



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title:	Civic Engagement and Social Issues: Central European Perspectives
Course code:	SOCI 3001 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 describe and further elaborate on specific social problems in the Czech Republic, exploring the historical context that generated them as well as critically discuss their impact on Czech society in comparison to other countries. The course also examines the interrelation of certain social issues and pays special attention to social exclusion and inequalities, exploring them in more detail through case studies. The overall theme of the course is to understand people's engagement in changing the society, primarily through their participation in non-governmental organizations and community initiatives. Students are invited to share their personal experiences in order to raise awareness. This course also serves as an interesting insight into the Czech culture and society from an unusual perspective.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Critically discuss the development of civil society in the region, along with its cultural and historical specifics;
- Provide examples of major social problems in the Czech Republic and assess how they are being approached and why;
- Evaluate the role of the third-sector in dealing with major social problems and striving for social justice;
- Understand difference between individualistic and structural approaches to social change;
- Include the perspective of mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion and social justice in further areas of research/study.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

The class will combine teacher presentations (lectures with PowerPoint presentations) with interactive in-class activities, videos, and collaborative student tasks developing students' critical and creative thinking skills. The course will also include interactive site-visits and guest teachers.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Readings	27%
2.	Midterm Assignment	15%
3.	Topic Presentation	15%
4.	Final Paper	23%
5.	Class Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Readings

Two response papers on compulsory reading are required, due during **midterm week** (reading response 1) and **final week** (reading response 2).

Midterm Assignment

Students will conduct and present one interview with a random respondent within the topic of "Civil society participation and personal engagement in social issues." Students will have time allocated during the classes to prepare and discuss their questions. The reading response to be handed in should be a summary of major points with a brief critical discussion on relevance to class topics and approximately two pages long.

Topic Presentation

Students will be divided into groups according to a topic based on their interests and will then prepare an interactive presentation for the class. Students will deliver the presentation during assigned time and also hand in supporting materials (such as presentation and reflection on personal contribution to the group presentation).

Final Paper

Personal reflection on the chosen issue inspired by the presentation given by another student group. Short essay elaborating the idea presented, further reflection of this idea and connection to the previous discussions in the class. Due during the final week. A brief presentation to the class is a part of this portion of the grade.

Class Participation

Assessment of students' participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. 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.

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. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade.

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%).

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: 1.1 Introduction to class

- Practical information, course requirements
- Previous experiences related to the class
- Discussing concepts of civil society, comparison of different definitions of the term, students' own concepts of civil society

Class: 1.2 Understanding the concept of civil society

- Specifics of Western democracies and their implications for civil society (social capital, social cohesion, civic engagement)

Required reading: Putnam, 1995, 65–78.

Week 2

Class: 2.1 History and the current general state of the Czech civil society

- Specifics of development of the Czech civil society with a focus on the role of non-governmental organizations

Required reading: Potůček, 2000, pp. 107 – 121.

Class: 2.2 Community psychology and learning about social issues in the CR

- Mapping social issues in the CR
- Belonging to community and social justice. Setting theoretical *background*.

Required reading: Kloos, 2011, Chapter 1, pp. 2 – 35.

Deliverables:

Reading questions for Kloos via Canvas discussion

Week 3

Class: 3.1 Community psychology and learning about social issues in the CR

- Belonging to community and social justice. Setting theoretical background. Core values of community psychology.

Required reading: Kloos, 2011, Chapter 1, pp. 2 – 35.

Deliverables:

Reading test 1

Class: 3.2 Preparation of midterm assignment

Group work and discussions, providing more detailed guidelines for the midterm assignment

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Homogeneity and society

- The Sudetenland: a sociological laboratory. New Czech identity and fundamental values.
- Minorities in a homogeneous society.

Required reading: Matějka, 2005, pp. 1 – 11.

Class: 4.2 Czech civil society and civic engagement

- Civic engagement survey 2016 – contents, modes, levels of scale of Czech engagement

Required reading: Ekman, Amna, 2012, pp. 283-300.

Deliverables:

Reading questions for Ekman & Amna via Canvas discussion

Week 5

Class: 5.1 Inclusion and exclusion of “other” people

- Homelessness as a social stigma: Site visit – Jídelna kuchařek bez domova (Cooks without homes), Homeless women cook for the public and present their culinary skills in their own bistro to help break the stigma of homelessness.

Required reading: Strnad, Marek, 2014, pp. 121 -130.

Class: 5.2 Mandatory one-day excursion to Teplice

Deliverables:

Reading response 1

Site visit feedback, class excursion feedback

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Midterm week

- Presentations of midterm assignments
- Class reflection
- Plan for the second half of the term (topic presentation, final paper)

Deliverables:

Midterm assignment based on the interview)

Annotation for final paper

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Inclusion and exclusion of “other” people

- Disability as a social stigma
- Learning about major social psychological perspectives explaining prejudice

Required reading: Gough, McFadden, McDonald, 2013, Chapter 5 Prejudice in practice

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Guest Speaker: Olga Marlin

Class: 8.2 Ethnicity and Prejudice in the CR (2 sessions)

- Ethnic minorities in the CR – roots of prejudices
- Gender and ethnicity

Required reading: Doubek, Levínská & Bittnerová, 2015, pp. 131-152.

Deliverables:

Reading questions for Doubek et al.

Reading test 2

Week 9

Class: 9.1 Ethnicity and prejudice in the CR (2 sessions)

- Focus on schools and school environment
- Inclusion versus segregation in schools

Required reading: Jarkovská et al., 2015, pp. 632-654.

Deliverables:

Reading response 2

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Topic presentation (group assignment) + follow-up discussion

Class: 10.2 Topic presentation (group assignment) + follow-up discussion

Deliverables:

Topic presentation (specific date will be set for groups)

Annotated bibliography (specific date will be set for groups)

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Topic presentation (group assignment) + follow-up discussion

Class: 11.2 Topic presentation (group assignment) + follow-up discussion

Deliverables:

Topic presentation (specific date will be set for groups)

Annotated bibliography (specific date will be set for groups)

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Field trip to Mezipatra

Class: 12.2 From collective action to prejudice reduction

- Different perspectives on social change

Required reading: Dixon, Durrheim, Stevenson & Cakal, 2016, pp. 481 – 499.

Week 13

Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Presentation of final papers (Thursday)

Deliverables:

Short presentation (slides) – final paper thesis

Class: 13.2 Final Exam Week

End-of-class discussion

Deliverables:

Course Materials

Readings

- Dixon, J., Durrheim, K., Stevenson, C., Cakal, H. (2016). From prejudice reduction to collective action: Two psychological models of social change (and how to reconcile them). In: Sibley, Chris G. and Barlow, Fiona Kate eds. *Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 481–499.
- Doubek, D., Levínská, L., Bittnerová, D. (2015). Roma as the Others. *Intercultural Education*, 26:2, pp. 131-152.
- Ekman, J., Amnå, E. (2012). Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology. *Human Affairs*, Volume 22, Number 3, pp. 283-300.
- Gough, B., McFadden, M., McDonald, M. (2013). *Critical Social Psychology – an introduction*. Chapter 5 Prejudice in practice, pp. 126-155. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hladíková, A., Hradecký, I. (2007). Homelessness in the Czech Republic. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 63/3, pp.607-622
- Jarkovská, L., Lišková, K., Obrovská, J. (2015). We treat them all the same, but...Disappearing ethnic homogeneity in Czech classrooms and teachers' responses. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, pp. 1361-3324.
- Kloos, B. et al. (2011). *Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities*. Chapter 1: Introducing community psychology. Wadsworth, Belmont.
- Mareš, Sirovátka (2006). Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Policy in CR. In *Social Policy&Administration*, 40/3 pp. 288 – 303.
- Matějka, O. (2005), *The Sudetenland – A sociological laboratory (or)*
- Sudeten inspiration on the question of social capital, In: *Antikomplex ads. Proměny sudetské krajiny*. Praha: Antikomplex, pp. 1 – 11.
- Morje Howard, M. (2002) *The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society*. *Journal of Democracy*.13/1, pp. 157 – 169.
- Potůček, M. (2000). The Uneasy Birth of Czech Civil Society. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 11, No.2. pp. 107 - 121.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*. *Journal of Democracy* 6(1), pp. 65–78.
- Stepping Stone into the World: Interview with Piotr Sztompka*. *Baltic Worlds*, 1/1, pp. 38 – 41, 2008, online on balticworlds.com 2010.
- Strnad, A., Marek, J. (2014). Homelessness in the Czech Republic. *Housing, Care and Support*. 17, pp. 121-130.
- Szczepanikova, A. (2009). Beyond 'Helping': Gender and Relations of Power in Non-governmental Assistance to Refugees. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 11/3, 19 – 33.
- Šašková, Mertová (2012). Care for vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the Czech Republic. *European Journal of Social Work*, 15/5, pp.664 – 678.
- Šiška, J, Beadle-Brown, J. (2011). Developments in Deinstitutionalization and Community Living in the Czech Republic. In *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 8/2, pp. 125 – 133.