Class code COLIT-UA 9140-001

Instructor Details
Professor Michael March
march@pwf.cz
603 560 510
office hours | Malé náměstí 2 | Monday | 15.00—17:00

Class Details
The Still Unborn About the Dead: Post-War East European Poetry
Monday | Wednesday | 13.30—15.00
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites
none

Class Description
To explore the reconstruction of Central and Eastern Europe through the currency of its poetry, through the desperate honor 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 unprofitability 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 five great Russian poets, Celan and Brecht.

Students will address the lectures through the selections in the Reader, additional texts from the poetry library, and the submission of a weekly, three to five-page poetry journal composed of critical readings of each poet’s work.

Desired Outcomes
To see poetry as a way of thinking:

“Without poetry, there is chaos.”

“Culture is the formation of recognition.”

“Poetry transmits the future.”

“Poetry preserves beauty, which in turn, saves the world.”
Class participation 40%  |  Journals  50%  |  Final Journal presentation 10%

Students should prepare for each class by consulting the assigned texts in the Reader, as well as the suggested reading materials in the poetry library. Final journals should comprise a minimum of fifty pages.

**Grade A:** Excellent work demonstrating a critical and observant approach to the subject, sound research and an ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively.

**Grade B:** Very good work.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory work.

**Grade D:** Passable work.

**Grade F:** Failure to achieve a passable standard.

**Grade conversion**

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65
Grading Policy

NYU Prague aims to have grading standards and results similar to those that prevail at Washington Square. At the College of Arts and Sciences, roughly 39% of all final grades are in the B+ to B- range, and 50% in the A/A- range.

We have therefore adopted the following grading guideline: in any non-Stern course, class teachers should try to ensure that no more than 50% of the class receives an A or A-.

A guideline is not a curve. A guideline is just that—it gives an ideal benchmark for the distribution of grades towards which we work.

Attendance Policy

Each unexcused absences will result in your final grade being reduced by 3%. Absences only for medical reasons will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor’s note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). Absences due to travel will not be excused.

Late Submission of Work

Work may be submitted late due to illness or through exceptional circumstances.

Plagiarism Policy

Reader and selected readings.

Required Text(s)

Internet Research Guidelines

Additional Required Equipment
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<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>“Literature and the Gods”</th>
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<th>Session 2</th>
<th>“The Materials”</th>
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<th>Session 3</th>
<th>“Osip Mandelstam”</th>
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<td>Friday, February 15</td>
<td>selected reading: Osip Mandelstam, <em>Journey to Armenia; The Noise of Time; Stolen Air</em>; Isaac Babel, <em>1920 Diary; The Red Cavalry</em>; Paul Schmidt, <em>The Stray Dog Cabaret</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>“Osip Mandelstam”</th>
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<td>Monday, February 18</td>
<td>selected reading: Nadezhda Mandelstam, <em>Hope Against Hope; Hope Abandoned</em>; Mozart and Salieri; Yevgeny Zamyatin, <em>We; Soviet Heretic</em>; Varlem Shalamov, <em>Kolyma Tales</em>; Joseph Brodsky, <em>Less Than One</em></td>
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<th>Session 5</th>
<th>“Anna Akhmatova”</th>
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<td>Wednesday, February 20</td>
<td>selected reading: Anna Akhmatova, <em>Requiem; The Word that Causes Death’s Defeat</em>; Anatoly Nayman, <em>Remembering Anna Akhmatova</em>; Amanda Haight, <em>Akhmatova</em></td>
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<th>Session 6</th>
<th>“Marina Tsvetaeva”</th>
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<td>Monday, February 25</td>
<td>selected reading: Marina Tsvetaeva, <em>Selected Pomes; Earthly Signs; Art in the Light of Conscience; Poem of the End</em></td>
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Session 7

Wednesday, February 27

“Marina Tsvetaeva”

selected reading: Rilke, Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, Letters 1926

Session 8

Monday, March 4

“Boris Pasternak”

selected reading: Boris Pasternak, My Sister – Life; Safe Conduct

Session 9

Wednesday, March 6

“Vladimir Mayakovsky”

selected reading: Vladimir Mayakovsky, Night Wraps the Sky; The Bedbug and Selected Poetry; Pro Eto; My Discovery of America; Elsa Triolet, Mayakovsky; Yuz Aleshkovsky, Kangaroo

Session 10

Monday, March 11

“Russian Futurism”

selected reading: Vladimir Markov, Russian Futurism: A History; Eugene Ostashevsky, Oberiu: An Anthology of Russian Absurdism; Anna Lawton and Herbert Eagle, Words in Revolution: Russian Futurist Manifestoes 1912-1928

Session 11

Wednesday, March 13

“The Holocaust: George Steiner | Jean Améry”

selected reading: George Steiner, Language and Silence; Jean Améry, At the Mind's Limits; Ageing; Irène Heidelberger-Leonard, The Philosopher of Auschwitz; Claude Lanzmann, Shoah; Tadeusz Borowski, This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen; Charles Reznikoff, Holocaust; Giorgio Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz

Session 12

Monday, March 18

“Primo Levi”

selected reading: Primo Levi, If This is a Man; The Truce; The Drowned and the Saved; The Voice of Memory; Collected Poems
Session 13  
“Paul Celan”  
Wednesday,  
March 20  

Session 14  
“Paul Celan”  
Monday,  
March 25  

Session 15  
“János Pilinszky”  
Wednesday,  
March 27  

Spring Break  
April 1—5

Session 16  
“Czesław Miłosz”  
Monday,  
April 8  
selected reading: Czesław Miłosz, *Post-War Polish Poetry; A Treatise on Poetry; The Captive Mind; The Witness of Poetry; Native Realm*

Session 17  
“Zbigniew Herbert”  
Wednesday,  
April 10  
selected reading: Zbigniew Herbert, *Selected Poems; Report from the Besieged City; Barbarian in the Garden; The King of the Ants; Elegy for the Departure*
Session 18  
Friday, April 12  
“Zbigniew Herbert”  
selected reading: Zbigniew Herbert, *Collected Prose*; Stanisław Baranczak: *A Fugitive from Utopia*

Session 19  
Monday, April 15  
“Tadeusz Różewicz | Anna Swir”  
selected reading: Tadeusz Różewicz, *The Survivor; Conversation with the Prince*; Anna Swir, *Happy as a Dog’s Tail; Talking To My Body*; Wisława Szymborska, *Collected Poems*; Witold Gombrowicz, *Cosmos*

Session 20  
Monday, April 22  
“Vladimir Holan”  
selected reading: Vladimir Holan, *A Night With Hamlet*

Session 21  
Wednesday, April 24  
“Jaroslav Seifert | Miroslav Holub”  
selected reading: Jaroslav Seifert, *The Plague Column, An Umbrella From Piccadilly*; Miroslav Holub, *Before and After; Dimension of the Present Moment; Vanishing Lung Syndrome; The Rampage; The Jingle Bell Principle*

Session 22  
Monday, April 29  
“Nichita Stănescu”  

Session 23  
Monday, May 6  
“Bertolt Brecht”  
Session 24

Monday, May 13

“Erich Fried | Hans Magnus Enzensberger”

selected reading: Erich Fried, *100 Poems Without A Country; Love Poems;* Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Mausoleum; The Sinking of the Titanic; Selected Poems; Kiosk; Lighter than Air; Critical Essays*

Session 25

Wednesday, May 15

“Child of Europe”

selected reading: Michael March, *Child of Europe; Description of a Struggle;* Lyubomir Nikolov, *Pagan; Street; Unreal Estate; Novica Tadić, Night Mail;* Elena Shvarts, *Paradise*

Session 26

Monday, May 20

Journals | Study of a Poet

Session 27

Wednesday, May 22

Return of course work.