



Graduiertenschule
für Ost- und Südosteuropastudien
Graduate School for
East and Southeast European Studies



Summer School 2022

Prague, Sept. 26-Oct. 1, 2022

Contested Memoryscapes: Central Europe and its Fractured Pasts

Prague, like many other places in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, is a palimpsest: its cityscape embodies different layers of a discontinuous history, some visible, others hidden. At the same time, and related to the mnemonic function of built structures, Prague and the Czech Republic are a paradigmatic case for the contested nature of memory, both in the region and more generally in the Eastern realm. Political groups embed their ideologies on particular narratives and associated visions of the past, whereas diverse social groups and initiatives struggle to make their histories visible in public space and mediated representations thereof. Political and social cleavages are rooted not only in divergent historical experiences but are reproduced through a struggle over history and memory. Both, therefore, have become major objects of political and social contestation, from the private sphere to national legislation. At the same time, the diverse pasts of a place like Prague face not only political but also commercial appropriations, which adds another layer to the fluidity of representations of history.

The 2022 Summer School of the Graduate School, organized in tandem with the Malach Center for Visual History at Charles University, will tackle these issues by engaging with existing research and with memorial practices themselves, as embodied in artefacts and texts, institutions, and performative practices. Guided by concepts from interdisciplinary memory studies, the participants of the Summer School will go out in the city in search of contested memoryscapes in their different manifestations, such as museums, memorials, street names, memory institutions and will speak to memory actors. In a more theoretically guided approach, they will also delve into practices of life writing and other forms of narrative memory production, reflecting about the heuristic status of the products derived from these processes (“sources”) as well as their functioning in the respective contested and commercialized memory cultures. Results and impressions from this instant research will be presented at the end of the Summer School. Plenary lectures by eminent local specialists will further add to the program.

Marginalized memories and voices are one of the focal areas of the Summer School. We ask about the voids and blind spots: whose histories are underrepresented or even actively silenced in the city that is so rich in memorials and museums? Is the multicultural past of Prague and the Czech Republic present in the (semi)official renderings of its history? What actors and groups can use public space to tell their stories? Are there gendered and socially exclusive admission criteria? And what does it mean to take silenced pasts to the public? We explore these issues in a day-long trip to Lety, near the

city of Písek, where the so-called Gypsy camp was located during German occupation. Run by the local collaborators, it was a de facto concentration camp for the local Roma that also served as a transfer station on the way to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the 1970s a large agricultural enterprise, a pig farm, was built on the site. Only recently, despite considerable political and local opposition, the government decided to relocate the pig farm and support a community memorialization project. We take Lety as a paradigmatic case to understand the challenges for the memory activists who represent a discriminated minority.

The Summer School will focus on three main themes, for each of which a working group of doctoral researchers and faculty will be formed; each group will zoom in on a particular domain of the memory making and discuss methodological questions, related to the study of specific modalities, media, and kinds of memory:

- History Politics and Memory Activism (coordinated by Volha Bartash and Ulf Brunnbauer)
- Touristic and Commercial Appropriations (coordinated by Bianca Hoenig and Vjeran Pavlaković)
- Storytelling and Memory (coordinated by Mirja Lecke and Marek Nekula)

Apart from lectures and group work, the program includes two public roundtables on Remembering Genocide and on new East-West divides and their roots. In a special session, the Malach Center will present visual and digital tools for research on memory practices.

Lecture Programme

Monday, Sept. 26, afternoon:

- Prof. Jan Hajič (Charles University, Malach Center Founder)
“Current Trends in Digital Humanities and Computational Linguistics and their Impact on Historical research”
- Prof. Marek Nekula (University of Regensburg):
“Remembering and Forgetting in Prague: Memory in and of the Central European Urban Space”

Tuesday, Sept. 27, morning:

- Dr. Veronika Pehe (Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences):
“Czech Memory Politics and Cultural Memory Intertwined: Trends and Trajectories since 1989”
- Evening (public event):
“Remembering Genocide – dominant narratives and voices from the margins”
Roundtable with Dr. Kateřina Čapková (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Prof. Dr. Kateřina Králová (Charles University Prague), Prof. Dr. Vjeran Pavlaković (University Rijeka).
Moderation: Dr. Volha Bartash (University Regensburg)
In cooperation with the Goethe-Institute Prague

Wednesday, Sept. 28, full day:

Excursion to Camp Lety (in Písek district): Memorial to the Holocaust of the Roma and Sinti in Bohemia

Thursday, Sept. 29, morning

- Václav Smyčka, Ph.D. / Stefan Segi, Ph.D. (both Czech Academy of Sciences):
“Guilt and Statute of Limitation in Czech Memory Culture”
- Jiří Kocián, PhDr.: *“Presentation of the Malach Centre for Visual History “*

- Evening (public event):
“Are we heading towards a new East-West Divide?” with David Emler (Prague), Daniela Kolenovská (Prague) and Valeria Korablyova (Prague), Moderation: Mirja Lecke (Regensburg)
In cooperation with the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University Prague

Friday, Sept. 30, morning

- Alexander Kratochvil (Prague/Munich): *“No Memory without Fictional Worlds: Memory and Trauma in Literature”*

In Cooperation with:

