

Kafka in Prague: Connections and Insights

SECTION I: Course Overview

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Course Code: | CUL320PRG |
| Subject Area(s): | Cultural Studies |
| Prerequisites: | None |
| Language of Instruction: | English |
| Total Contact Hours: | 45 |
| Recommended Credits: | 3 |

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Franz Kafka (1883–1924) has become recognized as one of the leading figures in world literature. Perhaps more than any other major author, Kafka is associated with one geographical location: the city of Prague, where he lived almost his whole life, mostly on the Old Town Square.

However, Kafka's works themselves are not explicitly about Prague, nor are they set in Prague. This gives students and scholars of Kafka's works a unique opportunity to interpret the city's history and culture through fiction in a way that is not straightforward, but rather creative, critical, and informed.

In this course, students will discover this special city through the lens of selected stories by Kafka. At the same time, students will discover Kafka by learning about Prague and engaging in guided, direct experiences of the city. Kafka's lifetime was a particularly complicated time in Prague's history, when it was at the crossroads of different cultural and social influences: German and Czech, industrialization and the arts, war and peace, Judaism and Christianity, monarchy and democracy, urban and rural, poverty and wealth. In addition to readings, lectures, in-class activities, and discussions, the course will provide active learning experiences to students, using the city, historical sites, and museums as an extension of the classroom.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Critically analyze selected works by Franz Kafka.
- Discuss Prague's history and culture during and before Kafka's lifetime.
- Create meaningful connections between the studied literary texts and the observed historical and cultural realities.
- Formulate effective academic arguments about Kafka's writing within the context of Prague's history.

SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Name: | TBD |
| Contact Information: | TBD |
| Term: | SEMESTER |

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Engagement | 20% |
| Insights | 10% |
| Essay 1 | 15% |
| Essay 2 | 15% |
| Essay 3 | 20% |
| Essay 4 | 20% |

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

Engagement (20%): Engagement in class is expected of all CEA CAPA students. Guidelines for engagement can be found on the list of academic policies.

Insights (10%): For most class meetings, you should post your “insights” on the online discussion within the virtual classroom for that week by 9 am the day of class. These Insights should be between 100 and 1000 words long. Each Insight should record your first, informal reaction to the reading for that week. You are encouraged to focus on particular parts of texts rather than making broad statements about all the reading for the week. You are welcome to read each others’ Insights assignments.

Essay 1, 2, 3, and 4 (15% each Essay 1 and 2; 20% each Essay 3 and 4): Each Essay will follow the following assignment.

- The essay will focus on a particular story.
- The essay is expected to be a literary analysis that also uses the historical and cultural information reviewed in the course to that point.
- Students will be able to choose the topic of their essay within the more formal constraints expressed below. In fact, the essay should exhibit a creative, original insight that is unique to the student’s way of thinking about the story. The essay should be devoted to an original insight that the student is making about the story, explaining a new or alternative way to understand the story.
- Moreover, the essay should seek to persuade the reader that the new or alternative way of understanding the story is useful, worthwhile, preferable to other readings, etc.
- Technical requirements and guidance:
 - The essay should be written in the form of an academic argument and written for a general academic reader.
 - The essay should be between 900 and 1200 words, exclusive of quotations, paraphrases, and any front or back matter.
 - The essay can use outside sources but this is not required and use of outside sources should benefit the essay; use of outside sources is not good in itself.

- Students are required to submit a draft of each essay, receive feedback on that draft, and give feedback on at least one other student's essay draft.
- The final grade for the essay assignment will take into consideration the draft, the quality of feedback given to other students, and the final essay.
- The structure of the essay should be such that the essay displays a thesis statement near the beginning of the essay and support of that thesis statement takes up most if not all of the rest of the essay.
- The draft is required to contain a thesis statement; the rest of the draft can be an outline of the plan of the essay or a complete (but not final) draft.
- It is expected that with each subsequent essay the student has more skills and knowledge to write a better essay; therefore, essay assignments will face steadily increasing standards for performance.

ACTIVE LEARNING

CEA CAPA courses are designed to include a variety of active learning component that will take you out of the classroom and allow you to explore your local, host city. This course includes:

- *Field Study: Walk with Kafka, in two parts*
 - A field study in Prague highlighting Kafka-relevant sites in the historical center of Prague. The professor provides continuous commentary and challenges students to make connections between sites and the stories read so far. The purpose is to give students a concrete feeling for what Kafka's exterior experience of the city must have been.
- *Field study to the Franz Kafka Museum*
 - Students work in groups to complete assignments designed to ensure each student engages in the museum's exhibits and the class meets after the museum visit to discuss the experience.

REQUIRED READINGS

The reading assignments for this course are listed below. All required readings must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format) and/or through CEA CAPA's online Moodle classroom.

SELECTED READING(S): The selected readings for this course are listed below. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format).

Kafka, Franz. *The Complete Stories*. Schocken, 1995.

Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*. Trans. Breon Mitchell. Schocken, 2012.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The recommended reading(s) and/or text(s) for this course are below. These recommended readings are not mandatory, but they will assist you with research and understanding course content.

Brod, Max. *Franz Kafka: A Biography*. Trans. G. Humphreys Roberts and Richard Winston. Da Capo, 1995.

Burton, Richard. *Prague: A Cultural and Literary History*. Signal, 2003.

Church, Margaret. "Time and Reality in Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 2, no. 2, July 1956, pp. 62-69.

- Cohn, Dorrit. "Kafka's Eternal Present: Narrative Tense in 'Ein Landarzt' and Other First-Person Stories." *PMLA*, vol. 83, no. 1, March 1968, pp. 144-150.
- Demetz, Peter. *Prague in Black and Gold: The History of a City*. Penguin, 1997.
- Duttlinger, Carolin, Ed. *Franz Kafka in Context*. Cambridge UP, 2018.
- Feuerlicht, Ignace. "Omissions and Contradictions in Kafka's *Trial*." *The German Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 3, May 1967, pp. 339-350.
- Janouch, Gustav. *Conversations with Kafka*. 2nd ed. Trans. Goronwy Rees. New Directions, 2012.
- Karl, Frederick R. *Franz Kafka: Representative Man*. Ticknor & Fields, 1991.
- Koelb, Clayton. "In der Strafkolonie": Kafka and the Scene of Reading." *The German Quarterly*. Vol. 55, no. 4, November 1982, pp. 511-525.
- Leopold, Keith. "Breaks in Perspective in Franz Kafka's *Der Prozess*." *The German Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 31-38.
- McCagg, William O. *A History of Hapsburg Jews, 1670-1918*. Indiana UP, 1992.
- Murray, Nicholas. *Kafka*. Little, Brown, 2004.
- Nekula, Marek. *Franz Kafka and His Prague Contexts*. Karolinum, 2016.
- Preece, Julian, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*. Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Salfellner, Harald. *Franz Kafka and Prague*. Vitalis, 2007.
- Smith, Zadie. "The Limited Circle Is Pure." *The New Republic*, 3 November 2003.
- Spector, Scott. *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siecle*. U of California P, 2000.
- Swales, Martin. "Why Read Kafka." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 76, no. 2, April 1981, pp. 357-356.
- Trahan, Elizabeth. "A Common Confusion: A Basic Approach to Franz Kafka's World." *The German Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3, May 1963, pp. 269-278.
- Wallace, David Foster. "Laughing with Kafka." *Harpers*, July 1998, pp. 23-27.

KEY RESOURCES

In order to ensure your success abroad, CEA CAPA has provided the academic resources listed below.

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA CAPA student, you will be given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH). You may access the UNH online library [here](#). You must comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.
- **CEA CAPA Classroom – Moodle**

COURSE CALENDAR *Kafka in Prague: Connections and Insights*

| SESSION | TOPICS | ACTIVITY | READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS |
|---------|---|---|--|
| 1 | Introduction to the course Literary Analysis | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | Reading (during class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Before the Law” (1914) • Trahan, “A Common Confusion” (1916) |
| 2 | “The Metamorphosis” (written 1912, published 1915) “The Judgment” (written and published 1912) | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Metamorphosis” (written 1912, published 1915) • “The Judgment” (written and published 1912) Assignments/deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights |
| 3 | Kafka’s Prague Culture (1 of 3) Essay 1 Workshop | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Trial</i> (written 1914–1915, published posthumously), one-third of the novel Assignments/deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights • Essay 1 Draft |
| 4 | Walk with Kafka, Part 1 | Field Study | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Trial</i> (written 1914–1915, published posthumously), two-thirds of the novel Assignments/deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights • Essay 1 Final Draft |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| 5 | <i>The Trial</i> (written 1914–1915, published posthumously) | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Trial</i> (written 1914–1915, published posthumously), complete novel <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights |
| 6 | <i>The Trial</i> (written 1914–1915, published posthumously) | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights |
| 7 | Kafka’s Prague Culture (2 of 3) Essay 2 Workshop | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 2 Draft • No Insights |
| 8 | Walk with Kafka, Part 2 | Field Study | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 2 Final Draft • No Insights |
| 9 | “A Report to an Academy” (written and published 1917) “A Country Doctor” | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A Report to an Academy” (written and published 1917) • “A Country Doctor” <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights |

| | | | |
|----|---|---|--|
| 10 | <p>“In the Penal Colony” (written 1914, published 1919) “A Hunger Artist” (1922)</p> | <p>Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities</p> | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In the Penal Colony” (written 1914, published 1919) • “A Hunger Artist” (1922) <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights |
| 11 | <p>Kafka’s Prague Culture (3 of 3) Essay 3 Workshop</p> | <p>Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities</p> | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 3 Draft • No Insights |
| 12 | <p>Franz Kafka Museum Visit</p> | <p>Field Study</p> | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 3 Final Draft • No Insights |
| 13 | <p>“The Burrow” (written 1923, published posthumously) “Josephine the Singer” (written 1924, published 1924)</p> | <p>Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities</p> | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Burrow” (written 1923, published posthumously) • “Josephine the Singer” (written 1924, published 1924) <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Insights |
| 14 | <p>Essay 4 Workshop</p> | <p>Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities</p> | <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Assignments/deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 4 Final Draft |

| | | | |
|----|-----|--|---|
| 15 | TBD | Lecture, directed class discussion, group activities | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBD Assignments/deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay 4 Final Draft• No Insights |
|----|-----|--|---|

SECTION III: CEA CAPA Academic Policies

To see all CEA CAPA academic policies outlined, please follow the following links. Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including the academic policies outlined online. CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time.

Class & Instructor Policies can be found [here](#)

General Academic Policies can be found [here](#)