

Course title:	Architecture in Berlin. A Walk through History
Instructor:	Dr. Gernot Weckherlin
Email address:	g.weckherlin@berlin.de
Track:	A-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS credits:	6
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher.

Course description

This course provides an overview of the development of public and private architecture in Berlin during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Following an introduction to the urban development and architectural history of the Modern era, the Neo-Classical period will be surveyed with special reference to the works of Schinkel. This will be followed by classes on architecture of the German Reich after 1871, which was characterized by both modern and conservative tendencies and the manifold activities during the time of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s such as Modernist avantgarde and the Housing Revolution. The architecture of the Nazi period will be examined, followed by the developments in the divided city in East and West Berlin after the Second World War. The course concludes with a detailed review of the city's more recent and current architectural profiles, including a critical analysis of the conflicts concerning the re-design of Berlin after the Cold War and the German reunification and contemporary planning issues.

Seven walking tours to historically significant buildings and sites are included (Unter den Linden, Gendarmenmarkt, New Housing Estates, Chancellory, Potsdamer Platz, Holocaust Memorial etc.). The course aims to offer a deeper understanding of the interdependence of Berlin's architecture and the city's social, economic and political structures. It considers Berlin as a model for the highways and by-ways of a European capital in modern times.

Student profile

The course addresses students of any subject, especially History of Art, Architecture and related subjects, such as History, Design or Fine Arts. An elementary knowledge of architecture and architectural history is welcome but not necessary. More advanced students or those interested in a particular field can - on request - be given special assistance and further material for self-study.

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>

Course requirements

Regular and active participation, Midterm exam, Final exam

Grading

Attendance and participation: 30%
Midterm exam: 30%
Final exam: 40%

Reading

A digital course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Monday, July 28, 2025	<p>Introduction: Urban History of Berlin Architectural Terminology</p> <p>1st Study Trip: Berlin-Mitte: Historic center of Berlin, St. Nikolai and Knoblauchhaus, Bauakademie, Gendarmenmarkt, Forum Fridericianum, Neue Wache, Zeughaus (armory), Werdersche Kirche, Humboldt-Forum, Museum Island</p>
Thursday, July 31, 2025	<p>19th-Century and German Empire (1871-1918) From Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Historicism to the beginnings of Modernity</p> <p>2nd Study Trip: Industrial Architecture: P. Behrens' AEG Works in Brunnenstr., Great Machine Hall, J.P. Kleihues, Block 270, Z. H. Nieländer: Berlin Wall Documentary Center</p>
Monday, August 4, 2025	<p>Modern Architecture of the "Golden Twenties" Weimar Republic I, 1918-1933</p> <p>3rd Study Trip: Residential Architecture, Berlin-Zehlendorf, Bruno Taut's „Uncle Tom's Cabin“ Housing Estate, H. Tessenow's: Housing estate Am Fischtalgrund, Waldsiedlung Krumme Lanke, FU Main Campus.</p>
Thursday, August 7, 2025	<p>Midterm Exam Official Architecture of the 1920s and 1930s Weimar Republic II, 1918-1933, and the Third Reich, 1933-1945</p> <p>4th Study Trip: Architecture and Politics, New governmental buildings and the Nazi-heritage: The Federal Ministry of Finance.</p>

Monday, August 11, 2025	<p>Architecture after WW II: From the 1940ties to the present: East/West: Two German States, the divided Berlin</p> <p>5th Study Trip: East – West: Stalinallee in East Berlin and the International Building Exhibition 1957 in West Berlin</p>
Thursday, August 14, 2025	<p>6th Study Trip (all day): The City and its periphery from the 1970s to today. A field trip into Unknown Berlin. The Reality of Housing Problems today. A Visit to Marzahn and Hellersdorf</p>
Monday, August 18, 2025	<p>7th Study Trip (all day): Architecture after Reunification and Contemporary Problems in Urban Development From Postmodernism to new Simplicity – a new capital: Pariser Platz, US Embassy, Holocaust-Memorial, Kulturforum, Philharmonic hall, Potsdamer Platz</p>
Thursday, August 21, 2025	Final Exam

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