



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title:	Czech Cinema
Course code:	CINE 3009 PRAG
Programs offering course:	Business, Arts and Sciences, Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Fall 2023

Course Description

The aim of the course is to discuss the most important trends and movements in the history of Czech cinema, to put the films within their historical, political and cultural contexts, and to explore how Czech films capture the life of the Czech society during various epochs (1960s - 2010s). Students learn how to analyze the film form and style and how to employ various approaches to film criticism. As the course focuses on practical application of concepts and theories on film material, it requires that students watch selected feature films in their entirety (with English subtitles) as well as short extracts illustrating the topic outside of class.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- classify and critique the most important Czech directors and films;
- assess the Czechoslovak New Wave;
- explain which genres are typical for Czech cinema and justify your arguments;
- analyze a Czech film of interest in its socio-cultural context;
- employ various critical approaches while writing about the particular film;
- analyze a film form and style of a chosen film.

Course Prerequisites

The only prerequisite is a willingness to read, think, speak, write, and learn about Czech cinema and film style and form generally.

Methods of Instruction

The course is rather discussion-laden: one of the weekly sessions is entirely devoted to discussing one particular feature film and the other session to a lecture, which will still require a lot of student participation. Being a film class, the showing of clips is indeed necessary. Occasionally there will be presentation slides shown. We will have two field trips: to the film festival One World and Barrandov studios. Also, there will be two guest teachers.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Response Papers	20%
2.	Presentation	20%
3.	Midterm Essay	20%
4.	Final Test	20%
5.	Class Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Response Papers

200 points (50 each)

The students will write FOUR 500-word response papers about the films. Each response paper will be written in one of following approaches: reception criticism, feminist criticism, auteur criticism, formalist criticism (each response paper will be written within a different approach; students themselves choose which films they will be writing about and which approach would be suitable for that very film; the suggestions will be provided). All the approaches will be explained in class ahead. The papers about the particular film will be turned in BEFORE the class discussion of the film. All four response papers need to be turned in until the last day of discussion. The response papers will be graded based on consistency of the arguments: students should prove that s/he understands the particular critical approach as well as show that s/he is able to apply it to the film. Students will not write a response paper on the film s/he has a presentation on.

Presentation

200 points

One lesson each week (90 minutes) will be devoted to discussion. We will discuss the film and the reading(s) that are assigned for that 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). The handout 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?"). The 90 minutes time span reserved for the discussion does not mean that the "leader" will talk 90 minutes! 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 in the names of the cast and crew (with exception of director and DP when relevant), the number of awards and prizes the film has received, 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 online. The presentation will be assessed based on following categories.

1. Subject. Was the presentation informative? Did it have a clear focus? Was it well researched? Was the student knowledgeable about the subject?
2. Organization/Clarity. Was it easy to follow? Was there a clear introduction and conclusion?
3. Delivering of the presentation. Was the speaker in control of the sequence, pacing and flow of the presentation? Did s/he make effective use of notes, without relying on them too heavily?
4. Sensitivity to audience. Did the speaker maintain eye contact with all members of the class? Did s/he give you time to take notes if needed? Did s/he speak clearly and loudly?
5. Handouts/Clips. Did the speaker make effective use of handouts? Did s/he used clips from the movie that were relevant to the topic discussed?

Midterm Essay

200 points

Students will write a midterm essay and they will decide themselves what they want to write about. I am open to suggestions. The in-class presentation is a part of the assignment. Late submission of the essay (max 5 days) will result in lowering the grade by two-thirds of point (e.g. B + instead of A, B instead of A - , B - instead of B + etc.).

- Essay will have 1400 words (about 6 pages double-spaced).
- The essay that would combine your major and (particular) film is highly encouraged.
- The essay will cover one or more Czech film(s). It does not have to necessarily be about film(s) we have seen in class, in that case, though, I need you to let me know ahead.
- Plagiarism is unacceptable, and if any part of the assignment is plagiarized you will receive a failing grade for the essay and may fail from the overall course.

"Itinerary":

1. Think about the topic for your essay and the source(s) you would like to use.
2. Meet me in a scheduled meeting and let's discuss your project.
3. Present your project to your classmates and myself and receive feedback.
4. Send me a final version of your essay before midnight on the Thursday of midterm week.

Final Test

200 points

A test on the material covered in class will be written during final exam week. The questions will stem from both the history of Czech cinema, as well as the film theory. One class will be entirely devoted to reviewing facts/information that will be needed to succeed on the final test.

Class Participation

200 points

CIEE Prague Class Participation Policy

Assessment of students' participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Participation is valued as **meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible 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. This includes valued or informed engagement in, for example, small group discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Students are responsible for following the course content and 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 only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students' active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

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

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Introduction

- Course introduction: course objectives, reading, assignments, approach, etc.
- What is cinema?

Class: 1.2 Response Papers: AUTEUR CRITICISM

- Jan Švankmajer (shorts)

Week 2

Class: 2.1 Field Trip

Class: 2.2 Chronology / MISE-EN-SCENE + CINEMATOGRAPHY

Week 3

Class: 3.1 Chronology II + How to write an essay (workshop)

Discussion: **BURNING BUSH** (Hořící keř, Agnieszka Holland, 2013, 231', color)

Required readings:

- "Mise-en-scene." <<https://collegefilmmandmediastudies.com/mise-en-scene-2/>>.
- "Cinematography." <<https://collegefilmmandmediastudies.com/cinematography/>>.

Class: 3.2 Response Papers: FEMINIST CRITICISM

- Michaela Pavlátová (Repete, 1995) + other animated films
- Required readings:
- Hamen (2012), 87-95.
- Smelik (1999), 353-365 or <www.annekesmelik.nl/TheCinemaBook.pdf>

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Guest Speaker

Eliška Děcká "Contemporary stop-motion films".

Class: 4.2 Czechoslovak New Wave; narration

- New Wave – its social and cultural roots, international links, the inspiration
- The directors of "Czechoslovak New Wave": Věra Chytilová, Jiří Menzel, Pavel Juráček, Juraj Jakubisko, Juraj Herz, Jaromil Jireš etc.

Week 5

Class: 5.1 Discussion: DAISIES (Sedmikráska, Věra Chytilová, 1966, 74', color)

Required reading:

- Lim (2001), 36-77.

Turn in DAISIES response paper (suggested approaches: feminist, reception, formalist)

Class: 5.2 Discussion: HAPPY END (Oldřich Lipský, 1967, 71', b&w /tinted/)

Required reading:

- Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. Film Art: An Introduction. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2010: 89-107. Print.

Turn in HAPPY END response paper (suggested approaches: reception, formalist, feminist)

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Field Trip: Karel Zeman Museum

Midterm Exam Period

Class: 6.2 Midterm Essays - Drafts

- Class discussion on the drafts of students' final papers (each student will have a presentation, others will give him/her feedback, the presentation creates 5% of a grade)

Midterm essay due

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Czech cinema in the 1970s + 1980s

Midterm Exam Period

- the political situation and its consequences
- new "genres"

Class: 7.2 Miloš Forman / EDITING

Miloš Forman CS/US careers

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Discussion: LOVES OF A BLONDE (Lásky jedné plavovlásky, Miloš Forman, 1965, 88', b&w)

Required reading:

- Parvulescu (2009), 87–91.
- Shaviro; <<http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=546>>.

Turn in LOVES OF A BLONDE response paper (suggested approaches: reception, formalist, feminist)

Class: 8.2 Discussion: FIREMEN'S BALL (Hoří, má panenka, Miloš Forman, 1967, 71', color)

Required reading:

- Smelik (1999), 353–365.
- Heilman; <<http://www.moviemartyr.com/1967/firemansball.htm>>.

Turn in FIREMEN'S BALL response paper (suggested approaches: reception, formalist, feminist, auteur)

Week 9

Class: 9.1 Field Trip: NaFilm! Film Museum

Class: 9.2 post-1989 Czech cinema / DOCUMENTARY

- New topics in new regime

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Discussion: CZECH DREAM (Český sen, Klusák+Remunda, 2004, 93', color)

Required readings:

- Coover, Roderick. "Czech Dream in a capitalist republic: an interview with Czech film-maker Filip Remunda." *Film International* 5.3 (2007): 63–68. Print.
- Nichols, Bill. "Modes of Documentary." n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 < <http://bit.ly/2vPo80x> >.

Turn in CZECH DREAM response paper (suggested approaches: formalist)

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Discussion: CONSPIRATORS OF PLEASURE

(Spiklenci slasti, Jan Švankmajer, 1996, 85', color)

Required readings:

- Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2010: 269–285, 288 – 298. Print.
- Shaviro, Steven. "Conspirators of Pleasure." *The Pinocchio Theory* 11 Feb 2007: n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 <<http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=555>>.

Turn in CONSPIRATORS OF PLEASURE response paper (suggested approaches: formalist, feminist, auteur)

Class: 11.2 Field Trip: Barrandov Studios

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Revision for Final test

Class: 12.2 Q&A + discussion about class

- Discussion about the class (What did you learn? What do you miss? What was your best experience?)

Week 13

Class: 13.1 Q&A + discussion about class

Finals Week

- Discussion about the class (What did you learn? What do you miss? What was your best experience?)
- Anything about final test you need to know?

Class: 13.2 Final Test

Course Materials

Readings

"Mise-en-scène." n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 <<https://collegefilmandmediastudies.com/mise-en-scene-2/>>.

"Cinematography." n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 <<https://collegefilmandmediastudies.com/cinematography/>>.

"Editing." n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 <<https://collegefilmandmediastudies.com/editing/>>.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2010. Print.

Coover, Roderick. "Czech Dream in a capitalist republic: an interview with Czech film-maker Filip Remunda." *Film International* 5.3 (2007): 63–68. Print.

Hamen, Susan E. *How to Analyse the films of the Coen Brothers*. Edina: ABDO, 2012. Print.

Lim, Bliss Cua. "Dolls in Fragments: Daisies as Feminist Allegory." *Camera Obscura* 16.2 (2001): 36–77. Print.

Nichols, Bill. "Modes of Documentary." n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 <<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:IJV0n9keFr4J:https://keyconceptsinnmc.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/doc-modes-nichols.pdf+&cd=1&hl=cs&ct=clnk&gl=cz>>.

Parvulescu, Constantin. "Betrayed Promises: Politics and Sexual Revolution in the Films of Márta Mészáros, Miloš Forman, and Dušan Makavejev." *Camera Obscura* 24.2 (2009): 87–91. Print.

Shaviro, Steven. "Conspirators of Pleasure." *The Pinocchio Theory* 11 Feb 2007: n. pag. Web. 9 August 2017 <<http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=555>>.

Shaviro, Steven. "Fireman's [sic]"Ball." *The Pinocchio Theory* 6 Jan 2007: n. pag. Web. 9 August

2017<http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=535>.

Shaviro, Steven. "Loves of a Blonde." *The Pinocchio Theory* 24 Jan 2007: n. pag. Web. 20 July 2014 <<http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=546>>.

Smelik, Anneke. "Feminist Film Theory." *The Cinema Book*, edited by Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink. London: British Film Institute, 1999. 353–365. Print. (Also at Web. 9 August 2017 < www.annekesmelik.nl/TheCinemaBook.pdf >)

Media Resources

Films (in order they will be discussed)

BURNING BUSH (Hořící keř, Agnieszka Holland, 2013, 231', color)

DAISIES (Sedmikrásky, Věra Chytilová, 1966, 74', color)

HAPPY END (Oldřich Lipský, 1967, 71', b&w /tinted/)

LOVES OF A BLONDE (Lásky jedné plavovlásky, Miloš Forman, 1965, 88', b&w)

FIREMEN'S BALL (Hoří, má panenko, Miloš Forman, 1967, 71', color)

CONSPIRATORS OF PLEASURE (Spiklenci slasti, Jan Švankmajer, 1996, 85', color)

CZECH DREAM (Český sen, Klusák+Remunda, 2004, 93', color)