SLOVAK 0890 – Slovak, Czech, and Central European Film

Final Paper

Deadline: 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

You may submit your final paper as early as you wish. Consider giving yourself an earlier deadline in order to accommodate the possibility of sudden adverse events (e.g., internet and CourseWeb problems, rescheduled exams, pet emergencies, transportation issues, and more) that tend to be reported during the finals week. Final papers that do not reach me by the deadline to the minute for any reason will be graded as not submitted (F).

You may ask me for an extension till 11:59 a.m. Thursday, April 23, for a grade lowered by one step (e.g., a C- for a paper whose content and style would merit a C if submitted on time). I must receive such a request before the deadline but no earlier than Wednesday 4:00 p.m., April 22 (I will not consider earlier requests). Include a reason that is not an unexpected adverse event you could have accommodated by giving yourself an earlier deadline.

If you send me a draft of your paper or just disconnected passages from it before or on Saturday, April 18, I will send you my comments on or before Monday, April 20.

If your draft or passages submitted for comments by Saturday, April 18, contain at least 4 full double-spaced pages of text that you have not submitted as part of a weekly assignment (new content shorter by merely a single line will not suffice for this purpose), your deadline will be automatically extended till 11:59 a.m. (noon), Friday, April 24, 2015, without the option of any further extension.

Your paper will have no less than 12 and no more than 14 pages (double-spaced, 12-point Bookman Old Style, and Arial for the title and your name). You must include references to the secondary sources you use or quote,* but you need not do that if you relate anything that we discussed or I said in class, or use anything contained in any of in the handouts (including the historical reviews) unless the handouts attribute the passage explicitly to a source other than myself – you may treat all of that as what you have learned in this class, as your own knowledge now. External sources can be useful for a variety of supporting information, but substantial reliance on them in the final paper may reduce the ratio, i.e., relevant value, of your own discussion of the films and filmmaking covered in class, which is a main source of grading in this course.

You must choose a topic derived from and based on the films covered in this course and give your paper a title. You may use material from your assignments and midterm paper, but at least half of your final paper must be new text (e.g., if you submit 12 pages, 6 must be new, if you submit 14 pages, 7 must be new). You need to choose a topic that will enable you to include all of the following in your paper, in any order:

• A comparison between American and Central European filmmaking.

* Pitt’s guidelines on Academic Integrity – Student Conduct mandate: “A student has an obligation to exhibit honesty and to respect the ethical standards of the academy in carrying out his or her academic assignments. Without limiting the application of this principle, a student may be found to have violated this obligation if he or she:” [...] “10. Presents as one’s own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.”
• A comparison between perceptions and expectations by American and Central European moviegoers. (In the late 1990s, 35 Slovak and Czech film critics and academics were asked to rank their 10 best Slovak and Czech films ever. An average of their ranking placed the following films among the top 20: The Shop on Main Street; The Firemen’s Ball; Closely Watched Trains; Birds, Orphans and Fools; The Sun in a Net; Daisies; Loves of a Blond; but Kolya barely made the top 50.)

• References, however brief, to each of the films numbered 1-10 you have seen in this course: in several instances, a simple statement like similar to film X, or another example was film X will do; but your paper must include a more detailed focus on at least 8 of the films you have seen in this course. You may include comments on other films shown in this course, including those shown just in clips as examples.

• The social and political context in which the Central European films were made.

• Comments on the way the films were made, not just on their storylines.

• Correct references to the historical background of the periods when the films were made and of the stories they relate.

• Given that this course is focused on Slovak and Czech film, all of your references to anything “Slovak,” “Czech,” and “Czechoslovak” must be flawless.

The following topics are merely suggestions for those who have not found a topic of their own: tailor the broad suggestions to suit your approach. Disregard them, and do not even read them if you do not want to be influenced. Whether you do or do not use these topics will not affect your grade. Unless it is needed for clarity, the possible, broad topics below omit variations of in/of/on... Central European film.