



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title:	American Media's Impact on Post-Communist Czech Media
Course code:	COMM 3004 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

This course examines the influence of American culture, specifically the American media model, on media in the Czech Republic after the fall of communism in 1989. Within this context, the course focuses on all aspects of the media, presenting specific examples. Following an introduction to the American cultural influence on European culture and the developments after World War II in Western Europe, and after 1989 in Central Europe, life under communism is explored to illustrate the contrast between the East and the West in Europe. The course also covers the different existing media models and invites students to create an "American media model" with its specific characteristics. Through studying literature and news items in both the United States and the Czech Republic, students are challenged to answer questions about the methods and scope of the American culture's influence on European countries, and specifically about the influence of the American media model on the media in the Czech Republic, and explore the identity of the Czech news and its challenges within this framework.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Analyze the forms of American cultural influence in Europe, specifically in Central Europe after 1989;
- Employ theories and notions studied in the course to characterize the American and Czech media and support their arguments through illustrative examples;
- Have complex understanding of the difference between the media in these two countries and explore the implications of how the news and facts are presented in both countries;
- Have developed and demonstrate new analytical skills to be able to study the news in a critical manner.

Course Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites, however, students should be interested in the different ways news is presented based on cultural and historical backgrounds, and the importance of this.

Methods of Instruction

The classes will combine lectures with interactive teaching methods such as group and pair work, class discussions, discussion over assigned readings and written assignments. The class will be informal and interactive, with a heavy emphasis on class participation and presentations.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Group Presentation	20%
2.	Case Study Analysis	15%
3.	Mid-Term Essay	20%
4.	Final Paper	25%
5.	Class Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Group Presentation

Working in small groups (maximum of three persons), students will analyze and characterize the American media

and create an American Media Model. The characteristics should be described during a 15-to-20-minute presentation.

Case Study Analysis

Each student will submit and present in class one case study analysis. Students are expected to employ theories covered in class and demonstrate analytical skills.

Mid-Term Essay

Students will write a midterm essay describing Americanization in Europe and their views of this. Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the material covered in the course.

Final Paper

On the space of 2,500–3,000 words, students will discuss the impact of American Media is on Post-Communist Czech media and expand on whether they believe that the identity of the Czech media is in danger because of American influence. They should examine the extent of the American cultural influence and then describe the identity of the Czech media. They will be encouraged to express their own ideas and findings, based on the knowledge that they gained in this course.

Class Participation

Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions and complete all virtual classroom discussions and assignments published on Canvas. They are also required to do the required reading before class, which will be always discussed during the class.

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 content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Class Introduction

Explanation of the content of the course, the learning goals, what is expected of the students, teaching methods and literature that will be used.

Class: 1.2 American Cultural Influence in Europe after 1945:

A first introduction based on the reading.

Reading: Pells 2008, Chapter Six.

Quiz about the reading.

Week 2

Class: 2.1 American Cultural Influence in Europe 2

Reading: Campbell and Kean 2016

Quiz about the reading

Documentary: 'The Cola Conquest Part II'

Written assignment about the documentary

Class: 2.2 Assignment: Observing American culture around you

Week 3

Class: 3.1 Discussion of (American) identity

Written assignment and class discussion about the assignment

Class: 3.2 Reading: Pells 2008, Chapter Eight.

Quiz about the reading.

Preparations for the group presentations.

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Group presentations followed by discussions

Class: 4.2 Reading: Kroes 2003

This is an in-class reading. Class discussion about the reading + written assignment

Week 5

Class: 5.1 Introduction to life under communism

A short lecture and showing of the documentary "The Lost World of Communism."

Information about the mid-term essay.

Class: 5.2 Visit to the Museum of Communism

Reflection paper due after the visit

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Life under communism: showing of the movie 'Goodbye Lenin'

Midterm Period

Class: 6.2 Film "Goodbye Lenin"

Written assignment and discussion of the assignment

*Midterm exam week; **essay due at the end of the week***

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Class discussion of the midterm essays.

Midterm Period

Reading: Shepherd 2000

Class: 7.1 TBA; possible trip to Radio Free Europe

Midterm evaluations

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Class Trip to Radio Free Europe

Class discussion about the trip + written assignment

Characterizing the Czech media after 1989

Reading: Jakubowicz 2004

Written assignment + class discussion

Week 9

Class: 9.1 .

Reading: Becker 1995

Written assignment + class discussion

Class: 9.2 The current state of the Czech media

Interactive reading: Jan Culik

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Guest speaker

Reflection paper due on the topic presented by the guest speaker for the Second meeting

Class: 10.2 Examples of Czech media and television clips

Class discussion about the examples

Reading: Jirák, Köpplová 2008

Quiz for next class

Week 11

Class: 11.1 .

Reading 1: Jirák, Köpplová 2008

Reading 2: Wyka-Podkowka 2014

Quiz for next class

Time for questions about the discussed topics and literature

Week 12

Class: 12.1 The influence of oligarchs

Two short in-class readings followed by discussion

Class: 12.2 A closer look at Czech identity

reading and discussion of New York Times article

Final paper due at the end of the week

Week 13

Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Student presentations of final papers

Class: 13.2 Final Exam Week

Wrap-up class with final discussion about the different topics that were presented in the course.

Course Materials

Readings

Required:

- Becker, Jörg. "Between Censorship and Commercialization: Structural Changes in the Public Sphere in Eastern Europe". *Réseaux. The French Journal of Communication* 3 (1995).
- Campbell, Neil and Kean, Alasdair. "The Transmission of America Culture". In *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Čulík, Jan. "The Czech Media: A Post-Communist Model?" *Britské listy* (2001). <https://legacy.blisty.cz/art/9304.html> (retrieved in 2003).
- Jakubowicz, Karol. "Post-Communist Media Development in Perspective". *Europäische Politik* 122 (2004).
- Jirák, Jan and Barbara Köpplová. "The Reality Show Called Democratization: Transformation of the Czech Media After 1989" *Global Media Journal – Polish Edition* 1 (4), 2008.
- Kroes, Rob. "Americanization, What Are We Talking About" In *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Pells, Richard. "Mass Culture: The American Transmission". In *Not Like Us. How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.
- Pells, Richard. "Transatlantic Misunderstandings: European Views of America". In *Not Like Us. How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.
- Shepherd, Robin H.E. "Civilizing Society". In *Czechoslovakia: the Velvet Revolution and Beyond*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000.
- Wyka-Podkowka, Angelika W. "Twenty-Five Years after the Fall: From Communist Monopoly to Foreign Control over Local Owners: Media Ownership and Its Effects on Journalism in Central Europe". *The Political Economy of Communication* 2 (1), 2014.

Media Resources

Films

Documentary: The Cola Conquest, Part III: Coca-Colonization: **Director:** Irene Angelico | **Producer:** Abbey Neidik, Irene Angelico | **Produced In:** 1998

Documentary: The Lost World of Communism: The Kingdom of Forgetting | **Producer:** BBC; Peter Molloy, Lucy Hetherington | **Produced in:** 2009

Film: Goodbye Lenin | **Director:** Wolfgang Becker | Producer: Stefan Arndt | **Produced in:** 2003