

Course title:	Urban Imaginaries: Between Place and Space in Berlin
Instructor:	Max Schnepf
Email address:	max.schnepf@fu-berlin.de
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	5
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher.

Course description

Urban studies and its discourse on the city draw on scholarship from fields as diverse as human geography, history, anthropology and the arts. Berlin, with its seemingly infinite possibilities for memory, imagination and creative self-fashioning, offers a rich analytical model. It is a city, which is as much a fixed place with a distinct topography as it is an imaginary that glides between remembering and forgetting. A measured understanding of the interplay of place, space and memory in Berlin's cityscape is key for students who are eager to learn about the city's many pasts and presents. FUBiS invites you to join us as we analyze and explore Berlin.

This seminar brings to the fore connections between Berlin's distinct topography, its radical histories, and its current trajectories as a political and cultural space. That cities are a complex assemblage – at best multiple constellations existing simultaneously – is enabled through perspectives on migration, queerness and postcoloniality for instance. In-class analysis and discussion of academic and literary texts, podcasts and films about Berlin will prepare participants for course excursions. Our temporal-topographical inquiry will take us to a diverse set of historical sites, cultural places and neighborhoods in the city (such as the Berlin Wall Memorial, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Schwules Museum, Sonnenallee).

We will conduct on-site discussions of these places/spaces in historical, spatial and social terms and record the urban with methodical observations. Upon completing the course, students will have compiled a portfolio of short essays reflecting their critical reception of Berlin's places/spaces as well as their gendered and embodied engagements, observations and memories of the city. The course not only enables an appreciation of how places/spaces are living archives of Berlin's past and present, it also invites participants to create their own personal record of Berlin.

Learning Objectives:

After attending this seminar, students will

- understand the topographical, social, and symbolic organization of place/space in an urban setting, Berlin in particular;
- gain insight into the character of cities as multiple, contested and always-in-the making constellations

- be able to reflect how access to the city is always subjective and contingent because it is primarily gendered, embodied, classed and racialized.
- be familiar with how the city's history continues to shape contemporary Berlin and its social imaginaries.

Student profile

Ideal for students of humanities and the arts, cultural, political, and social sciences.

Course Requirements

I. Active Participation

What is active participation?

- Being prepared for the seminar, e.g., having read the texts carefully.
- Constructive and productive participation in class and during the fieldwork.

II. Seminar Times and Fieldwork

The seminar takes place on Tuesdays and Fridays and includes fieldwork with the instructor in Berlin.

III. Presentation

You will prepare a 20-minute presentation (including discussion), in which you will present and explain a seminar topic. It is important that you prepare a handout with theses to debate with the other seminar participants.

IV. Course Blog

You will contribute three 500-word posts to the class blog. Analyzing a specific aspect of a seminar topic or reading, your blog post can adopt scientific or literary styles and include visual and sonic elements.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced intermediate level (B2) 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>)

Grading

Active Participation:	40%
Presentation:	30%
Course Blog:	30% (3 posts of 500 words each. Evaluation based on content, style, and quality of analysis)

Readings

A digital reader will be provided.

Suggested pre-reading:

- Anderson, Benedict, 2017 *Buried City, Unearthing Teufelsberg. Berlin and its Geography of Forgetting*. London, New York: Routledge.

- Low, Setha. 2009. "Toward an Anthropological Theory of Space and Place." *Semiotica* 175, 1(4): 21-37.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
<p>Tuesday, July 23, 2024</p>	<p>Week 1: Historicizing Berlin: Sites of Memory</p> <p>Session 1.1</p> <p>Low, Setha. 1999. "Introduction: Theorizing the City." In <i>Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader</i>, edited by Setha Low, 1-33. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.</p> <p>Anderson, Benedict. 2017. <i>Buried City, Unearthing Teufelsberg. Berlin and its Geography of Forgetting</i>. London, New York: Routledge, 51-80; 137-158.</p> <p>In-Class Workshop</p> <p>The first session introduces the historical imagination of the city. Students will acquire an understanding of the importance of engaging both material and immaterial perspectives, relevant to the overall course. This will be achieved by workshoping some of the ideas from the assigned readings, especially Anderson (2017) and collecting students' own imaginations/ expectations of the city. It will also prepare students for the first excursion.</p>
<p>Friday, July 26, 2024</p>	<p>Session 1.2</p> <p>Pike, David L. 2010. "Wall and Tunnel: The Spatial Metaphorics of Cold War Berlin." <i>New German Critique: An Interdisciplinary Journal of German Studies</i> 110: 73-94.</p> <p>Ladd, Brian. 2018. <i>The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape</i>, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-6; 237-255.</p> <p>This session will take place outdoors. Students will be expected to carry forward the key ideas of the workshop and identify its material-architectural formations. They will engage in discussions on-site and begin a field-diary (to be carried along to all excursions).</p> <p>Excursion: The Berlin Wall Memorial (Bernauer Straße) http://www.berliner-mauer-dokumentationszentrum.de/ + Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe</p> <p>BLOG POST 1: DUE BY MON. 29 JULY</p>
<p>Tuesday, July 30, 2024</p>	<p>Week 2: (Post-)Colonial and Multicultural Berlin: Past and Present</p> <p>Session 2.1</p>

	<p>Engler, J. 2013. "Renaming Streets, Inverting Perspectives: Acts of Postcolonial Memory Citizenship in Berlin." <i>focus on German Studies</i> 20: 41-61.</p> <p>Hentschel, Christine. 2015. "Postcolonializing Berlin and the Fabrication of the Urban." <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i> 39(1): 79-91.</p> <p>Podcast <i>Decolonization in Action</i>. Season 1, Episode 1, Part 1: Decolonizing Berlin. https://www.decolonizationinaction.com/episodes/2019/10/04/decolonizing-berlin-episode-1-part-1</p> <p>This session will introduce students to German colonial history and postcolonial/decolonial debates in Berlin.</p> <p>Excursion: Berlin Postkolonial City Tour OR Visit of the Exhibition "zurückgeschaut looking back: The First German Colonial Exhibition of 1896 in Berlin-Treptow" (Museum Treptow) https://www.museumportal-berlin.de/en/exhibitions/zurueckgeschaut-looking-back/</p>
<p>Friday, August 2, 2024</p>	<p>Session 2.2</p> <p>Zardini, Mirko. 2016. "Toward a Sensorial Urbanism." In <i>Sensing the City: A Companion to Urban Anthropology</i>, edited by Anja Schwanhäusser, 141-153. Basel: Baurverlag.</p> <p>Kasmani, Omar. 2023. "Migration: An Intimacy." In <i>The Affect Theory Reader 2: Worldings, Tensions, Futures</i>, edited by Gregory J. Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell, 214-232. Durham: Duke University Press.</p> <p>Gebrayel, Imad, Bassam Dawood. <i>Sonnenallee Podcast</i>. https://www2.hu-berlin.de/stadtlabor/publication/sonnenallee-podcast/</p> <p>The first-half of the session will take place in class. Students will be introduced to ideas of doing fieldwork in the city, especially the role of observation and sensorial methods for urban ethnography. The class will end with a walk down Sonnenallee. Students will be expected to document their walk.</p> <p>Excursion: Sonnenallee Walk (with Imad Gebrayel and/or Omar Kasmani tbc)</p> <p>BLOG POST 2: DUE BY MON. 5 AUGUST</p>
<p>Tuesday, August 6, 2024</p>	<p>Week 3: Berlin Otherwise: Queer Imaginaries Then and Now</p> <p>Session 3.1</p> <p>Beachy, Robert. 2014. <i>Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity</i>. New York: Knopf, 160-186.</p>

	<p>Rottmann, Andrea. 2023. <i>Queer Lives across the Wall: Desire and Danger in Divided Berlin, 1945–1970</i>. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 3-21.</p> <p>Based on the readings, students will learn about queer relations of the urban and how the city exists otherwise (beyond/ behind/ underneath); also the ways in which the more-precarious and less-visible histories of the city can be archived/ recorded. The session will either take place at the museum entirely or will involve an excursion. Students will learn about Berlin’s queer history through a guided visit to the museum’s archive (to be confirmed) or through their interactions with museum objects/ discussion of the exhibit.</p> <p>Excursion: Schwules Museum</p>
<p>Friday, August 9, 2024</p>	<p>Session 3.2</p> <p>Evans, Jennifer V. 2015. “Harmless Kisses and Infinite Loops: Making Space for Queer Place in 21st Century Berlin.” In <i>Queer Cities, Queer Cultures: Europe Since 1945</i>, edited by Jennifer V. Evans and Matt Cook, 75–94. London: Bloomsbury Academic.</p> <p>Çetin, Zülfukar. 2018. “The Dynamics of Queer Politics and Gentrification in Berlin.” In <i>The Queer Intersectional in Contemporary Germany: Essays on Racism, Capitalism and Sexual Politics</i>, edited by Christopher Sweetapple, 141-181. Psychosozial-Verlag.</p> <p>This session addresses queer forms of place making as well as conflictive relationships between queer identifications and urban space. Reading the two texts together with the documentary <i>Safe</i> (Leo Adef, 2020), we will discuss the contemporary imagination of “Queer Berlin” as composed of and enacted in embodied practices, representational discourses and political economies.</p> <p>Screening <i>Safe</i> (Leo Adef, 2020)</p> <p>BLOG POST 3: DUE BY MON. 10 AUGUST</p>
<p>Tuesday, August 13, 2024</p>	<p>Week 4: Berlin in Transformation</p> <p>Session 4.1</p> <p>Boym, Svetlana. 2001. <i>The Future of Nostalgia</i>. New York: Basic Books, 173-218.</p> <p>In this session, students will discuss the questions of change and urban transformation. They will build on the learnings of previous sessions by tying material dimensions of memory (architectural sites and memorials) with the city’s immaterial/ hidden dimensions (migrant/ queer/ postcolonial presence). Students will also reflect on their experiences in the city especially in relation to their expectations/ imaginations (identified in session 1).</p> <p>The second half of the session will be dedicated to preparing student presentations.</p>

<p>Friday, August 16, 2024</p>	<p>Session 4.2</p> <p>The final session will involve student presentations and discussions.</p> <p>Concluding Remarks and Summary</p> <p>FUBiS Farewell Ceremony</p>
--	--

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