Course Title
Topics in 20th-Century German Literature: Traditions of City Writing

Course Number
GERM-UA.9298001, SOC-UA.9435001

Instructor Contact Information
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Neuber
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Course Details
Mondays, 5:15pm – 8:00pm
Location of class: NYU Berlin, Academic Center, Room: "Prenzlauer Berg"

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description
This course addresses literary and visual representations of Berlin from the late 19th to the 21st century. Accordingly, students will investigate different aspects of Berlin, ranging from its growing to a metropolis in the German Empire and its cultural richness in the Weimar Period to the devastation of the city during World War II; from the division in the post-war period, which also produced two separate literary systems, to polyphonic and transcultural texts written after reunification. The course will also focus on German-Turkish literature. In its theoretical approach, the course offers insights into new paradigms of cultural studies such as “spatial turn” or “urbanism” as well as seeks to enhance academic skills in the reflection of gender aspects. The corpus of texts and films covers different periods and genres from realism to postmodernism.

Course Objective
This course aims to familiarise students with diverse forms of cultural representation, such as literature and film, as well as enhance their knowledge of Berlin's cultural past and buoyant present. Furthermore, the course focuses on developing the students' awareness of different writing/visual styles, which not only stand for specific genres or particular facets of literary/film history but also mirror manifold individual perspectives of the metropolis.

Assessment Components
Class participation (including well-prepared reading) counting 20% of total grade.
For class participation see also classroom etiquette below.
Two short papers (500-800 words each) counting 30% of total grade (15% each).
One final research paper (2000-3000 words) counting 40% of total grade.
- NB: All papers are to be submitted as hard copies.
Class presentation (5 to 10 minutes) counting 10% of total grade.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required component will 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*}
A & = 94-100 \\
A- & = 90-93 \\
B+ & = 87-89 \\
B & = 84-86 \\
B- & = 80-83 \\
C+ & = 77-79 \\
C & = 74-76 \\
C- & = 70-73 \\
D+ & = 67-69 \\
D & = 65-66 \\
F & = below 65
\end{align*}
\]

Alternatively:

\[
\begin{align*}
A & = 4.0 \\
A- & = 3.7 \\
B+ & = 3.3 \\
B & = 3.0 \\
B- & = 2.7 \\
C+ & = 2.3 \\
C & = 2.0 \\
C- & = 1.7 \\
D+ & = 1.3 \\
D & = 1.0 \\
F & = 0.0
\end{align*}
\]

**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](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](http://www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies)

Required Texts

- Thomas Brussig, Heroes Like Us [Helden wie wir, 1995], London: The Harvill Press 1997 (will be provided in class, not required to purchase).
- Irmard Keun, The Artificial Silk Girl [Das kunstseidene Mädchen, 1932], New York: Other Press 2011 (will be provided in class, not required to purchase).

Course Reader

Further texts will be provided on [NYU Classes](http://www.nyu.edu). 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)
- Further texts to be discussed in class

Internet Research Guidelines:
To be discussed in class

Additional Required Equipment
None

Session 1 – 31 Aug 2015
Introduction
Introduction to the course, discussion of the syllabus, getting to know each other, finding common interests.
Read in class: Georg Simmel, The Metropolis and Mental Life (1903).

Session 2 – 7 Sep 2015
Gender, Class and the City
Read for class:
Theodor Fontane’s Delusions, Confusions (1887), chapters 1-15 (see NYU classes).

Voluntary:

Session 3 – 14 Sep 2015
Modern Writing Techniques
Read for class:

Session 4 – 21 Sep 2015
Women Voices of the Weimar Republic
Read for class:
Irmgard Keun’s The Artificial Silk Girl (1932), pp. 55-122.
First short paper (500 - 800 words) due.

Session 5 – 28 Sep 2015
M
(dir.: Fritz Lang, 1931) – will be screened in class and discussed afterwards.

Session 6 – 5 Oct 2015
The Flaneur – a Theoretical Approach to City Writing
Read for class:

Office hour before and after class to discuss the short papers.

Session 7 – 12 Oct 2015
Literature and Politics
Read for class:
  Hans Fallada, Alone in Berlin, chapters ????

19 Oct 2015 – Fall Break – No Class

Session 8 – 26 Oct 2015
Politics and the Urban Space – The Germania-Project
Field trip: meeting point tba
In preparation see https://deutschlandunddieostmark.wordpress.com/category/giesler/

Session 9 – 2 Nov 2015
Videographic Testimonies of the Holocaust
Field trip: Visit the video archive in the “Information Centre” at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Address: Cora-Berliner-Str. 1, S- und U-Bahn “Potsdamer Platz” oder “Brandenburger Tor”).

Read for Class:
Second short paper (500 – 800 words) due

Session 10 – 9 Nov 2015
Divided Berlin I
Read for Class:
Excerpt from Divided Heaven. A novel by Christa Wolf [Der geteilte Himmel, 1963], chapters 1-9, 24-29 – In class we will discuss the novel and view scenes of the film Der geteilte Himmel by Konrad Wolf, based on Christa Wolf’s novel (DEFA: 1964).

Office hour before and after class to discuss the short papers

Session 11 – 16 Nov 2015
Divided Berlin II: The Lives of Others
[Das Leben der Anderen] (dir.: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2005) – will be screened in class and discussed afterwards.

Session 12 – 23 Nov 2015
The Fall of the Wall
Read for class:
Excerpt from Thomas Brussig’s Heroes like Us (1995), chapters 1, 2, 5, 7
Sven Regener: Berlin Blues (2001), chapters ???

Session 13 – 30 Nov 2015
Immigrants in Berlin – German-Turkish Literature
Read for class:
Silke Schade, ”Rewriting Home and Migration: Spatiality in the Narratives of Emine Sevgi Özdamer”. In: Spatial Turns (2010), pp. 319-341.

Session 14 – 7 Dec 2015
Unified Berlin I
Read for class:

Final paper due

Session 15 – 14 Dec 2015
Unified Berlin II / Goodbye to Berlin? Retrospection and Prospect
Read for class:
- Peter Schneider: *Berlin Now: The City After the Wall* (2014), pp. ???.

Students assess what they have learned in the course and during their stay in Berlin.

Office hour before and after the session to discuss the final papers

**Classroom Etiquette**
It is indispensable that the students engage in the discussions of and offer ideas on the texts, films or images which need to be thoroughly prepared prior the to respective classroom meeting. Only by actively discussing the issues at stake can the students develop the ability to critically measure and appreciate a text’s/film’s/image’s potentials. In other words, the students’ active classroom participation (answering questions, offering their thoughts and discussing the issue at stake) is crucial to the success of the class. As a consequence, the students’ classroom activity counts for 20% of the overall grade in this course.

Electronic devices of any kind may not be used during class.

**Your Instructor**
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Neuber teaches German Literature at Freie Universität Berlin; he was Visiting Professor of Literature at NYU Abu Dhabi from 2010-2015 and taught three J-Terms (2013-2015) at NYU Berlin.
[http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/we04/institut/mitarbeiter/neuber/index.html](http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/we04/institut/mitarbeiter/neuber/index.html)