Course description
This course will focus on the history of the culturally rich region of “Mitteleuropa” through analysis of the parallel evolution of Germany and the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Mitteleuropa as a region produced such important figures as Franz Kafka, Gustav Mahler, Sigmund Freud, Theodor Herzl and Milan Kundera; historical personalities whose influence internationally is indisputable. We’ll delve into the history of the region and on the central role played by German politics and culture from the end of the 19th century, through the turbulent 20th century to the present day.
Emphasis will be on the evolution of the concept of nationalism as well as on Germany’s foreign policy in the “concert of nations”, especially towards its Eastern neighbors. The aim is to achieve an understanding of the complex evolution of national entities and their interaction between the birth of the modern German state and the integration of the Visegrád countries in NATO and the European Union.

Grading policy
Presentation on Central European History  25%
Book review       25%
Mid-term exam     25%
Final exam      25%
Participation and pop quizzes (2 or 3 during the semester) will be taken into account in the final grade only if they reflect positively on the grade.

Attendance policy
Students may miss two sessions of 90 minutes each without excuse. After that, any absence needs to be justified with a doctor’s note. Additional work (in the form of a short paper) can make up for further absences. 3 and more absences without make-up work will lower the final grade automatically (A to A- in case of one absence, A to B+ in case of 2 absences etc.).
Schedules of classes

Week 1: Introduction
13 February: Overview of course: Prague as a capital city of Mitteleuropa.

15 February: What is Mitteleuropa? Germany, Austria-Hungary and Central Europe before the 1848 revolution
Assigned reading

Week 2: Nationalism and national identity
20 February: Definition(s) of nationalism
Assigned reading
Further reading

22 February: Nationalism and statehood in Germany and Central Europe: an overview
Assigned reading

Week 3: From Germany’s unification to the beginning of the First World War
27 February: Germany’s unification
Further reading

29 February: Germany from the unification to the beginning of the First World War: an overview
Further reading
2 March: Mitteleuropa after Germany’s unification

Assigned reading

Week 4: Germany’s Foreign Policy and the coming of the First World War

5 March: Germany’s foreign policy: Bismarck’s Balance of powers

Assigned reading

Further reading

7 March: Germany’s foreign policy: William II’s Weltpolitik

Assigned reading

Further reading

Week 5: The new European order

12 March: The First World War and the end of old Central Europe

Assigned reading
Jörg Brechtfeld: *Mitteleuropa and German Politics: 1848 to the Present*. London, Palgrave, 1996. (Chapter 4)*


Further reading

14 March: The Paris Peace Conference, the national reconstruction of Europe’s centre and the question of minorities in Central Europe.

Assigned reading


Week 6: The Weimar Republic and its neighbors

19 March: The Weimar Republic: history and constitutional problems

Further reading

21 March: The Foreign Policy of the Weimar Republic

Assigned reading
Jörg Brechtefeld: Mitteleuropa and German Politics: 1848 to the Present. London, Palgrave, 1996. (Chapter 4)*

Further Reading

Week 7: Central Europe between the two World Wars: the rise of authoritarian regimes

26 March: Presentations on Poland and Czechoslovakia

28 March: Presentation on Hungary

Week 8: The National-Socialist Regime

2 April: The Rise of National-Socialism

Further reading

4 April: Mid-term exam

Week 9: Spring Break – No classes

Week 10: Hitler and his plans for Germany and Central Europe

16 April: The Nazi-Regime in Germany, its structure and ideology

Further reading

18 April: Hitler’s Foreign Policy: The Anschluß, the Munich Agreement and the beginning of World War II

Assigned reading
Jörg Brechtefeld: Mitteleuropa and German Politics: 1848 to the Present. London, Palgrave, 1996. (Chapter 4)*

Further reading
20 April: World War II

Assigned reading
Jörg Brechteld: *Mitteleuropa and German Politics: 1848 to the Present*. London, Palgrave, 1996. (Chapter 4)*

Further reading

Book reviews are due

Week 11: World War II and its Consequences

23 April: Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam: redefinition of Central Europe

Assigned reading


Further reading

25 April: The birth of the two German states

Further reading

Week 12: Post-War German foreign policy

30 April: The Adenauer Era: the end of the German Sonderweg and the Hallstein Doctrine

Assigned reading


Further reading
Timothy Garton Ash: *In Europe’s Name. Germany and the Divided Continent*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1993. (Chapter 5)*

2 May: Brandt’s Ostpolitik and the normalization of the relations between Germany and the Eastern Block.

Assigned reading

**Further reading**
Timothy Garton Ash: *In Europe’s Name. Germany and the Divided Continent*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1993. (Chapter 5)*

**Week 13: The end of the Cold War**

7 May: Mikhail Gorbachev, Helmut Kohl: perestroika and the road to German unity

**Assigned reading**


**Further reading**


9 May: German unity, domestic and international aspects

**Assigned reading**
Timothy Garton Ash: *In Europe’s Name. Germany and the Divided Continent*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1993. (Chapter 7)*

pp. 233 - 252.*

**Further reading**
Timothy Garton Ash: *In Europe’s Name. Germany and the Divided Continent*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1993. (Chapter 8)*


**Week 14:** Central Europe between World War II and the fall of the Wall. Revolt and reform

14 May: Presentations on Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia

16 May: Final Exam

**Week 15: Germany’s relations with the East Central European countries (1990 – 2004)**

21 May: Germany’s new relations with the East Central European countries. A Summary

**Assigned reading**


Further reading

Adrian Hyde-Price: The International Politics of East Central Europe. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996

23 May: Return of exams, movie (“Václav Havel – Prague, Castle”, a documentary by Petr Jančárek and Martin Vidlák)

Books for the book review (suggestions)

Adrian Hyde-Price: The International Politics of East Central Europe. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996

NB: Documents marked with * are to be found in the reader.