Thinking Slovakia’s History in the Twentieth Century

Code:  
Term: Spring  
ECTS credits: 6  
Lessons per week: 90 + 90 min  
Language: English  
Instructor: Dr. Agáta Šústová Drellová, MLitt; Dr. Marína Zavacká, M.A.  
Form of study: lecture+seminar

Prerequisites

Course Objectives

Does history matter? How does the past influence present? How can one tell the difference between sound history and a myth? Can the historian’s perspective help us to understand contemporary challenges? What does it mean to read, think and write like a historian? In this course history of Slovakia in the twentieth century will serve as a springboard for thinking about major figures, ideas and processes that shaped both the previous and current centuries.

Contents

The following themes and issues will be discussed: Elites Ending a War, People come centre stage, Politics in an Interwar City, The Dynamics of Radicalisation, Stifling a democracy, Sending thousands to death, Back to democracy, Building a Stalinist City, Memory and nostalgia, Conformism and dissent.
Themes and Readings involved

Taught by Dr. Agáta Šústová Drelová

1. Thinking like a historian

Seminar 1. Historical Thinking 1.
Introductory class.

Seminar 2. Historical Thinking 2. (Secondary sources)


2. Postwar Slovakia: 1945-48

Seminar 1. Postwar 1: Catholics, Communists, and Democrats in postwar Czechoslovakia


Seminar 2. Postwar 2: Conspiracies, Dismantling postwar republic


3. Building Communist Czechoslovakia

Seminar 1. The Establishment of the totalitarian system


Seminar 2. Inside a Stalinist City

4. 1968: Prague, Slovak or Parisian Spring?

**Seminar 1: The many human faces of socialism**


**Seminar 2: A view from the West:**


5. Normalisation: Conformism or dissent?

**Seminar 1: Dissidents and conformists**


**Seminar 2: Socialist and post-socialist elites**


**Seminar 1: 1989, People or Elites? Roundtables or the streets?**


**Seminar 2: 1989 and its aftermath**


7. Ending the Great War

Seminar 1: Falls and Rises, Empires and their Successors, Old and new Elites


Seminar 2: Drawing lines, making peace


8. Becoming a Citizen

Seminar 1: Where to get and how to make a citizen


Seminar 2: The city and the time

Reading: www.pammap.sk, guided walk.

9. Dynamics of radicalisation

Seminar 1: Its economy


Seminar 2: From outside and from inside

Reading: Lipták, Ľ. The international and Internal Crisis of the Thirties.” A Concise history of Slovakia. (ed. E. Mannová), Bratislava, 2000,-254-255; + Own selection of articles.
http://digitalna.kniznica.info/browse

10. Down with Democracy

Seminar 1: Dismantling the civic fabric

Seminar 2: Violence and resistance
Reading: TBA, (virtual) tour to KZ Mauthausen, https://www.mauthausen-memorial.org/en

11. State-instigated hate

Seminar 1: Breaking taboos,
Reading: Vrba Wetzler Report

Seminar 2: Whitewashing crimes

12. Forced migrations

Seminar 1: Asylants and emigrants 1918-1953
Reading: Polian, Pavel. Against their will. History and Geography of Forced migrations in the USSR, Budapest 2003

Seminar 2: Asylants and emigrants 1918-1953
Reading: TBA

Evaluation Criteria
40% Written work – assignments
40% Final Essay (5000 words)
20% Active participation on classes

Instructor is expected to provide a midterm evaluation.

Course Evaluation (%)
A – excellent: 100-93,
B – very good: 92-84,
C – good: 83-74,
D – satisfactory: 73-63,
E – sufficient: 62-51,
Fx – fail: 50-0%.

Passing a course assumes that student was not absent at more than 4 lessons.