

CHID Prague: Discovering Central Europe - Spring

Prague, Czech Republic

**Program Terms:** Spring Quarter

**Dates / Deadlines:**

There are currently no active application cycles for this program.

**Fact Sheet:**

Primary Language(s) of Instruction:	English	Courses available in English?:	Yes
Field of Interest:	Humanities, International Studies, Language & Cultural Studies, Art History, Social Sciences	Affiliated Department:	CHID
Program Type:	Faculty-led Program		

**Program Description:**

## CHID Prague: Discovering Central Europe - Spring

**Location:** Prague, Czech Republic

**Department:** Comparative History of Ideas

**Dates:** April 1, 2013 - June 10, 2013

**Estimated Program Fee:** \$4,900

**Credits:** 15

**Program Director:** Vera Sokolova (CHID)

**Study Abroad Advisor:** Lauren Easterling

**Application Deadline:** November 1, 2012

**Information Session(s):** TBD

**Program Website:** <http://chidprague.cz/>



### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

#### Between the East and West: Discovering Central Europe

A medieval cultural capital located in the heart of Europe, yet for decades locked seemingly far away behind the Iron Curtain, Prague has a magical flair like no other. Relatively spared from natural disasters and war, Prague boasts magnificent architecture preserved from its distant past, and is the home to world class theatres (think Mozart), labyrinthine cobble-stoned streets (think Kafka), and tucked-away bars, gardens and cafés where you can contemplate the meaning of it all. One of the things that makes Prague special is its contradictions: it's both big as well as cozy, it's rich as well as poor, both "Eastern" and "Western", quiet and wild, and really old yet unmistakably reconfigured by the communist regime (1948-1989) as well as the capitalist system that replaced it.

The Prague Program, which is the oldest CHID study abroad program at UW (since 1996), is all about immersing yourself in Prague and the other great Central European cities – **Vienna, Krakow, Budapest and**

**Berlin**, where we will go on 4-day trips each – in order to develop a complex understanding of the dynamic historical, cultural and political life of Central Europe as a whole. The program itself is strongly anchored in the philosophy of CHID: it combines academically rigorous seminar-style courses, international field trips aimed at provoking personal reflection and exploration, and cultural events that transform our program into a living community. We focus on key issues that resonate well beyond Central Europe: the tragedy of the Holocaust, the nature and impact of the communist system, the hopes and tensions of the European Union, and how coming to terms with the past is reflected in the cultural and art scene we witness today.

We also reflect on the very meaning of Central Europe. Does Central Europe even exist? The question has for over a century occupied European intellectuals like Walter Benjamin or Milan Kundera, and continued to be reframed by the World Wars, a divided Europe during the Cold War, and the contemporary European integration. We travel to Vienna, Krakow, Budapest and Berlin to explore the commonality and diversity of Central Europe and to see how, as Christa Wolf expressed it, today is the last day of the past.

The Prague program is intensive both academically and experientially, often at the same time. The classes directly connect, for example, with our talks with journalists at Radio Free Europe in Prague or diplomats at the U.S. mission to the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) in Vienna. We discuss class readings with activists at the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest as well as with lawyers from the Transparency International in Prague. We visit women's rights activists in Krakow, local artists in Prague, and "green" squatters in the famous wagon commune Schwarzerkanal in Berlin. What might seem abstract at one moment becomes crystal clear the next when we walk through Auschwitz, visit a Stasi prison, witness street demonstrations, or explore the remnants of the Berlin wall.

Thus, to a large degree, the site, or rather the sites ARE the academic content of the program. But we do all of this with a heavy dose of fun: we go biking in Berlin and Krakow (possibly elsewhere), experience Budapest's Turkish baths, explore Vienna's Habsburg palaces, and see opera and ballet in Prague's beautiful theaters. We also encourage students to go on short-term trips to other wonderful places in the Czech Republic during the three-day weekends. Through this immersion, we hope that students in the program not only critically explore the intersections of rich and complex Central European history, society, and politics, but also, in the process, become themselves transformed by the places, people and ideas they encounter.

We believe for this immersion experience it's absolutely crucial that the students don't feel like tourists but instead live the same way regular Prague residents do. During the Prague program our students thus live in rented private residential apartments, centrally located in the heart of Prague. 4-5 students share two-bedroom apartments, all with fully equipped kitchens, bathrooms with showers or bathtubs, washing machines, living rooms with TV/SAT, and free internet. (The location of our classroom is within 20 minutes by walk or a short tram ride from all student apartments.)

The program fee covers most expenses connected with the international field trips (travel, housing, museums and other entrance fees, all breakfasts and a few group meals, etc.), student accommodation in the above-described apartments, 3-month public transportation pass in Prague, tickets to selected cultural events (opera, ballet, concerts, museums), and reading packs for all three classes.

For more information, please visit our program website: [www.chidprague.cz](http://www.chidprague.cz).

## **LOCATION:**

Prague, Czech Republic

### **Site(s):**

To a large degree, the site, or rather the sites ARE the academic content of the program. In addition to the three core classes the program includes four 3 to 4-day international trips to **Vienna, Krakow, Budapest and Berlin**. These field trips are highly academic and complement the courses by allowing the students to examine the transformations of Central Europe through direct experience and engagement with some of the most important and influential cities of the region. During these field trips, we visit historically relevant sites, museums, have guided lectures and talks by local experts and NGOs, visit national parliaments and universities. The courses will also be supplemented by visits to important Prague historical and cultural sites, visits by Czech NGO activists, exhibitions and other current cultural events in Prague.

### **Housing:**

The students reside in residential apartments rented by the program in various sites around the city center. They stay in groups of 4-5 with other members of the program, but their neighbors are other residents of Prague, so our students get a true feel for domestic life in the city.



## **ACADEMICS:**

### **Pre-Requisites/Language Requirements:**

None

### **Credits:**

15 CREDITS

### **Courses:**

#### **East European Communism and Everyday Life - HIST 490 (5 credits)**

This class is an intensive introductory course to the contemporary history of East Central Europe with a special emphasis on Czechoslovakia. Through visual culture, personal memoirs, oral history and site visits the class concentrates on issues of collaboration and resistance, complicity and responsibility, legacy and change, memory and forgetting, in order to see how these shape and complicate the notion of a national history, collective identity and individual agency. By examining the relationships between the state, society and the individual in various countries, the class works against the simplistic binary of "regime" vs. "people" and "East" vs. "West" to see what these reveal about the nature and reality of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. An integral part of this class is a Film Seminar, exploring and contrasting contemporary post-1989 cinematography with the (New Wave Czech) cinema of the 1960s and the mainstream communist regime films of the 1970s and 1980s.

#### **Democracy and Development in Central and Eastern Europe - CHID 471 B (5 credits)**

This class examines the interaction between democratization and the politics of economic development in Central and Eastern Europe. After the collapse of communism, democratic and economic reforms took place simultaneously and rapidly, leading to a host of urgent problems and consequences their designers did not always predict, such as increases in economic inequality, unemployment and an increased sense of insecurity by large segments of post-communist societies. These phenomena have, in turn, provided a base of support for reinvigorated communist parties and nationalist movements, as well as provoked disillusionment with the democratic process. In exploring the complex intersections of recent social, political and economic transformation, we will pay particular attention to the role of civil society and membership in the European Union in shaping the democratic futures of post-communist societies. An integral part of our class are visits of and from important Czech NGOs.

#### **Contemporary Czech Culture: Urban Semiotics - CHID 471 C (5 credits)**

The course will acquaint students with contemporary Czech art scene, its "roots" and transformations from three different perspectives. First, the course will pursue how Czech art and music are connected with activism, minority groups and mainstream culture. Second, focus will be placed on how to "read" contemporary urban performances, literature and works of art. How and why do performances address and fascinate their readers? What value-hierarchies and culture-changing signs do they produce? Third, the course will familiarize students with the notions of performance art, digital media, counterculture, mass culture and show their impact on Czech individuals and society. The course will elucidate the transitions in Czech art scene after 1989, together with their socio-historical context. It will explore different understandings of post-communist movements as represented in the performances by Czech artists. Czech art perspectives will be confronted with Western literary and cultural criticism.

## **PROGRAM LEADERS:**

Vera Sokolova, CHID

[verasokolova@email.cz](mailto:verasokolova@email.cz)



## PROGRAM EXPENSES:

### Estimated Cost:

\$4,900 This does not include the Study Abroad Fee (\$300), airfare, food (about \$34/day), Study Abroad Insurance (\$37/month) and personal spending money.

### Average Airplane Ticket Price:

\$1,150\* roundtrip \*Subject to when & where you buy your ticket

### Payment Schedule:

Program fees will be posted to your MyUW student account and can be paid the same way that you pay tuition and other fees. A \$350 non-refundable program deposit and \$300 non-refundable Study Abroad Fee will be charged to your MyUW Account once your signed contract has been received by the Study Abroad Office.

Payment Type	Payment Amount	Payment Due Date
Non-Refundable Program Deposit	\$350	Charged Upon Receipt of Contract
Non-Refundable Study Abroad Fee	\$300	4/12/2013
Program Fee Balance	4,550	4/12/2013
<b>TOTAL FEES CHARGED</b>	5,200	-

## Orientation

To be eligible to study abroad, all program participants must attend an in-person pre-departure orientation facilitated by the Study Abroad office as well as your program-specific orientations, offered by your program director.

You must register for orientation through your online study abroad account in order to attend scheduled orientations. You can visit the [Orientation section](#) of our website to view the current orientation schedule.

Orientation must be completed prior to the enrollment deadline for the quarter that you are studying abroad.

## Financial Aid and Scholarships:

Most forms of financial aid can be applied to study abroad. You can verify that your financial aid award will apply to your program costs by contacting the Financial Aid Office. Financial aid or scholarships awarded as tuition waivers or tuition exemptions may not apply so you will need to verify that these funds are eligible for use with study abroad by contacting the funding office.

Please remember that financial aid and most scholarships will be disbursed according to the UW academic calendar (at the beginning of the quarter). If your program starts before the start of the UW quarter, your financial aid will not be available to you until after you have left the country. If your program starts after the first day of the quarter, your financial aid will be disbursed on the first day of the program. In either of these cases, you will have to finance any upfront costs such as airfare and health insurance and the start of your time abroad on your own. Please take this into consideration when you plan your foreign study.

Please visit the [Finances section](#) of our website to learn more about disbursement, revising your aid package, short-term loans and scholarships.

## Application Process

The application includes a Personal Statement, 3 short answer questions, 2 Faculty recommendations and electronic signature documents related to University policies and expectations for study abroad. Following the on-line application process students may be contacted by the Program Director for an in-person interview. Once admissions decisions have been regarding your application, you will be notified by the study abroad system via email.

## Withdrawals

The \$350 program deposit and \$300 Study Abroad Fee are **non-refundable**. Students withdrawing from a program will be responsible for paying a percentage of the program fee depending on the date of withdrawal. More details about the withdrawal policy will be included in your payment contract. No part of the program fee is refundable once the program has begun. The date of withdrawal is considered the date (business day) a withdrawal form is received by the Study Abroad Office. Notice of withdrawal from the program must be made in writing, completing the following steps:

1. Provide notice in writing to the program director that you will no longer be participating in the program for which you have signed a contract and accepted a slot.
2. Submit a signed withdrawal form to the Study Abroad Office, 459 Schmitz Hall.

Please visit the [Withdrawals section](#) of our website for more information.