

# CESTA: Prague on the Go

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

**Lecturer:** Prof. Eva Eckert, Ph.D.

**Contact:** eeck233@gmail.com

**Office hours:**

**Class time:**

### Course description

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION examines current culture through various approaches to communication and the role of language in it; strives to answer the question what social factors support or prevent intercultural communication; studies cultural diversity of social networks of ghettos, immigrant communities, and professional and political groupings, and cultural boundaries of gender, age, social status, class, ethnicity and race; investigates globalization trends and the role of English, migration and ethnic conflicts of EU, and ideologies that accelerate language demise. The students apply their understanding of rituals, multilingualism and other concepts when examining the multiethnic setting of Prague.

**OVERARCHING QUESTIONS:** What defines culture, communication and language? How and why do speakers build social networks? If language becomes an obstacle in intercultural communication, through what channels can communication be accomplished? Is pragmatic competence and ritualistic knowledge universal or culture specific? Will English communicative rituals dominate intercultural communication and English become the global language? Or, is English going to split up into new languages?

**OBJECTIVES:** To gain understanding of the complicated issues of modern culture, pragmatics and communication, apply concepts of social networks and domains in solving problems in multilingual communicative situations, gain multifaceted insight into migration and integration conflicts as well as resources to argue and investigate pivotal questions.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Level:** 200 level

**Recommended and required readings** in a Class Reader, online:

*Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, by Ronald Wardhaugh

*Handbook of Sociolinguistics*

*Language Myths*, by Peter Trudgill and Laurie Bauer

*The Power of Babel*, by John McWhorter

**Teaching methods:** Seminar presentations and discussion

**Assessment:** Attendance, class preparation and participation are necessary and mandatory.

Late assignments are not accepted.

- 30% is assigned to quizzes (about 5) on readings and concepts
- 30% is assigned to the **portfolio** with student observations, comments, photos, cut outs, ads and other relevant materials that must be annotated. The materials relate to your semester in Prague and overall academic work and help you clarify the integrative project on which you work throughout the semester
- 40% is assigned to CESTA **interdisciplinary final project** (20 minute power or poster presentation) followed by a 5 to 10 p. research paper

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS and ASSIGNMENTS

### *Reading and study assignments*

#### I. Building up CESTA: Roads and Pathways, Transitions and Alternatives

##### WEEK 1: What is COMMUNICATION?

Talking vs. communicating

[Ellen Degenerous, \*People are talking\*](#) (2,25 mins into)

LANGUAGE as INSTINCT or CULTURAL ADAPTATION?

[Dan Everett, \*Endangered Languages and Lost Knowledge\*](#)

Cultural isolation: The Case of Piraha

#### II. European and Global Contexts

##### WEEK 2: CULTURE and WORDS

WORDS as historical repositories

Migrations, contacts and intercultural communication

Indo-European homeland

*Intro to Sociolinguistics, ch. 9*

*A History of English Words*

[Discovery of the Charchen man](#)

##### WEEK 3: The STORY of BABEL

Do we have to speak different languages?

*video* In Search of Babel

*The Power of Babel, p. 1-14*

*Myth 4 and 16*

*The Mother Tongue*

#### III. Ideas and Ideologies

##### WEEK 4: COMMUNICATION: Relevance and intention

*Relevance: Communication and cognition*

PRAGMATICS of COMMUNICATION

On being truthful and honest: [Colbert Show, \*Honest belief\*](#)

Information structure

Language and experience

*Handbook, ch. 23*

##### WEEK 5: COMMUNITIES and NETWORKS

Czechs and Romani

Case studies

*Intro to Soc., ch. 5*

#### iv. Central Europe in its Diversity: Transitions and Alternatives, Contacts and Conflicts; Czechs and their Neighbors

##### WEEK 6: COMMUNICATION BOUNDARIES

Class and Status  
Gender

*Intro to Soc., ch. 14*  
*Intro to Soc., ch. 13*  
*Women Talk Too Much*

## WEEK 7: ATTITUDES

Speakers' attitudes and prejudice

[Marking blind maps and speakers' attitudes](#)

[Linguistic profiling](#)

[You talk funny: American Tongues](#)

v. **REVIEW: Basic concepts and boundaries; Planning integrative projects**

vi. **Revolution and Social Change**

## WEEK 8: COMMUNITIES in CONTACT and CONFLICT

Switching codes and identities

Bilingualism: The Case of Belgium

[Dual language classes: Controversy](#)

Czech and American classrooms

*Handbook, 285-300*  
*Intro to Soc., 96-118*

## WEEK 9: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION and CULTURAL SHOCK

TRANSITION in MIGRATION

[Immigrant languages in the U.S.](#)

Migrants in Czech Rep. and the U.S.

*Hoffmann, Lost in Translation*

## WEEK 10: LANGUAGES at the CROSSROADS: DEATHS and BIRTHS

Europe

Scots E, Irish E, RP English accent

the U.S.

Spanglish

Is American English ruining Czech?

*Oxford Guide, 124-62*

163-75

*Myth 21*

vii. **Institutions and Legal Frameworks**

## WEEK 11: The Institution of EU, migration and ethnicity

viii. **Memory and Forgetting; Biographies and oral history**

## WEEK 12: LANGUAGES at the CEMETERY: Fieldtrip to Olšany

Networks and domains, Class and status, revisited

*Student group projects*

*Intro to Soc., ch. 10*

## WEEK 13: TALK and ACTION

Rituals

My Fair Lady: The small talk

Speech acts

Solidarity, Politeness and Etiquette

*Intro to Soc.*, ch. 11

*Intro to Soc.*, ch. 12

ix. **Landscapes: Real and Imaginary**

WEEK 14: GLOBALIZATION and LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

Dying languages

film *The Linguists*

EU and language shift

*The Power of Babel*, ch. 7

x. **CESTA at its End: What's Next on the Road? Transitions and Alternatives of the Future**

WEEK 15: **Student project presentations**