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
sh166@nyu.edu

Course Details
Thursdays, 3:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
Location of class: NYUB AC, Room “Prenzlauer Berg”.

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 crisis and rupture 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. The first essay is due the week of Session 6, the second essay is due the week of Session 14. Each essay counts for 20% of the grade, together they count for 40% of the 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 25 Feb. 2016); the second response should cover the readings addressed in session 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13 (turn in by 28 April 2016).

One Final, In-Class Exam (75 minutes) on 19 May 2016, 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 instructor may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

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\begin{align*}
B+ & = 87-89 & C+ & = 77-79 & D+ & = 67-69 & F & = \text{below } 65 \\
A & = 94-100 & B & = 84-86 & C & = 74-76 & D & = 65-66 \\
A- & = 90-93 & B- & = 80-83 & C- & = 70-73
\end{align*}
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Alternatively:
Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in NYU Berlin’s content courses that, unlike most courses at NYU NY, meet only once per week in a double-session for three hours. 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. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please approach NYUB’s Director or Wellness Counselor. Your professor or NYUB’s administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from the Director or Wellness Counselor.

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. Three unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. In German Language classes three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Furthermore, faculty is also entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival to class or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late for class counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Exams, tests, 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; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F. 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 because of any religious observance should notify the Director or Assistant Director for Academics in advance of the anticipated absence. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Director or Assistant Director will re-schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments.

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 instructor or to the Assistant Director for Academics, 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) Unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of the Director or Assistant Director), work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 weekdays following the session date fails and is given a zero.

(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.

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).

NYUB takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor. Your instructor 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). (Copy to use during the semester will be handed out in the first session, no need to purchase).

Christopher Isherwood, Goodbye to Berlin, New Directions (New York: 28th edition). (Copy to use during the semester will be handed out in the second session, no need to purchase).


All readings marked with an asterisk are available online and all required reading is on NYU classes or as an e-book through the Bobst ebrary system.
Books can be bought at Saint George’s in Wörther Straße 27 near NYUB.

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 – 04 Feb 2016**

*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 – 11 Feb 2016**

Berlin, *Kultur and Bildung* in the Nineteenth Century

**Required Readings**


**Textbook:**

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

**Recommended:**


**Session 3 – 18 Feb 2016**

*Heimat* and Empire – Berlin in the World
Trip to Zoologischer Garten and Siegessäule. Meet at the AC.

**Required Readings**


**Textbook:**


**Recommended:**


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**Session 4 – 25 Feb 2016**

Psychotechnics: *Technik, Arbeit and Kultur*

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

**Required Readings**


**In-class film excerpts:**

*All Quiet on the Western Front* – Lewis Milestone (dir.), screenplay based on the novel by Erich Maria Remarque – 1930.


**Textbook:**


**Recommended:**


Note: Make-up Day on following day.

**Session 5 – 26 Feb 2016 (Make-up Day)**

**New Men and New Women: Gender, Sexuality and Power**


**In-class film excerpts:**

*Menschen am Sonntag (People on Sunday)* – Robert Siodmak / Edgar G. Ulmer (dir.) – Billy Wilder (screenplay) – 1929

**Recommended**


**Session 6 – 03 Mar 2016**

**Worlds Turned Upside-Down: Trauma and Crisis in Weimar Berlin**
First Essay Due

Required Readings

Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*, 1-76; recommended: 100-207.

In-class film excerpts

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

Textbook:


Recommended:


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

Session 7 – 10 Mar 2016

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

Required Readings


Textbook:


In-class film excerpts

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

*Olympia* – Leni Riefenstahl (dir.) – 1936

Recommended:


Session 8 – 17 Mar 2016
“The Final Solution”: Approaches to Understanding the Holocaust

Required Readings


Textbook:
Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 187-204.

In-class film excerpts:

Night and Fog – Alain Resnais (dir.) – 1955 (In class)

Recommended:


***Mar 24 – NO CLASS – Make-Up Day: April 8***

***Mar 25 - April 3rd: Spring Break***

Session 9 – 07 April 2016
Physical and Emotional Rubble: The Problem of Rebuilding Society
Required Readings


* Sean A. Forner, “Reconsidering the ‘Unpolitical German’: Democratic Renewal and the Politics of Culture in Occupied Germany,” in *German History* 32/1 (2014), 53-78.

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 – 08 April 2016 (Make-Up Day)

* Ideology in Concrete: The Berlin Wall*

Excursion to Berlin Wall Memorial in the Bernauerstraße, meet at AC

Required Readings


Textbook:

**Recommended:**


**Session 11 – 14 April 2016**

**West Berlin: A Secluded Island?**

**Required Readings**


**Textbook:**


**Recommended:**


**Session 12 – 21 April 2016**

**1970s Internationalism in the Capital City of the German Democratic Republic**

**Required Readings**


**Textbook:**

**Recommended:**


**Session 13 – 28 April 2016**

“Multicultural” Berlin in “Fortress Europe”

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

**Required Readings**


* A Heroes Magazine (International Refugee Center Berlin, 2015), selections.

**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.


***05 MAY 2016** PUBLIC HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

**Session 14 – 12 May 2016**

Building the “Berlin Republic”: Urban Planning in a “Burdened Landscape”
Second essay due at the beginning of class

Required Readings


Textbook:


In-class film excerpts:


Recommended


Session 15 – 19 May 2016

In-class Final Exam

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 relations of 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.