Modern Art in Czech Lands
19th – 21st Century
Syllabus Spring 2012

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Course description: Modern Art in Czech Lands, 19th – 21st century – This course will present the development of the visual arts (paintings, sculpture, photography, architecture, design, etc.) in the Czech lands from the end of the 18th century until the present (The Czech lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until 1918). In the 19th century Bohemian culture was influenced by nationalist movement i.e. the National Revival, which was inspired by wider socio-political tendencies at this time. Relations to Austrian and German art were very important during that time. Since the 19th century we can see a profound shift to French literature (Symbolism, Decadence, Cubism, etc.). These connections endured until the period between the World War I and World War II (Surrealism, Abstract art). The period after the Second World War (until 1989) was characterized by a totalitarian political system that negatively deformed the standard art scene. Czech art acquired new dimension after the political changes of 1989. This course will introduce the history of Czech visual arts in a wider Central European context with references to other art fields (film, literature, theatre).

Class sessions will be composed of lectures, excursions to sights related to the course (museums, galleries, studios etc.) and discussions on weekly readings as well as on other sources such as film, theatre, music etc.

Class attendance is required. Students are also required to attend all seminar sessions and museum visits. All exams must be taken on the dates scheduled. Students will be permitted to take make-up exams in the case of medical or family emergencies, or if they are away on official university business. Late papers will not be accepted. Helpful suggestion: This course covers a large amount of material in a very short period of time. Many places, events, and terms will likely be unfamiliar to you. The best way to ensure that you will do well in the course is to participate actively. Review your notes regularly (at least every week or two) and be sure to correct misspelling or misinformation. Oral presentation: Each student is required to give one oral presentation (analyses of one painting, sculpture or building). Specific dates for the presentations will be determined in class. Your presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in length.

Final paper: Papers should be approximately 15 pages in length, excluding notes. You may include photographs, drawings and other forms of documentation, but these should not be counted in total number of pages. Papers should include a bibliography of all of the works you have consulted as well as footnotes. Please use a standard format for footnotes and bibliographical citation.

Grading policy
Class participation/attendance: 20 %
Paper or other assignment: 20 %
Mid-term: 20 %
Final: 40 %
Schedule of classes

**Week 1**
14 February - Overview of course

16 February - **Czech Art or Art in Czech Lands** - Introduction I. Romanesque and Gothic Art
(Master Theodoricus, Petr Parler)

**Week 2**
21 February - **Czech Art or Art in Czech Lands** – Introduction II. Renaissance and Baroque Art
(Giuseppe Archimboldo, Jan Blažej Santini)

23 February - Excursion - National Gallery, St Agnes Monastery

**Week 3**
28 February - **National revival: Looking for Lost Paradise**
(National Theatre, Josef Mánes)

1 March – Excursion - TBA

**Week 4**
6 March - State holiday, no classes

8 March – **Realism and the Birth of Modern Art**
(Josef Navrátil, Karel Purkyně)

**Week 5**
13 March - **Art Nouveau and Impressionism: New Shapes in New Light**
(Alfons Mucha, Municipal House)

15 March - Excursion – **Alfons Mucha Museum, Prague**

**Week 6**
20 March - **Decadent Symbolism or Great Decline of Spirituality**
(František Bílek, Karel Hlaváček)

22 March - **František Bílek Museum, Gallery of the City of Prague**

**Week 7**
3 April - **The Occult in Art**
(Josef Váchal, Jaroslav Panuška)

5 April - Excursion - TBA

Week 8
Spring Break

Week 9
17 April - Cubism: Fragments and Facets and Neurosis
(Bohumil Kubišta, Josef Chochoł)

19 April - Excursion – Museum of Czech Cubism, Prague

Week 10
24 April - Abstraction: Metamorphosis and/or Cosmic Spring
(František Kupka)

26 April - Excursion – National Gallery, Fair Trade Palace

Week 11
3 May - Surrealist Dream against Totality
(Jindřich Štyrský, Karel Teige)

Week 12
10 May - Wounded Culture: Socialist Realism and Myth of Underground
(Stanin Monument, Alén Diviš)

Week 13
15 May - After 1989: Back to the (Ab)normality I.
(David Černý)
Lit: Tomáš Pospiszyl, David Černý, Promrdané roky/ The Fucking years. Praha 2002

17 May - Excursion – TBA

Week 14 – Exam week
PAPERS ARE DUE THIS WEEK, EITHER May 22nd or 24th.
Literature (selection):

Petr Wittlich, *Prague, Fin-de-Siecle*. Paris 1992
Jaroslav Anděl (ed.), *Czech Modernism. 1900 - 1945*. Houston 1989
Jaroslav Anděl, Dorothy Kosinski (ed.), *František Kupka*. Dallas 1997
Hana Larová (ed.), *Sculptor František Bílek*. Praha 2000