Class code
EURO-UA9301001 and EURO-UA9301002 and SASEM-UG9400001 and SASEM-UG9400002

Instructor Details
Jan Urban
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+420 606 600 979
NYU Prague, Malé náměstí 2, 3rd floor, before classes

Class Details
Modern Political Dissent: The Art of Defeat – SPRING 2015
Monday and Wednesday, 9,00 and 12,00
Location to be confirmed

Prerequisites
none

Class Description
Individual or minority revolt against the prevailing majority position, religious interpretation or political rule is an important but often forgotten part of history. The Modern Political Dissent class covers this phenomena combining findings from several fields like psychological response to extreme situations, modern history, political and communication theory, art and culture in opposition against perceived injustice and case studies and analyses of important examples of modern political dissent. From the interpretation of the Holocaust or torture survival ordeal and Stockholm Syndrome, students are led to analyze the context – both psychological and historical – in order to search for possible remedies. Conditions that made totalitarian ideologies so widely acceptable are studied within the context of thought reform and cult manipulations. The works of Robert J. Lifton, Stanley Milgrams and Phillip Zimbardo are used to explain the importance of individual responsibility versus obedience to authority. Role modeling and differentiation in communicating minority or dissent values to the majority society give a possibility to adjust complex strategies for change.

The format of the course is based on a combination of lectures, readings and films, discussions and group projects.

The goal of this class is to introduce students to a contextual understanding of events, developments and theories as opposed to mere memorization of historical data. Throughout the course the students are invited to personalize often critical choices made in demanding or extreme situations in order to understand the need for critical thinking based on sound personal values. The questioning of the majority beliefs, authorities and values in a mass culture and binary perception of conflict is brought forward in order to understand the role of a responsible individual in modern society and democracy.

Desired Outcomes
Assessment Components
Grading composition: attendance and participation = 20%, presentation = 10%, exam = 30%, midterm paper = 20%, final paper = 20% Midterm and final papers – Minimum 5-6 pages. Oral presentation – depending on topic 5-10 minutes, group work 15-30 minutes

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class. All assignments and activity in the class will be worth certain number of points – the total for the semester should add up to 100.

Assessment Expectations
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 points
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

Attendance Policy
Absences only for medical reasons and for religious observance 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). To be excused for religious observance, you must contact the instructor and the Associate Director via e-mail one week in advance of the holiday. Your absence is excused for the holiday only and does not include days of travel associated with the holiday. Unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from your final course grade for every week of classes missed.

Late Submission of Work
Unexcused late submission of work will be penalized with a reduction of fifteen points on the assignment.

Plagiarism Policy
According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:

"Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science’s Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

"Presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt."

"Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university." (Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook)

Required Text(s)
Selection of required and recommended readings:

1. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Communist manifesto
2. Adolf Hitler: Mein Kampf
3. Giovanni Gentile: The Doctrine of Fascism
4. Primo Levi: The Drowned and the Saved
5. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn: Gulag Archipelago
7. Rober Jay Lifton: Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism
10. Hannah Arendt: Origins of Totalitarianism
12. C.J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, 1967
15. Philip Zimbardo: The Pathology of Imprisonment, Society, 9, 1972, 6, pp. 4-8
24. Vaclav Havel: Power of the Powerless
25. Vaclav Havel: A Word About Words
26. Adam Michnik: Letters from Prison
27. Adam Michnik: Letters from Freedom
33. Rock the Vote: Political Power for Young People – www.rockthevote.com
36. Zapatista!: Reinventing Revolution in Mexico / edited by John Holloway, Eloína Peláez; London,
Pluto Press 1998

37. Lifton, Robert Jay, Superpower syndrome : America’s apocalyptic confrontation with the world; New York, Thunder’s Mouth Press 2003


Supplemental

Text(s) (not
required to
purchase as
copies are in
NYU-P Library)

Internet Research

Guidelines

Additional

Required

Equipment

Session 1

Monday,
Feb 2

Overview of course

Introduction into the life in extreme. Psychological reactions to extreme stress and fear for survival. Issue of individual responsibility. Formation of individual and group identity. Knot in history situations and modernity’s love for short cuts...

Reading: Karl Marx: Communist manifesto, Internet sources on industrial revolution and serfdom

2-3 oral reports

Session 2

Wednesday,
Feb 4


2 oral reports

Session 3

Monday,
Feb 9

Where was Karl Marx wrong from the very beginning?

Other theoretical short-cuts – science as absolutist religion against critical thinking. WWI.

2 oral reports

Session 4

Wednesday,
Feb 11

Appeal of Fascism and National Socialism, Demise of democracy, Roles, Grey zone and Decent Nazis. Science and Arts - Experts and Artists in service to Evil.

Rober Jay Lifton: Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism

2-3 oral reports

Session 5

Monday,
Feb 16

Leni Riefenstahl case. Roles and Choice. Individual responsibility

film - Triumph of the Will, internet sources
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Wednesday, Feb 18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primo Levi – the psychology of survival, torture, guilt and suicide</td>
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<td>Primo Levi – The Drowned and the Saved</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Monday, Feb 23</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Roles and Identities – Victims, perpetrators and Bystanders</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 8</th>
<th>Wednesday, Feb 25</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Jay Lifton – Thought Reform, Brainwashing in Communist China</td>
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<td>Reader text</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 9</th>
<th>Monday, March 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stanley Milgrams obedience experiments, Philip Zimbardo, Stockholm syndrome</td>
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<td>Reader text</td>
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<th>Session 10</th>
<th>Wednesday, March 4</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Abu Ghraib experience. Are we different?</td>
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<td>Film - Ghosts of Abu Ghraib</td>
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<td>Class discussion</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 11</th>
<th>Monday, March 9</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karl Jaspers – The Question of Guilt, four layers of guilt and present day politics of guilt allocation</td>
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<td>Reader text</td>
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<td>2 oral reports</td>
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<th>Session 12</th>
<th>Wednesday, March 11</th>
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<td>What Jaspers could not envisage? Guiltless killers.</td>
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<td>Group projects on victim rehabilitation</td>
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<th>Session 13</th>
<th>Monday, March 16</th>
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<td>Cult formation, Religious and other cults, televangelist movement, escaping the reality, Jones´ tapes.</td>
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<td>Myth of modernity/postmodernity</td>
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<td>Robert Lifton - Cult Formation</td>
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<td>2 oral reports and class discussion</td>
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<th>Session 14</th>
<th>Wednesday, March 18</th>
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<td>Victim rehabilitation and identity change. Torture victim clinics, rehabilitation of child soldiers, veteran care.</td>
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<td>Reader text, internet sources</td>
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<td>Group projects</td>
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<th>Session 15</th>
<th>Monday, March 23</th>
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|            | Dissent as Art of Defeat – the need to communicate..
|            | Reader text |
|            | Midterm paper due |

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<th>Session 16</th>
<th>Wednesday, March 25</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Thoreau, Trade union movement, Sufragette movement – direct action and power of example, contextual approximation of tactics and goals</td>
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<td>Reader text, internet</td>
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<td>2 oral reports and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 17</th>
<th>Monday, March 30</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reader text</td>
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<td>2 oral reports and discussion</td>
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| Session 18 | Anticolonial movements and their failure as dissent. Cold War.  
Wednesday,  
April 1  
Internet sources. Case studies.  
4-5 shorter oral presentations on case studies. Types of response. |
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<tr>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>April 6-10</td>
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| Session 19 | Civil Rights Movement – use of television  
Monday,  
April 13  
2 oral reports |
| Session 20 | NGOs – Amnesty International, Greenpeace – human rights and environmental agenda, internationalisation  
Wednesday,  
April 15  
Internet sources  
2 oral reports |
| Session 21 | Zapatista movement – internet mobilisation on global scale for even local issues, roots of terrorism, terrorism vs dissent  
Monday,  
April 20  
Reader text  
2 oral reports |
| Session 22 | Antiglobalisation movement and tactics, Occupy the Wall Street, inability to communicate, dissent ghettos  
Wednesday,  
April 22  
2 oral reports |
| Session 23 | Ideological response to the fall of Communism, lessons of wars in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan.  
Monday,  
April 27  
3 oral reports |
| Session 24 | Film – Stake No.12  
Wednesday,  
April 29  
Postmodern dictatorships – Slobodan Milošević, electronic media and entertainment vs democracy |
| Session 25 | Dissent under Communism. Two schools – Vaclav Havel vs Adam Michnik,  
Monday,  
May 4  
In the reader  
2 oral reports |
| Session 26 | Planning dissent strategies. Avoiding violence and confrontation, development of impossible to solve situations.  
Wednesday,  
May 6  
Group projects and discussion |
| Session 27 | Case studies, China, Burma, Arab Spring – internet and social media  
Monday,  
May 11  
2 oral reports |
| Session 28 | Lessons and need of dissent for democratic societies  
Wednesday,  
May 13 (last day of classes)  
Class discussion |
| Session 29 | Summary of the course  
Monday,  
May 18  
Final exam  
Final paper due  
Summary of the course |
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday, May 20</th>
<th>Final exam</th>
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<td>Final paper due</td>
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<th>Classroom Etiquette</th>
<th>Active use of laptops is welcome</th>
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<th>Required Co-curricular Activities</th>
<th>Following or participation in Forum 2000 conference in Prague is supported.</th>
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| Suggested Co-curricular Activities | |
|------------------------------------| |