

Czech History and Theatre
Thursdays 7:00PM – 9:00 PM, SEIB 017

Andes/Slavishak

Course Description: The course's preparation and reflection components book-end the immersive experience of being in the Czech Republic for two-and-a-half weeks. The prep course acclimates students to Czech culture, introduces the academic content of the experience, and outlines trip expectations. Students conduct preliminary work on language skills, cultural research, and explaining their own baseline cultural perceptions. The reflection course in the fall semester asks students how the experience of the Czech Republic changed perceptions of culture.

Learning Goals:

1. Demonstrate a complex understanding of culture, including the ability to
 1. Develop a critical working definition of culture
 2. Articulate awareness of differences and similarities between their culture of origin and the one in which they are/were immersed
 3. Define and recognize ethnocentrism and ethnocentric assumptions
 4. Demonstrate critical awareness of their own cultural values and identity
2. Recognize how their attitudes, behaviors, & choices affect the quality of their cross-cultural experience
3. Reflect on personal growth, social responsibility, & the value of active participation in human society.

Attendance Policy: Students will be allowed 1 absence from the preparation course and 1 absence from the reflection course. Each subsequent absence will lower the total course grade by 10%.

Grading and Schedule:

Preliminary Meetings: 20% (Research presentation: 10%; Letter to Yourself: 5%; "Veranda" discussion: 5%)
These meetings are vital to the immersion experience, not only for cultural acclimation, but also to prepare for interacting with our contacts in the Czech Republic.

March 21	Course introduction & ice breaking
March 28	Negotiating the Czech Republic, JOURNAL
April 4	Discuss "View from a Veranda" essay, First Journal entry – response to reading
April 11	The Czech Language, Being Non-Czech in the Czech Republic
April 18	Research presentations (Journal & "Letter" to Yourself due)
April 25	Research presentations, Packing, etc.
May 2	Language Review, Are we ready?!

Research project topics:

ECONOMY

GENDER / SEXUALITY

LIVING WELL ("THE CZECH DREAM")

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

POLITICS / CIVICS / GOVERNMENT

RACE

REGIONALISMS

RELIGION

Immersion Learning: 30% (participation & engagement, including 8 journal entries, one blog post & choosing a creative project: 20%; small group discussions: 10%)

The class will travel from May 16 to June 1. Students will meet twice during the trip for formal small-group discussions of their experiences. Professors Andes and Slavishak will facilitate these discussions. Students will compile images, journal entries, and other objects/mementoes during the trip to assist them during the fall reflective course.

Students' behavior during the trip will count toward the overall grade assigned at the end of the reflection course. During the prep course, the instructors will explain expectations about participation in trip activities, being a good group member, the alcohol policy, caring for oneself while abroad, and looking out for each other.

Reflective Course: 50% (reflective essay: 30%; in-class journal writings: 5%; creative project: 15%)

This seven-week course will take place on Thursday evenings from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM during the first seven weeks of the fall semester. Attendance policy is the same as the preparation course.

Week 1	Reflection on Immersion Experience – Were you veranda travelers?
Week 2	Ethnocentrism and Ethnocentric Assumptions
Week 3	Cultural Identity in the Czech Republic
Week 4	Marginalized Czechs
Week 5	Using this Experience
Week 6	Work on Creative Projects
Week 7	Creative Project Presentations and Reflective Paper due