Post-War East European Poetry
Syllabus Spring 2012

Michael March
603 560 510 march@pwf.cz
Monday, 15.00—17.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation/attendance:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper or other assignment:</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Schedule of classes**

*Week 1*
13 February—“Literature and the Gods”
15 February—“The Materials”

*Week 2*
20 February—“Osip Mandelstam”
22 February—“Osip Mandelstam”

*Week 3*
27 February—“Anna Akhmatova”
29 February—“Marina Tsvetaeva”

*Week 4*
5 March—“Boris Pasternak”
7 March—“Vladimir Mayakovsky | Russian Futurism”

*Week 5*
12 March—“The Holocaust: George Steiner | Jean Améry”
14 March—“Primo Levi”

*Week 6*
19 March—“Paul Celan”
21 March—“Paul Celan”

*Week 7*
26 March—“János Pilinszky”
28 March—“Czesław Miłosz”
Week 8

2 April—“Czesław Milosz”

4 April—“Zbigniew Herbert”

Week 9 Spring Break—no classes

Week 10

16 April—Prague Writers’ Festival

18 April—Prague Writers’ Festival

Week 11

23 April—“Zbigniew Herbert”

25 April—“Vladimír Holan”

Week 12

30 April—“Jaroslav Seifert | Miroslav Holub”

2 May—“György Petri | Attila József”

Week 13

7 May—“Nichita Stănescu”

9 May—“Bertolt Brecht”

Week 14

14 May—“Erich Fried | Hans Magnus Enzensberger”

16 May—“Child of Europe”

Week 15

21 May—Journals | Study of a Poet

23 May—Return of course work
Professor: Michael March

THE STILL UNBORN ABOUT THE DEAD
Post-War East European Poetry

Course Description:

To explore the reconstruction of Central and Eastern Europe through the currency of its poetry, through the desperate honour of its poets.

With the war and subsequent occupation of Europe, literature, especially poetry, replaced consensus politics. Poets became the true accountants, and their ledgers contained the un-profitability of the human soul.

A reading of the finest poets of the past half-century situates the times and the seminal engagements born to restore independence. The poets were/are personally well-known to the lecturer, with the sad exception of the four great Russian poets, Celan and Brecht.

Grades:

The traditional grading scale, fashioned from class discussion, the reading of poems, as well as the presentation of a journal or diary assembled from classroom thoughts, original reading of the poets, philosophy, and dreams.

Course Structure:

1. The Absolute: Literature and the Gods

   reading: Roberto Calasso, Literature and the Gods; The Forty-Nine Steps;
   N.K. Sandars, The Epic of Gilgamesh; Heraclitus, The Art and Thought of Heraclitus; Han-shan, Cold Mountain; Marcus Aurelius, Meditations; Simone Weil, Gravity and Grace; Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents; Jean Genet, Sworn Enemy; Fragments of the Artwork; Ezra Pound, The Pisan Cantos; Octavio Paz, Alternating Current; Christopher Logue, War Music; Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Mind

2. The Execution of Speech:

   Akhmatova | Mandelstam | Tsvetaeva | Pasternak

   reading: Anna Akhmatova, Requiem; Anatoly Nayman, Remembering Anna Akhmatova; Amanda Haight, Akhmatova; Marina Tsvetaeva, Selected Pomse; Earthly Signs; Art in the Light of Conscience; Poem of
the End; Osip Mandelstam, Journey to Armenia, The Noise of Time; Stolen Air; Boris Pasternak, My Sister – Life; Safe Conduct; Nadezhda Mandelstam, Hope Against Hope, Hope Abandoned; Mozart and Salieri; Vladimir Mayakovsky, Night Wraps the Sky; Bed Bug; Elsa Triolet, Mayakovsky; Rilke, Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, Letters 1926; Isaac Babel, 1920 Diary; The Red Cavalry; Yevgeny Zamyatin, We; Soviet Heretic; Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Lenin in Zurich; The Gulag Archipelago; Varlem Shalamov, Kolyma Tales; Paul Schmidt, The Stray Dog Cabaret; Gustav Herling, A World Apart; Joseph Brodsky, Less Than One

3. Language and Silence: the Holocaust: Jean Améry | Primo Levi

reading: George Steiner, Language and Silence; Albert Camus, The Rebel; The Fall; Primo Levi, If This is a Man; Voice of Memory; Collected Poems; Jean Améry, At the Mind’s Limits; Ageing; Irène Heidelberger-Leonard, The Philosopher of Auschwitz; Irmre Kertész, Fatelessness; Claude Lanzmann, Shoah; Ingmar Bergman, The Serpent’s Egg; Aleksandar Tišma, Kapo; Tadeusz Borowski, This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen; Charles Reznikoff, Holocaust; Jorge Semprún, Literature or Life; Giorgio Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz; Fred Uhlman, Reunion; Arnošt Lustig, Katerina Horovitzova; Lovely Green Eyes

4. Conversation in the Mountains: Paul Celan

reading: Paul Celan, The Poems of Paul Celan; Collected Prose; Snow Part; Georg Büchner, Lenz; John Felstiner, Poet, Survivor, Jew; James Lyon, Paul Celan & Martin Heidegger; Ingeborg Bachmann, Darkness Spoken; Aharon Appelfeld, The Retreat; Badenheim 1939; Hanna Krall, To Outwit God; The Woman from Hamburg; Danilo Kiš, Garden, Ash; Encyclopedia of the Dead; Victor Klemperer, I Will Bear Witness; Elias Canetti, The Torch in My Ear; Curzio Malaparte, Kaputt; Wolfgang Borchardt, The Man Outside; The Sad Geraniums; Heinrich Böll, The Clown; Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem; Lawrence Langer, Art from the Ashes; Edmond Jabès, The Book of Questions; From the Desert to the Book; Martin Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought

5. Gravity and Grace: János Pilinszky | Czesław Miłosz

reading: János Pilinszky, The Desert of Love; Simone Weil, The Need for Roots; Czesław Miłosz, A Treatise on Poetry; Second Space; Collected Poems; The Captive Mind; The Witness of Poetry; Native
Realm; To Begin Where I Am; Attila József, Winter Night; Iron-Blue Vault; Miklós Radnóti, Forced March; Camp Notebook; Agota Kristof, The Notebook, Yesterday; Imre Kertész, Liquidation, Detective Story; Daniel Weissbort, Poetry of Survival; Vladimir Jankélévitch, Forgiveness

6. Barbarian in the Garden: Zbigniew Herbert

reading: Zbigniew Herbert, Mr Cogito; Report from the Besieged City; Barbarian in the Garden; The King of the Ants; Elegy for the Departure; Collected Prose; Stanisław Baranczak: A Fugitive from Utopia; Czesław Miłosz, Post-War Polish Poetry; Alexander Wat, Mediterranean Poems; My Century, George Konrád, The Loser; The Case Worker; Jerzy Ficowski, A Reading of Ashes; Milan Kundera, The Art of the Novel; Testaments Betrayed; The Curtain; Encounter

7. At the Barricades: Tadeusz Różewicz | Anna Swir

reading: Tadeusz Różewicz, Faces of Anxiety; The Survivor; Conversation with the Prince; Wisława Szymborska, Sounds, Feelings, Thoughts; View With a Grain of Sand; Anna Swir, Happy as a Dog’s Tail; Talking To My Body; Adam Czerniawski, The Burning Forest: Modern Polish Poetry; Yuz Aleshkovsky, Kangaroo; Witold Gombrowicz, Pornografia; Cosmos; Diaries; Bruno Schulz, The Street of Crocodiles; Tadeusz Konwicki, A Minor Apocalypse; Kazimierz Brandys, Warsaw Diary; Hannah Arendt, Men in Dark Times; Totalitarianism; The Human Condition

8. A Night With Hamlet: Vladimir Holan | Jaroslav Seifert

reading: Vladimir Holan, A Night With Hamlet; The First Testament; Selected Poems; Mirroring; Mirolsav Holub, Before and After; Dimension of the Present Moment; Vanishing Lung Syndrome; The Rampage; Jingle Bell Principle; Shedding Life; Jaroslav Seifert, The Plague Column, An Umbrella From Piccadilly; Vítězslav Nezval, Antilyric; Bohumil Hrabal, Total Fears; Little Town Where Time Stood Still; Closely Watched Trains; Ludvík Kundera, Overwintering; Josef Škvorecký, The Bass Saxophone


reading: György Petri, Night Song of the Personal Shadow; Eternal Monday; Imre Oravecz, September 1972; Ágnes Nemes Nagy,

10. Knots and Starts: Nichita Stănescu | Marin Sorescu


11. The Investigation: Bertolt Brecht | Hans Magnus Enzensberger

reading: Erich Fried, *100 Poems Without A Country; Love Poems; Bertolt Brecht, *Selected Poems; Journals 1934 – 1955; On Art and Politics; Georg Trakl, *Poems and Prose; To the Silenced; Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Mausoleum; The Sinking of the Titanic; Selected Poems; Kiosk; Lighter than Air; Critical Essays; Civil War; Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet; Arthur Schnitzler, *Dream Story; Night Games; Joseph Roth, *The Radetzky March; Hotel Savoy; The Wandering Jews; Right and Left; What I Saw; Sándor Márai, *Embers; Conversations in Bolzano; Karl Kraus, *Last Days of Mankind; Edward Timms, Karl Kraus: Apocalyptic Satirist; Elias Canetti, *Auto da Fé; The Play of the Eyes; Hands of the Clock; Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations; Understanding Brecht; Arcades Project; Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday; Gottfried Benn, *Primal Vision; Michael Hamburger, *Reason and Energy; East German Poetry; Proliferation of Prophets; Johannes Bobrowski, *Shadow Lands; Peter Huchel, *Selected Poems; Reiner
Kunze, Wonderful Years; Christoph Hein, Tango Player; Distant Lover; Peter Schneider, The Wall Jumper; The German Comedy; Günter Grass, The Tin Drum; My Century; Crabwalk; Günter Kunert, Windy Times; The Old Man; Alexander Kluge, The Devil’s Blind Spot; Gustav Janouch, Conversations with Kafka; Peter Gay, Schnitzler’s Century; Weimar Culture; Peter Weiss, Marat/Sade; Investigation; Hermann Broch, The Death of Virgil; Sleepwalkers; Heinrich Böll, The Silent Angel; Georg Groddeck, The Book of the It; Walter Abish, How German Is It; Double Vision; W.G. Sebald, Vertigo; Emigrants; Austerlitz; On the Natural History of Destruction; Hannah Arendt, On Violence; Rachel Bespaloff, On the Iliad; Jean-Michel Palmier, Weimar in Exile; Michael Hofmann, Twentieth-Century German Poetry; Thomas Bernhard, Wittgenstein’s Nephew; Extinction; Milan Kundera, Identity, Ignorance; William T. Vollmann, The Atlas; Europe Central

12. Child of Europe:

reading: Gojko Djogo, Ovid in Tomis; Lyubomir Nikolov, Pagan; Street; Unreal Estate; Novica Tadić, Night Mail; Elena Shvarts, Paradise; Birdsong on the Seabed; Arkadii Dragomoschenko, Description; Dust; Gary Shteyngart, The Russian Debutante’s Handbook; Absurdistan; Adam Zagajewski, Solidarity, Solitude; Two Cities; Sylva Fischerová, Tremor of Racehorses; Tomaž Šalamun, Feast; Slavenka Drakulić, How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed; Café Europa; The Taste of a Man; Róbert Gál, Signs and Symptoms; Andrzej Stasiuk, Tales of Galicia; Robert Menasse, Wings of Stone; Peter Stephan Jungk, Tigor; Perfect American; Aleksandar Hemon, Nowhere Man; The Lazarus Project; David Albahari, Götz and Meyer; Victor Erofeyev, Russian Beauty; Life with an Idiot; Yuz Aleshkovsky, The Hand; Miloslav Topinka, Crack; Jáchym Topol, City Sister Silver; Mircea Cărtărescu, Nostalgia; Patrik Ouředník, Europeana; Victor Pelevin, Sacred Book of the Werewolf; Vladimir Sorokin, Ice; Tony Judt, Postwar; Reappraisals