The Architecture of Berlin: Innovations, Confrontations and Redefinitions

Course Details
Mondays, 2:00pm to 4:45pm
Location of class: NYUB, Room "Charlottenburg" (TBC)
Tour meeting locations will be announced, please check your email the day before the class.

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description
Berlin's urban landscape and architectural history reflects the unique and dramatic history of this metropolis. Rarely has any city experienced equally radical waves of growth and destruction, of innovation and fragmentation and of opposing attempts at urban redefinition. Particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the city developed into a cultural and industrial metropolis. Berlin, the latecomer among European metropolitan cities, became a veritable world city with an outstanding heritage of baroque, classicist and modern architecture. Destruction during the Second World War and the division of the city led to opposing planning concepts for its reconstruction, which contributed to significant new layers of the urban pattern. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a major building boom made Berlin a hotspot for often controversial building and planning debates. This course will enable students to see, describe and understand the complex historical, cultural and social conditions of the different layers of Berlin's architecture.

Course Objective
1. This course is an introduction to Berlin's architectural history, as well as an introduction to methods of describing and reflecting upon architecture and built urban spaces. Students will gain a differentiated understanding of the form, function and style categories used in art
history. They will become familiarized with the proper terminology and will be trained in using historic sources such as historic city plans and historic illustrations.

2. By understanding architecture and urban space not only in its aesthetic value, but also in its political, social and cultural context, the course will lead to complex approaches to urban history and architecture.

**Assessment Components**

**Class Participation**, counting 15% of the total grade.

**5 weekly Reading Response Papers of 1 page each and 7 brief Verbal Introductions to Case Studies**, counting 15% of the total grade. Reading Responses: Students should identify an idea or argument in the reading that has surprised, perplexed or inspired them. Reading responses should be given to the instructor by email the day before the class and as a hardcopy at the beginning of the class. Case Studies: Students should give brief introductions to monuments discussed during the tours.

**Midterm Essay** of 5 pages, counting 15% of the total grade. Midterm essays must be submitted as hardcopies during session 7.

**One Research Paper** of 10 to 15 pages, counting 30% of the total grade. The research papers must be submitted as hardcopies during session 13.

**Exam**, counting 25% of the total grade. This will be a short written exam (about 45 minutes) concerning the major monuments discussed in the course.

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:
Alternatively:

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**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. 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 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 Texts

Course Reader


Books can be bought at Saint Georges in Wörther Straße 27 near NYUB. Readers can be bought at Sprintout behind Humboldt University (Georgenstraße/Universitätsstraße – S-Bahn-Bogen 190 - please allow five hours between booking and collecting readers).

Supplemental Texts (not required to purchase)


Internet Research Guidelines
To be discussed in class.

Additional Required Equipment
Berlin City Map.
Session 1: 31 Aug 2015

General Introduction to the course:

The Architecture of Berlin: Innovations, Confrontations and Redefinitions

Introduction to the history and architectural history of Berlin
Short Excursion: First steps into Berlin’s history

Session 2: 7 Sep 2015

From Classicism to Historicism

Reading:


Session 3: 14 Sep 2015

Tour 1: From the Traces of the Medieval City to the Representation of the Imperial Capital

Tour through the historical city center, starting at the remains of the medieval city and ending at the Reichstag Building.

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on Session 1 or 2: Practice describing architecture by using the proper terminology and by explaining stylistic categories. How can you differentiate a baroque building from a classicist building? What is Historicism?
Assignment due during this session.
Session 4: 21 Sep 2015

Urbanization in the late 19th Century and the Imperial Capital

Reading:


Assignment: Reading Response due this session.

Session 5: 28 Sep 2015

Tour 2: Metropolis and Electropolis

Tour through the "Gründerzeit" quarter of Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg and to the former AEG industrial parks in Berlin-Wedding.

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on Session 3 or 4: Practice using the proper terminology. Analyze your case study as a typical example of the urban landscape around 1900. Assignment is due during this session.

Session 6: 5 Oct 2015

The Rise of the Modern City: Housing Reform between 1900 and 1930

Reading:


Assignment: Reading response due this session.

Session 7: 12 Oct 2015

Tour 3: From Alfred Messel's Reform Housing to Bruno Taut's Housing Estates

Tour through Berlin-Friedrichshain (Messel's Reform Houses) and Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg (Bruno Taut's Housing estates on Prenzlauer Allee).

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on Session 6: Practice describing architecture by using the proper terminology and by explaining stylistic categories. Analyze your case study as a typical example of housing reform between 1900 and 1930. Assignment is due during this session.

Midterm Essay due (based on topics to be discussed individually with the instructor)

19 Oct 2015: No class - Fall Break

Session 8: 26 Oct 2015

Berlin under the NS-Regime

Reading:


Assignment: Reading Response due this session.

**Session 9: 02 Nov 2015**

**Tour 4: Traces of NS-Berlin. Tour to the Olympic Ground and Guided Tour to the Exhibition: "Mythos Germania: Vision and Verbrechen" in Berlin-Gesundbrunnen (planned)**

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on session 8. Practice describing architecture. Analyze your case study as an example of NS-architecture. Assignment is due during this session.

**Session 10: 09 Nov 2015**

**Cold War Confrontations**

Reading:


Assignment: Reading Response due this session.
Session 11: 16 Nov 2015

Tour 5: Karl-Marx-Allee / Alexanderplatz versus Hansaviertel / City West / Kulturforum

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on Session 10. Practice describing architecture. Analyze your case study as an example of post-war architecture regarding the specific political and cultural conditions. Assignment is due during this session.

Session 12: 23 Nov 2015

Tour 6: The Rediscovery of History: Monument Preservation, Reconstruction and Critical Reconstruction: International Building Exhibition Berlin (West) and Neo-Historism in Berlin (East)

Tour through "Southern Friedrichstadt" and through the Nikolai quarter in Berlin-Mitte

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on the reading for session 12. Practice describing architecture and analyze your case study as a typical example of postmodern architecture. Assignment is due during this session.

Session 13: 30 Nov 2015

Berlin Reunited

Reading:


Assignment: Reading Response due this session.

**Submission of Research Papers** (papers based on topics to be discussed individually with the instructor)

**Session 14: 07 Dec 2015**

**Tour 7: The New Berlin between Innovation and Reconstruction: Humboldt-Forum, Pariser Platz, Spreebogen and Potsdamer Platz**

Reading:


Assignments: Choose one case study based on Session 13 or choose the case study Humboldt-Forum. Analyze your case study and refer to recent and contemporary discourses on reconstruction, the rediscovery of the European city and innovative approaches to urban design. Assignment is due during this session.

**Session 15: 14 Dec 2015**

Course Summary and **Exam**.

**Exam**: Short written exam (about 45 minutes) concerned with the major monuments discussed in the course.
Classroom Etiquette
To be addressed in class

Required Co-curricular Activities
To be announced in class

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
To be announced in class

Your Instructor
Dr. phil. habil. Paul Sigel is an art historian with a special focus on architectural and urban history. He received his PhD at the University of Tübingen in 1997 and submitted his Habilitation (professorial dissertation) at the Technical University of Dresden in 2010. He has taught as a guest professor at the TU Dresden, the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the TU Berlin and the HafenCity University Hamburg. His main areas of research are architectural history and theory from the 19th century up until today, architecture and national representation, and discourses on urban identity.