

WAG 308

Instructor: Veronika Tuckerova

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Office hour: Mon 1-2pm

408 CAL

This course will examine modern works of Czech literature, from the 19th century Jan Neruda to Josef Škvorecký. The wide range of authors and works on the list will enable us to enjoy the diversity of these writings and expand and challenge the usual limited and contradictory notions of Czech literature and Czechs as “revolutionaries”, “beer drinkers”, “philosophers”, “dreamers”, or “realists”. As much as possible, we will read these works in the context of wider Central European and World literature, as counterparts to writers such as Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and others – I encourage students to draw on their previous readings! We will consider different genres (novels, short stories, philosophical essays), as well as multilingual dimensions, primarily the German; mutual exchanges, influences, and appropriations.

Requirements: Class participation, Presentation (30%), Response Papers on two chosen works (40%), final paper (30%).

Week 1, Jan 17th - Jan 19th

Introduction

Jan Neruda (1834-1891), *Prague Tales*

Week 2, Jan 24th – Jan 26th

Prague Tales

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, The Letter to Lord Chandos

Week 3, Jan 31st –Feb 2nd

Kafka, Franz, (1883-1924) *Contemplation*

Week 4, Feb 7th – Feb 9th

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910)

Week 5, Feb 14th - Feb 16th

Ladislav Klíma, (1878-1928) *The Sufferings of Prince Sternenhoch* (1924)

Week 6, Feb 21st – Feb 23rd

Hašek, Jaroslav (1883-1923), *The Bachura Scandal and other Stories*

Week 7, Feb 28th -March 1st

Week 8, March 6th – March 8th

Karel Čapek, (1890-1938) *Toward the Radical Center, A Karel Čapek Reader*

Week 9, Spring Break

Week 10, March 20th – March 22nd

Karel Čapek

Week 11, March 27th –March 29th

Week 12, April 3th – April 5th

Bohumil Hrabal (1914-1997), *Closely Watched Trains*

Week 13, April 10th – April 12th

Closely Watched Trains, Jiří Menzel 1966

Bohumil Hrabal *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age*

Week 14, April 17th – April 19th

Bohumil Hrabal, *Pirouettes on a Postage Stamp*

Week 15, April 24th – April 26th

Josef Škvorecký (1924-2012), *The Bass Saxophone*

Week 16, May 1st – May 3rd

Review

April 27th-28th Czech Workshop at UT Austin

Reading List:

Neruda, Jan, *Prague Tales*

Kafka, *Contemplation*

Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*

Ladislav Klíma, *The Suffering of Prince Sternenhoch: A Grotesque tale of Horror*

Hašek, Jaroslav, *Bachura Scandal and Other Stories and Sketches*

Čapek, Karel, *Toward the Radical Center: A Karel Capek Reader*

Čapek, Karel, *Three Novels: Hordubal, Meteor, An Ordinary Life*

Hrabal, Bohumil, *Closely Watched Trains*

Hrabal, Bohumil, *Dancing Lesson for the Advanced in Age*

Hrabal, Bohumil, *Pirouettes on a Postage Stamp: An Interview-Novel with Questions Asked and Answers Recorded by Laszlo Szigeti by Bohumil Hrabal and David Short*

Škvorecký, Josef, *The Bass Saxophone*

Films: *Closely Watched Trains*

Secondary Reading:

The Czech Reader, ed. Jan Bažant, Nina Bažantová, and Frances Starn (2010)

Alfred French, *Czech Writers and Politics, 1945-1969*

Peter Hames, *The Czechoslovak New Wave*, (2005)

Jiří Holý, *Writers under Siege. Czech Literature since 1945* (2007)

Josef Škvorecký, *All the bright young men and women; a personal history of the Czech cinema* (1971)

Peter Steiner, *The Deserts of Bohemia* (2000)