

## PPK-NEV:301 1 Introduction to Hungarian culture and society

### Aims

#### Aims of the course:

The aim of this course is to introduce foreign students to Hungarian culture and society. It aims to help them understand their new host country better and thus reduce any 'culture shock' by learning about its history, current social and political affairs and cultural heritage, including folk traditions, social customs, arts and gastronomy.

#### Expected learning outcomes and related competencies:

##### *Knowledge:*

- Has basic knowledge of the history and current social and political affairs of Hungary.
- Is familiar with most important traditions, celebrations, social customs and norms.

##### *Skills:*

- Is better able to understand current developments in Hungarian politics and social affairs, interpret the news and engage in informal discussions about these topics.
- Is better able to interpret and appropriately respond to Hungarian people's behaviour in everyday informal interactions.
- Is able to identify on- and offline sources of further information about topics covered in the course.

##### *Attitudes:*

- Appreciates and has a positive attitude towards Hungarian culture and society.
- Is eager to learn more about their host country.

##### *Autonomy and responsibility:*

- Takes responsibility for overcoming any cultural shock he/she experiences by proactively looking for ways to learn more about the host country and/or asking for further help if needed.

### Main topics

#### Main contents:

- Brief history of Hungary, current political and social affairs.
- Most important celebrations, traditions, social customs and norms.
- A glimpse of Hungary's cultural heritage: arts (literature, music, fine arts and movies), sports and science.
- A taste of Hungary: peculiar ingredients and meals in Hungarian cuisine.
- Historical and cultural sights in Budapest and in Hungary: places worth visiting.

#### Planned teaching and learning activities:

- Lecture
- Interactive discussion of model pieces of news and arts
- Students prepare a joint presentation in pair/group work as home assignment and present it at the last class

**Methods:** Lecture, pair work, group work. A seminar-style course with interactive discussions.

### Evaluation

#### Requirements:

- Knowledge of basic facts about Hungary, its history, current political system and political/social affairs and social customs
- Project work as home assignment and delivering a presentation to fellow students about a topic of interest related to the course content in pair/group work

**Type of evaluation:** presentation in class (20 minutes)

**Aspects of evaluation:**

- Active participation in discussions
- Quality of form and content of the joint presentation

### Reading

**Required reading:**

- Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Hungary in figures, 2017. pp. 2-9, 18-19, 24 [http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/hif/hungary\\_in\\_figures\\_2017.pdf](http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/hif/hungary_in_figures_2017.pdf)
- Kontler, L. (2002). *A History of Hungary: Millenium in Central Europe*. Palgrave 528 pp. Chapters I/2. (pp. 33-40) and VIII/3 (pp. 430-468)
- Bernát, A. (2019). Integration of the Roma in Hungary in the 2010s. In: Hungarian Social Report 2019. pp. 196-214 <http://www.tarki.hu/eng/tarsadalmi-riport>
- Simonovits, B. & Szeitl, B. (2019). Attitudes towards migration and migration policies in Hungary and Europe (2014-2018). In: Hungarian Social Report 2019. pp. 295-313 <http://www.tarki.hu/eng/tarsadalmi-riport>
- Török, A. (2011). *Budapest. A Critical Guide*. pp. 21-36 <https://issuu.com/andraas/docs/budapest> (updated versions available in bookshops)

**Recommended fiction books:**

- Magda Dénes: *Castles Burning: A Child's Life in War* (1997). A story told from the perspective of a 9-year-old Hungarian Jew whose father abandons her and her family in Budapest in 1939.
- Marianne Szegedy-Maszak: *I Kiss Your Hands Many Times: Hearts, Souls, and Wars in Hungary* (2013). A family memoir that tells the story of the author's parents' love story in Hungary during World War II.
- Imre Kertész: *Fatelessness (Sorstalanság)* (1975). Semiautobiographical novel chronicling the experience of a young concentration-camp prisoner, by a Hungarian-Jewish Auschwitz survivor who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2002.
- Kati Marton: *Enemies of the People* (2009). About life and surveillance under the Soviet eye.
- Jessica Keener: *Strangers in Budapest: A Novel* (2017). About Budapest in the early 1990s: A young American couple, Annie and Will, move from Boston to Budapest with their infant to build a new life.