

Creative Writing Studio

ARTS 3007 (3 credits)

Czech Republic: Studio Arts (Creative Writing, Contemporary Dance, and Photography)

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Description

This studio is devoted creative writing practice and an introduction to contemporary Czech literature. Students take part in workshops based on prompts provided by the lecturer, and group critiques of their work. They also meet with Czech writers of fiction and poetry to discuss the writing process and ways in which their writing reflects topics such as Czech identity and history and current public debates around politics and social justice topics. Students keep a journal of field-observation exercises and select one work for revision and presentation at a closing literary evening that also includes a discussion of their processes, topics and inspiration from Czech authors.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the intensive course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an informed knowledge of the contemporary Czech literature
- Create and refine works of fiction or poetry and take part in a literary reading
- Analyze the ways in which select writers reflect and engage current Czech social and political debates

Instructional Methods

The teaching approach of the lecturer is to introduce students to various techniques for developing their own voice and deepening their knowledge of key components of creative writing such as persona narrator, tone and mood. Students will be encouraged to explore unique corners of the city individually and with the group to draw out themes, fresh approaches to observing their physical surroundings and integrating those observations into their creative process and writing. Students are required to keep journals of these explorations and observations of other aspects of everyday life and cultural events they attend. The experiential approach allows students to experiment and create in the context of a holistic and immersive, intensive learning experience requiring observation and reflection in the field, independent creative work, and presentation and analysis.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English

Required texts: This is a short and intensive writing workshop with readings list of contemporary authors they will meet provided in advance and available at the school. All students should read in advance:

- Hůlová, Petra (2009) Alex Zucker, trans. *All This Belongs to Me*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.
- Lappin, Elena. (1997) *Daylight in Nightclub Inferno: Czech Fiction from the Post-Kundera Generation*. North Haven, Connecticut: Catbird Press.

Students are encouraged to review the following websites in advance of arrival:

- The Czech Literary Center: <https://www.czechlit.cz/en/> including Czech Literature in English Translation: <https://www.czechlit.cz/en/feature/czech-literature-in-english-translation/>
- The Museum of Czech Literature: <http://www.en.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz/>

Required Technology: None

Assessment: The final grades are based upon Fieldwork Journal, Deepening and refining at least one work of fiction or poetry for reading at the literary evening, as well as and timeliness and active participation.

Course Schedule:

Module 1: Orientation & Introduction to contemporary Czech arts & culture (4 days) The orientation & introduction module is devoted to an overview of the contemporary Czech arts and culture today including the visual, literary and performing arts and the ways in which current public discourse in politics and social justice are mirrored and engaged through the arts. The module will include a visit to the Czech museum of literature and the introductory panel of writers with specialists such as translators or publishers will introduce contemporary Czech literature and related topics such as the challenges of translation and predominance of English, the meaning and place of internationally-known Czech authors such as Franz Kafka, the Nobel-Prize winner, Jaroslav Seifert, Bohumil Hrabal and Milan Kundera, and the ways in which the new generation of writers works with historical trauma of Central Europe and reflect national and regional identities.

Module 2: (12 days)

This module comprises daily writing assignments, journaling and observation exercises, six critiques as well as four personal meetings with Czech writers about their own methods, sources of inspiration, their perspectives on contemporary Czech and global issues and the role that writers play in engaging, mirroring or provoking public debate. The module will also include an excursion to a regional city such as Brno to visit regional writers and take part in an observation exercise dealing with national and regional identities and history.

Module 3: (2 days)

Students make a selection of the writing to edit, elaborate and refine for reading at a final literary event where they will also take part in an open critique and discussion about their writing process, their sources of inspiration in Prague.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments

Creative writing assignments (50%)

Six writing assignments based upon the prompts of the lecturer and requiring active observation of places, people, everyday life and cultural events outside the classroom and participation in spontaneous writing and other methods in the classroom.

Discussions with Czech authors (30%)

Reading the fiction or poetry of five select Czech authors and preparing a short question set in preparation for active discussions around formal aspects of the texts, approaches to creative writing and engagement in political or social issues.

Preparation and Participation in a Final Literary Reading (20%)

Elaboration and substantive refinement of one text for reading and discussion at a closing literary evening.

Assessment:

Writing Assignments	50%
Discussions with authors	30%
Literary Evening	20%

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64%	F

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared, on time, and appropriately dressed for your internship. Comply with organization rules.

- Have progress report assignments completed on schedule and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions when in the field/office. Engage yourself in everyday life of the organization and initiate interaction.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (those of your internship supervisor and colleagues, classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with onsite visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

