

Remodelling Political Culture in Central Europe after 1989: Example of the Czech Republic on Central European Background

The course is conceived to give the students a basic insight into the trends and events that have in some way influenced recent political and social developments in the Czech Republic, and have significantly contributed to the present character of political institutions and political life in the country. However, even when the explanations related to the Czech political and social developments constitute the core of the course, they primarily serve to give examples of tendencies observable in the region of Central Europe as a whole. Therefore after a general historical introduction, and a survey of political and social processes in the Czech Republic, here serving as a model of case study, comparison with similar developments in other Central European countries will be given as well. Issues like formation of parties and party systems in Central Europe, build-up of new institutions, regional co-operation, and influences of the EU enlargement are important part of the course. In this way, the course outlines the Czech position within the broader Central and Eastern European context and makes possible comparison with changes in the region as a whole.

Guidelines to work

Students are expected to take active part in the discussions held in seminars and based on a knowledge of the texts, which are prescribed as the assigned readings, and on the ability to comment on them and use them as a source for their own opinions. **However, it is to be noted while it is really necessary that the assigned texts have been read before the lessons, their purpose is complimentary, i.e. issues discussed in classes do not repeat the same facts and opinions.** To **qualify for sitting the final examination**, students are obliged to comply with all other requirements of the course, i.e. **submit all other assignments** as indicated below (**by email at least two days before respective session**).

It is crucial to see all assignments must be made in time, while **late submissions** (without acceptable excuse) **will be penalized**.

Moreover, please note in order to be able to fully participate in the course, you are expected to learn how to use University's electronic information system through which you will receive information about your results and grades, and also to make use of your university email address which serve for communication with your teachers.

Assignments

1) **Review of a website** – students are expected to select web site(s) of (a) Central European country (official pages), (b) particular ministries and/or agencies of Central European countries, and (c) selected think-tanks and other policy institutions (any of these options is eligible), write up a short paper (app. 8.000 characters) that briefly summarizes contents of page(s) under review, and offers some personal reaction/commentary. Did you find the site useful or interesting? What points you have found attractive or difficult to grasp? Would you recommend any site? Why? Etc.

Deadline to submit the review is March 16.

2) **Group project** – students will work in groups of app. 3 members. Each group is expected to choose an issue related to topics as indicated in sessions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively, and present its analysis in class. For example, you may be required to choose one of the countries concerned (Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, while papers enabling for comparative approach – possibly including the Czech Republic – are also eligible) and present details of its political system and/or political development, or you can present a project related to parties/party systems in these countries. Another option is to elaborate developments and structures of organizations of Central European co-operation, i.e. CEFTA, CEI, Visegrad Group. Finally, you can also address an issue of accession of CE countries to NATO and/or EU. **Deadline to submit the project handout is April 5. The final presentations shall by submitted by email at least two days before the session in which the respective presentation shall be done.**

Examination procedure

The final examination consists of a written test involving 4 questions that cover topics lectured in the classes and/or contained in the assigned readings. Each question is for 10 points, i.e. 40 altogether. The exam will be held in May 17, at 2pm in the room in which classes are held.

Grading

Review of a website – 20 % of the final grade

Group project – 40 % of the final grade (20 % handout, 20 % presentation)

Final exam – 40 % of the final grade

The threshold to pass is 55 points of 100 possible. The grade scale is as follows: A 82-100, B 75-81, C 68-74, D 61-67, E 55-60, F 0-54.

Teacher responsible for the course

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