Civil resistance is not the same as just opting out of society or having views which go against the grain. It is far more fundamental than that and anybody raised in a democratic society where freedom of expression – both civil and artistic – is guaranteed, faces a challenge in trying to understand the circumstances in which people lived in this region in the past hundred years. It is about taking a decision – not to conform, not to go quietly along, with repressive regimes like Communism and Nazism. It is also about choosing the mode of action – political i.e. non-violent or military, especially in the times of war. Until recently, study has tended to emphasize the role of physical force in dealing with totalitarian regimes. Since 1989 there has been growing recognition that civil, artistic and educational activities can be equally important.

You can not understand civil resistance without understanding what the resistance is against – so this course requires us to get a foundation of understanding in how totalitarian regimes act, why people actively conform with them and why free expression and access to information from the outside world is considered as the biggest threat. We are looking to see a combination of both theory and practice. To truly understand the powerful stories we will see in literature, art and film, we have to understand both the theoretical and factual backgrounds.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the questions activists and artists never stopped asking were why authoritarian societies developed from ideals that seemed fair and peaceful?; what the purpose and limits of free creation were and whether ideas still mattered? People involved in civil resistance took powerfully practical steps which led to real consequences for them and finally undermined the regimes. All this is marvelously reflected in literature, art and film production that is today fully available.

In order to reinforce the point that the issues we are examining have meaning across regions and times, we will work thematically rather than chronologically. In this course we will be mixing approaches to how we explore the issues. In addition to traditional lecturing, there will be reading, videos and films. We will invite people who can talk personally about some of the issues and we will do field trips within Prague – the city that experienced liberal democracy, Nazism and Communism in only one century. Where necessary we will take a flexible approach in order to be able to take advantage of persons and events who might enrich the course being available in the semester.

Grading policy:
Class participation/attendance: 20%  
Mid-term: 30 %
Final: 30%  
Papers or other assignments: 20%

Schedule of classes:
Week 1

1. 15\textsuperscript{th} of February
   Overview of the course, its structure, papers to be prepared, reading and viewing required and recommended. Sergej Ejzenstejn’s “The Battleship Potemkin” (1925).

2. 16\textsuperscript{th} of February

Week 2

3. 22\textsuperscript{th} of February
   The notion of absurdity of any given totalitarian regime, the exploration of the situation of an innocent individual being treated as a potential criminal or enemy of the state, being Jewish in Central Europe. Franz Kafka: “Letters to Milena” (1925).
   “The Rhythm in My Heels” by Josef Škvorecký and Andrea Sedláčková (2010).

4. 23\textsuperscript{rd} of February
   Intelligent individuals trusting and serving a dictatorship e.g. in the communist Soviet Russia under Stalin and realizing too late what the real foundations of such a regime are. Nikita Mikhalkov: “Burnt by the Sun” (1994).

Week 3

5. 29\textsuperscript{th} of February
   Another option for an intelligent, honest person in the Soviet Russia – trying to stay out of the historical events, an impossible attempt to live without either compromising with the regime or fighting it. Boris Pasternak: “Doktor Zhivago” (1958).

6. 1\textsuperscript{st} of March
   The general analysis of a non-democratic, oppressive system, whether it is Communism or Nazism and the striving of individuals for love, freedom and truth. George Orwell: “1984”.

Week 4

7. 7\textsuperscript{th} of March
   The appeal of totalitarian ideology to some artists and intellectuals – by opportunism, by conviction?
   Leni Riefenstahl and Albert Speer serving the Nazi regime and their different perception of guilt later on.
   “The Triumph of the Will” and Gita Sereny’s biography of Albert Speer.

8. 8\textsuperscript{th} of March
   An opposite reaction of students fighting the oppressive regime and believing in democracy as a fair social environment.
Week 5

9. 14th of March
   How totalitarian ideology deals with its real or imagined opponents. Mass human rights abuses in the Soviet Russia and witnesses who had difficulties to be trusted in Western liberal democracies.

10. 15th of March
    Another example of an abusive regime dealing not only with its opponents, but other groups as well – Jews, Slaves, Romas, handicapped mentally or physically. Individual versus collective guilt.

Week 6

11. 21st of March
    Surviving inhuman conditions of war, occupation, ghetto and concentration camp. The notion of human solidarity, believing in good as a realistic concept after all, as well as friendship and love. The notion of guilt and shame.

12. 22nd of March
    A more skeptical vision of people conforming with occupation and rules of the dictatorship.

Week 7

13. 28th of March
    Jews as a persecuted group, the psychology of victimization and marginalization of a given social group by the majoritarian society. Imre Kertész: “Fatelessness” (1975).

14. 29th of March
    The loneliness of those who came back – from the front, from a prison, from a camp. Original beliefs confronted with today’s reality.

Week 8

15. 4th of April
    Methods generally used by any totalitarian ideology whether it is Communism or Nazism or any current extremist movement. Brain washing, psychological humiliation, physical torture, attacks on one’s beliefs and moral, isolation from the outside world.

16. 5th of April
    An attempt to catalogue and analyze the crimes of Communism over seventy years. Revelation of the actual, practical impacts of the ideology around the world – terror, torture, famine, mass deportations, massacres.
    Karel Bartošek´s chapter in Stéphane Courtois and coll.:“The Black Book of Communism” (1999).
Week 9

17. 18\textsuperscript{th} of April
What is it like to live in a society that is essentially not free and how do people react towards power. Conformity versus protest.

18. 19\textsuperscript{th} of April
The nature of 20th century human existence – behind the Iron Wall in the East or in a liberal democracy.
Between comedy and tragedy. Exile as a human condition.
Milan Kundera :“The Unbearable Lightness of Being”. (1984)

Week 10

18. 19\textsuperscript{th} of April
What is it like to live in a society that is essentially not free and how do people react towards power. Conformity versus protest.

18. 19\textsuperscript{th} of April
The nature of 20th century human existence – behind the Iron Wall in the East or in a liberal democracy.
Between comedy and tragedy. Exile as a human condition.
Milan Kundera :“The Unbearable Lightness of Being”. (1984)

Week 11

19. 25\textsuperscript{th} of April
A very different look at the social reality of the 80’s – although the abuse of power is omnipresent, a revolt is possible. Background of the Gdansk events just before the declaration of the martial law.
Andrzej Wajda and Agnieszka Holland:“The Man of Iron” (1977)

20. 26\textsuperscript{th} of April
Another perspective on the every day existence in Poland in the 80’s – the alternative community of dissidents versus the ‘realistic’ approach of the majority of people under the repressive regime.

Week 12

21. 2\textsuperscript{nd} of May
Dissent and civil resistance as a phenomenon of the 20th century in Central and Eastern Europe. Life in truth as a response to the totalitarian regime, possibilities of help from the outside world.
Jeri Laber :“The Courage of Strangers”(2002).

22. 3\textsuperscript{rd} of May
Secret police and its collaborators as an omnipresent control of people’s lives. Personal files and their critical evaluation.

Week 13

23. 9\textsuperscript{th} of May
Meditation on the possibilities of being an honest person in a dishonest regime. Every day life confronted with a moment of moral choice.
Ivan Klíma :“Love and Garbage” (1986).

24. 10\textsuperscript{th} of May
Dissent as a strategy, parallel community of like-minded people as a shelter.
Václav Havel:“The Power of the Powerless“ and Adam Michnik:“Letters from Prison and other Essays“.
Week 14

25. 16th of May
Samizdat as a specific way of communication.


Week 15

Exam week
Final Paper written in class.

Required readings and films:

Sergej Ejzenštejn: The Battleship Potemkin, 1925
Franz Kafka: Letters to Milena, 1925,
Boris Pasternak: Doctor Zhivago, 1958
Nikita Michalkov: Burnt by the Sun, 1994
George Orwell: 1984, publ. 1949
Alexander Solzhenitzyn: Gulag Archipelago, 1963
Nazi : The Warning from History
Leni Riefenstahl: The Triumph of Will, Albert Speer – Gita Sereny biography
Arnošt Lustig: Lovely Green Eyes, 2002
Josef Škvorecký: The Cowards, 1958
Imre Kertész: Fateless, 1975
Reiner W. Fassbinder: The Marriage of Maria Braun, 1978
Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartošek,
Jean-Louis Margolin: The Black Book of Communism, 1999
Artur London: The Confession, 1970
Jan Procházka and Karel Kachyňa : The Ear, 1970
Jaroslav Seifert: City in Tears
Czesław Miłosz: Verses, My Native Europe
Krysztof Kieslowski: No End, 1981
Jeri Laber: The Courage of Strangers, 2002
Bohumil Hrabal: Too Loud A Solitude, 1976
Vladimir Vysockij, Wolf Biermann, Karel Kryl, Jaroslav Hutka, Svatopluk Karásek and other song-writers
Milan Kundera : The Unbearable Lightness of Being, 1982
Ivan Klima: Love and Garbage, 1986
Václav Havel: The Power of the Powerless, 1977,
Adam Michnik: Letters from Prison and Other Essays, 1986

Recommended readings and films:

Franz Kafka: The Castle 1926, America (The Missing), 1927
Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: The Communist Manifesto
P. Čornej-J. Pokorný: A Brief history of the Czech lands
Philippe Herzog : Travelling hopefully, 2006
George Orwell: The Animal Farm, 1945, A Homage to Catalonia, 1938
Alexander Solzhenitzyn: One Day in Life of Ivan Denisovič, 1963
Adolf Hitler: Mein Kampf
Pablo Picasso: Guernica, 1937
Leni Riefenstahl: The Triumph of Will, 1934
Albert Speer’s architecture of the Third Reich
Ernest Hemingway: Goodbye, Army, 1929, For Whom the Bell Tolls, 1940
Karel Čapek: Talks with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, 1935
Edward B. Hitchcock: Edvard Beneš – Built a Temple for Peace,
Primo Levi: If this is a Man, 1947, The Drowned and the Saved, 1987, When if Not Now?, 1982
Robert Jay Lifton: Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism
Hannah Arendt: Eichmann in Jerusalem, Viking Press, 1963
Andrzej Wajda: Ashes and Diamonds, Promised Land, The Man of Marble
Roman Polanski: The Pianist, 2002
Josef Korbel: The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1959
Jaroslav Seifert: The Plague Column, All the Beauties of the World, 1986
Krzysztof Zanussi: The Structure of Crystal
Krzysztof Kieslowski: The Decalogue, The Trilogy – Blue, White, Red
Erich Fromm: The Heart of Man, To Have or To Be, The Art of Loving, The Art of Listening
Karen Horney: Neurosis and Human Growth
Ivan Klíma: Waiting for the Dark, Waiting for the Light, The Judge By Mercy
Jan Patočka, Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel: The Charter 77 Declaration
Michail Gorbachev: Glasnost and Perestrojka in the USSR
Ludvík Vaculík: The Czech Dreambook, 1980

Monika MacDonagh-Pajerová, December 2011