Please note that IMESS students are not required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Rose SMITH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation title:</td>
<td>Remembering Communist-era Czechoslovakia: A Museum’s role in facilitating History, Identities, and Memory Communities.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>70+</th>
<th>69-65</th>
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<th>59-55</th>
<th>54-50</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>F</td>
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**Knowledge**  
Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.

**Analysis & Interpretation**  
Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.

**Structure & Argument**  
Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an argument’s limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.

**Presentation & Documentation**  
Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.

**Methodology**  
Understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

ECTS Mark: 60  
Charles Mark: C-  
Marker: Ondřej Matějka

Signed:  
Date: 31.8.2019

**MARKING GUIDELINES**

A (UCL mark 70+) = A (Charles mark- excellent): Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work. Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B (UCL mark 69-65) = B (Charles mark – very good)  
C (UCL mark 64-60) = C (Charles mark – good): A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research,
D (UCL mark 59-55) = D (Charles mark – satisfactory)
E (UCL mark 54-50) = E (Charles mark – sufficient):
Demonstration of a critical use of sources and ability to engage in systematic inquiry. An ability to engage in sustained research work, demonstrating methodological awareness. 55 or over equates to a D grade.

F (UCL mark less than 50) = F (Charles mark - insufficient):
Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

Please provide substantive and detailed feedback!
Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (at least 300 words):

The proclaimed objective of the thesis is to study one specific version of the memory of communism in the Czech lands as it is presented in the Museum of Communism in Prague. Ms. Rose Smith correctly situates her research in the context of memory and museum studies and, besides obligatory references to Halbwachs, Bergson and Durkheim, she interestingly uses the theoretical concepts of “vicarious memories”, of “post-memory” by Hirsch as well as “prosthetic memory” by Landsberg. In the methodological part, she shows that she is well-acquainted with critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, Richardson).

With this robust theoretical and methodological background, she enters her research field – the Museum of Communism in Prague – more precisely its “discourse” on the communist era in Czechoslovakia that she analyzes (almost exclusively) on the basis of wall texts in the museum. Ms. Smith argues that the basic narrative line of the exposition is clear and unambivalent: the Czech(oslovak) nation is portrayed as “a kidnapped West”. This claim is supported by its presentation as “intrinsically democratic and capitalistic” historical entity to which communist ideology is politically, economically, and socially foreign.

The strongest part of the thesis uncovers the delicate and probably very well-thought juggling with various concepts and labels used by exhibition authors (German-Nazi-Russian-Soviet – pp. 48-55) in order to maintain a sort of narrative coherence.

Despite the well-established research design and correct work with (a relatively restrained) corpus of sources, the study contains, from my perspective, several more or less important weaknesses:

1/ The author returns again and again to the (correct) observation on the presentation of communism as a foreign entity (or invader) in the Czech lands (in the Museum of Communism) – but she does not even try to confront this narrative with (recent) historiography on unquestionably indigenous character of Czech communism and its very solid social basis since the interwar period. What is the reason for this omission?

2/ The “memory of communism” constructed in the Museum of Communism is undoubtedly work of a relatively small and specific group of people (one particular memory community?): the author mentions several names (Koráb, Carba, Čepičková) but she does not present them in more detail even though they are obviously the main architects of the Museum narrative line. In this regard it would be very useful to get inspiration from an older master thesis defended at Charles University analyzing this Museum of Communism from a more ethnographical perspective (Zýková, Iva-Hedvika. 2012. Doba temna? Aneb o tom, co dnes v Praze zahraniční turistům z komunismu ukazuje-me, co jim vyprávime a co si necháváme pro sebe.) which contains, among many other interesting data, also extensive parts from an interview with the (then) director of the museum. It is a pity that this very relevant text is not mentioned (and mainly used) at all by Ms. Smith.

3/ The main problem of the design of the thesis, in my view, consists, however, in the problematic relevance of the theoretical reflection on the position of (mostly state-owned and financed from public sources) museums in Western European cultures as “official, institutional, collective, formal, public and tangible” embodiment of the past (p. 50) for this particular private enterprise originally created as, if I dare simplify, an appendage to Glenn Spicker’s bagel business and having for its principal target group (at least in the first years of its existence) English-speaking tourists coming to Prague. It is important that the author explicitly reflects on this problem when she writes, in the last pages of her text, that “in most cases, privately-funded museums need the approval of their customer rather than to challenge them beyond their comfort zone” (p. 69) but this observation should have been worked through more systematically in the very core of the thesis.

4/ Considering the author’s interest in “memory communities” created by various museums (i.e. the reception side of the museum discourse), it is again a pity that she did not use some sources which are obviously accessible (as shown in Ms. Zýková’s thesis) – for example the “Book of Visitors” with their comments on their impressions from the Museum of Communism (showing some very critical responses from, for instance, French visitors). Furthermore, a simple consultation of the web page of the museum immediately leads a historically curious consumer to various “pedagogical materials” prepared for younger visitors of the museum (and, of course, strongly orienting their reception of the Museum “discourse”) – another fundamental and extremely interesting source ignored?overlooked? by Ms. Smith.

5/ From the formal point of view, the text contains relatively numerous typos/missing words (p. 11, 17, 32, 34, 37, 47, 53, 59, 61, 65); there is a completely missing note 22 (p. 18). In the “List of references” there is no distinction between (primary) sources and literature.
Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence *(at least 2 questions)*: 
During the oral defence, the author should address questions/critical remarks in points 1-4 – see above.