

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 Berlin's architectural development during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Following an introduction to the urban development of the 19th century, the Neo-Classical period and the architectural tendencies of the 19th century will be surveyed with special reference to the works of Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The subsequent classes will explore the architecture of the German Empire and its dynamically growing capital Berlin after 1871 including its modern and conservative tendencies. Manifold avantgarde movements during the time of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s such as Modernism, Bauhaus and the Housing Revolution will be covered. 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, historic sites and museums 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.

Course requirements

Regular and active participation, Midterm exam, Final exam

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>

Attendance

Each class consists of six teaching modules (45 minutes each). If you miss 6 modules (unexcused), your final course grade will drop by one grade. Coming more than 20 minutes late counts as one missed module (this also applies to excursion days). If you come late to class six times (up to 20 minutes) your entire course grade will also drop by one grade. If you miss 14 modules or more (unexcused), you will fail the class. Excused absences, such as those with medical documentation, do not count toward these totals.

Grading

Class participation:	30%
Midterm exam:	30%
Final exam:	40%

Reading

A digital course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Monday, July 20, 2026	<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 23, 2026	<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, July 27, 2026	<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, July 30, 2026	<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 3, 2026	<p>Architecture after WW II: From the 1940ties to the present: East/West: Two German States, urban planning and building in a divided Berlin</p> <p>5th Study Trip: East – West: Stalinallee in East Berlin and the International Building Exhibition of 1957 in West Berlin</p>
Thursday, August 6, 2026	<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 including a historic WBS 70 apartment, Gardens and a recently completed Apartment House.</p>
Monday, August 10, 2026	<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 13, 2026	Final Exam and Final Discussion

*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.