

COURSE DETAIL

HUMOR AND CZECH CULTURE

Country

Czech Republic

Host Institution

Charles University

Program(s)

Central European Studies

UCEAP Course Level

Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)

Slavic Studies Anthropology

UCEAP Course Number

154

UCEAP Course Suffix**UCEAP Official Title**

HUMOR AND CZECH CULTURE

UCEAP Transcript Title

HUMOR&CZECH CULTURE

UCEAP Quarter Units

4.50

UCEAP Semester Units

3.00

Course Description

This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon of humor, combining literary studies, culture studies, rhetoric, philosophy, ethics, psychology, and political theory. The course presents a historical introduction, comparing examples of humor and comedy from different parts of the world and different eras, focusing on the political power of laughter and comedy. Key concepts like satire, irony, parody, black humor, wit, resistance, subversion, absurd humor etc. are clarified and major philosophical theories of humor are discussed. The main focus of the course is Czech culture and the many ways humor is present in it. Was communism a “regime that was laughed out of existence”? Why did Czechoslovak citizens find absurd humour so relatable? Is there “nothing sacred” for Czechs? Apart from literary masterpieces by Hašek, Kafka, Havel, Kundera and others, the course takes a look at comedy in theater (Jára Cimrman Theatre), film (Czechoslovak New Wave) and other forms of art. The readings always include an excerpt from a humorous text and a short theoretical text pertaining to the type of humor or the problem presented. From the divine to the obscene, from the hyper-intellectual to the nonsensical, from practical jokes to political satire, the rich palette of humor provides a unique view of Czech culture.

Language(s) of Instruction

English

Host Institution Course Number

DE CUFA-ART 312

Host Institution Course Title

HUMOUR AND CZECH CULTURE

Host Institution Course Details

<https://eces.ff.cuni.cz/courses-2/detail/?id=988>

Host Institution Campus

Charles University

Host Institution Faculty

Arts

Host Institution Degree**Host Institution Department**

East and Central European Studies

Course Last Reviewed

2025-2026

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