Berlin and the Geography of Memory
GETR 2770 (3 credits)
December 29 – January 11, 2016

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Course Materials:
Brian Ladd, Ghosts of Berlin (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997) (required)
Travel Guide (DK or Rough Guide) (recommended)

All other readings, podcasts, and videos are available on Collab.
Films: Das Leben der Anderen (The Lives of Others)
Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will) (excerpts)

There is quite a bit of reading. Please try and get a big chunk of it done before leaving for Berlin. Once we’re in Berlin, we will be very busy. Watch the two films on your own prior to arrival.

Most readings will be made available on Collab. Please download all of them into a folder on your computer prior to departure, in case our Internet connection fails or is slow. It would also be a good idea to print out all the materials and collect them into a course reader.

Course Description & Objectives:
In this January Term program, we will experience Berlin as a geographical and spatial prism of the long, troubled and exciting history of Germany. Instead of proceeding through this history and culture chronologically, we will allow specific urban sites and places to guide us through Germany’s past, present, and future. Our walking tours, readings and discussions will take us through the architectural, cultural and urban history of Berlin and modern Europe.
Loaded with our own maps, cultural histories, podcasts and architectural guides, we won’t just read about German cultural history, we’ll walk through it and touch it. While learning about Frederick the Great of Prussia, we’ll visit his magnificent castle in the small town of Potsdam. After immersing ourselves in Brecht’s writings on theater, we’ll tour the theater he founded and watch a performance. We’ll discuss the 1936 Olympics and the rise of Nazi Germany while taking a seat in the Olympiastadion and walking through the ruins of the SS and Gestapo Headquarters. Having watched the iconic photos taken during the Soviet take-over of Berlin, we’ll enjoy the view from the roof of the reconstructed Reichstag.

Students will also be given plenty of time to research their own projects in an experiential manner: students interested in Jewish-German culture can gather their own materials from Berlin’s monuments and museums; students interested in Islam in contemporary Europe can visit the Islamic Cultural Center in Kreuzberg; those interested in life in the former East Germany can walk the working class neighborhoods of Prenzlauer Berg. This course will be an intense and rewarding experience of a singular urban metropolis, one marked with cultural and historical diversity at every corner.

Grading and Expectations:

Most days will begin with a seminar to discuss the assigned readings and outline the scheduled site visits and excursions. Students are expected to come prepared, having read the material and loaded with smart questions. Our seminar will continue for the remainder of the day, albeit on the go as we visit the places and spaces discussed in the readings. With only a few exceptions, Mr. Ilsemann will lead the daily excursions and on-site discussions. (It might well be a bit chilly, so we’ll make coffeehouse stops to discuss the bigger questions in comfort.) For some excursions, there is an accompanying Google Map with annotated routes and links on the important places. Please familiarize yourselves with these before coming to seminar. After the day’s excursions you will have most evenings free, with certain exceptions for group events (dinner, theater, etc.).

Your success in this course depends on the following factors:

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<th>% of grade</th>
<th>1. Attendance and Participation</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Students must thoroughly familiarize themselves with the day’s materials before each excursion.</td>
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<td>To avoid interruptions, it is essential to be on time, especially in the mornings (as you know, Germans treasure punctuality).</td>
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<td>Lively participation in on-topic discussions is crucial and will be rewarded.</td>
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<td>The use of electronic media during seminars, site visits, presentations, etc. should be limited to topic-related applications. Please be considerate.</td>
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|            | Opening-Excursion Presentation: Before leaving the country, each student will be assigned one specific Berlin “space.” This could be a memorial, a street corner, a building, or even a tiny plaque. Our initial excursion will be an eight-hour walking seminar – spread out over two days – led by Mr. Ilsemann, which will provide you with a hands-on overview of German history. We will make 20 different stops, each one represented by one of your sites. You will be responsible for a 5-10 presentation of your “space” on site (its history, the
debates surrounding its condition, and its cultural and historical significance). Reflections about the importance of your site for our seminar topic – memory – will be particularly welcome.

- **Reading Presentation**: Each student will be responsible for introducing one day’s readings for our in-class seminar (tentative).

**3. Collab Discussions**

- Each student will be expected to contribute one post to a daily Collab discussion (each around 100-150 words minimum) in response to readings, excursions, and the daily questions (see the daily schedule below). What sorts of things have you been noticing? What are you learning? What aspects of the course are you finding most intriguing, and why? These posts will be visible to all participants of the seminar, so you might wish to respond directly to a previous post to create a virtual discussion online. The daily questions based on the daily readings and excursions are meant to guide your thinking.

**4. Course Blog**

- The course blog is somewhat different from the other requirements in that it is meant to reflect your own, personal discoveries about the city of Berlin. Each student will be assigned one day, and each day will be covered by a blog entry. Since there are more students than days, some of you will work in a team. Despite the subjective nature of these entries, try to keep an eye on our seminar topic. Creative entries will be particularly welcome – for instance, you may write a poem, embed a short video, or draw our attention to some feature of our daily excursion that we may have overlooked.

**5. Essay**

- A 2000-word essay on the Berlin “space” of your choice will be due on Saturday, January 17, at 5 p.m. Electronic submissions through Collab are fine, as long as the formatting is correct (a handout will be provided). This essay should discuss the cultural history of one particular “space” in terms of the broader questions of the course: How does Berlin remember itself? What are the limits of memorialization? Are some events un-representable? The essay should draw on the course readings and your particular experiences while in Berlin.

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**Lodging:**

**Arte Luise Kunsthotel**

Luisenstraße 19
10117 Berlin
Germany
Tel. +49 (0)30 284 48-0
http://www.luise-berlin.com/
Daily Schedule [TENTATIVE]:

**DAY 1: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29: ARRIVAL; WELCOME TO BERLIN!**

- Coming from the US, you will most likely arrive at Berlin Tegel Airport (TXL), which is located in the northwestern part of the city. Depending on the airline, you may also arrive at Berlin Schöneberg Airport (SXF), which is located to the southeast of Berlin, just outside the city limits.
- At the airport, familiarize yourself with the public transportation system and travel to the hotel on your own or with your travel group.
- Check in at the hotel (see the information above).

14:00 UHR  Initial meeting: map orientation
15:00 UHR  Bus ride to Berlin-Zoo; short walking tour:
  - Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche
  - Kurfürstendamm (“Ku’damm”)
  - Kaufhaus des Westens (“KaDeWe”)
18:00 UHR  Group Dinner at the restaurant “Schildkröte”

**COLLAB QUESTION**

**Based on our visit to the Gedächtniskirche, reflect on the following questions:**

- Describe the Gedächtniskirche in your own words. How does it architecturally negotiate the tension between the past and the present?
- What else could have been done with the ruined church after the war?
- Imagine yourself as an urban planner charged with rebuilding Berlin right after the war. Try to devise a (brief) strategy of post-war city-planning, based on what could have been done with the church after the war.
- For this and every other Collab assignment, I’m encouraging you to respond to other students’ posts and to criticize each other’s proposals (politely!), pointing out possible drawbacks/improvements.

**DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30: BERLIN’S CITATIONAL CITYSCAPE; CITY TOUR I**

**READINGS**

- Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 1-6, 41-126, 237-245
- Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, Chapters 6 (“Democracy and Dictatorship”) and 7 (“The Two Germanies”)
- Review the route and places of our first excursion on Google Maps. Pay particular attention to your stop and its geographical location: Where is it situated in the larger city? The map is available on Collab.

10:00 UHR  Seminar; discussion of the readings
11:00- City tour based on your on-site presentations. Dress warmly yet flexibly
16:00 UHR to be prepared for changing weather conditions.

16:00- Structured spare time
18:00 UHR Dining (individually)

**DAY 3: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31: BERLIN’S CITATIONAL CITYSCAPE; CITY TOUR II**

**READINGS**

10:00 UHR Seminar; discussion of the readings
11:00- City tour based on your on-site presentations.
17:30 UHR Today’s tour includes a visit to the Holocaust Memorial/Information Center
18:00 UHR Group dinner, paid for by the program
21:00 Uhr New Year’s party at the Kulturbrauerei

**DAY 4: FRIDAY, JANUARY 1: INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS / BERLINER ENSEMBLE**

Most of the day off to focus on your individual projects!

**READINGS**
- Brecht, Texts on Theater (Collab)

18:00 UHR Watch a play in the Berliner Ensemble

**DAY 5: SATURDAY, JANUARY 2: THE INSTITUTIONS OF MEMORY**

**READINGS**

**COLLAB QUESTIONS**
- Why so much glass everywhere? Why this material for the new capital?
- What did you make of the reconstruction of the Reichstag? In the architecture and in our guided tour, which elements of the past are highlighted? Which ones are not?

10:00 UHR Seminar
11:30- Guided tour of the Reichstag
Security in the Bundestag is very strict. Do NOT bring anything that can be conceived as a weapon. That includes any sharp objects and pepper spray. You may get into serious trouble if you fail the security check.

Light lunch on the roof of the Reichstag, paid for by the program

Regierungsviertel walk

Dinner (individually)

**DAY 6: SUNDAY, JANUARY 3: ORGANIZING THE GERMAN PAST**

**READINGS**
- Read about the national history museum’s own history (http://www.dhm.de/en.html)

**COLLAB QUESTIONS**
**Based on our visits to the DHM, reflect on the following questions:**
- Discuss the organization and presentation of ‘German’ history in the museum. What struck you as surprising or interesting about the layout of the ‘German’ past?

**DAY 7: MONDAY, JANUARY 4: BERLIN’S PRUSSIAN PAST**

**READINGS**
- Adorno, “On the Question: ‘What is German?’” (Collab)
- Fullbrook, Chapter 4 (“The Age of Absolutism”)

**TRAVEL JOURNAL**
**Based on our visit to Sanssouci, write about the following questions:**
- How do Sanssouci/Charlottenburg memorialize the Prussian past? What virtues and characteristics were emphasized in the tour? How did these confirm (or undermine) written exhibitions throughout Sanssouci/Charlottenburg? What are some of the difficulties or paradoxes of posing, much less answering, a question like Adorno’s? And how did Sanssouci’s/Charlottenburg’s places and exhibits
exemplify (positively or negatively) the challenges involved in thinking about cultural memory and identity?

8:15 UHR     Leave for Potsdam

10:00-11:30 UHR     Schloss Sanssouci Tour

12:30 UHR     Lunch in Potsdam

14:00 UHR     Return to Berlin

15:30-17:00 Uhr     Schloss Charlottenburg

18:00 Uhr     Dinner (individually)

**DAY 8: TUESDAY, JANUARY 5: REMEMBERING A TOTALITARIAN PAST I**

**READINGS**
- Large, *Nazi Games*, Chapters 6 and 9 (Collab)
- Ladd, “Nazi Berlin” 127-174
- “Hitler’s Building Sites,” *Art of the Third Reich*, 229-275 (Collab)
- Susan Sonntag, “Fascinating Fascism” (Collab)
- Karsten Strathausen, “Nazi Aesthetics” (Collab)
- Leni Riefenstahl, “Olympia: Fest der Völker” and “Olympia: Fest der Schönheit” (YouTube clips on Collab site)

**COLLAB QUESTIONS**
- Is there such a thing as a fascist aesthetic?
- What do you make of the various ways in which Germany’s fascist past is remembered?
- Is the redone Olympic Stadium a memorial?

9:39 UHR     Regionalexpress RE 5 ab Potsdamer Platz

10:30-12:30 UHR     Gedenkstätte Sachsenhausen

12:30 UHR     Lunch

14:00 UHR     Return to Berlin

15:00-16:30 Uhr     Olympiastadion Berlin

18:00 Uhr     Dinner (individually)

**DAY 9: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6: LIFE IN THE DDR**
READINGS
- Timothy Garten Ashe, *The File*, 3-43 (Collab)
- Film: *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*).

COLLAB QUESTIONS
**Based on our visit to the DDR-Museum, reflect on the following question:**
- Can you think of any positive aspects of living in the DDR? Is there anything, in your opinion, that the DDR “did better” than Western countries such as the BRD or the US?
- Surveillance was rampant in the DDR. Do you think the threat of a “surveillance society” is still relevant today, or has it passed into history with the demise of regimes like that of the DDR?

10:30- DDR-Museum
12:00 Uhr

12:00- Lunch at the DDR-Museum, paid for by the program
13:15 Uhr

14:00 Uhr Guest lecture by Dr. Barbara Gügold, IES Berlin
16:30 Uhr Coffee and Cake

EVENING Spare Time

DAY 10: THURSDAY, JANUARY 7: JEWISH LIFE IN BERLIN / THE WALL

READINGS
- Adorno, “The Meaning of Working Through the Past”
- Andreas Huysen, “The Voids of Berlin” (Collab)
- Jane Kramer, “Two from Berlin”
  http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/10/27/031027ta_talk_kramer;

COLLAB QUESTIONS
**Based on our excursions today, reflect on the following questions:**
- Considering its highly symbolic architecture, the Jewish Museum seems to be both a museum and a memorial. Do you agree with that assessment? If so, do you think the combination of these two functions is fruitful, or not?
- How would you describe the relationship between the Jewish Museum and other places referencing Jewish life, such as the Holocaust Memorial or the Neue Synagoge?

10:00- Jewish Museum
12:00 Uhr

12:00- Lunch (individually)
13:30 Uhr

14:00- Berlin Wall Memorial, Bernauer Straße
DAY 11: FRIDAY, JANUARY 8: REMEMBERING A TOTALITARIAN PAST II

READINGS
- Paul Celan, “Death Fugue” (Collab)
- Nelly Sachs, poems (Collab)
- Large, “The Divided City”
- “Berlin Wall Video Guide,” 4 Podcasts (Collab)

COLLAB QUESTIONS
Based on our excursions today, reflect on the following question:
- Imagine that you woke up one day to a wall separating your city and country. What problems would that pose? How would it change your life?

10:00-11:00 Uhr
Topographie des Terrors

12:00 Uhr
Lunch (individually)

13:30-15:30 Uhr
Panorama “Die Mauer,” at Checkpoint Charlie

16:00 Uhr
Guest lecture by Professor Ulrike Stamm, Humboldt University

18:00 Uhr
Dinner (individually)

DAY 12: SATURDAY, JANUARY 9: DRESDEN (ANOTHER CITY REMEMBERS)

READINGS
- W.G. Sebald “On the Natural History of Destruction” (Collab)
- Durs Grünbein Europa nach dem letzten Regen (Collab)
- George Packer, “Embers: Will Dresden Finally Confront its Past?” (Collab)

COLLAB QUESTIONS
- Respond to Sebald’s argument about the possibility of German victimhood after having visited Dresden.
- How does Dresden as a city remember its past? Compare and contrast to the ways Berlin does.
- In particular, compare the two Libeskind museums, Berlin’s Jewish History and Dresden’s Military History Museum.

Times are not set yet, but these give you an idea of the length of the day:

8:00 Uhr
Leave Berlin Hbf for Dresden (tentative)
10:00 Uhr  Arrive Dresden Hbf
10:00-   Semperoper Tour
11:00 Uhr
12:00 Uhr  Grünes Gewölbbe (timed entry)
12:30-   Visit Frauenkirche and the Military History Museum and then choose
16:30 Uhr  among the various collections in the Zwinger (die Gemäldegalerie Alter
Meister, Porzellanansammlung, der mathematisch-physikalischen Salon)
19:00 Uhr  Leave Dresden Hbf for Berlin
21:30 Uhr  Arrive Berlin Hbf

**DAY 13: SUNDAY, JANUARY 10: REMEMBERING GERMANY’S COUNTER-CULTURE**

**READINGS**
- Ladd, 175-216
- Ton, Steine, Scherben “Macht kaput, was euch kaput macht”; “Rauch-Haus
  Song” (Collab)
- David Bowie, “Heros” (Collab)
- Einstürzende Neubauten, “Die Interimsliebenden” (Collab)
- Film: *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (excerpts) (Collab)
- Peruse [http://www.ostpunk.de/](http://www.ostpunk.de/)

**COLLAB QUESTIONS**
- What kinds of relationships between the city and the music did you notice?
- To what extent were the places that we visited today ‘memorials’?
- In what ways does the street art / the music act as a form of memorialization or
  remembering?

10:00 UHR  Seminar
12:30-   Event on Berlin’s counter-cultures
16:30 UHR
18:00 UHR  Final Group Dinner (paid for by the program)

**DAY 14: MONDAY, JANUARY 11: DEPARTURE – GOOD-BYE, BERLIN!**

Return Flight from Tegel, Taxi or Bus from Hotel.

**Final paper due date: Tuesday, January 19 at 5 p.m.!”**
‘Self-guided’ Tour to Modern Architecture in Berlin

Students should visit some of these buildings sometime during their visit. These are all examples of how the reconstruction of Berlin has changed the field of contemporary architecture.

- Reichstagsgebäude, Deutscher Bundestag: Scheidemannstraße/Ebertstraße, Architekten Sir Normen Foster & Partners
- Bundeskanzleramt: Willy-Brandt-Straße, Architekten Axel Schultes
- Paul-Löbe-Haus: Paul-Löbe-Alle, Architekt Stephan Braunfels
- Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders-Haus: Schifflauerdamm, Architekt Stephan Braunfels
- Lehrter Bahnhof: Invalidenstraße, Architekt von Gerkan, Marg & Partner
- Kappelle der Versöhnung: Bernauer Straße 4, Mitte, Architekten Reitermann
- Deutsches Historisches Museum, Erweiterungsbau: Unter den Linden, Hinter dem Gieehaus, Architekt leoh Ming Pei
- Holocaust-Mahnmal: Ebertstraße/Behrenstraße, Architekt Peter Eisenman
- Haus der Dresdner Bank: Pariser Platz 5a-6
- DZ-Bank Haus am Pariser Platz 3: Architekt Frank Gehry
- Botschaft von Großbritannien: Wilhelmstraße, Architekt Michael Wilford
- Friedrichstadt Passagen, Galeries Lafayette
- Potsdamer Platz: Regionalbahnhof Potsdamer Platz (Architekten Hilmer & Sattler), Daimler-Benz-Areal und Büro- und Geschäftshaus Daimler-Benz (Architekt Hans Kollhoff)
- Sony-Center Potsdamer Platz: Architekt Helmut Jahn
- Jüdisches Museum: Lindenstraße 14 Kreuzberg, Architekt Daniel Liebeskind
- Nordische Botschaften: Tiergarten Rauchstraße 1

Museums

1. **Kulturforum Berlin-Potsdamer Platz**
   In the neighborhood of Potsdamer Platz, this collection of museums, including the world famous **Neue Nationalgalerie**, houses some of the world’s greatest collections of modern European art.

2. **Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart**
   This contemporary collection of art is definitely worth a visit.

   We’ll visit this together but it is well worth a second visit.

4. **Museumsinsel**
   This island is home to some of the world’s greatest museums:

   - **Pergamonmuseum**: One of the greatest collections of ancient and Egyptian art anywhere.
   - **Altes Museum**: World class collection of Roman and Hellenic pieces of art.
- Museum für islamische Kunst im Pergamonmuseum: Collection of Islamic art from the 8th to the 19th centuries.

This redesigned and refurbished museum is Germany’s central historical museum. It takes you through centuries of Germany’s and Berlin’s history in a building re-thought by I.M. Pei.