

CZECH @ UNL

2009 – 2010



University of Nebraska in Lincoln
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

Overview

In 2007 the Czech language program at UNL celebrated its centennial. The program, together with the students, marked the anniversary with cultural performances and commemorative events.

In Nebraska one out of ten people have Czech ancestors and Czech heritage and culture are an integral part of Nebraska's heritage and culture. Ten percent of UNL students who have studied Czech have gone on to study and/or work in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Business opportunities are growing in Eastern Europe. Many U.S. companies have already expanded into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The Czech program at UNL is one of eight regularly offered Czech language programs in the entire United States and has been offered at UNL since 1907.

History

Many famous American politicians and cultural personalities graduated from the program. Let us mention Olga Stastny, the founder of Nebraska social medicine, one of the founders of the American Medical Women's National Association, Dr. Gogela, the pioneer of brain surgery, and Roman Hruska, US Senator. Czech language instruction at UNL started in 1907. The first instructor was the poet Jeffrey Hrbek, who was succeeded by his sister, Dr. Šárka Hrbková. After Dr. Hrbková went to New York to work for the International Red Cross, Professor Orin Stepanek took over until the mid-1950s. Dr. Vladimír Kučera, the next teacher of Czech, is remembered for his organizational skills; he helped bring about Czech festivals in Nebraska. Joseph Swoboda, UNL archivist, assembled the second largest archive of Czech emigration and its cultural achievements, in the US. It is housed in Love Library.

Courses

Twenty-two hours of Czech can be used to fulfill UNL's language requirements. The courses in Czech are as follows:

First Semester

101 Beginning Czech I (5 hours)

No prerequisites and intended for beginners. The course is designed to introduce beginners to the basic functioning of the Czech language. The class work consists of reading, writing, speaking and listening exercises. Students learn basic social interaction rules; how to use dictionaries, and about Czech culture.

Second Semester

102 Beginning Czech II (5 hours)

Prerequisites and desirable preparation: Czech 101 or equivalent knowledge. Czech 102 completes the first year of the language requirement and prepares students for Czech 201. Students achieve a level that allows them to understand simple sentences, participate in small talk, talk about themselves and their families, extract information from newspapers, schedules, menus, and to be able to function as a tourist in the Czech Republic.

Third Semester

201 Intermediate Czech I (3 hours)

Prerequisite: Czech 102 or equivalent. Czech 201 is the third step to satisfy the 16 hour foreign language requirement. Students learn how to orient themselves in the Czech Republic, ask for directions, order a meal, talk about themselves, their family, write their biography, apply for a scholarship and perform other similar tasks in Czech. They will understand the replies of natives to their inquiries. Students will be able to read simple texts, and even some short stories, using a dictionary.

Fourth Semester

202 Intermediate Czech II (3 hours)

Prerequisite: Czech 201 or equivalent knowledge: Czech 202 is the fourth step to satisfy the 16 credit hour language requirement. The class teaches the four basic skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Except for grammatical notes, and for verification of listening comprehension, the target language is used the entire class

period. Students acquire the mastery of communicational structures of routine social demands, as well as the ability to read the press and easier literary works with the use of a dictionary.

Fifth Semester

301 Representative Authors I (3 hours)

Prerequisites: Students who completed Czech 202 and/or equivalent. This course constitutes a continuation of Intermediate Czech and is for students who wish to acquire advanced knowledge of the Czech language and to study aspects of Czech literature. Czech 301 consists of Readings of Czech Literature of the 19th Century and first quarter of the 20th Century.

Sixth Semester

302 Representative Authors II (3 hours)

Prerequisites: Czech 301 or equivalent. This class discusses Readings of Contemporary Czech Literature.

Faculty

Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce

Associate Professor of Russian and Czech, Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce has taught at UNL since 1989. She studied Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Brussels, and went on to receive her Masters and Ph.D. in Slavic Linguistics and General Linguistics at the University of Kansas (1986). Professor Saskova-Pierce's research interest is in teaching methodology and Slavic Linguistics. She has published several articles on learning processes, a textbook *Czech for Communication*, and several articles about the history and language of Slavic settlements in the USA.

Katarína Čermáková, lecturer

Katarína was born in Slovakia and grew up in Moravia, in Brno. She is ABD (all but dissertation) in linguistics. Her doctoral thesis focuses on syntactic problems. She analyzes conjunctions and their function in complex sentences in the Czech language. Katarína's professional experience includes the teaching of Czech to foreigners at the University of Olomouc in the Czech Republic. Katarína's teaching at UNL is partially supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Layne Pierce, lecturer

Layne Pierce grew up in Kansas, near the Czech community of Pilsen. He studied Czech language at DLI and later as a graduate student at the University of Kansas. He has done extensive translations from Czech and Slovak into English. He is the co-author of Essential Czech textbook. He co-teaches the Czech on-line courses and team teaches other Czech classes. He has been involved in the organization of cultural programs offered by the Czech Language Program at UNL over the past 20 years. He graduated with master's degree from the University of Kansas in German language and literature, with minor emphasis in Czech. In addition he holds master's degree in library science.

The Czech Language Minor

Sixteen hours of beginning and intermediate courses count for the language requirement. Students can obtain a minor in Czech after completion of six credit hours in instruction of the third year.

Study Abroad Opportunities

There are several programs in the Czech Republic offered through the University of Nebraska office of International Affairs.

Spring in the Czech Republic in Olomouc (six weeks), the Summer Institute at the University of West Bohemia (Plzen,

three weeks), *Prague Summer Language Institute* at Charles University in Prague (six weeks) and *SLI* in Olomouc and Brno.

Scholarships and Other Help

All beginning students enrolled in the Czech Language Program will receive free textbooks from the Czech Language Foundation. There are about thirty scholarships earmarked for students of the first year of Czech language, provided by the Czech Language Foundation and Nebraska Czech Communities. (www.unl.edu/CzechLanguageFoundation)

The scholarships are not available for on-line courses.

Czech Komensky Club

The principal function of the Czech Komensky Club is to provide events which focus on culture and history and bring together people of diverse backgrounds who share Czech interests. The Club activities started in 1904. It has organized concerts of classical music, lectures, poetry readings, balls, workshops, film screenings, potluck parties, and other activities for UNL students as well as for members of the Lincoln community. The Czech Komensky Club meets twice a month. Everyone is welcome. In 2005 the Czech Komensky Club received the prestigious *Gratias Agit* Prize from the Czech Republic Government. (www.unl.edu/komenskyclub)

For further information on the Czech Language Program

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