

Central European Cultural Spectrums - Culture as a Parable summer semester 2012

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Course description: Since ancient times, parables have often been considered short encapsulations of a lesson needed to be learned by a society. Biblical references gave way to folk stories and common sayings – all of which encouraged active thought. This course examines Central European culture as a living parable, preserving the past and creating the present: what have the cities versus the villages offered over time, the provisions of love versus the deprivations of war or attempts to survive mentally via black humor. Culture as a parable may be tracked on a personal level, but then later brought up to the level of national consciousness. The literature of the Visegrad countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary + Slovenia will be supplemented with photographs, music and film.

Readings: Readers can be purchased...

Grading policy

Class participation:	25%
In-class presentations (2):	25%
Mid-term project:	25 %
Final paper:	25%

Schedule of classes

DATE - Introduction

DATE - Cityscapes

Czech Republic	Franz Kafka – “On the Tram” Jan Neruda – “The 3 Lilies” Vítězslav Nezval – “City of Spires” Pavel Brycz – excerpts from <i>I, City</i>
Slovenia	Tomaž Šalamun – “History” Meta Kušar – “36.” Dušan Čater – “Winters in Cities Are Quite Depressing, I Think”
Hungary	István Örkény – “Café Niagara” “The Barber of Budapest”
Poland	“And How to Spend 72 Hours in Warsaw...” Leszek Engelking – “In an unfamiliar town” Czeslaw Milosz – “Campo di Fiori”
Slovak Republic	“City Break”

DATE - Homecoming-Homeleaving

Czech Republic	Franz Kafka – “The Way Home,” “Home-Coming” Jaroslav Seifert – “View from Charles Bridge”
Slovenia	Edvard Kocbek – “Mountain”

	Andrej Skubic – “Not With This Train”
Hungary	György Spiró – “Forest”
	Flóra Imre – “Psalm”
Slovak Republic	Vlado Puchala – “For Mama”

DATE – Villagescapes

Slovenia	Maja Novak – “The Conspiracy”
	Ciril Kosmač – “A Day in Spring”
Czech Republic	Eva Kriseová – “Our Small Town”
	Jiří Musil – “Small Towns, Big Ideas”
Poland	Sławomir Mrożek – “The Hole in the Bridge”
	“Poland: Examining School Reforms”

DATE – Parables

Czech Republic	Franz Kafka – “On Parables”
	Alexander Kliment – “Mark on the Wall”
Poland	Tadeusz Rozewicz – “A Voice”
Slovak Republic	Ivan Olbracht – “Gabor, Gabor”
	Peter Balgha – “People and Ants”
	“T.G.Masaryk, The Founding Father of Czechoslovakia: From Vienna to Prague – the rise and fall of a nation.”
	“JUDr. & PhDr. Edvard Beneš
	Miroslav Kusý – “Slovaks are More...”
	Ludvík Vaculík – “Our ‘Slovak Question’”
	excerpt from <i>Czecho / Slovakia: Ethnic Conflict, Constitutional Fissure, Negotiated Breakup</i> .
Slovenia	Vitomil Zupan – “The Standpoint of Great Peace”

DATE – On Love or Lack Thereof

Czech Republic	Franz Kafka – “The Married Couple”
	Karel Hynek Mácha – excerpt from <i>May</i>
	Václav Havel – 2 Typograms
Hungary	Endre Fejes – “Blue-white Love”
Slovak Republic	Pavel Vilikovský – “Escalation of Feeling”
Slovenia	Edvard Kocbek – “Another Abyss to Cross”
	Barbara Korun – “Kiss”
	Artur Štern – “Morning Rhymes”
	Maja Novak – “Wrong Side of Bed”
Poland	Aleksander Jurewicz – “A True Ballad...”
	Czesław Miłosz – “Encounter”
	Czesław Miłosz – “Love”

DATE – Black Humor

Hungary	István Őrkény – “November”
Czech Republic	Marta Kadlecíková – “Ode to Joy”
	Bohumil Hrabal – “World Cafeteria”

DATE – World Wars

Czech Republic	Wladimir Stedry – “Still Life”
Slovenia	Drago Jančar – “Repetition”

Poland Hanna Krall – “Retina”
Hungary János Pilinszky – “Harbach 1944,” “On the Wall of a KZ-Lager”
Imre Kertész – excerpt from *Fatelessness*
Slovak Republic Dušan Kužel – “Someone Else Will Come”
Milan Richter – “Light?”

DATE – Lahaim & Beneath the Communist Fist

Poland Piotr Szewc – “Annihilation”
Agata Tuszyńska – “A Family History of Fear”
Władysław Szpilman – “The Hour of the Children and the Mad”
“Paradoxes of the Polish Transformation”
Hungary Mihály Kornis – excerpt from *Lifebook*
Péter Zilahy – “Eternity”
Attila Bartis – “Engelhard, or the Story of Photography”
Czech Republic Arnošt Lustig – “Hope”
Ivan Diviš – “Invasion Day”
Slovak Republic Ján Johanides – “Memorial to Don Giovanni”

DATE - Review Week

FINAL PAPERS DUE DATE by pm by email

POTENTIAL SUPPLEMENTARY SECONDARY LITERATURE (to be modified as needed)

Central Europe

Kusý, Miroslav. We Central East Europeans. In: Markweta Goetz-Stankiewicz, *Good-bye, Samizdat*. Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1992, pp. 160-165.

Rupnik, Jacques. "Central Europe or Mitteleuropa?" in *Daedalus*. Vol. 119, No. 1, Winter, 1990, pp. 249-278.

Senderovich, Sasha. "Graven Images." *Europa*, Michaelmas 2001, pp. 20-21.

Tischner, Jozef. "Towards Ethical Substance." In: *Kwartalnik Res Publica Nowa*. Warszawa: Res Publica Nowa, ca. 2011, pp. 122-124.

Czech Republic / Slovakia

Soriga, Flavio. "Uta, Prague, Rome and the Whole World." In: *Streifzug durch Europa/Travel through Europe*. Berlin: HALMA, 2010, pp. 59-60.

Zajac, Peter. "In the Windshield, in the Rear-View Mirror." In: *Kwartalnik Res Publica Nowa*. Warszawa: Res Publica Nowa, ca. 2011, pp. 40-42.

Hungary

Baki, Péter, Colin Ford & George Szirtes. *Eyewitness: Hungarian Photography in the Twentieth Century*. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2011.

Bozóki, András. "The Chances of Cultural Renewal in Hungary." In: *Kwartalnik Res Publica Nowa*. Warszawa: Res Publica Nowa, ca. 2011, pp. 43-50.

Poland

Baran, Magdalena. "You're only laughing at yourselves: Polish Stereotypes of the Visegrad Brotherhood." In: *Kwartalnik Res Publica Nowa*. Warszawa: Res Publica Nowa, ca. 2011, pp. 68-73.

Slovenia

Theunissen, Jeroen. "Names." In: *Streifzug durch Europa/Travel through Europe*. Berlin: HALMA, 2010, pp. 75-78.