Course Title
Cities, Communities, and Urban Life: Exploring Historical and Contemporary Berlin

Course Number
GERM-UA 9293-001 (2721); HIST-UA 9460-001 (2777); SOC-UA 9460-001 (2776)

Summer 2017

Syllabus last updated on 14-June-2017

Instructor Contact Information
Dr. Katrin Dettmer
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Course Details
Wednesdays, 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Thursdays, 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Location: NYU Berlin Academic Center, Room: “Tempelhof”
Detailed information on where and when to meet for the excursions will be given during the respective preceding session or can be found on NYU Classes.

Prerequisites
Interest in the history of Germany and Berlin; interest in questions of public memory and urban design; motivation to engage with sites, their development and architecture; willingness to contribute to discussions during excursions as well as in class.

Units earned
4

Course Description
Berlin was a focal point of 20th century German, European, and international history. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the city has undergone profound transformation, redefining both its relationship with the past and its identity in the present. This course will introduce you to historical and contemporary Berlin by exploring key sites connected with the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the division of Germany, as well as the post-Wall period. Organized chronologically, the course will give you the opportunity to gradually expand your knowledge of the city and its history. At the same time, a major focus will be the overlaying of past and present in Berlin’s cityscape and the processes of repurposing and memorialization that these illustrate. In addition to the spatial experience of the sites, we will use testimonial accounts, historiographical texts as well as artistic responses to critically engage with the palimpsest of Berlin’s urban structure.
Course Objective
Explore key sites of German history; trace the transformation of Berlin since 1900; analyze and interpret urban space; use testimonial, historiographical, and artistic material for contextualization.

Assessment Components

Class participation: 30% of total grade
Students are expected to attend all sessions, do the reading on time, and productively contribute to discussion on site as well as in class and to demonstrate knowledge of the prescribed texts.

4 Response Papers (2 pages, double spaced, standard font and margins): 40%
In their response papers, students will engage more closely with one aspect of each site that they find particularly interesting. This may include the history of a site, its architecture and memorialization, voices of testimony, as well as reflections in literature, film, and art. The deadlines for submission are 28 June, 5 July, 12 July, and 19 July at 1:30pm (in paper before the session).

1 Final Paper (8-10 pages, double spaced, standard font and margins): 30%
In your final paper, you will undertake a broader survey of an aspect of the course. The topic of your paper will be based on your own suggestion, to be confirmed by the course instructor. You will be required to consult and reference the relevant scholarly literature. The deadline for submission is 1:30pm on 27 July (in paper before the session).

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:

- B+ = 87-89
- C+ = 77-79
- D+ = 67-69
- F = below 65

- A = 94-100
- B = 84-86
- C = 74-76
- D = 65-66

- A- = 90-93
- B- = 80-83
- C- = 70-73

Alternatively:
- A = 4.0
- B+ = 3.3
- C+ = 2.3
- D+ = 1.3
- A- = 3.7
- B = 3.0
- C = 2.0
- D = 1.0
- B- = 2.7
- C- =1.7
- D = 0.0.
Attendance Policy
Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success. 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 the summer program director Tom Ertman
(te11@nyu.edu).

Unexcused absences affect students’ grades: Missing one week’s worth of classes (consecutive or
non-consecutive) without an excuse 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. Furthermore, your Professor 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 and
submit it to the Program Director Tom Ertman; 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 their instructor AND the Program Director Professor
Tom Ertman in writing via e-mail one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If
examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the
Program Director will re-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 instructor or to the Program Director, 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,
unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor’s note or by approval of the Program
Director), 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 weekdays following the
submission 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.

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).

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
All titles are available in NYU Berlin’s Reading Room and/or on NYU Classes.

Course Schedule
Session 1 – 21 Jun 2017: Course Introduction; Excursion: Berlin Memory Walk
How can we explore a city’s past and present through its spaces? What kinds of spaces are we going to discover in the case of Berlin, and what is their interrelation? The first session will begin by introducing you to the German capital in the 20th century as well as canonical approaches to the semantics of space and the construction of memory. On our first excursion, we will focus geographically on Berlin’s boulevard Unter den Linden and how it has been reshaped throughout the centuries. We will discover how spaces within cityscapes change and thus affect the city in return, while also discussing how Berlin strives to commemorate different periods of its history at the same time.

Readings:
Session 2 – 22 Jun 2017: Berlin as a site of Public Memory; Excursion: Neues Museum
Expanding on our first exploration of the city, we will discuss how memory and space constitute one another and can be constructed and reconstructed. We will watch excerpts from Walther Ruttmann’s film *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927) in class and relate the film to contemporary identity processes in the city. On our second excursion, we will visit Museum Island and specifically Neues Museum, which was created to collect artifacts and art, but which became itself a site that exhibits a complex layering of histories.

Readings:

Session 3 – 28 Jun 2017: Berlin during the Third Reich
In this class, we will take a closer look at the city of Berlin during the Nazi period, from Adolf Hitler's vision of the future world capital Germania to the everyday day life of its inhabitants. As we will discuss the system of National Socialism and its intricate organization of the various spheres of life, we will also consider the possibility of resistance during those times. We will view the 2016 film *Alone in Berlin*, based on Hans Fallada’s novel, in class.

Readings:

*deadline for first response paper: “Berlin as a site of Public Memory”*

Session 4 – 29 Jun 2017: Excursion: Topography of Terror & Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and other memorials in Tiergarten and Mitte
As the area around the Brandenburger Tor was the geographical center of the Third Reich’s power, it has now become a center for the public memory of the horrific crimes of World War II and the Shoah. We will visit sites that focus both on the education with regard to the fascist structures as well as on the commemoration of its victims. While the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has now also become a symbol of the city and its interaction with its past, it took the city of Berlin remarkably long to also acknowledge other victim groups and dedicate sites of remembrance to them, for example the Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted Under Nazism (in 2008) and the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism (in 2012).

Readings:
Session 5 – 05 Jul 2017: Berlin and the Shoah
In 1933, one of the first Nazi concentration camps was set up in Oranienburg, 35km north of Berlin. Three years later, it was replaced by the much larger, meticulously planned Sachsenhausen concentration camp and Oranienburg became the administrative center of the German camp system. After the end of the war, Sachsenhausen was used by the Soviet secret service as a special camp for former Nazi functionaries. In preparation for our site visit, we will discuss the organization of the camp system and its effects on the prisoners. We will view the 2007 film The Counterfeiters, which is set in Sachsenhausen, in class.

Readings:

*deadline for second response paper: “The Third Reich and Memory in Berlin”*

Session 6 – 06 Jul 2017: Excursion: Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial
Please note that the excursion will start at 1.00pm sharp from the Academic Center.
A guided tour will introduce us to the violent and complex history of the site. We will get to know the different phases of the camp’s memorialization after 1945 and discuss its position within the memorial landscape of Berlin today. We will analyze National Socialist sites of terror such as the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and how they reshaped the German landscape and also human relations. Based on our visit to the memorial site, we will discuss how these sites become public spaces of remembrance and how the horrific events of the World War II and the Shoah are commemorated.

Readings:

Session 7 – 12 Jul 2017: Berlin at the “Zero Hour”
In this class, we will analyze how the end of the Second World War and the destruction of Berlin were reflected in literature and film of the post-war period. Particular attention will be given to the concept of “Stunde Null” (zero hour), the idea that the unconditional surrender also meant a fresh start for a new Germany, and criticism of this idea then and now. We will view the film The Murderers Are Among Us (1946) by Wolfgang Staudte in class and analyze early artistic attempts of Vergangenheitsbewältigung.

Readings:
- Benz, A Concise History of the Third Reich, 269-81.

*deadline for third response paper: “The Shoah and Memory in Berlin”*
Session 8 – 13 Jul 2017: Divided Berlin I: The FRG; **Excursion:** Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, Kurfürstendamm, and Schöneberg

Our excursion today will take us to West Berlin. We will explore the old and the new church buildings of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, which is one of the most recognizable landmarks of the city and a memorial to the destruction of Berlin at the end of World War II as well as the rebuilding of the city, specific to the occupational zones. We will also see Berlin’s famous boulevard, the Kurfürstendamm, and walk through the neighborhood of Schöneberg, which became the home of international artists like David Bowie and whose City Hall was the location of President John F. Kennedy’s famous speech in 1963.

**Readings:**

Session 9 – 19 Jul 2017: Divided Berlin II: The GDR; **Excursion:** Berlin Wall Memorial Bernauer Straße

In this class, we will analyze the political system of the GDR and its effects on society. We will also explore the contested image of the GDR in post-reunification Germany, and the role which political persecution continues to play in this debate. In this context, we will discuss extracts from the feature films *The Lives of Others* (2006) by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck and *Barbara* (2012) by Christian Petzold. At the Berlin Wall Memorial, we will gain a concrete spatial and visual sense of the German division. We will understand where the erection of the Berlin Wall began on 13 August 1961 and how the border developed until the end of the 1980s. Traces and testimonies will help to illustrate how citizens were affected by the division. In a second step, we will discuss how the original infrastructure was preserved after 1989 and how it was complemented with historical information.

**Readings:**

*deadline for fourth response paper: “Berlin’s Zero Hour”*

Session 10 – 20 Jul 2017: **Excursion:** Stasi Museum

The former headquarters of the GDR Ministry for State Security (MfS or “Stasi”) in Berlin is a key site for remembering political persecution in the Soviet occupied zone and the GDR. Erected in 1960-61, the building complex also housed the offices of Erich Mielke, who served as Minister for State Security from 1957 until the end of the GDR. These rooms have been preserved in their original condition and form the centerpiece of the historic site, which also offers various exhibitions that provide information about the State Security and how its activities affected the GDR population.

**Readings:**
Session 11 – 26 Jul 2017: Reunified Berlin: Tempelhof Airport and the 21st Century
Expanded during the Third Reich as part of Albert Speer’s plans for the German capital, Tempelhof Airport was also the site of the Berlin Airlift (1948-49). Closed in 2008, today the airport stands at the center of a debate about its public or commercial usage. The case study of Tempelhof will prompt us to unite the various strands of discussion emerging throughout the course. What strategies are followed in memorializing sites with multiple and often violent histories? How are decisions about urban redesign and the use of public space taken? Finally, how should national history be memorialized in a society more and more characterized by migration, as the former airport’s location close to the multicultural district of Neukölln illustrates?

Readings:
• Stuart Taberner and Paul Cooke (eds), *German Culture, Politics, and Literature into the Twenty-first Century: Beyond Normalization* (Rochester: Camden House, 2006), 1-16.
• Taylor, *The Berlin Wall*, 50-61.

Session 12 – 27 Jul 2017: Excursion: Berlin Tempelhof Airport
Gaining access to the terminal building and the surrounding complex, we will discover the site’s layered history from within and analyze the debate and decision process about its future.

*deadline for the final paper: in hard copy on site*

Classroom Etiquette
No laptops or other electronic devices are allowed during class. Mobile phones are to be switched off. Drinks are allowed in the classroom, but food is not. For the excursions, please dress accordingly to the weather yet appropriately for the specific sites. Wear comfortable footwear and bring along water for refreshment.

Your Instructor
Katrin Dettmer is the Arts Coordinator at NYU Berlin. She received her Ph.D. in German Studies from Brown University in 2012. Since then she has taught for Brown University and Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, where she taught German Studies and Theatre Arts with a special focus on dramaturgy. In her dissertation on East-German playwright Heiner Müller, entitled *The Touch of the Dead*, Katrin negotiates the dynamics between history and performance in both Müller’s writing and his stage work. Her research focuses on 20th and 21st century German literature; GDR literature and intellectual life; literatures of trauma, memory, and remembrance; Theater and Performance Studies; Media Studies; intellectual history; and aesthetics of presence. In addition to her academic work, Katrin has also been working as a dramaturg for a variety of productions, both in the US and in Germany. Her latest production, in cooperation with *lunatiks produktion* and Theater Lüneburg, *Senkungen*, a devised piece based on extensive regional research, premiered in Lüneburg in February 2016.