)

- *Surrealism in Czechoslovakia (Jindřich Štyrský, Toyen, Karel Teige); tradition of the surrealist tendencies up to the present moment.*
- *Strategies of survival: mythology of everyday life (Group 42 and Jindřich Chalupecký), return of expression, reflection of loneliness, ways to escape (Alén Diviš).*

**HW DUE:** Final paper topic and outline.

Class: 8.2 .

Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - **Permanent collection, 2nd floor**
- Aim of the class: understand the development of **surrealism** and **figurative art** (1930s-50s) and its connection with politics of the time (working in groups, working sheets).

**HW DUE:** Presentations for readings from Week 6.

**Reading for Presentation** (due **Monday** and **Wednesday Week 10**)

- Required readings:
  - Artist Intervene in Everyday Life (pp. 120-123), Milan Knížák a Jan Maria Mach
- HW Question:
  - What do you think of the described project? Do you consider it art? Do you consider it relevant?

## Week 9

Class: 9.1 Socialist realism and its counterparts

**Official and unofficial art of the 1950s-60s**

*Session 1 (in class) –*

- *Official and non-official art of the second half of the 20th century; socialist realism and its adversaries (Vladimír Boudník, Mikuláš Medek).*

**HW DUE:** Required readings and questions from Week 7 (write-up).

Class: 9.2 .

Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to the **Kampa Museum**, <http://www.museumkampa.com/en/>
- *How to get there:* tram Újezd (9, 12, 20, 22) – go back to the river and walk along it in the direction of Charles Bridge (5 – 7 min walk).
- *Aim of the class:* get acquainted with most important private art collection in Prague, existential and surrealist undercurrents in Czech modern art (working in groups)

## Week 10

Class: 10.1 "Art Leaving Galleries (and coming back)"

**Figuration, Abstraction and Experimental art (1960s – 70s)**

Session 1 (in class)

- Abstract art and new technological optimism of the 1960s (Zdeněk Sýkora, Stanislav Kolíbal).
- Fluxus, Happening, Performance, Body art (HAPSOC, Actual Group, Milan Knížák, Petr Štembera); Land Art (Zorka Ságlová); Conceptual Art

**HW DUE:** Written HW (3D analyses) from Week 6.

Class: 10.2 .

### Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - **New Figuration, Abstraction and Experimental Art of the 1960s- 70s** - permanent collection (2nd floor).
- *Aim of the class:* Czech art during the 1960s political "thaw" and after 1968 (new sensibility, new figuration), discover new forms of art: happening, installation, etc.

### HW (reading, questions and write-up – 250-500 words) – due Monday Week 11:

- *Required reading:* Přibáň 2013, 15 – 26 (The anomic society of late socialism)
- HW Question: *How would you describe the situation in Czech society during the late socialist regime of the 1980s? What problems were the artists facing? What visual codes did the artists adopt or what were they forced to avoid?*

## Week 11

Class: 11.1 "Everything goes" - Postmodern shift in art and architecture.

### Session 1 (in-class)

- *From prefabricated housing projects to postmodernism; Dancing House (Frank Gehry, Vlado Milunic); organic architecture (Jan Kaplický)*
- *Postmodern art and its concepts: plurality of meanings, multiple coding, eclecticism, appropriation, deconstruction, etc.*

Class: 11.2 .

### Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to the National Gallery Prague collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Trade Fair Palace, <http://www.ngprague.cz/> - **Postmodernism in Czech Art** - permanent collection (2nd floor).
- *Aim of the class:* get acquainted with principles of **postmodernism** and its Czech specifics using examples of artworks (students activity in groups)

### *Recommended reading:*

Pospiszyl, Tomáš. David Černý - *The Fucking Years, The Life and Work of an Artist.*

## Week 12

Class: 12.1 Czech Art after the Velvet revolution

### Session 1 (in-class)

- Art and politics, art in public space, the role of the context.
- Women in art: strong generation of woman artists – can we talk about "feminist" strategies in art?
- Presentation for the final paper (part 1)

**HW DUE:** Final paper and presentation (PPT and write-up).

Class: 12.2 .

### Session 2 (field trip)

- Visit to an art gallery or exhibition of contemporary art (will be specified)

## Week 13

Class: 13.1 Assessment of the course, revision, discussion, presentations.

### Session 1 (in-class)



- **Presentation for the final paper and project (part 2)**

**HW DUE:** Presentation for the papers and project (PPT and write-up).

Class: 13.2 Final Test

## **FINAL TEST**

### **Course Materials**

#### **Readings**

- Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*. Tufts University, New Jersey. 1999. Print.
- Janák, Pavel. "Prism and Pyramid". *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*. Ed. Benson, Timothy O and Éva Forgács. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002. 86-92. Print.
- *Czech Modern Art 1900-60*. Prague: The National Gallery in Prague, 1995. Print.
- Chalupecký, Jindřich. "The Intellectual under Socialism". *Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s*. Hoptman, Laura J. And Tomáš Pospiszyl. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002. 29-33. Print.
- Jiránek, Miloš. "The Czechness of our Art". *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*. Ed. Benson, Timothy O and Éva Forgács. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002. 56-57. Print.
- Knížák, Milan and Jan Maria Mach. "Artist Intervene in Everyday Life". *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*. Ed. Benson, Timothy O and Éva Forgács. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002. 120-123. Print.
- Mansbach S. A. *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Print.
- Pospiszyl, Tomáš. *David Černý - The Fucking Years, The Life and Work of an Artist*. Prague: Divus, 2002. Print.
- Přibáň, Jiří: *Pictures of Czech Postmodernism*. Prague: Kant, 2013. Print.
- Tietz, J.: *The Story of Architecture: Architecture at the Turn of the Century*, Cologne: Könemann, 1999. Print.