

OLLI WINTER 2023

HABSBURG CAPITALS: VIENNA, PRAGUE, BUDAPEST

HARLOW ROBINSON, Ph.D.

SYLLABUS

Ruled by the indomitable Hapsburg monarchs, the great cities of Vienna, Prague and Budapest rose from ancient roots to become vibrant modern multi-cultural centers of industry, commerce, science and art in the heart of central Europe. Each developed a distinct and colorful personality celebrated in literature, song and cuisine. As the grand imperial capital on the Danube, Vienna, home of the waltz, achieved an architectural and musical splendor rivalling Paris and London. “Golden Prague,” capital of the fertile Czech lands, asserted its Slavic identity in a burst of cultural renewal in the late nineteenth century, after centuries of Austrian domination. Straddling the banks of the Danube on the edge of the Ottoman world, exotic and rebellious Budapest eventually gained status as a dual capital with Vienna of the new (and short-lived) Austro-Hungarian Empire. When the Empire vanished after World War I, these three closely linked cities assumed new and difficult identities in a region afflicted by ethnic violence and war. Our course will take an interdisciplinary approach in exploring the history and culture of these magnificent destinations.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND CLASSES

CLASS MEETS ON TUESDAYS, 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., FOR SIX WEEKS BEGINNING JANUARY 16 THROUGH FEBRUARY 20, 2024

WEEK ONE (JANUARY 16): VIENNA (I)

Who were the Hapsburgs and how did they become so powerful?

Geographical and historical overview of the three cities within the Habsburg Empire

The Austro-Hungarian mentality; Multiculturalism

Overview of history of Vienna and its development as imperial capital of the Habsburg Empire. The Ottoman threat.

Suggested reading: *The Radetzky March*

WEEK TWO (JANUARY 23): VIENNA (II)

Napoleon and Vienna.

Music in Vienna from Beethoven to Schoenberg.

The legacy of the long reign of Emperor Franz-Joseph.

Intellectual and cultural currents in fin-de-siecle Vienna. World War I and the end of the Habsburg era, the new post-war Austria and Vienna.

Suggested reading: *A Nervous Splendor*

WEEK THREE (JANUARY 30): PRAGUE (I)

The rise and fall of the Czech lands before Habsburg domination

Jan Hus and religious conflicts in Bohemia

Prague under the Habsburgs: language and cultural identity

History of the Jewish community in Prague

Suggested reading: *The Coasts of Bohemia*

WEEK FOUR (FEBRUARY 6) PRAGUE (II)

The Czech national revival in the 19th century

Rediscovering Czech national identity through language, culture and music

Smetana and Dvorak

Architectural trends in Prague: a center of Art Nouveau

Prague becomes the capital of the new nation of Czechoslovakia in 1918

Suggested reading: *Prague Winter*

WEEK FIVE (FEBRUARY 13) BUDAPEST (I)

Buda and Pest as separate cities and their unification

Budapest under the Ottomans and their ultimate defeat

Hungary and Budapest under Habsburg rule

The 1848 Revolution and the rise of Hungarian national identity

Budapest becomes a second capital: the formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

Suggested reading: *Budapest 1900*

WEEK SIX (FEBRUARY 20)

BUDAPEST (II)

Budapest reborn as a great European city: architecture and national identity

Jews and Roma in Budapest

The aftermath of World War I: Budapest becomes the capital of a diminished nation

Vienna, Prague and Budapest after 1918: into the vortex of war and ideology

Suggested reading: *The Red Prince: The Fall of a Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Europe*

RECOMMENDED READING:

The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History. Princeton, 1998, 442 pp. by Derek Sayer.

Prague Winter. by Madeleine Albright.

The Radetzky March by Joseph Roth. Overlook Press, 2002.

A Nervous Splendor: Vienna 1888/1889 by Frederic Morton.
Penguin, 1979, 340 pp.

Fin de Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture by Carl Schorske. Random House, 1980, 432 pp.

The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815-1918 by Alan Sked.
Longman, 2001, 360 pp.

Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture by John Lukacs. Grove Press,
1990, 255 pp.

The Red Prince: The Fall of a Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Europe by Timothy Snyder