

Name:	Dr. Markus Wessendorf
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Course title:	The "New" Berlin and Its Places of Memory - as Represented in Film, Writing, Museums and Urban Sites
Track:	A-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	72 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	6

Course description

The course provides a historical, political and cultural introduction to one of the most multifaceted cities of recent times. Like very few other metropolises, Berlin has witnessed some of the major upheavals of the last century: the short-lived attempt at democracy during the Weimar Republic in the 1920s, the fascist Third Reich in the 1930s and 1940s, the division of Berlin into (capitalist) "West" and (socialist) "East" from the late 1940s to the late 1980s, and the reunification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Since the end of the Iron Curtain various campaigns have proclaimed "das neue Berlin" – the new Berlin. At the same time, the public discussion about how to commemorate the history of Berlin – and of Germany at large – has not stopped. The Memorial Museum of German Resistance, the Gedächtniskirche, the Topography of Terror exhibition and the Museum at Checkpoint Charlie, for example, all predate the fall of the Wall, but the Jewish Museum, the Holocaust memorial, and the National Historical Museum were only built after 1989. Also, some historic districts of Berlin – such as Hackesche Höfe in Berlin-Mitte – were rediscovered and cautiously remodeled in the 1990s, while a desolate area such as Potsdamer Platz was turned into an architectural showcase of Berlin's new corporate power.

This course will examine some of the major public controversies and arguments that accompanied the planning and construction of some of the mentioned memorials, museums, and sites. As the public debate over the design of the "Freedom Tower" on the former site of the World Trade Center in New York City has amply demonstrated in recent years, the relationship between place and memory is also a major issue in contemporary American political culture. What better place than Berlin to investigate the complex interconnections between politics, history, personal memory, public remembrance, the commemoration of the past and the celebration of the present?

This course will investigate how the "new Berlin" relates to the history of the "old Berlin." Each week of the summer session will be dedicated to a different era in Berlin's recent history: Weimar Republic, Third Reich, West Berlin, East Berlin, and the Berlin Republic.

The syllabus for each week follows the same pattern: an introduction to each week's historical period, a discussion of literary texts from that era, and the screening and discussion of a film (on video/DVD) relating to that period on Monday, followed by a discussion of significant "places of memory" from that period and a half-day excursion to the discussed places of memory on Thursday.

Student profile

Students in following fields may be interested in taking this course: German studies, theatre studies, art, architecture, urban studies, cultural studies, modern history, and political science

Prerequisites

None

Course Requirements

Students are required to give three 10-minute **presentations** introducing the assigned readings or films to be discussed in the respective course session. They are also expected to submit 2-3 page typed versions of each presentation. (6-9 pages in total).

Five weekly 2-3 page **journals** should document the students' reflections on discussed readings and films, visited sites and, particularly, their experiences in Berlin outside of the course context. The journals are due at the beginning of every Monday class. (10-15 pages in total).

For the **final project**, the students are expected to interview two Berlin residents about their experience of one of the historical eras discussed in class. This project can be presented in class – and submitted to the instructor – in different formats: as a research paper, as a literary text, as a video or audio documentation, as a visual essay combining text and photography, as a performance piece, etc.

Grading

- Presentations: 30%
- Journals: 20%
- Final Project: 30%
- Class Participation: 20%

Reading

A course reader will be provided at the first course meeting.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
I. BERLIN FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC	
Monday, June 4, 2018	<p>9-10:30am Historical introduction; Assigned reading: TILL, "Haunting, Memory, Place"</p> <p>11am - 12:30 Discussion of assigned reading: BENJAMIN, "Berlin Childhood around 1900" (excerpts), DÖBLIN, <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i> (excerpts)</p> <p>2:00 pm Screening and discussion of Phil Jutzi's <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i></p>
Thursday, June 7, 2018	<p>9-10:30am Places of memory: Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden, Alexanderplatz; Assigned reading: WHYBROW, "Karl Liebknecht Strasse: The Space of Light"</p> <p>11am – 3:30 pm Excursion to the Walter-Benjamin Platz, Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden, and Alexanderplatz</p>

II. BERLIN DURING THE THIRD REICH		
Monday, June 11, 2018	9-10:30 am	Historical Introduction; Assigned reading: LARGE, "Hitler's Berlin"
	11am - 12:30	Screening and discussion of Oliver Hirschbiegel's <i>Downfall</i>
	2:00 pm	Discussion of assigned reading: BRECHT, scenes from <i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i>
Thursday, June 14, 2018	9-10:30 am	Places of memory: the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Memorial; Assigned reading: TILL, "Aestheticizing the Rupture: Berlin's Holocaust Memorial"
	11am - 3:30 pm	Excursion to the Topography of Terror exhibition, the Jewish Museum, and the Holocaust Memorial
III. THE DIVIDED CITY – EAST BERLIN		
Monday, June 18, 2018	9-10:30 am	Historical introduction; Assigned reading: LARGE, "Coming into the Cold" and "The Divided City" (445-460, 496-515)
	11am - 12:30	Screening and discussion of Frank Beyer's <i>Trace of Stones</i>
	2:00 pm	Discussion of assigned reading: MÜLLER, scenes from <i>Germania Death in Berlin</i> ; BIERMANN, selected song lyrics
Thursday, June 21, 2018	9-10:30 am	Places of memory: the Soviet War Memorial in Treptow and the Stasi Museum; Assigned reading: FUNDER, <i>Stasiland</i> (excerpts)
	11am - 3:30 pm	Excursion to the Soviet War Memorial in Treptow and the Stasi Museum
IV. THE DIVIDED CITY – WEST BERLIN		
Monday, June 25, 2018	9-10:30 am	Historical introduction; Assigned reading: LARGE, "The Divided City" (461-495) and "From Bonn to Berlin"
	11am - 12:30	Screening and discussion of Wim Wenders's <i>Wings of Desire</i>
	2:00 pm	Discussion of assigned reading: song lyrics of West-Berlin Punk/New Wave songs from the late 1970s/early 1980s (Nina Hagen, Ideal, and Einstürzende Neubauten)
Thursday, June 28, 2018	9-10:30 am	Places of memory: Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, Potsdamer Platz, and Checkpoint Charlie; Assigned reading: MACLEAN, "David Bowie, and 'Heroes;'" WHYBROW, "Potsdamer

		Platz: White Noise”
	11am -3:30 pm	Excursion to Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, Potsdamer Platz, and Checkpoint Charlie
V. BERLIN AFTER THE WALL		
Monday, July 2, 2018	9-10:30 am	Historical introduction; Assigned reading: LARGE, “The Berlin Republic”
	11am - 12:30	Screening and discussion of Tom Tykwer’s <i>Run Lola Run</i>
	2:00 pm	Discussion of assigned reading: GRÜNBEIN, <i>Ashes for Breakfast: Selected Poems</i> (excerpts)
Thursday, July 5, 2018	9-10:30 am	Places of memory: Chaussee Strasse, the Brecht House, <i>Oranienburger Strasse</i> , and Potsdamer Platz, Assigned reading: WHYBROW, “Chaussee Strasse: The Last Place” and “Oranienburger Strasse: The Space of Recurrence”
	11am -3:30 pm	Excursion to Chaussee Strasse, the Brecht House, Dorotheenstädtischer Friedhof, and Oranienburger Strasse
VI. CONCLUSIONS		
Monday, July 9, 2018	9-10:30 am	Screening and discussion of Sebastian Schipper’s <i>Victoria</i>
	11am - 12:30	Discussion of assigned reading: reviews of <i>Victoria</i> by Stephen Holden and others
	2:00 pm	Presentation of final student projects
Thursday, July 12, 2018	9am-12:30	Presentation of final student projects (cont.)
	2:00pm	Wrap Up Session

*Field trips may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, adaptation of class times is possible.