

Czechoslovak and Czech Foreign Policy

Syllabus

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(M.A. course; full-time studies; seminar)

I. Course purpose and characteristics

This course will deal with Czechoslovak and – to a much larger extent – Czech foreign policy. As a selective course at master's level it will pay increased attention to **conceptualizing problems and embedding findings in theoretical frameworks**. That, however, will proceed on the basis of facts, observation of real policies and, insofar as feasible, first-hand accounts of foreign policy professionals. Although the lack of relevant academic literature in English prevents from obtaining a comprehensive narrative about Czech(oslovak) foreign policy, this can be overcome by using sets of sources dedicated to the individual fields of interest, including documents, speeches, articles, media reports etc. The goal of this course is to provide students with below-the-surface knowledge of interests, motives and considerations shaping policies of the Czech(oslovak) Republic, and to arrive at an understanding of the complex nature of a state's foreign policy, in dependence on specific conditions (such as history, location, political environment, or public opinion). In addition, the course sets out an ambition to collect research outcomes of students' individual work, creating a unique body of expertise that can be further utilized.

The course will have four parts, each covering three weeks. After an introduction, part A will briefly look into the history of Czech(oslovak) foreign policy since Czechoslovakia's inception. The remaining three parts will deal with contemporary issues, starting with Part B focusing on relations with the 'big dogs' of international politics (EU, USA and Russia). Part C will then examine the local (or, perhaps, sub-regional) context of Central and Eastern Europe. Finally, Part D will delve into questions over values and principles influencing foreign policy. Each weekly class will deal with a set of problems—**see the detailed schedule below**—where class topics readily suggest conceptual ideas as initial impetuses. Autonomous work of students (produced in consultation with the lecturer) will be presented in class to provoke a discussion leading to conclusions over a conceptual understanding of the given area.

The lecturer will make all efforts to bring foreign policy professionals from relevant institutions to some of the classes. That should give the students an opportunity to acquire unmediated information 'from the field' and get involved in discussion. The lecturer himself is employed at an analytical unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

II. Requirements and assessment

Students are expected to actively participate in classes and engage in discussions on the basis of presentations given as well as assigned readings. For their presentation everyone will choose a topic pertaining to one of twelve areas corresponding to the 12 course weeks and will give a 20-minute in-class presentation about their topic in the respective week. They

will also choose a topic for their final essay. It is highly recommended and in students' own interest that both topics—presentation and essay—are identical. Students are supposed to start preparing their essays as soon as possible. As part of this process they will deliver a 500-word outline of their essay by the end of the tenth week for consultation with the lecturer. The final essay constitutes the decisive piece of work in this course and must be written with emphasis on precise analysis, clear argumentation and original interpretation (closer information in the introductory class). It will have to be delivered by the end of the second week of the examination period.

The final mark will accrue from this scheme:

1. Active participation in classes – 20%
2. Presentation about chosen topic – 20%
3. Essay outline (500 words by the 10th week) – 5%
4. Final essay (3500 words with 10% tolerance by the 15th week) – 55%

III. Course policies

Throughout the course, vivid discussions and contributions from students are essential and will always be welcome. Participation in each class is not required, but more than 3 absences will negatively impact the participation mark. So will passive (i.e. unengaged) participation. While a change of essay topic is permissible in a justified case during the course, presentation topics and schedule must remain fixed. Failure to give presentation according to schedule or belated delivery of the outline or the final essay will impair the respective marks (3% a day).

IV. Course structure

Week 1: Introduction

Part A: **History of Czech(oslovak) foreign policy in brief – from independence till today**

- Week 2: The restless Masaryk/Beneš era (1918-1948)
- Week 3: In prescribed tracks under the 'Soviet Yoke' (1948-1989)
- Week 4: Post-communist reversals (1989 onwards)

Part B: **Big players in the game – Europe, America and Russia**

- Week 5: 'Back into Europe' – Enthusiasm and Ambivalence
(*relations with the EU before and after accession*)
- Week 6: Looking for post-Cold War safeguards
(*Transatlantism, NATO membership, relations with USA*)
- Week 7: Mistrust and fear in face of former hegemon
(*perception of and relations with Russia*)

Part C: **Seeking anchors in Central and Eastern Europe**

- Week 8: Neighborly relations – decline of bilateralism, petty issues
(*relations with Germany, Poland, Austria, Slovakia*)
- Week 9: Sub-regional initiatives – wishful thinking with little substance
(*Visegrad, Central European Initiative, CEFTA*)
- Week 10: Stretching the EU to South and East – morale and pragmatism combined
(*support for 'European perspective' for Western Balkans, the 'Eastern Partnership'*)

Part D: **Principles and values**

- Week 11: Democracy promotion as dissident heritage
(*policies toward Cuba, Belarus, Burma, China etc*)

- Week 12: Balanced policies but biased thinking? – The Middle East conflict (*relations with Israel, Palestine, Arab countries*)
- Week 13: Commitments to missions abroad - loyalty and responsibility in play? (*missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, former Yugoslavia*)

V. Course materials

To prepare for each class, students will be required to read pieces of academic and/or non-academic text (such as speeches, media reports etc) and make themselves acquainted with relevant documents and resources. Most pieces are downloadable or accessible online. Those that aren't will—as far as possible—be comprised in easy-to-use readers (study packs) or put online on the university's website. The following lists are by no means complete or comprehensive, but they rather provide some starting-point information.

A. Documents

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic for the 2003 - 2006 period*. Praha 2003.
http://www.mzv.cz/public/32/2a/ac/14172_14945_ForeignPolicyII.doc
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Security Strategy of the Czech Republic*. Praha 2004.
<http://www.mzv.eu/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?id=24118&ido=7567&idj=2&amb=1>
- Office of the Government. *Work Programme and Priorities of the Czech EU Presidency*.
<http://www.eu2009.cz/scripts/file.php?id=6226&down=yes>

B. Regular reports

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Report on the foreign policy of the Czech Republic*. Praha. [2001-2008] <http://www.mzv.eu/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?ido=233&idj=1&amb=1&trid=1>
- Association for International Affairs. *Agenda for the Czech Foreign Policy 2008*. Praha 2008. http://www.amo.cz/download.php?group=produkty1_soubory&id=124
- Association for International Affairs. *Agenda for the Czech Foreign Policy 2007*. Praha 2007. http://www.amo.cz/download.php?group=produkty1_soubory&id=144

C. Literature

- Association for International Affairs. *Czech Foreign Policy and Elections 2006*. Praha 2006.
- Beneš, Edvard. *Five Years of Czechoslovak Foreign Policy: Speech in Committee of Parliament February 6, 1924*. Praha: Orbis, 1924.
- Cordell, Karl: *Germany's Foreign Policy Towards Poland and the Czech Republic*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- *Germany and Czechoslovakia: By an Active and Responsible Czechoslovak Statesman - Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia in its Relations to Germany*. Prague: Orbis, 1937.
- Institute of International Relations. *The Conceptual basis of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic*. Praha 1998

- Institute of International Relations. *Czech Foreign Policy in 2007: IIR Analysis*. Praha 2008.
- Institute of International Relations. *Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic 1993 – 2004: Successes, Issues, and Perspectives*. Praha 2004.
- Klein, Radoslav and Jiří Opršal. *Czechoslovak Foreign Policy in the Eighties*. Praha: Orbis, 1988.
- Klimek, Antonín. *Diplomacy at the crossroads of Europe: Czechoslovak foreign policy 1918-1938*. Praha: Orbis, 1989.
- Masaryk, Jan. *Statement on the Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia - made before the Constituent National Assembly on March 20th, 1947*. Praha: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1947.
- Simon, Jeffrey. *NATO and the Czech and Slovak Republic: A Comparative Study in Civil-Military Relations*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004.
- Stejskal, Antonín et al. (eds.). *European Security and Czechoslovak Foreign Policy*. Praha: Orbis, 1975.
- Štefaňák Michal. *Czechoslovak Foreign Policy*. Praha: Orbis, 1985.
- Štěpanovský, Jiří. *Czecho-Slovak Foreign Policy* Praha: Institute of International Relations, 1990.

D. Online resources:

- Association for International Affairs. *Publications*.
<http://www.amo.cz/publications.htm?lang=en>
- EU2009.cz – Portal of the Czech EU Presidency.
<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/default.htm>
- Institute of International Relations. *Books and Documents*.
<http://www.iir.cz/books.asp?idi=29>
- Institute of International Relations. *Other publications*.
<http://www.iir.cz/display.asp?ida=115&idi=8>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Foreign Relations*.
<http://www.mzv.eu/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?ido=7567&idj=2&amb=100>

E. Readings and resources by week:

Will be specified at the beginning of the course.

F. Additional recommended resources (in Czech):

- <http://www.snaidauf.info/public/mup/CzechForeignPolicy-AdditionalSources.txt>