

East Central Europe, 1944-2004



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This is a course on the postwar history of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland. Historically and culturally, these four countries all belong to “Central Europe,” but from the late 1940s to the early 1990s they were politically part of “the East.” What distinguishes this region, in other words, are its historical ties to the West on one hand, and its experience of Communism on the other. Since 1989 a generation has passed and the region has been fully re-integrated into the West. However, many of the region’s citizens claim that, in some ways at least, life was better under the old regime than it is today. This course is therefore structured around the central question of whether and to what extent such claims are valid. To answer this question, we will examine in depth both the Communist experience and the revolutionary transformation that followed it.

READING MATERIALS

The required textbooks are available from Paragraphe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College Ave.:

- Czesław Miłosz. *The Captive Mind*. New York: Vintage, 1990 [1951].
- Daphne Berdahl. *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Timothy Garton Ash. *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. New York: Vintage, 1999 [1990].

A textbook recommended for background reading (but not required for the course) is also available from Paragraphe:

- T. Iván Berend. *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

A coursepack containing required readings is available from the McGill Bookstore.

All these texts have been requested for 3-hour reserve in McLennan Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The breakdown of assignments and weights for overall mark determination are as follows:

Conference participation	15%
Pronunciation Quiz	5%
Midterm exam	15%
Research project <i>or</i> Critical reviews	30%
Final exam	35%

Conference participation: Conference sections of approximately 20 students each will be scheduled to facilitate discussion of weekly readings. Active participation will be expected, and unexcused non-attendance will have a negative impact on your participation grade. The conferences will be led, in turns, by both the instructor and the T.A.

Pronunciation quiz: This will be a short oral quiz to ensure that you are able to pronounce Czech, German, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovak names (and to help the instructor learn your names). The quiz will be administered individually in the instructor's office early in the semester in a five-minute time slot for which you will be asked to sign up in advance.

Midterm: The midterm exam will take place during regularly scheduled lecture time and test your understanding of material covered in the first half of the course.

Research project: This may be a standard research paper (10-12 pp.), or a more creative project (e.g. an exhibit or happening). To ensure that your project is viable, you are asked to submit a 1-paragraph proposal, with a preliminary bibliography, by Feb. 1. To ensure that your writing is on the right track, a thesis statement and outline (1 page total) should be submitted to the instructor by Mar. 15. The final project will be due by Apr. 5.

Critical reviews: Instead of a research project, you may elect to write two 5-6 pp. papers, each critically reviewing either one book or two films, with reference to relevant secondary literature. Lists of possible titles will be circulated, and papers will be due on Feb. 13 and Mar. 20. Each review will be worth 15% of your cumulative grade.

Final exam: The final examination will be take-home. It will include a component comparable to the midterm, testing your understanding of material covered in the second half of the course, as well as an essay component asking you to think critically about the whole semester.

N.B.: The use of mobile phones and laptop computers in class is prohibited (except when laptops are necessary to compensate for a documented disability). Use of these devices in the classroom can be disruptive, and psychological research has conclusively demonstrated that students learn better when they take notes by hand rather than on a keyboard.

COURSE SCHEDULE

★ = *primary source*

☆ = *quasi-primary source*

___ = *hyperlink for materials available online*

WEEK 1

- Wed, Jan. 4 Lecture: The Pre- and Post-History of Socialism in East Central Europe
Fri, Jan. 6 Lecture: The End of WWII and the Division of Europe

Required Reading

- ☆Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe” [11 pp.]
☆Miłosz, pp. vii-xiv, 3-81 [91 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 1-13

WEEK 2

- Mon, Jan. 9 Lecture: Postwar Expulsions and Resettlement
Wed, Jan. 11 Lecture: Communist Strategies for Taking Power (and Calling It *Revolution*)
Fri, Jan. 13 Lecture: Building Socialism in the City

Required Reading

- ★Eugen Varga, “Democracy of a New Type” (1947) [3 pp.]
[Eagle Glassheim, “Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia’s Borderlands, 1945-1989,” pp. 65-81 \[16 pp.\]](#)
[Mark Pittaway, “The Politics of Legitimacy and Hungary’s Postwar Transition” \[22 pp.\]](#)
[John Connelly, “Foundations for Reconstructing Elites: Communist Higher Education Policies in the Czech Lands, East Germany, and Poland, 1945-1948” \[26 pp.\]](#)
[Katherine Lebow, “Public Works, Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s” \[21 pp.\]](#)
☆Miłosz, pp. 82-134 [53 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 16-25, 39-55, 72-93

WEEK 3

- Mon, Jan. 16 Lecture: Building Socialism in the Country
Wed, Jan. 18 Lecture: “The International Situation is Intensifying”
Fri, Jan. 20 Lecture: Show Trials, Labour Camps, and the Question of Totalitarianism

Required Reading

- ★“The Trial of László Rajk” (1949) [3 pp.]
☆Anna Tučková, “Interview with Investigator XY” [6 pp.]
☆Tereza Torańska, *Them*, pp. 203-05, 233-36, 256-58, 271-77, 293-96, 330-34 [20 pp.]
☆Miłosz, pp. 135-251 [117 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 26-38, 55-72

WEEK 4

- Mon, Jan. 23 **Conference: What Legitimacy Did the New Communist Regimes Enjoy?**
Wed, Jan. 25 Lecture: 1953—A Funeral and Two Uprisings

Fri, Jan. 27 Lecture: The Polish October and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956

Required Reading

Gary Bruce, *Resistance with the People: Repression and Resistance in Eastern Germany, 1945-1955*, pp. 174-199 [26 pp.]

Lutz Niethammer, "Where Were *You* on 17 June? A Niche in Memory" [25 pp.]

Władysław Gomułka, speech to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 20 October 1956 [4 pp.]

Bill Lomax, "1956: The Forgotten Heroes" [11 pp.]

★ György Lukács, "Contemporary Problems of Marxist Philosophy" (June 1956) [6 pp.]

★ "The Students' Demands," 22 October 1956 [1 p.]

★ The slogans of the Petöfi Circle (23 October 1956) [1 p.]

★ Resolution of the Workers' Council of Miskolc and Borsod County, 25 October 1956 [1 p.]

★ Two appeals by the National Council of Trade Unions (27 October 1956) [1 p.]

★ Imre Nagy, radio address, 28 October 1956 [3 pp.]

★ "Appeal of the Revolutionary Committee of Hungarian Intellectuals to the Population of the Country" (28 October 1956) [3 pp.]

★ Resolution of the Parliament of Workers' Councils, 31 October 1956 [2 pp.]

★ Imre Nagy, radio address, 4 November 1956 [½ p.]

★ Antal Apró, János Kádár, István Kossa, & Ferenc Münnich, "Open Letter to the Hungarian Working Nation" (4 November 1956) [1 p.]

★ Appeal by the command of Soviet troops in Hungary to the Hungarian people and the officers and men of the Hungarian army, 5 November 1956 [1½ pp.]

★ "The Place of Hungarian Communists Is on the Barricades" (5 November 1956) [1 p.]

★ "Dunapentele Is under Arms" (7 November 1956) [½ p.]

★ "Demands of the Workers' Councils of the Eleventh District of Budapest" (12 November 1956) [2 pp.]

★ "Appeal of Újpest for a Central Workers' Council" (12 November 1956) [½ p.]

★ "The Workers' Councils in the Current Political Situation" (10 January 1957) [2 pp.]

[James Mark, "Society, Resistance and Revolution: The Budapest Middle Class and the Hungarian Communist State 1948-56"](#) [24 pp.]

☆ Sándor Szilágyi, "Sándor Rácz: The Workers' Councils Gave Their Stamp to the Entire Revolution" [31 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 94-126

WEEK 5

Mon, Jan. 30 **Conference: What Were the Aims of the Uprisings of 1953 and 1956?**

Wed, Feb. 1 Lecture: The Wall

Research project proposals due in class

Fri, Feb. 3 Lecture: Reform Communism and the Czechoslovak Spring

Required Reading

[Corey Ross, "East Germans and the Berlin Wall: Popular Opinion and Social Change before and after the Border Closure of August 1961"](#) [19 pp.]

★ The Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (April 1968, excerpts) [38 pp.]

★ Miroslav Jirásek, "Another Viewpoint" (April 1968) [3 pp.]

★ Zdeněk Mlynář, "Towards a Democratic Political Organization of Society" (May 1968) [8 pp.]

- ★ Alexander Dubček, speech to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, 29 May 1968 [3 pp.]
- ★ Ludvík Vaculík, “The Revival Process in Semily” (June 1968) [12 pp.]
- ★ Ludvík Vaculík, “Two Thousand Words” (June 1968) [8 pp.]
- ★ “Proclamation by the Central Committee Presidium,” 21 August 1968 [1 p.]
- ★ “Appeal by the Communist Party’s Central Committee to the Population” (23 August 1968) [4 pp.]
- Karel Kovanda, “Czechoslovak Workers’ Councils (1968-1969)” [19 pp.]
- ★ “The Ten Point Manifesto” (1969) [8 pp.]
- ★ “The Workers’ Proclamation” (1972) [4 pp.]
- ★ “Anna Šabatová’s Appeal” (1972) [6 pp.]
- ★ Ota Šik, *The Third Way*, introduction and conclusion (1972) [23 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 136-152

WEEK 6

- Mon, Feb. 6 **Conference: Was Communism Reformable?**
- Wed, Feb. 8 **Midterm**
- Fri, Feb. 10 Lecture: Normalization, Goulash Communism, and Ostpolitik

Required Reading

- László Kürti, “The Communist Youth League: Ideology, Culture and Alienation” [39 pp.]
- ★ Miklós Haraszti, *A Worker in a Worker’s State*, pp. 21-124 [104 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 155-169, 182-221

WEEK 7

- Mon, Feb. 13 Lecture: The Ideological Organization of Everyday Life
First critical review due in class
- Wed, Feb. 15 Lecture: Consumption and the Environment
- Fri, Feb. 17 Lecture: Propaganda, Censorship, and the Secret Police

Required Reading

- ★ Miklós Haraszti, *A Worker in a Worker’s State*, pp. 125-157 [33 pp.]
- Paulina Bren, “Self-Realization and the Socialist Way of Life” [23 pp.]
- [Jonathan R. Zatlín, “The Vehicle of Desire: The Trabant, the Wartburg, and the End of the GDR”](#) [23 pp.]
- [Eagle Glassheim, “Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia’s Borderlands, 1945-1989,”](#) pp. 81-92 [11 pp.]
- Berdahl, pp. 23-71 [43 pp.]
- ★ “The Trial of Miklós Haraszti” (1973) [17 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 169-173

WEEK 8

Mon, Feb. 20 **Conference: Should We Feel Nostalgic about Everyday Life under Communism?**

Wed, Feb. 22 Lecture: The Sociology of Really Existing Socialism

Fri, Feb. 24 Lecture: Varieties of Dissidence

Required Reading

★Jan Patočka, “What Charter 77 Is and What It Is Not” (1977) [3 pp.]

★KOR’s Appeal to Society (1978) [9 pp.]

★John Paul II, speech on Victory Square in Warsaw, 2 June 1979 [4 pp.]

★Adam Michnik, “A Lesson in Dignity” (1979) [9 pp.]

Those who have not read ★[Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,”](#) *should do so* [90 pp.]

Those who have read Havel’s essay should quickly review it, then read:

[Timothy Garton Ash, “Does Central Europe Exist?”](#) [31 pp.]

★[Adam Michnik, “A New Evolutionism”](#) (1976) [14 pp.] *on “MyCourses”*

★[Jan Patočka, excerpts from the *Heretical Essays*](#) (1975) [30 pp.] *on “MyCourses”*

Christian Joppke, “Why Was There No ‘Dissidence’ in East Germany?” [33 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 173-181, 238-253

WEEK 9

Mon, Mar. 6 **Conference: What was the Essence of “Dissident” Thought?**

Wed, Mar. 8 Lecture: Solidarity

Fri, Mar. 10 Lecture: Perestroika and Civil Society in the 1980s

Required Reading

Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity*, pp. 15-56 [41 pp.]

Shana Penn, “Women at the Gates” [37 pp.]

★The Gdańsk Agreement (August 1980) [10 pp.]

Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity*, pp. 99-114, 126-154 [44 pp.]

★The Solidarity Program (October 1981) [21 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 222-238, 254-264, 267-273

WEEK 10

Mon, Mar. 13 **Conference: How Should We Account for Solidarity?**

Wed, Mar. 15 Lecture: Round Tables in Poland and Hungary

Project thesis & outline due in class

Fri, Mar. 17 Lecture: Revolutions in East Germany and Czechoslovakia

Required Reading

★Ludvík Vaculík, “Glasnost” [5 pp.]

Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern* [146 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 265-266, 274-291

WEEK 11

Mon, Mar. 20 **Conference: What Was Revolutionary about 1989?**

Second critical review due in conference

Wed, Mar. 22 Lecture: To the East German Elections and the Czecho-Slovak Hyphen War

Fri, Mar. 24 Lecture: The Rediscovery of Democracy and German Unification

Required Reading

[Timothy Garton Ash, "Après le déluge, nous"](#) [18 pp.]

★Round Table draft of an East German Constitution (April 1990) [3 pp.]

[Tomek Grabowski, "The Party that Never Was: The Rise and Fall of the Solidarity Citizens' Committees in Poland"](#) [40 pp.]

★György Konrád, "What Is the Charter?" (1991) [7 pp.]

★The Democratic Charter (1991) [3 pp.]

★Iván Szelényi, "The Third Way" (1989) [4 pp.]

★Václav Klaus, "The Ten Commandments of Systemic Reform" (1993) [7 pp.]

★Václav Klaus, "The Czech Republic between Past and Future" (1995) [4 pp.]

[Alison Stenning, "Shaping the Economic Landscapes of Postsocialism? Labour, Workplace, and Community in Nowa Huta, Poland"](#) [17 pp.]

Berdahl, pp. 72-103 [32 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 303-340

WEEK 12

Mon, Mar. 27 Lecture: Shock Therapy and the End of Solidarity

Wed, Mar. 29 Lecture: Coupon Privatization and the End of Czechoslovakia

Fri, Mar. 31 Lecture: Reaction and Radicalism in the Politics of the 1990s

Required Reading

Berdahl, pp. 104-205 [102 pp.]

Gil Eyal, "The Making and Breaking of the Czechoslovak Political Field" [24 pp.]

Martin Myant, "Civil Society and Political Parties in the Czech Republic" [21 pp.]

Optional Reading

Berend, pp. 341-371

WEEK 13

Mon, Apr. 3 **Conference: What Determined the Path of Transformation after 1989?**

Wed, Apr. 5 Lecture: East Central Europe in the European Union

Research project due in class

Fri, Apr. 7 Lecture: Beyond the Happy Ending

Required Reading

Berdahl, pp. 206-233 [28 pp.]

Timothy Garton Ash, ["The Twins' New Poland"](#) [10 pp.]

István Deák, ["Hungary: The Threat"](#) [7 pp.]

James Krapfl, "The Discursive Constitution of Revolution and Revolution Envy" [12 pp.]

Additional short readings may be announced

Optional Reading
Berend, pp. 378-381

WEEK 14

Mon, Apr. 10 **Discussion: A Generation after 1989, What Do We Have to Celebrate?**

The final exam will be due on a date between Apr. 13 and 28, to be announced.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/> for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.