Course Title

Berlin’s Modern History and Culture

Course Number
HIST-UA.9984001; IDSEM-UG.9100001; GERM-UA.9225001

Instructor Contact Information
Dr. Stefan Höhne
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Course Details

Thursday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
Location of class: NYU Berlin Academic Center, Room “Prenzlauer Berg” (tbc)

Prerequisites
None.

Units earned
4

Course Description

Power and culture are intimately interwoven in the social history and the material substance of modern Berlin. This interdisciplinary course explores the changing historical contours of the keywords of Kultur (culture), Geist (spirit), Technik (technology), Bildung (education), Arbeit (work) and Macht (power) and contestations over their meanings. Through applying an interdisciplinary approach that integrates literature, film, art, architecture, and philosophy, we interrogate how meaning is made individually and collectively. We will look at how relationships between individual identities, state power, and social norms were shaped in the context of recurrent political and economic crises and ruptures and ask how changing local, national, supranational, and global contexts influence how meanings are made. Paying attention to possibilities and constraints for negotiating the terms of everyday life and for conforming or resisting, we will trace how Berliners made and make sense of their lives and the world they participate in shaping. (This syllabus was co-designed with Dr. Sasha Disko.)

Course Objective

The aim of this course is for students to gain a better understanding of how power and culture are intertwined through exploring different episodes in the history of modern Berlin and how they relate to Germany, Europe, and the larger world. Students will engage with a variety of sources, from novellas to social theory, music and film, advertising, art, and architecture. As well, students will pay close attention to the economic, social and political contexts in which subject positions and discursive categories were produced. Students will hone their analytic skills through discussions and will practice clearly articulating arguments and analyses in written assignments.
Assessment Components

Class Participation, counting 15% of the total grade.

Two Essays of 6-8 pages (1 standard page = 450 words). The first essay is due the week of Session 7 (09 Mar 2017), the second essay is due the week of Session 12 (27 Apr 2017). Each essay counts for 20% of the total grade, together they count for 40% of the total grade.

Two Reading Responses of 3-4 pages each. Each essay counts for 10% of the total grade, together they count for 20% of the total grade. The first response should cover the readings addressed in Session 2, 3 or 4 (turn in by 16 Feb 2017); the second response should cover the readings addressed in Session 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13 (turn in by 11 May 2017).

One Final, In-Class Exam (75 minutes) on 18 May 2017, consisting of 3 short answer IDs (identify a term, event, or person) and one short-answer essay counting 25% of total grade.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 94-100 \quad & B &= 84-86 \quad & C &= 74-76 \quad & D &= 65-66 \quad & F &= \text{below 65} \\
A- &= 90-93 \quad & B- &= 80-83 \quad & C- &= 70-73
\end{align*}
\]

Alternatively:

A= 4.0 \quad A- = 3.7

B+ = 3.3 \quad B = 3.0 \quad B- = 2.7
Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html

Late Submission of Work

(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.
(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work, and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.

(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles: http://nyu.libguides.com/citations).

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global's academic policies please see: www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies
Required Text(s)
Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (2nd ed.), Cambridge University Press (Cambridge: 2004). (loan copies will be provided at the beginning of the course)


Books can be bought at Dussmann in Friedrichstraße 90, where the books are pre-ordered for students. Additionally, one copy of each book is kept in the Reading Room of NYU Berlin’s Academic Center, for you to read in the center but not to take out.

All readings marked with an asterisk below are available online and all required reading (except the Isherwood and Böll titles listed above) is on NYU classes or as an e-book through the Bobst ebrary system.

Free access to the German History in Documents and Images Project of the German Historical Institute (Washington, DC, University of Mainz): http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/

**NYU Berlin Library Catalogue:** All resources, that are available in the Reading Room of the Academic Center or St. Agnes, can be found using this link: http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin

**Internet Research Guidelines**
To be discussed in class

**Session 1 – 02 Feb 2017**
*Kultur – Bildung – Technik – Arbeit – Vaterland:*
Culture and Power in Modern Berlin

Introduction to the course and on-site visit to the German Historical Museum. Meet in the classroom and travel together from the AC. Discussion of key terms, presentation of the course, its learning outcomes, the skills that will be acquired by students and the assessments that are required from students.

**Session 2 – 09 Feb 2017**
*Berlin, Kultur and Bildung in the Nineteenth Century*

This session will introduce key concepts and approaches for the course, such as “culture”, “education” and “enlightenment” and relate them to the dynamics and struggles of creating the German nation in the second half of the 19th century.

**Required Readings**


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 104-122.

Recommended:


Session 3 – 10 Feb 2017 (Friday, Make-Up Day: 10:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.)

Heimat and Empire – Berlin in the World

Trip to Zoologischer Garten and Siegessäule. Meet at the AC.

How is the German Empire imaged and created in relation to other European colonial powers? How does this become manifest in Berlin’s urban space? In tracing Walter Benjamin’s memories of his “Berlin Childhood”, we will address these questions on site in an excursion through Tiergarten and a visit to one of the most controversial symbols of German nationalism: the victory column (Siegessäule).

Required Readings


* David Ciarlo, Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany, Harvard University Press (Cambridge MA, 2011), 25-64. (ebrary)


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 122-148.

Recommended:


Session 4 – 16 Feb 2017

Psychotechnics: Technik, Arbeit and Kultur
The First World War is often called the first modern war in which the principles of modernity, such as rationalization and mechanization, were mobilized at a large scale. It resulted not only in massive deaths and a traumatized German nation, but also marked the rise of a new form of social order: the mass society. This session will explore these dynamics by critically engaging with writings, movies and other sources from that period.

**Last date to turn in first reading response**

**Required Readings**


**In-class film excerpts:**

* *Metropolis* – Fritz Lang (dir.) – 1927.

**Textbook:**


**Recommended:**


*** 23 Feb 2017: NO CLASS ***

**Sessions 5 and 6 – 02 Mar 2017**

(3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Additional office hours will be provided)

New Men and New Women: Gender, Sexuality and Power
Sexuality and gender was a “hot topic” in the Weimar Republic. Focusing on the emergence of new gender roles such as the “New Man” and “New Woman”, we will discuss how these figures embody both anxieties and hopes about Germany and why they were so symbolically charged. Furthermore, in addressing the abortion debate and the rise of eugenics in the Weimar Republic, we will reflect on how bio-politics became a crucial element of power and governmentality in German Society.

Christopher Isherwood’s iconic novel *Goodbye to Berlin* offers a compelling inside perspective on everyday life in Berlin and the rise of Nazism during the last years of the Weimar Republic. In engaging with the novel as well as other historical sources, we will explore the relationship between political and economic disorder and sexuality during this turbulent period. The historian Dr. Sasha Disko will be a guest lecturer in this session and provide useful insights into her research on everyday life in the Weimar Republic.

**Required Readings**

Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*. (we read the entire novella).


**Textbook:**

Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, 155-179

**In-class film excerpts**

*Kuhle Wampe (or To Whom Does the World Belong?)* – Slatan Dudow (dir.) – Bertolt Brecht (screenplay) – 1932.

**Recommended**


Eric Weitz, “Walking the City,” in *Weimar Germany; Promise and Tragedy*, 40-79.

**Session 7 – 9 Mar 2017**

**Olympia in Germania: Culture and Power in Nazi Berlin**

First essay due at the beginning of class
How could the National Socialists become an attractive option for the German people? Why was it perceived as a way of overcoming the crisis of capitalism and the sense of a loss of meaning? We will address these questions through the work of one of the most controversial film makers of all times, Leni Riefenstahl, and her movies.

Required Readings

* Wolfgang Benz, “Exclusion as a Stage in Persecution, The Jewish Situation in Germany 1933-1941,” in David Bankier and Israel Gutman (eds.), Nazi Europe and the Final Solution, Yad Vashem (Jerusalem: 2003), 40-52.


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 179-187.

In-class film excerpts

Triumph of the Will - Leni Riefenstahl (dir.) – 1935

Recommended:


*** March 11-19: Spring Break – No Class ***

Session 8 – 23 Mar 2017

“The Final Solution”: Approaches to Understanding the Holocaust

How can we understand everyday life in Nazi Germany as being a mixture of coercion and consent? How can we make sense of the so called “Final Solution”? In tackling these complex and highly charged questions, we will also address how creating a “pure” racial national community and expanding German “living space” (Lebensraum) were intertwined in the destructive Nazi logic that culminated in the war and holocaust.

Required Readings

Session 9 – 30 Mar 2017
Physical and Emotional Rubble: The Problem of Rebuilding Society

After the end of World War II, the question of how to rebuild a society in physical and emotional rubble took center stage. This session will address key moments of Postwar Germany’s economic, social, and political development and discuss how it led to the formation of two German states, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic.

Required Readings


Original Sources:


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 204-212.

In-class film excerpts:

 Murderers Among Us – Wolfgang Staude (dir.) – 1946 (In class)

Recommended:


Session 10 – 06 Apr 2017

 Ideology in Concrete: The Berlin Wall

Excursion to Berlin Wall Memorial in Bernauerstrasse and the Exhibition “Everyday Life in the GDR”, meet at AC, 3pm.

This session will focus on the two competing visions of ordering society in the East and West and how they were entangled with the interests of the two postwar superpowers. We will explore the dynamics that led to the building of the so called “antifascist protective wall”, the Berlin Wall, and how it affected everyday life in both East and the West Berlin. Guided by questions and tasks, students will visit and explore the museums listed above.

Required Readings


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 212-230.
Recommended:


***13 Apr 2017: NO CLASS***

Session 11 – 20 Apr 2017 (3:00 pm – 6:45 p.m. – Extended Session)
West Berlin: A Secluded Island?

The student revolts of 1967 and 1968 mark a crucial moment in the history of Germany and Berlin. In exploring its motives and strategies, we will discuss how the so-called "New Left" of the 1960s and 1970s reacted against the West's demonization of the East as "a Communist Menace" and the East's demonization of the West as "Capitalist Infiltrators". Furthermore, in discussing the iconic novella The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum by Heinrich Böll, we will address questions of gender, violence and the role of mass media in Cold War West Germany.

Required Readings


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 230-235.

Recommended:


Session 12 – 27 Apr 2017
1970s Internationalism in the Capital City of the German Democratic Republic
(Guest Lecturer Martin Behnke)

Second essay due at the beginning of class
The 14th World Festival of Youth and Students, which took place in East Berlin in 1973, marks a crossroads in the development of the young GDR. Critically engaging with the assigned readings as well as visual material, we will explore what aims and hopes were tied to the festival of youth, its relevance for the political history of the GDR, and how the young people themselves experienced it. Furthermore, with the support of our guest lecturer, the filmmaker Martin Behnke, we will address how these visions and ideas were reversed in the following decade, eventually leading the end of the GDR.

Required Readings


Textbook:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 235-243.

Recommended:

Olaf Georg Klein, Suddenly Everything was Different: German Lives in Upheaval, Camden House (Rochester, NY: 2007), 18-30.

Session 13 – 04 May 2017

“Multicultural” Berlin in “Fortress Europe”

In what ways can we think about the phase from the 1970s through the 1980s as a period of both stagnation and mobility? Through the lens of the history of Berlin Kreuzberg during this time, we will discuss how many citizens, both male and female, began to take an active approach to shaping society and extending participatory democracy and how migration and political activism made this stigmatized borough into a hub of counter culture.

Required Readings


Recommended

* Joyce Marie Mushaben, “Rethinking Citizenship and Identity: ‘What it Means to be German’ since the Fall of the Wall,” in *German Politics* 19.1 (2010), 72-88.


Session 14 – 11 May 2017
Building the “Berlin Republic”: Urban Planning in a “Burdened Landscape”

Last date to turn in second reading response

What factors led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German unification? How does the New “Berlin Republic” emerge in the decades after these events and what role do urban planning and the development of *Potsdamer Platz* and other iconic sites play in this context? In tackling these questions as well as addressing the debates on the Holocaust Memorial and the highly controversial reconstruction of the Berlin City Castle, we will discuss how and by whom German history is mobilized in contemporary Berlin.

Required Readings


Textbook:

In-class film excerpts:


Recommended


Session 15 – 18 May 2017
In-class Final Exam (Note: earlier start at 10 am!)

75 minutes, IDs and a short answer essay
Short wrap up discussion

Classroom Etiquette
No cell phone use, no online social networking. Please be in class on time. Habitual tardiness will negatively affect your participation grade.

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
Berlin has many museums and commemorative sights, and just walking around Berlin is often like being in a living museum that is always changing. If you would like tips on historically interesting places to visit, please let me know.

Your Instructor
Stefan Höhne grew up in a small town in Thuringia (former East Germany). He holds an MA in cultural history, philosophy and sociology from Leipzig University. From 2008 to 2010 he was a Ph.D. fellow at the Transatlantic Graduate Program Berlin-New York. During that time he was also a visiting scholar at Columbia University and a member of the transnational Research Network NYLON at NYU. From 2011 to 2012, Höhne was a researcher and lecturer at the Institute for Cultural History and Theory at Humboldt University Berlin. Since completing his Ph.D. in Modern History at Technische Universität (TU) Berlin in 2013, he is an assistant professor at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at TU Berlin. His forthcoming first monograph, A Society of Passengers is a social, technological and cultural history that explores shifts in the subject constructions of New York City subway passengers from 1904 to 1968. His current research projects focus on the entangled histories of Berlin and New York, as well as the relationship between technologies and urban protests during the Cold War. Since June 2013, Stefan Höhne is a father of a young daughter, Marlene, who is a wonderful distraction to his work.