

FEATURED PROJECT: HAVEL AT COLUMBIA

The Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning, in partnership with the Columbia University Arts Initiative, released the *Havel at Columbia* site, a resource to support former Czech President Václav Havel's seven-week residency on campus during the Fall 2006 semester.

As an artist, thinker, essayist, human rights leader and political leader, Václav Havel is one of the most significant cultural and political figures of our time. On December 29, 1989 he was elected president of a united and democratic Czechoslovakia. His residency at Columbia was his first extended stay in New York since stepping down from office in early 2003. While he was on campus, the University community paid tribute to his life and ideas with a number of lectures, symposia, screenings, and panel discussions.

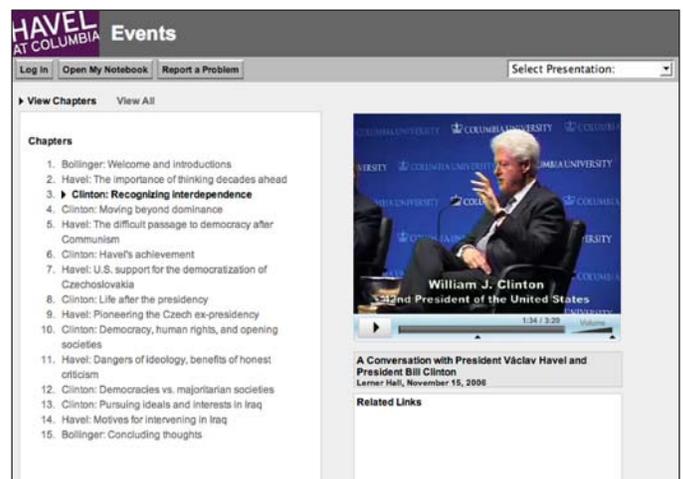
The *Havel at Columbia* site contains a wide range of teaching and learning materials for classroom study of Havel's life and art, growing throughout the semester as events and materials were added. The multimedia resource features video interviews with scholars, artists, and political figures contributing their insights on Václav Havel's legacy as an artist and political leader, including Dean Lisa Anderson from the School of International and Public Affairs, former President George H. W. Bush, Edward Albee, Milos Forman, Lou Reed, and George Soros. A timeline of events, an image glossary with photographs and primary documents, and archival footage from television and films provide historical context for the Velvet Revolution and Havel's presidency, making the site a rich educational resource beyond his campus residency. The site features video recordings of the many lectures, performances, and presentations that took place throughout the residency. These are available to view online and downloadable as podcasts.

Courses that used the *Havel at Columbia* site during the Fall '06 semester included "History, Literature, Film and Dissent in Eastern European Culture," an undergraduate seminar by Brad Abrams and Christopher Harwood and a multidisciplinary course at Barnard co-taught by Cathy Nepomnyashchy with theater lecturer Amy Trompeter that included a study and performance of Havel's play *The Beggar's Opera*. Anne Bogart focused on the political theater of Clifford Odets and Havel in her graduate MFA course "Directing III." In addition, Literature Humanities students studied Havel's play *The Garden Party*, Havel delivered a lecture to the Core Curriculum's Contemporary Civilization course, for which students read his essay "Dear Dr. Husák."

To allow instructors to create a more customized experience of the site for their courses, CCNMTL introduced a new feature called the Havel Notebook. Any Columbia University faculty



The site contains archival news video from the Velvet Revolution.



Users can navigate through the videos by selecting specific chapters.

member or student with a UNI can log in to organize their own resources from the site by saving and annotating text, images, and links to a personalized page, or "notebook." Developed in coordination with faculty partners from the Harriman Institute, School of the Arts, and Barnard College, these notebooks can be shared with others, making them especially useful for classes that are using the *Havel at Columbia* site as a resource.

"The Havel Web site is a terrific clearinghouse for all the materials. The interviews are fascinating, and will continue to be a valuable resource. The real bonus is all of the documentary and filmed materials that surrounded all of the aspects of Havel's career."

— Bradley Abrams, Associate Director, Harriman Institute, and Associate Professor, History Department