Study Abroad in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Austria: Democratization in Eastern and Central Europe

Political Science 300
Summer I: June 18-28, 2020

Professor: Olga A. Avdeyeva, Ph.D.
Office: 330 Coffey Hall; phone: 773-5083484
E-mail: oavdeyeva@luc.edu

Course Description

The year of 1989 saw one of the most surprising developments in contemporary politics--the collapse of communist regimes across Eastern and Central Europe. This course will provide students with a unique opportunity to study the process democratization and its challenges in a study abroad setting. Our course discussions will take place in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Austria. To explain and understand the causes of autocratic regime collapse, the political alternatives these societies had, and the challenges of democratization and democratic consolidation, this course will examine the history and politics in the region with focus on Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, and compare and contrast it with experiences of the Europe’s “old democracy,” Austria.

In comparing different trajectories of political and economic transformation across several Central and Eastern European states, we will first discuss the relationship between state and society and the nature of the political and economic institutions of state socialism. Then, we will focus on processes of democratic transition, economic reform, and the major dilemmas and challenges they created. The course will introduce both academic scholarship on different approaches to democratization and hear and learn from government and civil society activists who lived through and struggled for democratic reforms and democratic consolidation in post-communist Eastern and Central Europe. This historic transformation from authoritarian communist regime to consolidated democracies offers students a unique opportunity to learn through experience and observation about the challenges and strategies of a democratic process.

Course Objectives:

This course has three main learning objectives:

(1). Define the key concepts and terms used in academic democratization literature and correctly employ them in students’ description and analysis of political structures and institutions as applied to post-communist countries.

(2). Appreciate the complexity of political, social, and economic structures, formal and informal institutions that influenced the paths of transformation in post-communist countries.
Critically evaluate and assess political processes and outcomes in Central and Eastern European post-communist states and their implications for democratization efforts in other regions of the world.

Course Requirements:

The course is designed as an experiential learning with the largest part of the course taking place in Poland (Krakow), Hungary (Budapest), the Czech Republic (Prague), and Austria (Vienna). During our travels, we will participate in many activities, which will introduce and promote students’ understanding of the region and other course learning objectives. As such, we will have opportunities to visit government institutions (Parliaments), meet major party leaders and activists, and hear from activists from civil society organizations. Students are expected to attend all scheduled events during our trip. To be able to fruitfully engage in the experiential part of the course, however, students should complete the two assigned reading materials (two books) PRIOR to departing for the course.

While in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Austria, the students will keep a log of daily journal reflections. In their daily journal entries students will reflect on their day activities, meetings, conversations, and link them to the reading material assigned for this course. It is important that students create analytical connections between their daily activities and meetings with assigned reading, employing critical evaluation and analysis, as well as key concepts and terms that they have learned during lectures and meetings and in the assigned reading. This creative reflection will be facilitated with our daily group reflections and discussions, which will have elements of a lecture (given by the professor), talks by guest speakers, and student discussion and sharing. When the study abroad portion of the course will be complete, students will submit a ten-page reflection on one of the topics of the course (democratization, democratic consolidation, democratic backsliding, other course-related topics) written as student reflection on the assigned reading material and experiential portion of the course, discussions and lectures that took place in CEE states. WE will hold two on-line sessions with students to discuss their progress on papers and answer student questions upon the arrival to the United States.

Required books:


Grading of Class Assignments and Grade Composition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in all scheduled events:</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Journal Entry:</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reflection (Due 10 days upon arrival from the trip):</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>200</td>
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</tbody>
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94 – 100% or 470 – 500 points = A
90 – 93.9% or 450 – 469 points = A-
87 – 89.9% or 435 – 449 points = B+
84 – 86.9% or 420 – 434 points = B
80 – 83.9% or 400 – 419 points = B-
77 – 79.9% or 385 – 399 points = C+

73–76.9% or 365–384 points = C
70–72.9% or 350–364 points = C-
67–69.9% or 335–349 points = D+
63–66.9% or 315–334 points = D
Below 63% or 315 points = F

ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

In writing course papers, students must document all passages, paraphrases, and ideas that are borrowed from any source. Direct quotations must be placed within quotation marks. Papers must represent research conducted for the course in which they are assigned and no other; it is not appropriate to submit a paper that has already been or will be submitted for another course. Finally, papers must be the product of the student’s own work. Papers written by anyone other than the student, including those purchased from commercial services, are unacceptable.

Academic dishonesty on an examination or other assignments is inconsistent with Loyola’s standards of academic integrity. This includes, in the words of the Undergraduate Studies catalogue, “obtaining, distributing or communicating examination material prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing to, or obtaining information from, another student during the examination; or attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted.”

The catalogue states that “plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning a grade of “F” for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department.” The chairperson is required to report cases of academic dishonesty to the Dean.

Additional rules concerning academic integrity and examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct can be found in the current Undergraduate Studies catalogue. See also:
http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml
Preliminary Schedule
June 18 - June 29, 2020

Arrive to Budapest
Day 1: Budapest

- Arrive to a designated hotel
- Meet your professor at the hotel
- Meet Tour Director at the hotel
- Take a walking tour of Budapest

With your tour director you will see:

- Fisherman’s Bastion
- Parliament

- With your professor: lecture and discussion on collapse of communist regime and democratization process in Hungary. Party formation and political competition.
- Enjoy dinner in Budapest: Welcome Group Dinner
- Fill out journal entry

Day 2: Budapest

- Tour Budapest with an expert local guide, lecture focused on historic efforts of democratization in Austro-Hungarian Empire and Hungary
- Visit Matthias Church, discuss the importance of religion for democratization
- With your professor: lecture and discussion of reasons for democratic backsliding in Hungary, 2005-present
- Enjoy an evening river cruise on the Danube
- Fill out journal entry

Day 3: Group Transfer from Budapest to Kraków
Travel via Slovakia and the Tatra mountains to Kraków

- With your professor: lecture and discussion of Polish history and efforts of democratization. Opposition movement and civil society.
- Enjoy dinner in Kraków
- Fill out journal entry

Day 4: Kraków

- Tour Kraków with an expert local guide. Hear guided tour on Polish history
- Visit the Jewish Ghetto
- Visit Wawel Cathedral
- With your professor: lecture and discussion on collapse of communist regime and democratization process in Poland. The rise of right-wing parties, 2005-present.
- Kraków Salt Mines:
Discover a subterranean labyrinth of giant caverns, underground lakes and chapels on this half-day guided excursion. The salt mine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has existed for 900 years. Descend into the earth on a mining elevator and explore chambers where miners and artists have crafted salt sculptures and bas reliefs. Comfortable shoes and warm clothes are recommended.

- Fill out journal entry

**Day 5: Kraków**
- Visit Auschwitz and Birkenau with an expert local guide
- Visit human rights NGO in Kraków: guest lecture on democratization in Poland
- Spend time exploring Kraków on your own
- Fill out your journal entry

**Day 6: Transfer to Prague**

**Travel to Prague**

- With your professor: lecture and discussion on the history of Czech democratization. Economic transition to market economy and democratization.
- Take a walking tour of Prague

With your Tour Director you will see:

- Old Town Square
- Astronomical Clock
- Fill out your journal Entry

**Day 7: Prague**

- Tour Prague with an expert local guide
- See Charles Bridge
- Walk down the Golden Lane
- Visit St. Vitus Cathedral
- With your professor: Lecture and discussion of democratic consolidation in Central and Eastern European states, comparative analysis.
- Prague River cruise

Cruise along Prague's Vltava River and admire the Czech capital's main sights, including Charles Bridge, Kampa, Prague Castle, the Dancing House, and the National Theatre.

- Journal entry

**Day 8: Prague**

- Visit the National Assembly: Organized tour with professor (details pending)
- Guest lecture: human rights activists (details pending)
- Evening: walking tours on your own
• Journal entry

**Day 9: Transfer to Vienna**

On the bus: lecture and discussion on consolidated democracy and the Austrian experience. The democratic wave post World War II.

• Take a walking tour of Vienna
  • With your Tour Director you will see:
    • Opera House
    • Kärntnerstrasse
    • St. Stephen’s Cathedral
    • Open evening
    • Journal entry

**Day 10: Vienna**

• Take a guided tour of Vienna
  • With your expert local guide you will see:
    • Ringstrasse
    • Parliament
    • Rathaus
    • Hofburg
  • Visit Schönbrunn Palace
  • With your profressor: lecture and discussion on the complexity of a democratic process in historical perspective

• Final Evening: Enjoy a traditional Weiner Schnitzel dinner in Vienna

• Final Journal Entry

**Day 11: Depart to Chicago**

**Day 15: Upon arrival to Chicago we will have an online conference call to discuss student progress on papers and answer student questions. Time TBD.**

**Day 16: We will have an online discussion board to post students’ comments and reflections on critical issues. Time TBD**