

Yale Summer Session in Prague, Czech Republic

CZEC S243/FILM S143 In Kafka's Spirit: Prague Film and Fiction

► Course Description

An introduction to Prague's intellectual culture and the Jewish question through contemporary film, fiction, history, language, sightseeing, and students' film projects (screenwriting, acting, making short films) or other creative projects. Travels in the Czech Republic and selected countries of former Austro-Hungary (Vienna, Budapest, Piran, Trieste and Salzburg). Emphasis is on Kafka's influence on today's Prague, Holocaust period, Communist state, dissident movement, transition from totalitarianism to democracy, and current multi-ethnic globalism. Works include analyzing films by Miloš Forman (*Loves of a Blond*, *Firemen's Ball*), Jan Kadar (*Shop on the Main Street*), Jan Svěrák (*Kolya*), Jan Hřebejk (*Divided We Fall*), and readings by Franz Kafka, Holocaust writer Arnošt Lustig, Bohumil Hrabal, Milan Kundera, and Václav Havel. Includes guest lectures by prominent cultural, economic, or sport Prague leaders. Under the supervision and critical advice of cinematographers Josef Lustig, Gary Griffin, Alice Arnold, Veronika Janečková, and the renowned film director Jan Hřebejk, each student will complete a creative project of his or her choice (short film based on students' screenplay, or short story, theatre play, etc.), working in groups or individually. No prerequisites are required for the comprehensive introduction to the L1 level conversational Czech, which is an integral part of the course.* Students performing in the language exceptionally may qualify for placement in L2 or L3 during the 2018-19 academic year; however, an option of enrolling in L1 in fall 2018 remains open to everyone. Participants choose to receive credits either in CZEC or FILM. Group I, Hu, **2 credits**

*Students with some knowledge of Czech may be eligible to receive private tutorial.

► Classes:

Classes are held in English on the indicated days. They are required to be attended by all the registered students. Classes are in a form of seminars with the following grading distribution:

- Class attendance and participation in Czech, and Film/Fiction, and testing 25%
- Classwork and homework in Czech and in Film/Fiction 25%
- Midterm Short Film Shooting or Creative Project 25%
- Final Paper/Analytical Essay based on Film and Fiction materials 25%

► Teaching Schedule in Prague:

- 9:30 – 11:00 Czech Language class
- 11:00 – 11:30 Snack break
- 11:30 – 1:00 Film & Fiction Class

During the Film Shooting/Art Project week (4th week of the program), instruction hours may be extended as needed. A modified teaching schedule is during travels.

► **Required Materials:**

1. Purchase the books below in the Yale bookstore or online. (Total price for all required books is circa \$100 and additional \$25 will be collected in Prague for Xerox copies, Czech textbook and the novel *Among the Sinners*). If you are able to access these books or the films digitally, please let other participants know about this possibility. Before the program begins, read the books indicated with an asterisk and highlight important ideas in yellow marker so in Prague you can just reread significant passages.
2. The academic curriculum, filming (or completing art project) and travels are quite demanding: you will have Czech homework everyday (except during travels), written work of a 700-word critical analysis of novels/films studied each week (in addition to other activities, and exploring Prague, visiting museums and galleries in each city either in groups or on your own). Your creative project (screenplay and/or story, etc.) will be 7 pages long in a written form, and if produced in visual or dramatic form, it will be equally demanding in your time and energy; therefore, a prior preparation (reading the assigned novels) will be extremely beneficial. Final 10-page paper is due in three days after the end of the program.

- Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, * and *The Trial**
- Václav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace**
- Václav Havel, *Largo Desolato**
- Bohumil Hrabal, *I Served the King of England**
- Arnošt Lustig's story "Tanga" will be distributed in Prague
- Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, * and *Ignorance**
- Karen von Kunes, *Among the Sinners*, provided in Prague
- Paul Argenti, *Elements of Style for Screenwriters** (can be shared)
- Karen von Kunes, *Hippocrene Czech-English/English-Czech Dictionary*
- James Naughton, *Colloquial Czech*, chapters will be distributed in Prague
- Textbook of Czech by Karen von Kunes, available for purchase in Prague
- Peter Demetz's *Prague in Black and Gold* excerpts distributed in Prague

3. The films and additional materials (criticism, journal articles, etc.) will be distributed in class. However, you might want to watch the assigned films before your trip. Our policy is to watch each film the day before the class discussion. The films are the following:

- Jiří Menzel: *Closely Watched Trains*
- Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos: *The Shop on Main Street*
- Jan Hřebejk: *Divided We Fall*
- Jiří Menzel: *I Served the King of England*
- Miloš Forman: *Loves of a Blond*
- Miloš Forman: *Firemen's Ball*
- Jan Svěrák: *Kolja*

► **Program Director and Instructor:**



Dr. Karen von Kunes

Known as KvK among students, Dr. **Karen von Kunes** is Director and Instructor of the YSS in Prague. A Yale University Senior Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Film & Media Studies, she has been included in *The Best 300 Professors* by 2012 The Princeton Review, published by Random House. Dr. von Kunes has published Hippocrene *Czech-English and English-Czech Practical Dictionary*, and is the author of several textbooks, including *Czech Step By Step*, *Check Your Czech*, and “Czech’s so Easy.” In addition to *Beyond the Imaginable: 240 Ways of Looking at Czech*, and *Everything You Wanted to Know about Czech*, Dr. von Kunes has published critical articles on Czech literature and film (Kundera, Forman and Havel), and authored a screenplay. Her novel *Among the Sinners* was published in 2013 by Práh, and her scholarly manuscript on Kundera’s and Forman’s works is forthcoming. More under the following websites: <http://slavic.yale.edu/von-kunes> <http://www.hercampus.com/school/yale/yales-illustrious-czech-professor-kvk>

► **Guest Instructors:**



Josef “Pepi” Lustig

Josef Lustig, aka Pepi

Everyone loves Pepi, a son of a Holocaust survivor, a man of vital experience, energy and humor. As an artist and filmmaker, Pepi has a unique vision, and will help you to turn your ideas into a short film and other creative projects. Mr. Lustig is genuinely interested in your talents, potential, goal and accomplishments. He holds a Ph.D. degree in film, and has taught at Czech and American universities. Josef Lustig is a screenwriter, film director, editor, producer and actor. His main interest is the Holocaust, and he has won a variety of awards and recognitions for his works. Without Pepi, Yale FILM S-143/CZEC S-243 program would lack the true Czech/Jewish spirit.



Gary Griffin

Gary Griffin

An award-winning producer/director, Gary won the Sundance Film Festival’s 2005 American Excellence in Cinematography Award for his work on *The Education of Shelby Knox*, the story of a feminist’s coming-of-age. In his feature film *Listopad* (2014) he revisits the Prague Velvet Revolution. His other works include *Autism is a World*, a documentary co-produced with CNN, which tells a story of an autistic woman’s path to communication, and *Gerrymandering*, a film about the unfair legislative practice of redistricting. Mr. Griffin holds a MFA degree from Prague’s Film Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), and is Artist in Residence at the American University in Washington, D.C.



Alice Arnold

Alice Arnold

A critic and documentary director, Alice spends a significant time in Prague. As a Fulbright Fellow she made *Electric Signs*, a documentary about signs and screens in Hong Kong. Her first film, *To Be Seen*, a documentary about street art, public space and urban environment, was broadcast in July 2006 on REEL/NY, WNET/PBS, and was screened at the Museum of Modern Art and distributed by Icarus Films. Alice Arnold teaches media studies and media production in New York City. She is a fine editor, and Yale participants in Prague appreciate her patience, dedication and hard work that she generously puts in introducing them to the art of film editing.



Veronika Janečková

Veronika Janečková

A FAMU graduate, Veronika has made several short films. She supports Yale students in a variety of undertakings and in pursuing their creative ideas to completion of projects of their interest from video making to music composition.



Jan Hřebejk

Jan Hřebejk

A prominent Czech feature film director, Mr. Hřebejk received the 2001 Oscar nomination for *Divided We Fall* in the Best Foreign Language Film category. While a student at FAMU, he directed and produced two short films, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Experience* (1988), and *1948 AD* (1989). Both entered film festivals and caught viewers' and critics' attention. In 2009, his *Kawasaki's Rose* was selected for the Czech entry to the Best Foreign Language Film competition. Jan Hřebejk spends one afternoon with Yale students to discuss the art of directing and teach them the tricks of the film trade.



Tomáš Sedláček

Tomáš Sedláček

Mr. Sedláček is the Chief Macro-economic Strategist at ČSOB, and a former member of the National Economic Council of the Czech Republic & an economic advisor to former President Václav Havel. In 2006, Mr. Sedláček spent a semester at Yale as a World Fellow. He enjoys meeting with Yale students, talking about politics and his bestseller *Economics of Good and Evil* that was recently published in English by the Oxford University Press.