

# NYU Prague

## SOC-UA9970P01

### Collective Identity in a Totalitarian Regime

### Spring 2020

#### Instructor Information

- Vanda Thorne, PhD
- Email:
- Office hours: Immediately before or after class, and by arrangement via email
- Telephone:

#### Course Information

- SOC-UA9970P01
- **Collective Identity in a Totalitarian Regime**
- Co-requisite or prerequisite: none
- **Monday/Wednesday 10:30 am – 11:50 am**
  - Dvořák classroom, BB

#### Course Overview and Goals

This course examines totalitarian oppression from the point of view of ordinary citizens in communist Czechoslovakia. It focuses on the construction of collective mentality through everyday official/public and unofficial/private activities, including mass parades, public rituals, ceremonies and performances, work relations, children's education, housing schemes or collective vacationing. Almost any nation's history contains numerous incidents characterized by people's mass participation, e.g., elections, demonstrations, revolutions, or wars. The totalitarian regime of communist Czechoslovakia took these events to an extreme, turning the elaborately planned mass events and activities into one of its primary defining characteristics. Collective mass identity was celebrated by the Czechoslovak leaders as an embodiment of the best communist qualities and a guarantee of successful and happy future.

We will consider what participation in public mass activities meant for ordinary people, but also how the idea of united homogeneous masses was officially presented in propaganda and other materials. In the second part of the semester, we will examine many aspects of people's private lives that were also forcefully structured by the ideology of mass collectivity – even the most intimate experiences of love, marriage or parenthood were to be opened to public discussion and intervention. At the end of the semester, we will explore what fueled post-communist nostalgia in the Czech Republic and consider the consequences of mass nostalgia for developing democracies.  
Lectures, discussions, video resources, fieldtrips

#### Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the main theoretical concepts and historical events of totalitarianism against the background of specific activities and experiences of Czechoslovak people.
- Critically analyze the consequences of life in a totalitarian regime.

- Contrast and compare the classic Western theories of the masses with Eastern European official and unofficial texts about mass mentality.
- Demonstrate the ability to research and analyze historical phenomena, using academic texts as well as analyses of fiction, propaganda materials, samizdat and censored writing.

## Course Requirements

### Class Participation

**Active class participation** is necessary for this type of course; therefore, it will form a considerable part of a student's grade (20%). You are expected to ask questions and/or comment on the issues discussed frequently. **Short response papers or home assignments** (max. 1 page) will be assigned by the professor throughout the semester to assess students' knowledge of the specific phenomena covered in discussions, films and readings.

Note: This course has a **mandatory overnight research trip** to Jachymov (work camps for communist political prisoners) during the weekend of **April 25 – 26, 2020**.

### Reading Presentations

Each student will be asked to present 2 readings from the assigned list according to her/his choice over the course of the semester. **At least 1 presentation is due before the Midterm**. More than 1 person, but no more than 3 people, can present the same article (please note that in the case of short texts it is not advisable to have more than 2 people presenting the same reading). As a discussion facilitator, you will shortly introduce the reading (max. 2-3 minutes) and then focus on your evaluation of it (max. 10 minutes). Your task is to present your own arguments and/or comments regarding the key points discussed in the text. **Come prepared with a written short summary of the text and at least half a page of your own commentary and questions or thought-provoking points** that you wish to make about the reading. Please make enough copies for class distribution. Your written and spoken presentation should be focused and to the point; avoid lengthy quotations. The goal is to stimulate discussion of the readings and to make connections with previous class topics. Each presentation will be worth 10% of the final grade (5% for the questions/points sheet, 5% for the verbal presentation of the reading). Please note, however, that **all students, not just the discussion facilitators, are expected to read and discuss the assigned reading each week**.

### Written Analysis

Minimum 5 pages, double spaced, with bibliography. In-depth analysis of one of the class topics or one of the assigned films. You should demonstrate your knowledge of previously read class materials, relate your analysis to the relevant historical, cultural and social phenomena that we discussed, and provide evidence of your own independent thinking. Please follow standard citation criteria.

### Tests & Quizzes

**Midterm test** and **Final test** (in-class written tests)

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

## Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

<b>Assignments/Activities</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
Class participation/attendance/short response papers, mandatory research trip	20%
2 Reading Presentations ( <b>one due before Midterm</b> )	20%
Midterm Test (in-class written test, March 23)	20%
Written Analysis (5 pages, May 13)	20%
Final Test (in-class written test, May 18)	20%

## Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>A</b>	94% - 100%
<b>A-</b>	90% - 93%
<b>B+</b>	87% - 89%
<b>B</b>	84% - 86%
<b>B-</b>	80% - 83%
<b>C+</b>	77% - 79%
<b>C</b>	74% - 76%
<b>C-</b>	70% - 73%
<b>D+</b>	67% - 69%
<b>D</b>	65% - 66%
<b>F</b>	Below 65

## Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** Excellent work. Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the topic and an active and critical approach to the subject. Written work shows original thought and research and an ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively.

**Grade B:** Very good work. Frequently participates in class discussions and shows some insight. Written work is well structured and researched but falls short of the highest level.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory work. Has done necessary class work but lacks individual insight and active class involvement. Written work accurate but not original or critical.

**Grade D:** Passable work. Meets minimum requirements.

**Grade F:** Fails to meet the requirements.

## Course Schedule

## Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Session 1 Monday, February 3	<b>Overview of course. Definitions of Basic Concepts. Historical and Social Background to Totalitarianism in Central Europe.</b>	No reading	
Session 2 Wednesday, February 5	<b>Lecture: Propaganda</b>	<b>Arendt, Hannah.</b> "A Classless Society," in <i>Totalitarianism</i> , pp. 3-24 (21 pages)	<b>SIGN UP FOR READING PRESENTATIONS</b>
Session 3 Monday, February 10	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Theories and Images of Propaganda</b>	<b>Clark, Toby.</b> "Propaganda in the Communist State," in <i>Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century</i> , pp. 72-101 <b>Ellul, Jacques.</b> "The Characteristics of Propaganda," in <i>Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes</i> , pp. 3-24 <b>Molloy, Peter.</b> "Hero Workers," in <i>The Lost World of Communism: An Oral History of Daily Life Behind the Iron Curtain</i> , pp. 86-109 (73 pages)	In-Class Analysis of the Nazi, Soviet and Czechoslovak political propaganda
Session 4 Wednesday, February 12	<b>Lecture: Western Theories of the Masses – Are They Applicable in the Context of Eastern European Communist Systems?</b>	No reading	
Session 5 Monday, February 17	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Western Theories of the Masses</b>	<b>Le Bon, Gustave.</b> "The Mind of Crowds – General Characteristics of Crowds," in <i>The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind</i> , pp. 1-9 <b>Ortega y Gasset, Jose.</b> "The Coming of the Masses" and "Why the Masses Intervene in Everything, and Why Their Intervention Is Solely by Violence," in <i>The Revolt of the Masses</i> , pp. 11-18 and 68-77 <b>Canetti, Elias.</b> "The Crowd (The Fear of Being Touched – The Attributes of the Crowd)," in <i>The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind</i> , pp. 15-30 (39 pages)	

Session 6 Wednesday, February 19	<b>Film analysis and discussion: Power and Control in a Totalitarian System</b>	Film: <b>The Lives of Others</b> (Das Leben Der Anderen)	In-Class Worksheet
Session 7 Monday, February 24	<b>Lecture: The Ideology of Collective Identity in Czechoslovakia</b>	No reading	The Lives of Others Worksheets due on NYU Classes
Session 8 Wednesday, February 26	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Public and Private Aspects of Imposed Collective Mentality in Czechoslovakia</b>	<b>Havel, Vaclav.</b> "Letter to Dr Gustav Husak, General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party," in <i>Living in Truth</i> , pp. 3-35. <b>Ash, Timothy Garton.</b> "Czechoslovakia Under Ice," in <i>The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe</i> , pp. 55-63. <b>Margolius Kovaly, Heda.</b> <i>Prague Farewell</i> , pp. 90-123. (73 pages)	
Session 9 Monday, March 2	<b>Field Trip: National Museum</b>	No reading	
Session 10 Wednesday, March 4	<b>Lecture: Official Mass Ceremonies and Performances</b>	No reading	
Session 11 Monday, March 9	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Participation in Organized Mass Events</b>	<b>Bakhtin, Mikhail.</b> "Introduction," in <i>Rabelais and His World</i> , pp. 1-36. <b>Scott, James C.</b> "The Public Transcript as a Respectable Performance," in <i>Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts</i> , pp. 45-69. <b>Bojar, Tomas, Jan Trestik, and Jakub Zelnicsek,</b> (eds.) "With Lenin Forever," in <i>Power of Images, Images of Power</i> , pp. 111-145. (93 pages)	
Session 12 Wednesday, March 11	<b>Lecture: Collectivization of Life in the Private Sphere. Spending Free Time with the Masses – Weekend Housing and Vacationing</b>	No reading	
Session 13 Monday, March 16	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Construction of the Socialist Home. Collective Vacationing</b>	<b>Drakulic Slavenka.</b> "On Doing Laundry," in <i>How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed</i> , pp. 43-54. <b>Crowley, David.</b> "Warsaw Interiors: The Public Life of Private Spaces,	

		1949-65,” in <i>Socialist Spaces</i> , pp. 181-206. <b>Margolius Kovaly, Heda.</b> <i>Prague Farewell</i> , pp. 63-80. <b>Bren, Paulina.</b> “The <i>Chata</i> , the <i>Tramp</i> and the Politics of Private Life in Post-1968 Czechoslovakia,” in <i>Socialist Spaces</i> , pp. 123-140. (70 pages)	
Session 14 Wednesday, March 18	<b>Field Trip: Import/Export: Rock’n’roll (Music in Normalization Czechoslovakia)</b>	No reading	
Session 15 Monday, March 23	<b>MIDTERM TEST</b>		
Session 16 Wednesday, March 25	<b>Film analysis and discussion: Domestic Space and Politics</b>	Film: <b>Pelisky</b> (Cosy Dens)	In-Class Worksheet
Session 17 Monday, March 30	<b>Lecture: Mass Gymnastics as a Collective Performance</b>	No reading	
Session 18 Wednesday, April 1	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Disciplined Communist Bodies</b>	<b>Foucault, Michel.</b> “Docile Bodies,” in <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i> , pp. 135-169. <b>Dano, Orsolya and Petr Roubal,</b> (eds.) <i>Bodies in Transformation. Mass Gymnastics under Communism</i> , pp. 1-22. (55 pages)	Start reading <i>The Wall</i> (Petr Sis) – copies in the library
Session 19 Monday, April 6	<b>Field Trip: Strahov Stadium</b>	No reading	
Session 20 Wednesday, April 8	<b>Lecture: Children as the Perfect Socialist Collective</b>	<b>Sis, Peter.</b> <i>The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain.</i> (48 pages)	
Spring Break April 11 - 19	<b>Spring Break</b>		
Session 21 Monday, April 20	<b>Lecture: Women and Men as Unanimous Collectives – Gender Aspects of Collective Identity</b>	No reading	

Session 22 Wednesday, April 22	<b>Text analysis and discussion: Ideology and Reality of Enforced Equality</b>	<p><b>Havelkova, Hana.</b> "Women in and after a 'Classless' Society," in <i>Women and Social Class – International Feminist Perspectives</i>, pp. 69-82.</p> <p><b>Marx Ferree, Myra.</b> "Patriarchies and Feminisms: The Two Women's Movements of Post-Unification Germany," in <i>Crossing Borders: Gender and Citizenship in Transition</i>, pp. 159-178.</p> <p><b>Thorne, Vanda.</b> "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Communist Sex," in <i>Transitions Online</i>. (December, 2018)</p> <p><u>Recommended:</u>  Einhorn, Barbara. "New for Old? Ideology, the Family and the Nation," in <i>Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe</i>, pp. 39-73  (36/66 pages)</p>	
Make-up Day Friday, April 24 (9am-5pm)	Make-up day for missed classes		
April 25–26	<b>Research Trip: Jachymov</b>		
Session 23 Monday, April 27	<b>Film analysis and discussion: N(Ost)algia for Communism?</b>	Film: <b>Goodbye Lenin</b>	In-Class Worksheet
Session 24 Wednesday, April 29	<b>Field Trip: National Memorial Vitkov</b>	No reading	
Session 25 Monday, May 4	<b>Lecture: N(Ost)algia for Communism? Text Analysis and Discussion: Nostalgia in Central European Context</b>	<p><b>Boym, Svetlana.</b> "Nostalgia and Post-Communist Memory," in <i>The Future of Nostalgia</i>, pp. 57-71.</p> <p><b>Thorne, Vanda.</b> "Czech Communist Nostalgia in an Immature Democracy," in <i>Transitions Online</i>. (Feb. 10, 2014)  <a href="http://www.tol.org/client/article/24154-czech-communist-nostalgia-in-an-immature-democracy.html">http://www.tol.org/client/article/24154-czech-communist-nostalgia-in-an-immature-democracy.html</a>  (15 pages)</p>	
Session 26 Wednesday, May 6	<b>Field Trip: Museum of Communism</b>	No reading	

Session 27 Monday, May 11	<b>Final Summary of the Course</b>	No reading	
Session 28 Wednesday, May 13 (last day of classes)	<b>Film Analysis: Contemporary Anti-Communist Satire (and the Communist Backlash to It)</b>	Film: <b>The Death of Stalin</b>	In-Class Worksheet, <b>WRITTEN ANALYSIS DUE</b>
Session 29 Monday, May 18	<b>FINAL TEST</b>		
Session 30 Wednesday, May 20	<b>Individual Reviews</b>		

## Course Materials

### Required Textbooks & Materials (in chronological order):

- Arendt, Hannah. *Totalitarianism* (Harcourt Brace & Company: 1968), 978-0156701532
- Clark, Toby. *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers: 1997), 978-0810927131
- Ellul, Jacques. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. (Vintage Books: 1973 [1965]), 978-0394718743
- Molloy, Peter. *The Lost World of Communism: An Oral History of Daily Life Behind the Iron Curtain*. (BBC Books: 2009), 978-1785940255
- Taylor, Richard. *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*. (I. B. Tauris Publishers: 1998), 978-1860641671
- Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. (The Viking Press: 1896/1960), 978-0486419565
- Ortega y Gasset, Jose. *The Revolt of the Masses*. (Norton: 1930/1993), 978-0393310955
- Canetti, Elias. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. (Dover Publications: 2002), 978-0486419565
- Havel, Vaclav. *Living in Truth*. (Faber and Faber: 1986), 978-0571144402
- Ash, Timothy Garton. *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*. (Penguin Books: 1999), 978-0140283921
- Margolius Kovaly, Heda. *Prague Farewell*. (Indigo: 1997), 978-0575400863
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. (Indiana University Press: 1984), 978-0253203410
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. (Yale University Press: 1990), 978-0300056693
- Bojar, Tomas, Jan Trestik, and Jakub Zelnicsek (eds). *Power of Images, Images of Power*. (Galerie u Krizovniku: 2005), 802-3943103
- Drakulic Slavenka. *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*. (Norton: 1991), 978-0393030761
- Crowley, David. *Socialist Spaces*. (Berg: 2002), 978-1859735381
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (Vintage Books: 1995), 978-0679752554
- Dano, Orsolya and Petr Roubal, (eds.) *Bodies in Transformation. Mass Gymnastics under Communism*. (Open Society Archives at Central European University: 2001), 963- 8523069
- Sis, Peter. *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (Frances Foster Books: 2007), 978-0374347017

- Zmroczek, Christine and Pat Mahony (eds.) *Women and Social Class – International Feminist Perspectives*. (Taylor and Francis/UCL: 1998), 978-1857289305
- Hobson, Barbara and Anne Marie Berggren (eds.) *Crossing Borders: Gender and Citizenship in Transition*. (Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination: 1997), 3840175
- Einhorn, Barbara. *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe*. (Verso: 1995), 978-0860916154
- Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. (Basic Books: 2001), 978-0465007080
- Thorne, Vanda. "Czech Communist Nostalgia in an Immature Democracy," in *Transitions Online*. (Feb. 10, 2014).
- Thorne, Vanda. "'Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Communist Sex,'" in *Transitions Online*. (December, 2018).

All required texts are included in the **Course Reader** (available in the library) or on **NYU Classes**. Please note that **some texts will be only available in an electronic format on NYU Classes**. Petr Sis's book *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* is available in the NYU Library.

## Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](https://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](https://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](https://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](https://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)
- **NYU Prague library:** [Tritius Catalog](https://nyu.tritius.cz/?lang=EN) (https://nyu.tritius.cz/?lang=EN)

## Course Policies

### Attendance and Tardiness

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 Academic 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 2% percent deduction from your final course grade for every week of classes missed.

**Please note that Friday, April 24 (9am – 5pm) is reserved as a make-up day for missed classes. Do not schedule any trips for this day.**

### Late Submission of Work

All assigned written work is to be submitted by the proper deadline. Any late submission will be penalized by deducting 5% from the assignment grade for each day of the delay. Written assignments will not be accepted for grading if delivered more than 10 days after the original deadline.

Students are permitted to reschedule their reading presentation once per semester without penalty. Any further rescheduling will result in a penalty of 5 points on the 100 point scale for each rescheduled reading.

### Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

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)**

## **Classroom Etiquette**

Eating is not permitted in the classroom. No cell phones and **no use of the Internet for other than educational purposes** in the classroom. **Tardiness of more than 20 minutes without a reasonable excuse will be regarded as an absence.**

**No use of electronic devices during the classroom discussions.** Please stay focused on our debates, not your screens – you will learn more and faster.

## **Disability Disclosure Statement**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.