

Course Title

Prague, Pop, Politics

What to expect

What's music got to do with it? Apparently, a lot. Join AAU professor, author and musician Pavla Jonssonova on a course about the history of pop, rock and how they have shaped politics and history in the Czech Republic.

Overview

Track	LovePrague
Instructor	Pavla Jonssonova
Date	February 4 - 25, 2021
Format	Four-week course
Delivery	On campus / in city
Price	6,000 CZK
Academic credits	N/A
Pre-requisites	N/A
Language	English

Course Description

This course will take you through the history of Czech pop and rock from the 1960s til today. We will watch the best music videos from the Prague Spring of 1968, discuss texts about the underground and alternative music as it developed in the 1970s and 1980s and admire the authenticity of the musicians, who stayed true to their beliefs and never betrayed.

Participants will see how the future president Václav Havel befriended The Plastic People of the Universe (Czech rock band most representative of the underground culture), and how he fought for their release from prison. We will learn about what happened to Czech music in liberal democracy after 1989.

The course is fully experiential, with classes held in Prague, visiting actual places and music venues. Relevant literature and readings will be provided to all participants in advance.

Learning Outcomes

- * Understand the history of Czech rock, know about the persecution and imprisonment of the musicians.
- * Find out about five Czech bands and their poetics and topics
- * See how music is connected to politics
- * Learn about Czech musicians who are successful in the West, like Iva Bittová or Už jsme doma

Methodology

Academic course led by a professor of AAU who will provide insights from her hands-on experience and research. In class lectures are complemented by visuals and discussion of readings. One excursion is to the Museum of Music, one to the Pop Museum at Kaštan.

Schedule and Course Content

Session 1				
Topic	Date	Time	Place	Duration
History of Czech Rock'n'Roll with music videos and lyrics translations	February 4	2pm -4pm	AAU Classroom	2 hours
Description	We will see how Czechs mastered the new music genre despite the Iron Curtain limitations, who were the first professional rock bands in the 1960s, and how the invasion of the Warsaw pact troops stopped it all. New strategies had to be invented in the 1970s, and as technologies progressed in the 1980s, rock once again developed itself as a resistance to the regime.			
Materials	Maderová, Blanka, et al. "Czech Alternative Music and Rock" in: To Touch the World: Czech Musical Alternative 1968-2013 Praha: Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy v Praze, 2013. (Library) Ramet Sabrina. Rocking the State. Please have a question ready for a great discussion			
Session 2	Date	Time	Place	Duration
Czech Underground, The Plastic People of the Universe, DG 307. Ivan Martin Jirous and Egon Bondy as the masterminds. Videos, films, discussion	February 11	2pm - 4pm	AAU Classroom	2 hours
Description	We will learn about a movement of brave rebels against the regime who remained true to their beliefs despite being put into jail. British dramatist of Czech origin, Tom Stoppard, wrote a play called "Rock'n'Roll" (2006), where he discussed the role of the underground at the end of the Cold War.			
Materials	Ivan Jirous Report on the Czech Underground. From Views from the Inside - manifesto Topol, Jáchym. "Game Park." Prague: Yazyk, 1995, 30-32. Pavel Z. Time is a Mid-Night Scream, Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 1999. Please have a question ready for a great discussion			

Saturday Excursion	Date	Time	Place	Duration
POP Museum, Cross Club	February 13	2pm - 6pm	Kaštan, Bělohorská 201/150, Praha 6 Besední 487/3, Malá Strana Plynární 1096, P7-Holešovice	4 hours
Description	The Pop Museum has a collection of instruments, records, posters, and photos. It is housed in a major independent culture center called Kastan, which is operated by Unijazz, an organizer of alternative festivals, publishers of Uni. Cross Club is another major alternative venue with a distinctive architecture of moving statues, financed by the municipality of Prague to organize free events.			
Materials	Zuzana Jurková: <i>Prague Soundscapes</i> . AAU Library, especially the chapter on Cross Club			
Session 3	Date	Time	Place	Duration
Czech Museum of Music	February 18	2pm - 4pm	Karmelitska 2/4, Praha 1	2 hours
Description	Czech Muzeum of Music often houses grandiose exhibits not only on classical music but also on pop.			
Materials	Materials will be updated soon.			
Session 4	Date	Time	Place	Duration
Music after 1989 Lecture with music videos	February 25	2pm - 4pm	AAU Classroom	2 hours
Description	Everything changed after 1989, new radios, labels, press, music stores, studios. Music stopped being a resistance tool and became just another market item.			
Materials	Materials will be updated soon.			