Name: Dr. Karolina Golimowska

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Course title: Popular Culture: Berlin and Beyond

Track: B-Track

Language of instruction: English

Contact hours: 48 (6 per day)

ECTS-Credits: 4

Course description

This course is meant to show Berlin as both, a setting of popular culture practices and phenomena as well as a protagonist and source of inspiration thereof. We will consider the many facets and dimensions of popular culture, including its history and various modes of ideology within. We will then see how these are intertwined with the cultural history of the city and its urban, social and political developments.

The course will cover a whole range of pop culture representations related to the city in different ways: film, television, comic books, fiction, music, paintings, street art etc. and will discuss their significance within the historical frame of reference as well as their international impact. We will also look at how these popular culture representations on one hand reflect the city and on the other contribute to the way Berlin is being imagined, perceived and remembered.

Studying the history of popular culture, students will be able to see various cultural disciplines and practices as interlinked and as having a mutual influence on one another. Providing theoretical as well as practical approaches, the course aims at developing critical thinking and embracing popular culture representations in the context of a given time period and political setting. It shows artistic and cultural practices as related to one another in time and space and therefore also allows for a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective.

Student profile

This course is open to all students interested in the critical study of popular culture with a special focus on Berlin. No previous experience with (pop) cultural studies is necessary.

Prerequisites

Students have to be fluent in English at an at least advanced intermediate level.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced Intermediate level (Mittelstufe II) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52

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Course requirements

- Consistent preparation, regular attendance, and active participation in all course activities including field trips: the more you contribute, the better the class is going to be.
- An in-class presentation of appx. 10-15 minutes including questions to guide the session’s reading.
- Final paper on a topic related to the course.

Grading
Participation: 30%,
Oral presentations: 30%,
Final paper: 40%

Reading
A course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Program*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 21, 2020</td>
<td><strong>Introduction: Popular Culture and Metropolises on both Sides of the Atlantic</strong></td>
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<td>What makes culture popular? Why is it interesting to study popular culture practices in relation to metropolises? What role does the US play in shaping modern cultural practices? How have New York City and Berlin been (re)imagined in literature?</td>
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|                       | **Reading:**  
### Friday, July 24, 2020

**The Power of Comics and Graphic Novels – Hybrid Story-telling Practices on the Example of Art Spiegelman’s “Maus” and Flix’s “Spirou in Berlin”**

What can comics do that other media cannot? How can historic events be addressed and depicted in comics and what makes these depictions so powerful? How does such an account of historical events influence the perception thereof?

**Reading:**

### Tuesday, July 28, 2020

**Discussion regarding the final paper guidelines and requirements, the choice of topics**

**Berlin and Film**

What are the specificities of the European film industry? How has Berlin been reflected in film and how can the history of the city be linked to the history and the development of feature film as a genre?

**Reading:**

**Screening** (fragments): „Himmel über Berlin“ (dir. Wim Wenders 1986)

“Victoria” (dir. Sebastian Schipper 2015)

**Field Trip:** Film Museum DFFB Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen

### Friday, July 31, 2020

**“Babylon Berlin” and Serialized Story-telling Practices**

Modern series with their narrative structure and plurality of voices and characters resemble the genre of a novel – for which, according to the German literary scholar Volker
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Practices of Reappropriation #1 Fine Arts</th>
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| Tuesday, August 4, 2020 | Klotz, the city is the most natural setting. How is this form of storytelling linked to new modes of access and watching practices?  
Reading:  

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Practices of Reappropriation #2 Music</th>
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| Friday, August 7, 2020 | How do practices such as sampling, mash-ups or borrowing shape modern artistic practices in different styles of music?  
What are the mutual influences between the US and Germany and why has Berlin been such a popular destination and an inspiration for musicians for decades?  
Reading:  
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<td>Tuesday, August 11, 2020</td>
<td><strong>Imagining the End – Apocalyptic Fantasies and the Fear of Disasters</strong></td>
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Imaginary disasters have been an important motive in popular culture ever since. What makes them attractive? How are they linked to the classical notion of the sublime? Why do certain cities become objects of disaster fantasies and other do not? What is it like in the case of Berlin?

**Reading:**


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<td>Friday, August 14, 2020</td>
<td><strong>Wrap-Up: Discussion and Roundtable</strong></td>
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**Final paper due**

FUBiS Farewell Ceremony

*Field trips are subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, class hours may be adjusted.*