

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 and NATO 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. 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 teacher.

Assignments and exams

1) **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 November 1. The final presentations shall be submitted by email at least two days before the session in which the respective presentation shall be done.**

2) **The mid-term exam** consists of a written test involving 2 questions that cover topics lectured in the classes and/or contained in the assigned readings (sessions 2 to 7). Each question is for 10 points, i.e. 20 altogether. The exam will be held in November 8 in the beginning of the session.

3) **The final exam** consists of a written test involving 4 questions that cover topics lectured in the classes and/or contained in the assigned readings (all sessions). Each question is for 10 points, i.e. 40 altogether. The exam will be held in December 13, at 2pm in the room in which classes are held (U33).

Grading

Group project – 40 % of the final grade (20 % handout, 20 % presentation), late submissions shall be penalized

Mid-term exam – 20 % of the final grade

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

Dr. Pavel Pšeja

Tel.: 549 497 175

e-mail: palo@fss.muni.cz

Course structure

1. Introduction: structure and logic of the course, assignments, responsibilities (20. 9.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejka

2. Notion of Central Europe and its relationship to the early history of the region (27. 9.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejka

Objective: To inform students about the broad background and differing dimensions of the notion of Central Europe.

Lecture: The term “Central Europe” will be discussed in some depth, especially with regard to different cultural, political and social interpretations of the area. The lecture aims at explaining specific features of Central European culture and identity, thus giving specific background to further discussions in classes. Students will be invited to express their own opinions on the phenomenon and compare it with the respective societies of their countries, their cultural and historical roots.

Assigned reading:

Johnson, Lonnie R. (2002), pp. 3-12.

Wandycz, Piotr S. (2001), pp. 1-11.

Additional reading:

Johnson, Lonnie R. (2002): *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbours, Friends*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Wandycz, Piotr S. (2001): *The Price of Freedom: A history of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the present*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London.

Issues for discussion:

The cultural meaning of the notion of Central Europe.

Explain the role played by the German population in forming Central Europe.

3. History of Central Europe (4. 10.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejka

Objective: To offer historical framework for current political developments and to explain dependence of current politics on history.

Lecture: Although the major focus will be on the 20th century, histories of Central European nations ask for being traced back through many centuries. In this session, drawing upon the fact contemporary Central European politics can only be in many cases understood if seen through lenses of both ancient and recent historical experience, the most important events and processes in the modern Central European will be discussed, thus setting the ground for more deeply rooted knowledge of Central European states and peoples. Moreover, we will pay some attention to the ends of communist regimes in Central Europe, with a special emphasis on divergences of the regimes in respective countries.

Assigned reading:

Johnson, Lonnie R. (2002), pp. 223-274.

Rothschild, Joseph, Wingfield, Nancy M. (2000), pp. 227-245

Wandycz, Piotr S. (2001), pp. 201-235.

Additional reading:

Johnson, Lonnie R. (2002): *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbours, Friends*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Rothschild, Joseph, Wingfield, Nancy M. (2000): *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II*, 3rd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Wandycz, Piotr S. (2001): *The Price of Freedom: A history of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the present*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London.

Issues for discussion:

Explain interrelationships of Central European nations.

Characterize differences in major features of communist regimes in Central Europe.

4. Czech history as a key to understanding contemporary behaviour: ideas, trends, cornerstones (18. 10.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejda

Objective: To explain importance of history for contemporary social and political behaviour.

Lecture: In this session, key points in the older Czech (and Czechoslovak) history will be discussed and presented as fundamentals of present political culture and public policy in the Czech Republic. Historical relations of Czechs and Germans, psychological dimensions of the Czech identity, fears of assimilation as a reason for political views, language as a myth legitimizing self-perceptions of the Czech nation, creation of Czechoslovakia, all these issues and many others are to be elaborated in as much details as possible.

Assigned reading:

Fawn, Rick (2000), *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, Harwood Publishers, Amsterdam, pp. 1-13.

Innes, Abby (2001), *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 1-16.

Additional reading:

Hájek, Jan; Kolář, František; Matoušek, Václav; Vágner, Petr. *The Heart of Europe*, Theo Publishing, Pardubice, 2000.

Issues for discussion:

Explain the relation of Czechs and Slovaks.

Describe circumstances of dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938.

5. Social and political background of the Czech society – years of the communist regime (18. 10.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšěja

Objective: To inform students about the changes in the character of Czech society in the years of the communist regime.

Lecture: Detailed information about the processes and developments that influenced the behaviour of the Czech society under communist rule will be given in this lecture. A brief analysis will also be made with regard to the damages the communist regime inflicted upon Czech society and in what way it affected not only its internal nature, but its position in the international community as well. As a final point, changes related to the fall of the communist regime will be discussed as well.

Assigned reading:

Fawn, Rick (2000), pp. 14-26.

Innes, Abby (2001), pp. 19-38.

Additional reading:

Hájek, Jan; Kolář, František; Matoušek, Václav; Vágner, Petr. *The Heart of Europe*, Theo Publishing, Pardubice, 2000.

Skilling, H. G.: *The Czechoslovak Constitutional System: The Soviet Impact*. Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 2. (Jun., 1952), pp. 198-224.

Issues for discussion:

The conditions under which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia seized power in 1948.

The whole notion of “normalization”.

6. Social and political background of the Czech society – “velvet revolution” and “velvet divorce” (1. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejja

Objective: To explain trends leading towards the change of the regime and consequent dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

Lecture: Analysis of reason leading to so-called “velvet revolution” will be presented in the first part of the lecture. The attention will be paid not only to internal influences, but also to the quality of international environment as a background of the regime change in Czechoslovakia. In the second part differences between Czech and Slovak part of the state will be discussed with a special emphasis on the role of economy and nationalism in the process of gradual break-up of Czechoslovakia.

Assigned reading:

Kraus, Michael, Stanger, Allison (eds.), *Irreconcilable Differences? Explaining Czechoslovakia's Dissolution*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham 2000, pp. 7-25.

Additional reading:

Olson, David M. “Democratization and Political Participation: The Experience of the Czech Republic”. In Dawisha, K., Parrott, B., *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*. Cambridge: CUP, 1997, pp. 150-196.

Večerník, Jiří; Matějů, Petr, eds. *Ten Years of Rebuilding Capitalism: Czech Society after 1989*. Praha: Academia, 1999.

Issues for discussion:

The role played by the Czech and Slovak political parties at the “velvet divorce”.

The role played by the Czech and Slovak mass media at the “velvet divorce”.

7. The party and political systems in the Czech Republic and their impacts on the political culture (1. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejja

Objective: To gain an understanding of the general development of the Czech party and political systems and of their nature.

Lecture: In this lecture the students will be informed about the major parties operating within the Czech party system, the basic characteristics of the system as such, and the developments within the system in the last fifteen years. Some attention will be paid to the structural aspects of how party and political systems function and to key structural patterns and inefficiencies exhibited in the Czech political system.

Assigned reading:

Fiala, Petr; Mareš, Miroslav; Pšejja, Pavel. “The development of Political Parties and the Party System”. In Večerník, Jiří, Matějů, Petr, eds. *Ten Years of Rebuilding Capitalism: Czech Society after 1980*. Praha: Academia, 1999, pp. 273-294.

Additional reading:

Večerník, Jiří; Matějů, Petr, eds. *Ten Years of Rebuilding Capitalism: Czech Society after 1989*. Praha: Academia, 1999.

Grzymala-Busse, Anna Maria (2002), *Redeeming the communist past: the regeneration of communist parties in East Central Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Issues for discussion:

The main political parties in the Czech party system.

The basic stages of the development of the Czech party system.

8. Workshop on Central Europe in Transition: Developments in Poland (15. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejja

Objective: To outline major elements in the developments taking place in the post-communist Poland. **Please note this session begins with the mid-term exam as specified in the introductory part of this syllabus!**

Workshop: In this session, internal developments in Poland will be elaborated. In their projects, students will address issues like change of the political regime, characteristics of political system, elements of (re)emerging political culture and some major points of political and social controversy, thus bringing up new points of view. Moreover, lecturer will take care to relate developments under discussion to similar processes in the Czech Republic, and to show what common features (and discrepancies) are to found in Central European countries.

Assigned reading:

Michta, Andrew A. (1999): "Democratic consolidation in Poland after 1989", in Dawisha, Karen, Parrott, Bruce (eds.), *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 66-108.

Additional reading:

Ágh, Attila (1998): *The Politics of Central Europe*, Sage, London.

Batt, Judy, Lewis, Paul G., White, Stephen (eds., 2003), *Developments in Central and East European Politics 3*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Issues for discussion:

Comparison of similarities and differences in the political development of the Czech Republic and Poland.

Special features of the Polish society that make it different from other CE countries.

9. Workshop on Central Europe in Transition: Developments in Slovakia and Hungary (15. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšěja

Objective: To outline major elements in respective developments taking place in these two countries.

Workshop: Following the same structure as presented in session eight, we will put emphasis on issues specific to Slovak and Hungarian political arrangements.

Assigned reading:

Tökés, Rudolf L. (1999): “Party politics and political participation in postcommunist Hungary”, in Dawisha, Karen, Parrott, Bruce (eds.), *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 109-149.

Wolchik, Sharon L. (1999): “Democratization and political participation in Slovakia”, in Dawisha, Karen, Parrott, Bruce (eds.), *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 197-244.

Additional reading:

Ágh, Attila (1998): *The Politics of Central Europe*, Sage, London.

Batt, Judy, Lewis, Paul G., White, Stephen (eds., 2003), *Developments in Central and East European Politics 3*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Issues for discussion:

Comparison of similarities and differences in the political developments of these countries with respect to processes taking place in the Czech Republic and Poland.

Patters of stability and change in Slovakia and Hungary.

10. Workshop on Parties and Party Systems in Central Europe (22. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšěja

Objective: To explain impact of parties on political developments in CE countries since 1989.

Workshop: Political parties have generally played decisive roles in transforming the totalitarian constitutional arrangements into democratic ones. Therefore, in this session we are to pay specific and detailed attention to the developments of party systems of Central European, as well as to emergence of major cleavages and importance of some individual parties and party groupings. Theoretical and practical ramifications of these developments will be discussed accordingly.

Assigned reading:

Ágh, Attila (1998), pp. 101-131.

Additional reading:

Ágh, Attila (1998): *The Politics of Central Europe*, Sage, London.

Bakke, Elisabeth, Sitter, Nick (2005): „Patterns of Stability: Party Competition and Strategy in Central Europe since 1989”, *Party Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 243-263.

Issues for discussion:

Major developments in Hungarian/Polish/Slovak party system.

Similarities and differences in CE party systems.

11. Workshop on Central European developments since 1989 and tendencies towards integration – emergence of formalized structures (Central European Initiative /CEI/, Visegrad Group, Central European Free Trade Association /CEFTA/) (29. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejja

Objective: To explain political developments in Central European region since 1989 and highlight attempts at broader co-operation.

Workshop: Immediately after democratic changes taking place in 1989, and in some cases even before that date, Central Europe witnessed a rising trend to organize a regional co-operation based on common political and social experience, and focused on enhancing economic and security position of respective countries, as well as on promoting their interests in relation to the European Union. Co-operative projects in Central Europe, i.e. developments of Central European Initiative, Visegrad Group and CEFTA, will be dealt with through projects prepared by students and focused on their major features and influences.

Assigned reading:

Dangerfield, Martin (1999): “Sub-regional Economic Cooperation in CEFTA: Past Performance and Future Prospects”, in *The Role of CEFTA in the Process of EU Enlargement*, Institute of International Relations, Prague, pp. 25-31.

Lukáč, Pavol (2001): “Visegrad Co-operation – Ideas, Developments and Prospects”, *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*. Vol. II, No. I, pp. 6-23.

Skjalm, Karsten (1999): “CEFTA and the EU Enlargement Process: an Asymmetrical Bargaining Exercise”, in *The Role of CEFTA in the Process of EU Enlargement*, Institute of International Relations, Prague, pp. 37-44.

Additional reading:

Brusis, Martin (2002): “Prospects of Visegrad Cooperation in an Enlarged European Union”, in Št’astný, Marek (ed.): *Visegrad Countries in an Enlarged Trans-Atlantic Community*, Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava, pp. 67-84.

Issues for discussion:

Reasons for regional co-operation, its failures and successes.
Possibilities of co-operation in relation to EU membership.

12. Workshop on Central European States and their Relationships to the European Union and NATO (29. 11.)

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejda

Objective: To show various strategies of CE countries in their respective accession processes to the NATO and EU.

Workshop: To a big degree, all Central European countries permanently strived to become members of originally West European structures, notably EU and NATO. However, individual journeys to these aims differed, as for instance the case of Slovakia and NATO makes it clear. In this session, journeys and strategies of Central European countries, while going through the process of accession to NATO and/or EU, are to be followed, while attention shall also be paid to general political and security concerns.

Assigned reading:

Asmus, Ronald D. (2002): *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 212-305. **Note: Not all the pages are necessary to read, you just can pick up information of the biggest interest.**

Nugent, N. (2004): The EU and the 10 + 2 Enlargement Round: Opportunities and Challenges, in: Nugent, N. (ed.): *European Union Enlargement*. Basingstoke – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-21.

Réti, Tamás (2002): “Visegrad Economies – Heading for European Union”, in Št’astný, Marek (ed.): *Visegrad Countries in an Enlarged Trans-Atlantic Community*, Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava, pp. 139-166.

Additional reading:

Giusti, Serena (2002): *Visegrad – Balancing between United States and European Union?* In: Št’astný, Marek (ed.): *Visegrad Countries in an Enlarged Trans-Atlantic Community*. Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs, s. 85-112.

Grayson, George W. (1999): *Strange Bedfellows. NATO Marches East*. Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America.

Issues for discussion:

Reasons for Slovak failure to join NATO together with other CE countries.
Comparison of individual strategies to reach membership in the EU.