UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
SLA 405 H/ 1608 H

On the Waves of the Avant-garde
Thursday 10-12
AH 306
Instructor: Veronika Ambros
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Office Hours: Monday 12-1 Alumni Hall R. 405, Wednesday 1-2 Comparative Literatures, 3 Floor Isabel Bader Theatre
Program:

In 1920 artists of various disciplines founded the group Devětsil (Nine Powers), which became the epitome of the Czech avantgarde. Inspired by several new studies of the avant-garde art (Benson, Levinger, Garfinkel) this class will examine the politically defined understanding of the Czech avant-garde as works of leftist creators as the mostly accepted views of this group. Special attention will be paid to the role of translations, the function of intermediality, to individual authors like Jaroslav Hašek, and the Čapek brothers who did not belong to any group, but shaped considerably modern Czech culture.

In addition, we will discuss the unique position of Czechoslovakia of the thirties where the artistic experiments continued until the end of the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) whereas the political events elsewhere, especially in the Soviet Union and Germany, disrupted artistic experiments and their theoretical conceptualization.

Readings in Czech and English

REQUIREMENTS:

Graduate:

A paper (5000 words - 20 pages) on a research topic chosen in consultation with the instructor (50%) should be handed in a week before the end of classes. Students will present an oral report (20%) as well as a written book review (5 pages 20%). A regular attendance and active participation (10%) are expected.

Undergraduate:

A paper (2500 words 10 pages) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor (50%) should be handed in a week before the end of classes. Students will write one book review (2 pages, 20%) and post their reader responses (20%). A regular attendance and active participation (10%) are expected.

The style of the papers has to follow the general rules for MLA Style.
Program

1. Introduction

2. Česká moderna /Czech modernism

All

Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853-1912) The Ballad of Blaník: Bažant Page 214
Petr Bezruč (1867-1958) Maryčka Magdonova:
Karel Hlaváček (1874-1898) Late towards Morning:


Graduates


3. Czech Cubism

All


Francois Burkhardt “Czech Cubism Today,” ibid 96-111


**Graduates**


4. **“Moderns in Bohemia” Franz Kafka, Jaroslav Hašek, Karel Čapek**

   **All**

   Franz Kafka “The Report to an Academy”
   Jaroslav Hašek “The Kynological Institute”
   http://www.socialiststories.net/writers/jaroslav-hasek/

   Bažant Part VIII. “From National Self-Determination to Cosmopolitanism (1867-1918)”


**Graduates**

Lubomír Doležel "Karel Čapek - Modern Storyteller" 15-28,
Karel Čapek *War with the Newts (Válka s mloky*, 1936), also translated as *War with the Salamanders*, a novel

5. **The French Connections**
   **All**
   Apollinaire Zone


Graduates


6. Devětsil

All


Roman Jakobson “dada” Vestnik Teatra 1921, ibid. 359

Zdeněk Pešat “Devětsil and Literature” In František Šmejkal The Czech Avant-Garde of the 1920s and 30s, London, Moma 1990, 52-57

Michal Bregant ‘The Devětsil Film Dream František Šmejkal The Czech Avant-Garde of the 1920s and 30s, London, Moma 1990, 70-73

Karel Srp ‘D: “An Epilogue” ibid. 80-87


Graduates

7. Poetism

Vítězslav Nezval *Edison* (1927)


Alfred French “Poetism“ in *Poets of Prague*, 29-43


Graduates


8. Karel Teige


---. “10 years of the Bauhaus *[stavba 1929-30]* ibid 632


Nicholas Sawicki,. "Writing the History of the "Czechoslovak Official Modern:" Karel Teige as Historian of the "Cubist" Generation." In *Centropa 5* 12005, 4-15


Graduates

9. **Surrealism I.**

Alfred French “Interval for Surrealism” *Poets of Prague* 91 -109
Michal Schonberg `The Theater and Films of Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich` *ibid.* 183-191.

**Graduates**

10. **Surrealism II.**


Karel Srp and Lenka Bydžovská “Mirrors without Images”. 88-94
Jindřich Štýrský “Artificialism” [ReD1927-8.] Benson 589

**Graduates**
Lenka Bydžovská `The Avantgarde Ideal of Poiesis: Poetism and Artificialism during the Late 1920s. in Dluhosch, Eric (ed ), et al. *Karel Teige, 1900-1951, l’Enfant Terrible of the Czech Modernist Avant-Garde.* USA; UK, 1999. 46-69
11.  Stage Experiments


Graduates


12.  Theory and Practice - Prague Linguistic Circle. Review


Jiří Veltruský “Semiotics and Avant-garde” *Theatre Survey / Volume 36 / Issue 01 / April 1995*, pp 87 - 95

Graduates

Recommended General Readings


Suggested Readings:

Ambros, Veronika


Bydžovská Lenka “Against the Current. The Story of the Surrealist Group of Czechoslovakia” *Papers of Surrealism* Issue 1 winter 2003


---. *Od avantgardy k druhé moderně : (cestami filozofie a literatury)* Praha, Torst, 2004,

---. *Strukturalsmus a avantgarda*. Authors. 1970, Československý spisovatel, Praha


Garfinkle, Deborah Helen. „Bridging East and West: Czech Surrealism's Interwar Experiment” (Vitezslav Nezval, Karel Teige, Soviet Union, France).2003. http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations/AAI3073073/


Neslehová, Mahulena. "Impulses of Futurism and Czech Art." International Futurism in Arts and Literature. G. Berghaus ed. (122-143). (De Gruyter, 2000);


Sawicki, Nicholas. "Writing the History of the "Czechoslovak Official Modern": Karel Teige as Historian of the "Cubist" Generation." _Centropa_, 2005 Jan., v.5, n.1 _5.1


Švácha Rostislav "Surrealism and Czech Functionalism" _Umeni_, 2007, 4

http://versita.metapress.com/content/m08051r747p2/?p=6c80cc4f58b142ababd353ff490bf119&pi=0


Voskovec, Jiří () Klobouk ve křoví, Praha: Československý spisovatel1965
Winner, Thomas. The Czech Interwar Avantgarde and the Prague Linguistic CircleAuthors: Elsevier, Amsterdam 1990, 637-647,
---. “ The Poetics and Aesthetics of the Prague Linguistic Circle” Poetics, 1973, 77-96
Zusi, Peter A. "The Style of the Present: Karel Teige on Constructivism and Poetism." Representations (Berkeley, Calif.).88