

EUS3938: Review & Progress in Czech

Spring 2025, Course no. 22328

MWF 7 in Ustler 105

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Tentative office hours from Jan. 13-April 23 (to be confirmed by Jan. 18): Mon. 12:00-1:30 pm; Fri. 3:00-4:30 pm & by appointment. (My availability during finals week will change.)

- To meet outside of office hours, please email me!
- Feel free to stop by even if you don't have questions; we can go over homework or just chat in Czech. It's an excellent way to get extra practice.
- I limit all students to an initial 15 minutes if other students are waiting (but you're welcome to wait and then return).

Course website: elearning.ufl.edu/ (then use Gatorlink ID & password to log in to Canvas)



Course description: Our topic this semester is **Czech cultural production, focusing on art, entertainment & media** with a special interest on **truth and lies**, broadly understood. You will increase vocabulary, solidify knowledge of Czech grammar, and refine all four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) while exploring critical episodes in 20th-early 21st c. Czech cultural history. We will read excerpts from traditional textbooks and prepared materials as well as study a number of authentic materials (ads and propaganda, literature, films, news, etc.) to sharpen your communicative abilities and cultural proficiency.

Course goals (what you should be able to do in Czech by the end of this course):

- Define concepts like “censorship” or “propaganda” and provide relevant Czech examples
- Analyze visual language, describing the message and aesthetic strategies of various actors/artists
- Identify colloquial Czech (vs. standard dialect) and explore how artists use it to various effect
- Identify important Czech figures (e.g., Václav Havel, Alexander Dubček, Miloš Forman) and explain their cultural contributions
- Convey timelines, features and significance of select historical events (e.g. Prague Spring, Normalization)
- Apply concepts from the communist era (e.g., truth and lies) to select post-communist media

Prerequisites: CZE2200 or equivalent or consent of instructor. This course is intended for students who have studied Czech at the college level for three semesters or who have spent a significant amount of time interacting in Czech (i.e., with family members in the U.S. or while living abroad).

Required materials: You'll need a notebook or binder (preferably) for the many handouts you will print or receive in class. You'll also need a reliable computer and internet access. There are no other products or materials to purchase; all required materials will be made available free of charge. Most materials will be available on Canvas; other materials will be provided by instructor in hard copy.

Note: This is a tentative syllabus. While I do not expect to make any major changes, I reserve the right to make adjustments as needed to ensure quality of instruction or compliance with UF provisions (for extreme weather, pandemic, etc.) I will announce any changes in class and post them on Canvas.

Requirements. Your course grade will consist of the following components:

Class Participation & Attendance – 10%, Homework – 23%, Quizzes and Exams – 50%,
Research & Reports -- 15%, Oral Interview – 2%

Class Participation – 10%

You are expected to arrive on time each day, ready to participate. Please come to class prepared to engage the daily topic **in Czech**. While you may feel rusty after the break, your abilities will return soon enough if you are patient with yourself and consistent. The challenge in the upper levels of Czech is not to rest on your laurels: you will need to work to maintain what you have learned and improve!

Communication is also a two-way street, and your classmates depend on you. Help them (and yourself) by being a committed interlocutor. When you are unprepared, it affects their progress, too. As always, don't be afraid of making mistakes! They are a natural part of learning.

I award participation points for the following performance:

- Arriving prepared: you are familiar with vocab and concepts covered in previous HW, you can produce & understand routine expressions without long delays;
- Being attentive during class and engaged in course activities;
- Consistently striving to communicate in Czech (and never English)!

I deduct participation points for these ignominious behaviors:

- Being un- or underprepared for class activities (unfamiliar with vocab/concepts covered in recent HW, excessively slow/unable to understand or produce expressions due to poor preparation);
- Hampering your partner during pair/group work: not listening, not responding, not communicating;
- Persistent use of English in class. Reluctance or inability to use Czech as your default language;
- Texting, using Facebook, doing work for other courses (etc.) during our class;
- Being disruptive (talking about unrelated topics in English during class, late loud entrances, etc.).

****Absence policy**** -- If you *must* miss class due to an **excused** absence (family emergency, illness, religious holiday or participation in an approved academic or athletic event), please let me know (in advance whenever possible) and be prepared to provide follow-up documentation. Note that it is *your* responsibility to find out what you missed while absent and make up any missed work. While I won't penalize you for excused absences, they will affect your performance.

Unexcused absences will be reflected in your course grade as follows:

- **1 absence** – no penalty; everyone gets one freebie ☺
- **2-3 absences** – proportionate % subtracted from *Class Participation grade*
- **4+ absences** – ½ grade drop from overall course grade per absence (ex. from A- to B+)
- Being **10+ minutes late** to class on 4 occasions = 1 absence.

Quizzes & Exams –50%

There will be several scheduled quizzes and thematic exams during the semester as well as a few pop-quizzes, as needed, to keep you on your toes. Most unit exams contain both written and oral components: grammar and vocabulary sections are graded discretely, based on the number of errors; oral skills and writing are graded more holistically, based on how successfully you execute a given task. In discrete sections, spelling errors count as a 1/2 point, and grammar and vocabulary mistakes count as 1 point. Grading criteria for oral sections will be provided prior to the first exam. There is no midterm.

****Good student bonus****: Students who have completed **all** unit homework and have **no** unit absences can self-correct their unit exam and then submit their corrections for extra credit. In this way students can regain up to 50% of the points they originally missed (ex: a 70% will be raised to a max of 85%, provided all corrections are accurate). Quizzes, oral, and take-home or open-book exams cannot be self-corrected or resubmitted for additional points.

Make-up policy:

- You may make up a missed quiz or exam if you have an *excused reason* (due to illness/trauma, serious family emergencies, religious holidays, participation in special curricular requirements or official university activities (see more [examples in the UF catalog](#)).
- Make-up privileges might be granted in the event of a non-excused absence if ample advance notice is provided.
- Please contact me as soon as you are aware of the conflict or problem. If you are sick or have an excused absence, you will be given enough time to make up accruing homework and exams. If you have a time conflict during quiz or exam for another reason, I *may* be able to offer you a makeup opportunity if you reach out to me in advance!
- Missed work should generally be made up within two weeks of your return; all missed work should be completed before the last week of instruction.
- You are expected to provide official documentation of an excused absence. Note that UF offers [telehealth visits](#) if you need a medical note.

Research & Reports – 15% (Research –5%, Oral Presentation –5%, Paper --5%)

1. **Research:** You will independently research a topic related to Czech or Czechoslovak cultural production from 1938 to the present. You can explore virtually any cultural medium that interests you (art, monument, architecture, music, video/film, performance, fashion, etc.). You are not limited to a work of art or particular media product, but can rather explore related issues: censorship, patronage/financial support, reception, alternative dissemination practices like *samizdat*, etc.) or institutions (Czechoslovak radio, Czechoslovak TV, Ministry of Interior, etc.) or publications/publishing houses etc. "Culture" can also be broadly understood—high or low culture, official communist culture (including youth culture, sports, etc.), alternative culture, etc. If describing works/products, you should describe the formal properties; for all topics, you should address intended function and (intentional or inadvertent) role in shaping or contesting culture. If you aren't sure what topic you'd like to pursue, please come talk to me! Based on your interests, I can surely help you find your focus.

You should use multiple (3 or more) quality Czech-language sources (internet OK if reputable). The research process will be divided into phases:

- **Week 6 (Fri):** Send me your topic. 5 points.
- **Week 8 (Fri):** Send me your bibliography (3-5 quality sources in Czech) 15 points.
- **Week 10 (Fri):** Send me a short **summary** of one source in English and an initial **list** of 10 high-frequency terms you encountered while reading that were not previously in your active vocabulary. 20 points.
- **Week 12 (Mon):** Send me a short **summary** of two additional sources in English an initial **list** of 15-20 high-frequency terms you encountered while reading that were not previously in your active vocabulary. 30 points.
- **Week 14 (Wed):** Submit a **Czech outline** of your main talking points for your oral presentation. It should include your headings and 1-2 main ideas for each heading. List the works you intend to cover and a 1-line description. 30 points.

2. **Oral Presentation (Week 15):** You will report orally on what you have learned. You should plan to speak for about 6-10 minutes and should prepare PowerPoint slides or other visual aids to accompany your presentation, featuring relevant **headings** or **questions** to guide or preface your talk, essential **vocabulary** that your classmates will need to understand your talk (please use dictionary format!), and relevant images or **visual** media.

While you may use an outline to assist you, you should **not read** lengthy text (sentences) verbatim and will be downgraded for doing so! You should also aim to use an oral style of language (shorter sentences, simpler syntax, familiar vocabulary) rather than a written style which can be difficult to digest when presented orally. (See *evaluation rubric on Canvas* for more info.)

3. Paper (due by 5 pm on Wed. April 30): You will submit a written draft (approx. 2-4 pages typed, double-spaced with 1-inch margins), related to your presentation topic(s). You are encouraged to submit a rough draft in advance (ideally at the time of your oral presentation) so that I can give you feedback before your final submission during Finals Week. (See *evaluation rubric on Canvas for more info.*)

Assessment: Your oral presentation and final written draft will be evaluated for both form and content. You can find assessment criteria for both on Canvas. You should also:

- **Post a copy of your PPT slides** to the **Discussions** forum on Canvas.
- **Email me** a .docx version of your final draft & also **post a copy to Assignments** area on Canvas.

Oral Final / Interview – 2% (Our exam block: Thu. 5/1, 7:30-9:30 AM, but I am flexible this week)

You will schedule a 40-minute meeting with me (Zoom OK) during Finals Week when we will do a proficiency-based exit interview. While this interview is required, since it is proficiency-based, no preparation is required. More details to be provided.

Grading Scale: Letter grades are based on the percentages shown in the table below:

97-100%	A (No A+s at UF)	87-89.99%	B+	77-79.99%	C+
93-96.99%	A	83-86.99%	B	73-76.99%	C
90-92.99%	A-	80-82.99%	B-	etc.	C-

Last Day to change grade to S/U basis: Friday, January 31

S/U grading means that you would earn a “Satisfactory grade” (S) for a “C” grade or higher and an “Unsatisfactory” (U) grade for a “C-“ grade or lower; neither would count in your GPA. If you are taking this course to fulfill a college foreign language requirement or as an elective, S/U grading should be fine, but S/U grades are typically not allowed for required coursework in a specific major, minor or certificate. I encourage you to talk to your major or college advisor if you are interested and have questions.)

More UF grade info can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>:



Tentative Course Schedule

Below you can find the main topics we will cover this semester. You can find daily homework assignments posted on Canvas (as in previous semesters). Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

Week	Topic
1	Intro to course. Timeline of 20 th c. Czech(oslovak) history. Intro to propaganda. Examples from Protectorate era (Czech and German).
2	Liberation of Czechoslovakia and Feb. coup. Post-war propaganda.
3	Real-lived socialism vs. socialist realism (1)
4	Real-lived socialism vs. socialist realism (2) (Test 1)
5	Thaw and Prague Spring
6	Film truth: Miloš Forman (1) Fri: Research topic due
7	Film truth: Miloš Forman (2)
8	Film truth: Miloš Forman (3) (Test 2) Warsaw Pact Invasion (radio, TV)

	Fri: Research sources due
9	Normalization: censorship, samizdat, living room theater (1)
10	Living in truth: Havel (1) Friday: Summary of 1 source and list of high-frequency vocab due
11	Living in truth: Havel (2)
12	Living in truth: Havel (2) (Test 3) Fall of communism and "return to Europe" Monday: Summary of 2 sources and list of high-frequency vocab due
13	Czech Dream: Is the 'era of lies' over?
14	Czech Dream: Is the 'era of lies' over? Wed: Presentation outline due
15	Czech Dream: Is the 'era of lies' over? (Test 4) Wed: Presentation due
Finals Wk	Wed: Research paper due

Spring 2025 Holidays & Other Important Dates

Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday: **Monday, January 20.**

Deadline to change grade to S/U basis (vs. a letter grade): **Friday, January 31.**

Spring break: **Monday - Friday, March 17-21**

Reading days: **Thursday-Friday, April 24-25**

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty & UF Honor Code

All students are bound by the Honor Pledge: "*[o]n all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.*" Violations of the code (including acts like cheating, plagiarizing, multiple submissions, etc.) will not be tolerated. Before submitting any work for this class, please familiarize yourself with the Honor Code (especially pp. 11-13) and consequences for violating it: <https://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/UF-Regulation-4.040.pdf>

Related: Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Translation (MT)

AI and MT tools are like training wheels on a bicycle: they offer balance when we're starting out, but relying on them too much can hinder our ability to ride unassisted. While AI can be a fantastic aid for brainstorming ideas, proofreading drafts, or even interactive role-plays, it's important to use these tools judiciously. While they're tempting to use due to their ease and speed, relying on them can prevent deep engagement with the language, leading to weaker grasp of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and generally poorer outcomes on exams and other assessments.

To ensure tools like ChatGPT and Google Translate (GT) enhance -- rather than undermine -- learning, **you are required to disclose their use in your submissions. Please indicate in your homework document the specific tool used and explain how / for what purpose you consulted it.** (E.g., did you ask it for essay ideas, to translate lines, to proofread text, etc.?)

Additional Considerations:

- **Understanding and Accountability:** Make sure you fully understand any language sourced from AI. If you use an expression in homework, be prepared to use it in other contexts (class, an exam, etc.).
- **Communication with Classmates:** Since your classmates won't know all the expressions you've learned via AI or MT, be ready to explain what they mean (in Czech) or use appropriate alternatives.

- **Data Security & Privacy:** Be aware that your interactions with AI tools like ChatGPT are not private. Avoid disclosing personal or sensitive information as it could be inadvertently repeated in future outputs. (UF offers [AI tools for free to students using the UF VPN and claims data won't be retained or used to train LLMs...](#)but it's always good to be cautious.)
- **Assignments Using AI:** You may be asked to use AI on some assignments or assessments. If you object to using these tools (e.g., ethical reasons), please let me know.

This section was authored with the assistance of ChatGPT. :-)

Online Course Evaluations

At the end of the semester, you are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Evaluations are typically open for you to complete during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester. Students will be notified when the evaluation periods opens, and they can complete evaluations through the email they receive on GatorEvals or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC)

The CWC teaches students skills to cope with anxiety and to support mental health and personal wellness. CWC services include traditional, group, and couples' therapy as well as consultation, crisis services, workshops, biofeedback, and more. Contact the CWC at: (352) 392-1575, 3190 Radio Road or counseling.ufl.edu/. Call the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Check the “Campus Resources” tab on Canvas to explore other student services.



Opportunities & Deadlines

- **Foreign Language and Area Studies grants. Deadline: February 7.** FLAS grants provide tuition and a stipend to help you continue Czech at UF during the 2025-26 academic year or to study intermediate Czech intensively overseas this summer (tuition, flight, housing & living stipend are provided). <https://ces.ufl.edu/funding/student-funding/foreign-language-area-studies-fellowships-flas/>
- **Study abroad! UF in Prague deadline: March 1.** Contact Dr. Ingrid Kleespies (iakl@ufl.edu) for info about Summer 2025 (6 weeks). UFIC's scholarship deadlines are usually a bit earlier than March 1 so visit their [website](#) for details. They also an annual study abroad fair (usually in January) where you may learn about other (non-UF) programs. There are many ways to make degree progress while studying in Czech Republic, and I'm happy to talk to you about options, so please reach out!
- **Add a Czech-related track to your degree!** Interested in a **B.A. degree** in International Studies? Czech language and area studies course can fulfill tracking requirements for the major's European track. **Minor & Certificate** programs in Central European Studies allow you to combine your interest in Czech with a number of disciplines. Visit the CES website for more info (or ask me since I am the advisor for European Studies): <https://ces.ufl.edu/academics/undergraduate-degreeprograms/>

Questions or concerns?
Please contact me: hraynard@ufl.edu