

# **Popular Culture and Folklore in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe**

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Tuesday 12:30-2:00 room 306  
Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Celetna 20, Prague 1



The course provides an introduction to phenomena of popular culture and folklore of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) with special emphasis on Czech social and cultural context.

Firstly we introduce a range of theoretical approaches to study popular culture and folklore, exploring the intersection between everyday life, mass media, and broader political and historical contexts within the CEE. We will discuss key theoretical readings in the study of popular culture and folklore, including ideology and hegemony, (post)subculture, commodification, vernacular culture, cultural practice, folklore vs. folklorism vs. folkloresque, postsocialism, and nationalism.

Secondly, building on knowledge of these conceptual approaches, we will examine a range of themes in popular culture and folklore in CEE such as media transformation, the elite exchange/continuity, re-nationalization and re-traditionalization, Westernisation, glocalisation, and retro-movement. These issues will be presented on the empirical case studies not only from contemporary Czech culture, but also in Czech-Slovak comparison within the CEE context.

Requirements for the students will comprise regular reading, attendance of field lessons (film, field trip) and presentation about particular issue of Czech popular culture and folklore within final colloquium.

## **Course structure**

1. Central and Eastern European (CEE) popular culture and folklore between East and West (introductory lecture)
2. What is popular culture in CEE? (Reading: John Storey)
3. What is folklore and vernacular culture in CEE? (Reading: Petr Janeček)
4. Socialism and postsocialism vs. popular culture (Reading: Boris Buden)

5. Folklore behind the Iron Curtain: CEE vernacular cultures during Communism (Reading: Christie Davies)
6. Marxism and popular culture (Reading: Antonio Gramsci, Guy Debord – film)
7. Urban legends in CEE: From Flüsterpropaganda to adoration of neoliberalism (Reading: Lajosz Czaszi)
8. From subcultures to postsubcultures (Reading: David Muggleton)
9. Re-traditionalization, nationalism and identitarianism (Reading: Ladislav Holy)
10. Digital Natives: Internet vernacular cultures of the CEE (Reading: Kaarina Koski)
11. Quest for the Folk Again: re-traditionalization of the Millenials (Reading: Joseph G. Feinberg/TBA)
12. Field trip: The CEE culture of mushrooming

## Literature

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- Buden, Boris Children of Postcommunism. 2010, *Radical Philosophy* 159 (January/February), pp. 18–25.
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- Daniel, Ondřej, Kavka Tomáš, Machek Jakub *Popular Culture and Subcultures of Czech Post-Socialism: Listening to the Wind of Change* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.
- Davies, Christie: Jokes as the Truth about Soviet Socialism. In: *Folklore. An Electronical Journal of Folklore* 2010 Vol 46, pp. 10-32.
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- Janeček, Petr: Bloody Mary or Krvavá Máří? Globalization and Czech Children´s Folklore. *Slovak Ethnology* Vol 62(2), 2014, pp. 221-243.
- Laineste, Liisi: Post – Socialist Jokelore: Preliminary Findings and Futher Research Suggestions. *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 209, Vol 54, pp. 31 – 45.
- Media Studies Journal. Special Issue on Popular Culture and Post-socialist societies in East-Central and Southern Europe. Vol. 2/2015, on line <https://medialnistudia.cz/archiv-cisel/medialni-studia-022015-special-issue-2/>
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