

# CET Syllabus of Record



**Program:** CET Prague

**Course Title:** Central European Film

**Course Code:** PR/FILM 215

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Film Studies / Central European Studies

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites/Requirements:** Open to all students

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## Description

This course examines the most important trends and movements in the history of Czech and Central European cinematography. It also puts films within their historical (political and cultural) context. Chronology of the Czech film history is combined with thematic and stylistic analysis. During class sessions, students engage in discussions on specific themes and watch films or clips from films that represent these themes.

## Objectives

By the end of the course, students are able to:

- Explain the most powerful forms of Czech/Central European (CE) cinematography
- Define the Czech New Wave, Polish Cinema of Moral Concern and other movements
- Explain which genres are typical for Czech/CE cinematography and why
- Analyze a Czech/CE film of interest in its socio-cultural context
- Apply film theory in writing
- Understand the most important terms in film theory

## Course Requirements

Course readings average 30 pages per session and course preparation may include outside film screenings. Both readings and screenings should be completed before class. Students are expected to come to class ready to discuss the issues at hand. Students are required to write a review (1 page, about 350 words) of a Czech/CE film seen outside of class and an article (1 page, about 350 words) about a film festival, workshop or similar event visited while studying in Prague. Students also prepare a presentation based on a film seen within class and based on a required reading.

Students write a midterm essay (4 pages minimum, 1400+ words) and a final essay (6 pages minimum, 2100+ words).

Students are expected to abide by CET's Attendance Policy.

## Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%

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- Assignments (each 5%): 10%
- Presentation: 25%
- Midterm essay: 15%
- Final essay: 30%

### Primary Texts

- Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997 and 2010.
- Burch, Noël. *Theory of Film Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, 17-31.
- Shaviro, Steven. "The Joke." <http://www.shaviro.com/Blog/?p=549>
- Mulvey, Laura, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Patricia Erens, 28-40. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Lim, Bliss Cua. "Dolls in Fragments: *Daisies* as Feminist Allegory," *Camera Obscura*. 16, no. 2: 36-77.
- Owen, Jonathan: "Slovak bohemians: revolution, counterculture and the end of the sixties in Juraj Jakubisko's films." *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 1, no. 1, 2010, pp. 17-28.
- Lawton, Anna M. "The double... a Dostoevskian theme in Polanski," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 9 (1981), no. 2: 121-129.
- Freeland Cynthia: "Explaining the Uncanny in *The Double Life of Véronique*". In Schneider, Steven Jay (Ed.), *Horror film and psychoanalysis: Freud's worst nightmare* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 87-105.
- Lavinia Stan, Ed., *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union* (Taylor&Francis, 2008), pp. 39-45.

### Supplementary Texts

Films:

- Gnome* (Tomáš Vorel, 2005)
- Control* (Nimród Antal, 2003)
- The Shop on Main Street* (Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, 1965)
- Witness* (Péter Bacsó, Hungary, 1969)
- Sunshine in the Net* (Štefan Uher, 1962)
- The Joke* (Jaromil Jireš, 1968)
- Loves of a Blonde* (Miloš Forman, 1965)
- Daisies* (Věra Chytilová, 1966)
- Birds, Orphans, and Fools* (Juraj Jakubisko, 1969)
- Knife in the Water* (Roman Polanski, 1962)
- Double Life of Veronique* (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1991)
- Conspirators of Pleasure* (Jan Švankmajer, 1996)
- Walking too Fast* (Radim Špaček, 2009)

### Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately 1 topic every week.

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## Topic 1 – Introduction and Chronology

Chronology of the Czech/Central European Cinema

Common history / common topics

What is cinema?

Field trip to Czech Television (Kavčí hory)

## Topic 2 – Contemporary Central European Cinema / Mise-en-scene

“Velvet ” (and other) revolutions and the changes they brought about in the cinema.

What is mise-en-scene and why is it important in the movies?

## Topic 3 - Workshop: How to write an essay / Framing

Dos and Don'ts: What to avoid in writing an essay

What is framing and how is it important in the movies?

## Topic 4 – WWII and Holocaust in the movies / Editing

WWII and Holocaust in the Central European Cinema

Referential, explicit, implicit and symptomatic meanings

## Topic 5 – Hungarian Cinema / Narration

Chronology

Miklós Jancsó

Narration and narrator / plot vs. story

## Topic 6 – Czechoslovak New Wave / Off-Screen Space

New Wave – its social and cultural roots, international links, the inspiration

Traits of CNW: existentialism, sexuality, etc.

The directors of “Czechoslovak New Wave”: Věra Chytilová, Jiří Menzel, Jaromil Jireš, Juraj Jakubisko, Štefan Uher etc.

## Topic 7 - Miloš Forman / Feminist Film Theory

Miloš Forman a his CS and US career

Feminist film theory: its premises and goals

## Topic 8 - Czech Cinema in the 1970s and 1980s / Editing

Obstacles of Czech New Wave directors in the 1970s and 1980s

Similarities with the 1950s

Ideology and socialistic realism

Different kind of editing

## Topic 9 - Polish Cinema / Sound

Chronology

Andrzej Wajda

Krzysztof Kieslowski

## **CET Syllabus of Record**

Function / similarity and repetition / difference and variation / development / unity and disunity