Instructor: Alex Went, MA (Cantab.)
Email: asmwent@gmail.com

Prerequisites

Students are expected to be curious and motivated to explore the history and culture of the city where they are studying, and in particular its buildings and architectural heritage. Their approach should include:

- commitment to reading both required and recommended texts
- background reading and online research
- personal initiative in discovering and selecting topics for analysis in assignments
- readiness and proper preparation for outdoor activities

Course Description

The course serves as an introduction to the city of Prague as a specific cultural and social milieu, seen through the lens of its artists, architects and their works. It is also intended – particularly through the reading list – to inspire an interest in the unique blend of storytelling and legend that underpins much of the city’s character and history.

The scope of the course includes the major periods of European architectural development: from medieval to modern, as well as aspects specifically reflecting the history and heritage of the Czech nation. In structuring the course according to artistic styles and movements, it is hoped that students will recognize the ways in which artists of widely varying origins and temperaments responded to, influenced, or disrupted the artistic conventions of the day, and how their work continues to reflect the social and political dynamics of the city.

Course structure

The course comprises ten teaching and learning sessions, based on a series of illustrated lectures. Materials are drawn from the lecturer’s online catalogue, The Prague Vitruvius (http://www.pragitecture.eu) as well as from the accompanying reading list. Secondary materials, presentations and sample answers will be posted online. The second half of each teaching period involves a field trip within the city of Prague, or else is set aside for tests or quizzes.

In addition to attendance at lectures, students will be expected to produce a short class presentation, as well as a final paper on a topic of their own choice with due reference to relevant reading and research. Students are encouraged to use all the resources at their disposal, including university libraries, and to ask their lecturer for assistance as appropriate. Academic integrity and honesty are expected at all times, and students are expected to understand the need for proper citation and attribution.
Course Objectives

Desired outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should have a comprehensive understanding of

- the development of Czech architecture in its historical and artistic context
- how to distinguish and explain artistic and architectural styles, chronology and context
- how to identify significant artists, architects, and architectural structures.
- the ways in which the architecture reflects major cultural, social and political change (for example through private and public ownership, patronage, influence and immigration

Grading policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation* and attendance</th>
<th>15%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 x quizzes</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Participation grade includes contribution to discussion in class (including field trips), overall commitment and interest in the subject, handing assignments in on time, and readiness to consult with the instructor regarding assignment topics.

Evaluation criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
<th>Generally Accepted Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>Outstanding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A -</td>
<td>90-95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Good work, distinctly above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B -</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Acceptable work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C -</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Work that is significantly below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D -</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Work that does not meet minimum standards for passing the course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Course outline

Lecture 1

Introduction: Overview of the course, outline of its structure, and expectations of students.

EARLY MEDIAEVAL, ROMANESQUE

- Foundation myths: Libuš and Přemysl, Ctirad and Šárka
- The coming of Christianity: Cyril and Methodius. Rotundas – St Martin, St Longinus
- Cult of Wenceslas - The Sázava Gospel (11th century), the French connection.
- The foundation legend in the service of the Czech National Revival

Field trip: Vyšehrad to Emauzy: earliest Vyšehrad palace and rotunda of St Martin; statues of mythological figures by Myslbek (1897); basilica of Sts Petr and Pavel (with ‘sarcophagus of Longinus’). Výton to Palackého náměstí: Emauzy

Required reading:
Agnew, Hugh: The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, pp. 6-26
Demetz, Peter: Prague in Black and Gold, pp. 16-29 (on Libuse)
Thomas, Alfred: Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory and the City, Chicago, 2010, pp. 15-42

Recommended additional reading:

Lecture 2

Introduction: Conventions for citation; Czech diacritics

EARLY GOTHIC

- Early Gothic: Old-New synagogue (1270)
- The coming of the Holy Roman Empire. St Vitus Cathedral 1344
- Patronage of Charles IV: Peter Parler, construction of Nové Město 1348
- Italian connection: Vyšší Brod altarpiece 1350, Angelus of Florence, Kutná Hora (Vlašský dvůr)
- FOCUS: The Golden Gate and the chapel of Wenceslas – 1370

Field trip: St Agnes Convent. Over the river: St George’s Chapel; Saint Vitus Cathedral and the rest of the Castle complex

Required reading:
Agnew, Hugh: The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, pp. 32-28
Fajt, Jiří et al: Emperor Charles IV 1316-2016 Exhibition Guide, pp 18,22,36,44,52,60

Recommended additional reading:
Lecture 3

LATE GOTHIC TO RENAISSANCE

• *The Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493 (Michael Wohlmut)
• Rise of Protestantism. First defenestration of Prague: New Town Hall
• *Patronage of Vladislaw Jagellonsky* Benedikt Rejt and Bonifaz Wohlmut
• Renaissance architecture: sgraffito, portals, house signs and oriels
• FOCUS: The Vladislav Hall and Ludvík tower of Prague Castle

**Field trip:** Architectural walking tour: Karlovo náměstí, New Town Hall; Staroměstské náměstí, Šaloun’s monument to Hus (6 July 1915); Dům u Minuty; Oriel window in Malé nám. Maisel synagogue (1592)

**Required reading:**
Fajt, Jiří et al.: *Europa Jagellonica 1386 - 1572*
Campbell, Gordon (ed.) *The Grove Encyclopedia of Northern Renaissance Art* Oxford 2009

**QUIZ 1:** Romanesque to Renaissance

Lecture 4

RUDOLFINE PRAGUE

• *Patronage of Rudolf II* – Arcimboldo, Dürer’s Feast of the Rosaries
• Tycho Brahe and Kepler: how alchemy became astronomy
• Letohrádek Hvězda (1555)
• John Dee, Edward Kelley and the poet Elizabeth Jane Weston (*1582 + 1612*) The Jewish tradition: Rabbi Loew and the Golem; Joachim Gans, the first Jew in America
• FOCUS: Letohrádek kr. Anny (1538) and Ball court (Bonifaz Wohlmut et al.)

**Field Trip:** Tour Malostranské nám. St Thomas’s Church – memorial to Elizabeth Jane Weston; tram 22 to castle: Letohrádek, Prague Castle Picture Gallery, Ball Court.

**Required reading**
Burton, Richard: *Prague, a Cultural and Literary History*, chapter 2 (pp 55-79) (on the Golem)
Banville, John: *Prague Pictures*: pp. 130-195 (on Tycho and Kepler)

**Recommended additional reading**
Marshall, Peter, *The Theatre of the World*, chapter 9 (on John Dee)
Thomas, Alfred: *Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory and the City*, Chicago, 2010, pp. 43-76 inclusive
Lecture 5

THIRTY YEARS’ WAR

- Social structures. Church and Estates. Second (Third) defenestration of Prague
- The defence of Prague: Battle of the White Mountain
- The assassination of Valdštejn and the curious story of the British Embassy
- Counter-reformation and the cult of Jan Nepomuk
- Numerology and chronograms
- FOCUS: Charles Bridge statuary: Matyáš Bernard Braun and the Brokoffs

Field Trip: Valdštejn Gardens (exit via Senate) Malá Strana, Cathedral of saint Nicholas (Malostranské nám), Charles Bridge, Staroměstské náměstí (execution of the rebellious estates)

Required reading
Agnew, Hugh: The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, pp. 55-75
Rippelino, Angelo: Magic Prague, chapters 82 (on Nepomuk); chapters 83 to 85 inclusive (on the Charles Bridge)

Recommended additional reading:
Went, Alex, Digital Signatures of the Baroque (Prague 2016)

Lecture 6

BAROQUE

- Introduction to European Baroque
- The Dientzenhofers and Anselm Lurago
- J.B. Mathey and the French style: Troja and the Archbishop’s Palace
- J.B. Santini-Aichel: Borrowings from Borromini
- FOCUS: K.J. Dientzenhofer (active 1717-1753)

Student presentations 1 to 4

Required Reading
Agnew, Hugh: The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, pp. 75-80
Pavlík, Milan and Uher, Vladimir, Prague Baroque Architecture pp 11-13, pp 61-62
Rippelino, Angelo: Magic Prague, chapters 80 to 81 (on the coming of the Baroque)
Veverka, Přemysl et al: Great Villas of Prague: chapters 2 and 3 (Dientzenhofer)

Recommended additional Reading

QUIZ 2: Rudolf II to the Baroque (10%)
Lecture 7

REVIVALISM and HISTORICISM

- The Czech National Revival: ‘Národ sobě’. Neo-renaissance and gothic revival
- Exponents of historicism in architecture and art: Josef Mocker, Antonín Turek, Josef Schulz, Antonín Barvítius, Mikoláš Aleš.
- ‘Asanace’ – the ‘sanitation’ of the Old Town and destruction of Josefov

Student presentations 5 - 8

Field trip: Architectural walking tour: Grébovka and Koruní: We will hear the story of Moritz Gröbe and tour the interior of the villa; walk up over the hill past Šaloun’s studio to Koruní. Kotěra’s house. Works by Antonín Turek (Vinořadská vodarna, market hall, Narodní dům na Vinořadech) and finally St Ludmila in Nám. Míru.

Required Reading

Online resources:
Dvě Prahy: http://www.dveprahy.cz/

Lecture 8

ART NOUVEAU to CUBISM

- The Viennese Secession. The influence of Jan Kotěra. Peterkuv Dům (1899)
- Oswald Polívka: Topič Building (1905)
- Obecní Dům (1905-1911) and Vršovice Civic Savings Bank (1912) Antonín Balšánek
- Alphonse Mucha
- FOCUS: Ladislav Šaloun and the construction of the Hus memorial.
- Czech Cubist architecture: Josef Chochol, Josef Gočár, Emil Králiček, ‘Rondocubism’: Legiobank and later examples.

Student presentations 9 to 12

Field Trip: Na Švihance and Chopinova: examples of fully-fledged Art Nouveau and two buildings by Kotěra. Šaloun Villa. Vršovice Civic Savings bank

Required Reading
Kohout, Michal et al., Prague: 20th century architecture, Prague 1999 pp 6-8
Veverka, Přemysl et al: Great Villas of Prague: chapter 10 (Homage to Jan Kotěra), chapter 14 (Kotěra’s Villa, 1909) and chapter 19 (Kovařovic Villa)

Recommended additional reading
Von Vegesack, Alexander (ed.): Czech Cubism, Montreal, 1992
Lecture 9

FUNCTIONALISM TO PANELAKS

- Patronage of Masaryk: Jože Plečnik
- Late Gočár and Janák – churches on Moskevská and Dykova.
- Mánes building (1928)
- Villa Tugendhat (Mies van der Rohe, 1930); Villa Muller (Adolf Loos, 1930)
- Barrandov Film Studios and Terrace (1931-3), Max Urban et al.
- Baba estate (1932)

Field trip: Orechovka Estate, Villa Muller, Villa Rothmayer,

Final student presentations

QUIZ 3: Revivalism to Today (10%)

Required Reading

Veverka, Přemysl et al: Great Villas of Prague: chapter 32
Berglund, Bruce R: ‘The Democratic Castle as Sacred Space: Religion and Ideals in the Renovation of Prague Castle’ (on Plečnik)

Recommended additional reading

Tallis, Benjamin: ‘Panel Stories: Public Lies and Private Lives’
Tallis, Benjamin: ‘The Unbearable Lightness of Brutalism Ignored’

Lecture 10

URBANISM and PLANNING

- World War II damage: bombings of 14 February 1945. Destruction of the synagogue in Vinohrady
- Transport infrastructure: construction of the Prague Metro
- Survey of contemporary architecture: Dancing house, Pankrác developments, Karlín
- FOCUS: National Technical Library
Resources and Reading List

I.

Historical context

Ripellino, Angelo, Magic Prague, Macmillan 1994
Thomas, Alfred: Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory and the City, Chicago, 2010.
Winder, Simon: Danubia: A Personal History of Habsburg Europe. Picador 2013

II.

Architectural heritage

Fajt, Jiří et al: Emperor Charles IV 1316-2016 Exhibition Guide
Kohout, Michal et al., Prague: 20th century architecture, Prague 1999

Pavitt, Jane: Prague (in the Buildings of Europe series), Manchester UP, 2000
Pavlík, Milan and Uher, Vladimir, Prague Baroque Architecture
Von Vegesack, Alexander (ed.): Czech Cubism, Montreal, 1992

Essays

Berglund, Bruce R: ‘The Democratic Castle as Sacred Space: Religion and Ideals in the Renovation of Prague Castle’
Harrington, Dr Ralph, ‘The Distinctiveness of Bohemian Baroque’ (University of Leeds)
Tallis, Benjamin: Panel Stories: Public Lies and Private Lives
Tallis, Benjamin: The Unbearable Lightness of Brutalism Ignored
Went, Alex, Digital Signatures of the Baroque (Prague 2016)
III. General Reference


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**Selected online reading**

The Prague Vitruvius (curated by Alex Went)  [https://pragitecture.eu](https://pragitecture.eu)
*Slavne Vily (Famous Villas, Czech only) [http://www.slavnevily.cz/](http://www.slavnevily.cz/)

*in Czech