

ABOUT THE SERIES

The Prague Histories Forum is a joint public lecture series co-organized by Collegium Carolinum, the German Historical Institute (GHI) Warsaw, the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), and the Czech-German Research and Mediation Platform at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences (FLÚ AV ČR), and hosted by the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague.

Rooted in the long-standing collaboration between German research institutions and Czech academic partners in Prague, the series builds on the experience of the Prague Lectures, an established forum for history and the humanities in the city. It brings internationally recognized scholars into dialogue with students, researchers, and the wider public. Each semester is organized around a thematic cluster exploring the history and societies of East-Central Europe from a multidisciplinary humanities perspective.

This semester's theme is Gender and Queer History in East-Central Europe. From early modern identities and bodies to state-socialist emancipation campaigns, queer life under communism, and anti-gender politics in the postsocialist present, the history of gender and sexuality in the region raises questions that are as historically rich as they are politically alive. Six distinguished academics address them from a range of disciplinary perspectives, tracing a broad arc from medieval Central Europe to the contemporary moment.

Link for online participation:



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Leibniz Institute for
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FACULTY OF ARTS
Charles University



Czech Academy
of Sciences

PRAGUE HISTORIES FORUM

Winter Semester 2026/27

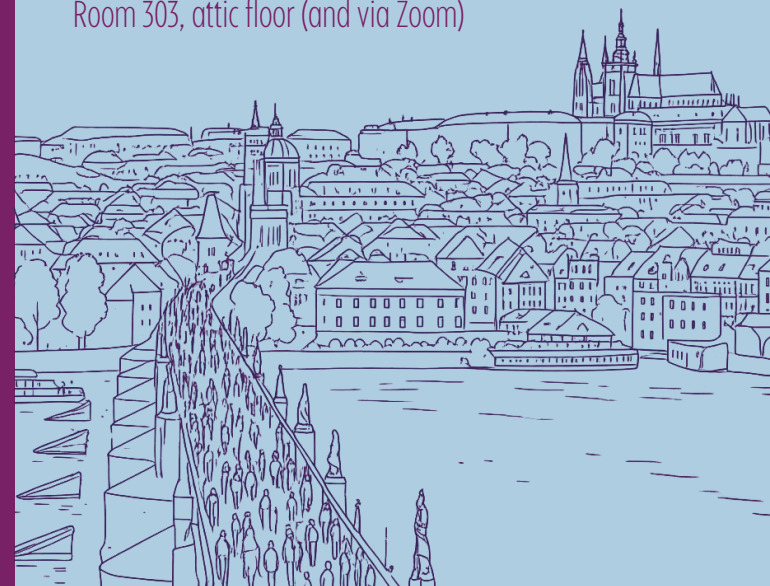
Gender & Queer in East Central Europe

Tuesdays, 15:50–17:20

Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Venue: Špork Palace, Hybernská 3, Prague 1

Room 303, attic floor (and via Zoom)



20 OCTOBER 2026

Christina Lutter (University of Vienna)

Rethinking Medieval Power: Gender, Social Capital, and Relational History

Why does medieval history matter in an age of renewed debates about diversity, inclusion, and social inequality? This lecture argues that studying medieval women is not just about recovering historical actors, but about developing new ways of analyzing power, agency, and social relations. Moving beyond the search for exceptional women, it proposes a relational approach that understands gender as an analytic category intersecting with status, kinship, education, religion, and other dimensions of social belonging.

10 NOVEMBER 2026

Zsófia Lóránd (University of Vienna)

Feminist Political Thought in East Central Europe in the 20th Century: Feminism and Marxism in Socialist Hungary and Self-Managing Yugoslavia

Women all over Central, Eastern, and Southeast Europe have been contemplating, discussing, and fighting for their rights across a broad range of political streams. Feminist and socialist women often engaged in highly adversarial yet mutually transformative exchanges about how women's place in life, politics, and society should change. These debates were heavily framed by the context of state socialist women's emancipation across the region between 1917 and 1989. This lecture draws on the Yugoslav feminist interpretations of Agnes Heller's work and the broader potential of Marxist feminism in the writing of Nada Ler Sofronic, Blazenka Despot, and Nadezda Cacinovic to map the relevance of Marxist revisionism for these authors, and as a path to reinterpreting Heller's early work on women, the family, and feminism.

24 NOVEMBER 2026

Natalia Jarska (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw)

Has the "woman question" been solved under state socialism? The state, women's emancipation, and critical knowledge production in post-war Poland

This lecture examines how, in post-1945 East Central Europe, official ideology and policies shaped gender relations, how they evolved, and how women responded to these shifting agendas and realities. It traces the emergence and development of knowledge production on women's issues from the 1950s to the 1980s, both as a site of critical assessment of state-socialist policies and their outcomes and as an expression of women's voices. Based on the Marxist understanding of production and social relations, the key official state emancipatory agenda stressed women's employment as a condition for emancipation and equality between the sexes. Nevertheless, expertise on women's work showed the limits of this agenda through the intersectional lens of gender and class.

1 DECEMBER 2026

Tracie L. Wilson (Rachel Carson Center, Munich / Technical University Chemnitz)

Narrating the Sex Trade: Stories, Migration, and New Materialist Perspectives

How did stories about the sex trade circulate across and beyond a multilingual borderland with a mobile population? What did these narratives do rather than represent? This lecture argues that the stories themselves were part of how the sex trade, migration, sexuality, and regulation were produced and negotiated.



15 DECEMBER 2026

Dan Healey (University of Oxford)

Sexual Dissidence in the Soviet Union

How did the Soviet state govern sexual dissidence, and what forms of life, solidarity, and resistance did non-normative individuals build within that system? This lecture maps the overlapping legal, medical, and cultural frameworks through which successive Soviet regimes regulated homosexuality and gender nonconformity, from the Bolshevik sexual revolution of the 1920s through the Stalinist recriminalization of male homosexuality in 1933 and into the decades of late socialism. Drawing on archival sources, literary texts, and forensic and psychiatric records, the lecture traces both the instruments of state control and the everyday realities of those who navigated or defied them.

5 JANUARY 2027

Hadley Z. Renkin (Central European University, Vienna)

Queer Histories and Affective Architectures in Hungary

In this lecture we will track several interweaving trails in the shifting affective trajectory of queer belonging and politics in late socialist and postsocialist Hungary: from moments of fear and emotional connection under late socialism to dreams of imminent personal and political normality in the early 1990s, through growing disillusionment and shame at national and queer backwardness in the early 2000s, and grief, anger, and despair at the Orban regime's brutal heteronational politics, to new hopes and cynicisms following Orban's recent fall.

