

Transitions to Democracy: The Czech Experience
POL 1001 and POL 3001



Summer 2023	Dr. Lindsey Lupo and Dr. Lenka Vystrcilova
Course runs: May 24-June 15, 2023 (Arrive May 22 / Depart June 16)	Email: lindseylupo@pointloma.edu and lvystrcilova@ceacapa.com
Course Location: CEA CAPA Study Center in Prague	Course website: https://canvas.pointloma.edu/

PLNU Mission:

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description:

This course analyzes the democratization process and explores all its phases, from the initial cracks in the authoritarian regime to consolidation to issues of transitional justice to the potential of move back to authoritarianism. A transition to democracy can be long and full of challenges and may not be a linear process - this course will deconstruct the process and will have us asking questions about favorable conditions for democracy, different paths toward democracy (and potential detours), and the ways in which democracy is never fully consolidated and “safe.” Toward the end of the course, we will study the “fourth wave” of democratization (1989-1991) and the current reverse wave of democratization (2014-present). The setting of Prague, Czech Republic will allow us to study in-depth one of these “fourth wave” democracies. We will explore the inception of Czech democracy, the country’s totalitarian experiences, liberalization, democratic transition and consolidation as well as its more recent democratic backsliding. The discussion of the Czech case will be rooted in foundational readings on democracy and democratization.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Differentiate between the concepts of “liberalization,” “democratic transition,” “democratic consolidation,” and “democratic decline/backsliding.”
- Analyze the constitutive and causal factors for democratization and democratic declines in different contexts.
- Bring together the theories of transition, consolidation, regression or breakdown of democracy with empirical observations from different cases (in particular, the Czech Republic).
- Develop and defend original arguments in the study of democratization in class discussions and research papers.

Course Readings:

1. Agnew, Hugh. 2004. *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.
2. Dahl, Robert. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press
3. Sorensen, Georg. 2008 (third edition). *Democracy and Democratization: Processes and Prospects in a Changing World*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
4. Various digital articles and chapters on Canvas (full citations appear below).

Course Format:

This course will meet Monday-Thursday from 9:30am-12:30pm between May 24 and June 15. “Class time” will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and group work in the CEA CAPA Study Center, and will also include activities and excursions throughout Prague and the surrounding area.

Assessment Requirements and Grading:Short Papers –

You will have two (students enrolled in POL 1001) or three (students enrolled in POL 3001) short papers (2-4 pages, double-spaced) due throughout the course. These papers will answer a question that we will pose based on that week’s topic. We will post this question on Canvas at least five days before they are due (see exact due dates below under “schedule”). For the grading rubric, please see the assignment on Canvas.

Journal Entries –

Each student will be provided with a paper travel journal before we leave for Prague. We encourage you to use this journal to write and/or draw your thoughts and emotions as you embark on this journey. What you put in this journal is private and is for your eyes only (unless you choose to share with others), but there are four journal entries that we will be reviewing. In other words, these four journal entries will be graded but everything else in the journal is private. For these four journal entries, we will be providing a prompt and a grading rubric. You should then respond to the prompt in your journal with a handwritten entry, take a picture of your journaled response, and upload it to Canvas.

Midterm Exam –

The midterm exam will consist of five short answer questions, of which you will answer three. The exam will be handwritten during class time and will be based on the course readings, lectures, discussions, and activities.

Final Exam –

The exam will be in essay format, and it will be cumulative. You will be presented with three essay prompts, of which you will answer two. The exam will be handwritten during class time and will be based on course readings, lectures, discussions, and activities. A study guide will be distributed to assist you in your studies.

Participation –

You will be assessed on your participation. This assessment will include, but not be limited to, your contributions to whole class and small group discussions, arriving on time and prepared, and generally having a participatory and positive attitude regarding elements of the course.

POL 1001 (Lower Division)	POL 3001 (Upper Division)
Short papers (2 total) – 50 points (25 points each)	Short papers (3 total) – 75 points (25 points each)
Journal Entries (4 total) – 40 points (10 points each)	Journal Entries (4 total) – 40 points (10 points each)
Midterm exam – 60 points	Midterm exam – 60 points
Final exam – 100 points	Final exam – 100 points
Participation – 40 points	Participation – 40 points
TOTAL – 290 points	TOTAL – 315 points

Schedule – Please complete the reading assignment before we meet for that day’s class session.

Date	Classroom Topics and Excursions	Reading and Assignments
	Part I: Foundations of Democratic Theory	
	<i>Week 1</i>	
Sunday, May 21 (or earlier)	Depart for Prague, Czech Republic	All students: Read Dahl, chapters 1, 4, and 5
Monday, May 22	Arrive in Prague – Get settled!	All students: No reading – explore and settle in!
Tuesday, May 23	CEA CAPA Orientation, Welcome Lunch, and Prague City Tour	All students: Read Sorensen, chapter 1; Explore the entry for Czechia on the CIA World Factbook website
Wednesday, May 24	Classroom Meeting – Democracy: What and Why? (Dr. Lupo)	All students: Read Dahl, chapters 6-8
Thursday, May 25	Classroom Meeting <u>from 4:00-5:30pm</u> – Bohemia under the Habsburgs (Guest lecture with Dr. Gaelle Vassogne)	All students: Read Linz and Stepan, chapter 1 and pages 316-333

Friday, May 26	Activity from 9:30am-1:00pm – Prague Castle Guided Tour	All students: Read Sorensen, chapter 2; Read the Burns piece POL 3001 students only: Read Linz and Stepan, pages 38-54 All students: Journal entry #1 due at 11:59pm local time
Saturday, May 27	<i>See CEA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: No reading – explore! (Or catch up on reading and work on your short paper #1 ☺)
Sunday, May 28	<i>See CEA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: Short paper #1 due at 11:59pm local time
	Part II: Transitioning to Democracy	
	Week 2	
Monday, May 29	Classroom Meeting – Top-Down versus Bottom-Up Transitions; Transition of Elites and Institutions (Dr. Lupo)	All students: Read O’Donnell & Schmitter, pages 6-14 and 37-47; Read Dahl, pages 119-141
Tuesday, May 30	Classroom Meeting – Conceptions of Consolidation; Elections, Constitutions, and Institutions (Dr. Lupo)	All students: Read the Schedler article; Read the Haggard and Kaufman article; Read the McFaul article POL 3001 students only: Read Sorensen, chapter 3
Wednesday, May 31	Classroom Meeting – Justice: Truth Commissions and Reconciliation (Dr. Lupo)	All students: Read Hayner, pages 1-49; Read the Rohac article
Thursday, June 1	Excursion from 9:00am-6:00pm– Terezin and Lidice	All students: Read Sorensen, chapter 5
Friday, June 2	<i>See CEA CAPA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: No reading - explore! (But work on your short paper #2 if you are a POL 3001 student ☺)
Saturday, June 3	<i>See CEA CAPA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: No reading – explore! (Or catch up on reading ☺) POL 3001 students only: Short paper #2 due at 11:59pm local time
Sunday, June 4	<i>See CEA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: Journal entry #2 due at 11:59pm local time

	Part III: Democratization in the Czech Republic	
	<i>Week 3</i>	
Monday, June 5	Classroom Meeting (Part I) – Midterm Exam Classroom Meeting (Part II) – First Czechoslovak State: Political Agents, Institutions & Principles (Dr. Vystrčilová)	All students: Read Agnew, chapter 11 (Note: this reading will <i>not</i> be a part of the midterm exam – it is the foundational reading for Part II of today’s class session)
Tuesday, June 6	Classroom Meeting – Totalitarian Legacies of Fascism & Communism, Liberalization & Prague Spring (1948-1968) (Dr. Vystrčilová) Activity <u>from 1:30-3:00</u> : Nuclear Bomb Shelter Tour	All students: Read Agnew, chapters 12 and 13
Wednesday, June 7	Classroom Meeting – Dissent, Normalization, Velvet Revolution & Velvet Divorce (Dr. Vystrčilová) Activity <u>from 1:30-3:30pm</u> : Museum of Communism	All students; Read Agnew, chapters 14 and 15 All students: Consider watching the movie “Kolya” (nothing due – just a suggestion!)
Thursday, June 8	Excursion from 9:00-6:00: Jachymov	All students: Read the Havel article
Friday, June 9	<i>See CEA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: Read the Schultheis article
Saturday, June 10	<i>See CEA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: Journal entry #3 due at 11:59pm local time
Sunday, June 11	<i>See CEA list of suggested activities</i>	All students: No reading
	<i>Week 4</i>	
Monday, June 12	From Velvet Revolution to EU Membership (1989-2004) (Dr. Vystrčilová) Classroom Meeting from 1:00-2:30 – Minorities and Minority Protection in the Czech Republic (Guest Lecture with Dr. Salim Murad)	All students: Read Agnew, chapter 16, Read the Pehe article POL 3001 students only: Read the Way and Levitsky article
	Part IV: The Future of Democracy	
Tuesday, June 13	Classroom Meeting – The Global Decline of Democracy? (Part I) (Dr. Vystrčilová and Dr. Lupo)	All students: Read the Bustikova & Guasti article; Read the Jureckova article POL 1001 students only: Short paper #2 due at 11:59pm local time POL 3001 students only: Short paper #3 due at 11:59pm local time

Wednesday, June 14	Classroom Meeting – The Global Decline of Democracy? (Part II) (Dr. Vystrčilová and Dr. Lupo) Excursion from 12:30-3:00pm: Post-Bellum Non-Profit Organization	All students: Read the Foa and Mounk article (“The Signs of Deconsolidation”); Read the Norris article; Read the Alexander and Welzel article; Read the Freedom House 2023 Report POL 3001 students only: Read the Foa and Mounk article (“The Democratic Disconnect”) All students: Journal entry #4 due at 11:59pm local time
Thursday, June 15	Classroom Meeting – Final Exam (Dr. Vystrčilová and Dr. Lupo) Farewell Lunch at 1:00pm	All students: No reading – study! 😊
Friday, June 16	Students depart Prague - Na shledanou!	

Full Citations for Assigned Readings

Alexander, Amy C. and Christian Welzel. 2017. “The Myth of Deconsolidation: Rising Liberalism and the Populist Reaction.” *Journal of Democracy* (Online only), April 28, 2017.

Bustikova, Lenka and Petra Guasti. 2017. “The Illiberal Turn of Swerve in Central Europe?” *Politics and Governance* 5(4):166-176.

Burns, Tracey A. “Life During the Communist Era in Czechoslovakia.” Private Prague Guide. Available at: <https://www.private-prague-guide.com/article/life-during-the-communist-era-in-czechoslovakia/>

Foa, Roberto Stefan and Yascha Mounk. 2016. “The Democratic Disconnect.” *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): 5-17.

Foa, Roberto Stefan and Yascha Mounk. 2017. “The Signs of Deconsolidation.” *Journal of Democracy* 28(1): 5-15.

Haggard, Stephen and Robert Kaufman. 2021. “Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 32(4): 27-41.

Havel, Václav. 1978. “The Power of the Powerless.” Vintage Books, 2018, pp. 176.

Hayner, Priscilla B. 2001. *Unspeakable truths: Confronting state terror and atrocity*. New York: Routledge.

Jureckova, Adela. October 18, 2021. “The End of the Babis Era? The Czech Republic Between the Past and the Future.” Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation. Available at: <https://eu.boell.org/en/2021/10/19/end-babis-era-czech-republic-between-past-and-future>.

Lazarová, Daniela. February 24, 2022. "Sharp Rise in Pro-Russian Disinformation Campaigns on Czech Social Media." *Radio Prague International*. Available at <https://english.radio.cz/sharp-rise-pro-russian-disinformation-campaigns-czech-social-media-8742912>.

Linz, Juan and Alfred Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

McFaul, Michael. 2021. "Russia's Road to Autocracy." *Journal of Democracy* 32(4): 11-26.

Norris, Pippa. 2017. "Is Western Democracy Backsliding? Diagnosing the Risks." *Journal of Democracy* (Online only), April 28, 2017.

O'Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Pehe, Jiri. 2014. Judging Prague's democratic difficulties: The quality of Czech democracy. *Index on Censorship*, 43(2), 28–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306422014538156>

Rohac, Dalibor. 2021. "Transitions, Populism, and Democratic Decline: Evidence from Hungary and the Czech Republic." *European Politics and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2021.1973213>.

Schedler, Andreas. 1998. "What is Democratic Consolidation?" *Journal of Democracy* 9(2): 91-114.

Schultheis, Emily. October 21, 2017. "The Czech Republic's Fake News Problem." *The Atlantic*. Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/fake-news-in-the-czech-republic/543591/>.

Way, Lucan A. and Steven Levitsky. 2007. "Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide." *East European Politics and Societies* 21(1): 48-66.

Movies suggestions from the CEA CAPA Prague staff (all are available to borrow from CEA CAPA):

- Kolya (1996 Oscars; Best Foreign Film)
- Horici Ker (Burning Bush)
- Pelisky (Cozy Dens)
- Lidice

Additional Suggested Activities:

Historical Sites

- Prague Castle
- Strahov Monastery
- Strahov Library
- Charles Bridge & Town
- Clementinum (baroque library or classical music concerts)
- Old Town Square/Old Town Hall/Astronomical Clock
- Josefov (Jewish Quarter)
- Municipal House
- Wenceslas' Square
- Petřín Tower
- Vyšehrad fortress

- Vítkov hill
- Mala strana (Lennon's wall, Kampa, St. Nicholas Church, etc.)
- Dancing House

Museums, Galleries, Theaters

- National Museum
- National Technical Museum
- National Gallery
- National Theater
- State Opera
- Museum of Communism
- Alfons Mucha Museum
- Franz Kafka Museum
- DOX Centre for Contemporary Art
- Museum Kampa
- David Černý public statues and art work (more at <https://news.expats.cz/art/david-cerny-art-in-public-spaces/>)
- Rudolfinum
- Laterna Magika

Exhibitions

- Crossroads of Czech and Czechoslovak Statehood / Laboratory of Power. National Museum – National Memorial on Vítkov Hill

Talks and Events

- Václav Havel Library (Knihovna Vaclava Havla) – program can be found: <https://www.vaclavhavel.cz/en/>

Parks & Outdoors

- Kampa park
- Petrin park
- Botanical Garden
- Prague Zoo
- Náplavka
- Letná park
- Stromovka park
- St Wenceslas Vineyard
- Wallenstein Garden
- Riegrovy Sady

Cinemas

- Svetozor Cinema
- Bio Oko
- Kino Aero
- Kino Lucerna
- Žluté Lázně – open-air cinema

Farmers' Markets

All Saturdays 8AM - 1PM

- Jiřího z Poděbrad (Prague 2)
- Dejvická/kulaťák (Prague 6)
- Náplavka (Prague 1)

Further recommendations and information in English can be found at: www.prague.eu/en