Kafka in Prague

Fall Semester 2019

Classroom: TBA

Time: Tuesday 13.00–16.00

Professor:

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Objectives:
This seminar will engage some major prose compositions by the important modernist Prague-born writer, Frank Kafka (1883–1924). We shall also engage some key works of criticism on Kafka by authors who are themselves thinker-writers of stature and interest; these will include Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, Stanley Corngold, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Michael Löwy, J. Hillis Miller, Paul North, David Foster Wallace, Benno Wagner and Slavoj Žižek. Furthermore, we shall also watch a 1962–film based on Kafka’s novel work, The Trial, by the American-born director Orson Welles (1915–85). We shall also visit the Franz Kafka Museum in Prague. The seminar aims to achieve a greater awareness of the possible roles of literature and of Kafka for the individual and social imaginary.

Requirements:
—Reading: there is not an over-abundance of matter to be read for the class; therefore, that which is assigned merits your vigilant attention

—Two essays a midterm of 2500 words and a final essay of 3000 words; topics will be given two weeks in advance, but you can also make your own creative choice of topic area that must have the professor’s approval in advance; regrettably, late papers will not be accepted.

—Attendance at the weekly sessions to discuss the guided readings and single screening (one absence allowed, beyond that your grade will be lowered a full letter grade for each additional excused or unexcused absence). Your mental participation and over-all effect on the quality of the class inform this grade as much as how much you contribute to seminar discussions; arriving more than ten minutes late for class or leaving for more than ten minutes for any part of the class session will result in an absence for that day. There will be two ten minute breaks during each week’s session.

—Oral presentations by the students in the class, which may be seen as work in progress toward one of the two writing assignments
Grading Policy:
Participation/attendance in the class sessions: 30%
Midterm essay: 25%
Final essay: 35%
In-class presentation: 10%

Academic Integrity Policy: plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated

UPCES Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy
The UPCES program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristic, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

UPCES Diversity Policy
UPCES fully embraces diversity and strives to create a safe and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds. Prague is a wonderfully diverse community and UPCES is no different. All students should feel at home while studying abroad and UPCES will do its utmost to make sure that becomes a reality. Although unique challenges may arise, we believe that students from all walks of life will encounter wonderful opportunities for enrichment as they explore a new culture while studying abroad.

Texts either in a hard copy or in the online version of the course reader or: available in the CERGE EI library to borrow or will be discussed by the professor:


_____. *The Complete Stories*. Target stories on syllabus required

_____. *The Castle*. Required

_____. *The Trial*. Required


Paul North, *The Yield: Kafka’s Atheological Reformation* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2015). Selections to be discussed in class by instructor

Erik S. Roraback, work in progress to be discussed in class by the author and teacher-scholar


Slavoj Žižek, Selected passages from across his corpus of texts that briefly yet intelligently broach the work of Franz Kafka. E.g. *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006). To be discussed in class by the teacher-scholar
Weekly Schedule

Week 1:
Orientation, etc.

Week 2:
Introductions I

Week 3:
Introductions II

The World of Judgment I
Read first half of The Trial

Week 4:
The World of Judgment II
Read second half of The Trial
--Gilles Deleuze, “To Have Done with Judgement”, Essays Critical and Clinical, pp. 126–35

Week 5:
Kafka on Film
Watch 1962 film of The Trial (dir. Orson Welles, 123 minutes)
—Jeffrey Adams, “Orson Welles’s The Trial: Film Noir and the Kafkaesque” pp. 140–57
—Deleuze and Guattari, pp. ix–xxi, xxii–xxix, 3–42 + notes 91–96 from Toward a Minor Literature

Week 6:
Post-film discussion on The Trial
Kafka & After; or, Leading-Edge Kafka Criticism
—Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 43–88 + notes and index 96–104 from Toward a Minor Literature

Week 7: Mid Term Essay Due
A visit to the Franz Kafka Museum

Week 8:
The Kafka Short Story I
Read “In the Penal Colony”, “A Hunger Artist” from The Complete Stories
—Stanley Corngold, Chapter Four “Allotria and Excretia in ‘In the Penal Colony’” pp. 67–93, 223–26 from Lambent Traces: Franz Kafka

Week 9:
The Kafka Short Story II
Read “The Metamorphosis”, “The Judgment” from The Complete Stories
—Optional reading only Maurice Blanchot, pp. 240–88, 305–09 “Kafka and Brod”, “The Last Word”, “The Very Last Word” from Friendship
—Stanley Corngold and Benno Wagner, Chapter 7 “Kafka and Sex” pp. 133–49, 246–47 from Franz Kafka: The Ghosts in the Machine
*Also you may consult Stanley Corngold, trans. and ed. “The Metamorphosis” by Franz Kafka (New York: Modern Library, 2013) two copies to be found for consultation with one on reserve in the CERGE-EI library

**Week 10:**
The Kafka Short Story III
Read “Josephine the Singer”, “The Burrow” from *The Complete Stories*
—Georges Bataille, pp. 151–69 “Kafka” from *Literature and Evil*

**Week 11:**
Kafka’s *Magnum Opus I*
Read *The Castle* first half
—Theodor W. Adorno, pp. 245–71 “Notes on Kafka” from *Prisms*

**Week 12:**
Kafka’s *Magnum Opus II*
Read *The Castle* second half
—optional reading Walter Benjamin, pp. 108–35 “Franz Kafka on the Tenth Anniversary of His Death” + pp. 136–43 “Max Brod’s Book on Kafka And Some Of My Own Reflections” from *Illuminations*
—Erik S. Roraback, work in progress to be discussed by the author and teacher-scholar
Conclusions

**Week 13: Finals Week**
*Final Essay Due*, which takes the place of the Final Exam