COURSE DETAIL

THE RISE AND FALL OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN TOTALITARIANISM
Country Czech Republic
Host Institution CIEE, Prague
Program(s) Central European Studies
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Political Science
UCEAP Course Number 103
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title THE RISE AND FALL OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN TOTALITARIANISM
UCEAP Transcript Title TOTALITARIANISM
UCEAP Quarter Units 4.50
UCEAP Semester Units 3.00

Course Description

Liberal democracy seems to be the obvious winner of the ideological struggle of the twentieth century. It is therefore hard to understand why the two main alternatives to liberal democracy – Nazism and Communism –exercised such a power over the lives and minds of people of Central Europe throughout the larger part of the twentieth century. This interdisciplinary course examines this conundrum through systematic study of totalitarian practices. Following a basic theoretical outline and criticism of the term “totalitarianism”, the course analyses the ideologies of the “Totalitarian Twins”, Communism and Nazism, which both grew from a perceived crisis of liberal democracy. The main focus of the course is on the methods the two regimes used to rule over their citizens, going beyond the obvious themes of fear and terror and looking at the role of economic policy, propaganda, leader’s cult, and media and art in securing the conformity of the citizens. By studying these methods, the course touches upon the challenges liberal democracy faces in the current political situation. The course also includes the often overlooked issue of environmental destruction especially under communism, and the consequent rise of the environmental consciousness and movements, which contributed significantly to the eventual fall of communism. The course presents a "Prague perspective," examining the experience of the Czechs in the twentieth century as an example of a nation dealing with the two dictatorships. Although the Nazi and Communist dictatorships are over, their residues remain in the collective memory, which influences everyday life. As mentality can only be explained against the historical backdrop, students undertake a journey into the minds of people who lived in these two destructive dictatorships and try to understand them.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
POLI 3003 PRAG

Host Institution Course Title

THE RISE AND FALL OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN TOTALITARIANISM

Host Institution Course Details

Host Institution Campus
CIEE Prague

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department
Social Sciences

Course Last Reviewed
2024-2025

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