



**Summer semester 2021: 12.04.2021 - 17.07.2021**

## **Exploring Berlin Museums – Focus on Memory and Migration**

### **Instructor**

Dr. Victoria Bishop Kendzia  
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### **Schedule**

Weekly

### **Time and place**

This course will be held in a digital format with synchronous meetings in Zoom. Excursions and in-class meetings might take place, depending on the circumstances and regulations.

### **Course Level & Target Group**

Berlin Perspectives courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees. This course is directed at students interested in wide range of topics: museology, history, memory studies, ethics, Jewish studies, and migration studies are a few disciplines that this course can complement.

### **Language requirements**

English required B2, and German an asset, but not required. All students must function at the B2 level in English. Instruction is in English. Materials for general class participation have to be in English so that all can participate. Any written assignments, submitted directly to the instructor, may be written in: English, German, Spanish or French.

### **ECTS**

5 ECTS

## **Course Description**

Berlin's rich museological landscape lends itself to in-depth exploration: How are the upheavals of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, especially, remembered and represented? This course aims to enable the students to get to know a number of Berlin museums focussing on Memory and Post-WWII migration using anthropological methods and to critically analyse them within larger theoretical frameworks of "self" and "other" constructions. To explore the role of museums in rendering such constructions visible and therefore debatable.

## **Course Objective & Learning Outcomes**

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to familiarize the students with a number of key Berlin museums. In addition, they are to be equipped with ethnographic methods in order to critically approach the material, reflecting on their own positionalities. They will also develop their abilities to read and reflect on a variety of relevant academic literature.

### **Learning Objectives**

The aim is to have students:

- Understand, describe and identify key aspects of Berlin's museological landscape
- Reflect critically on scholarly texts and sites and media output relevant to the Museology, Memory and Migration in Germany.

and acquire the following skills and competencies:

- The use of ethnographic and critical analysis methods to virtually explore settings and sites.
- Identifying and reflecting on the positionality of scholarly authors, museum stakeholders, and themselves.
- Communicating and discussing key ideas in a constructive and respectful way.

## **Didactic Methods:**

An important aspect of the didactic method is open discussion and learning through research. Here, the instructor acts as a moderator, fostering a constructive environment where the materials can be explored and analysed in a productive way.

The approach is both student-focussed and process-focussed: the aim is to meet the students where they are vis a vis the topic and accompany them through a learning and exchange process throughout the course. In this context, the instructor's role is to offer important background knowledge to enable the students to find key talking points and to offer guidance and support as they explore the material.

## Course Schedule

(14 weeks, 28 teaching hours à 45 min, usually 2 hours per week)

### Week 1

#### Description of digital course sessions:

*NB: Actual dates and times and final number of weeks will depend on whether the SoSe remains digital. I can also remain flexible to adapt deadlines (therefore the number of weeks) based on students' needs in this digital format. **If it becomes an in-class course, each session would have to be 4 hours long, to accommodate site visits and discussions as a group, so the number of weeks would be lower (7 sessions in total).** Should the course go to completely in person, I would adapt it as follows: a number of the digital assignments become excursions to museums, while Zoom Meetings become in-class sessions.*

#### This schedule below is based on a digital-only format:

Week 1 – Introduction. Here a short assignment in which students watch a video and read an article introducing the instructor and the course. Submission of their own impressions of museum experiences in the past. A key concept here is reflexive positioning via exploration of previous experiences.

Week 2 – First Zoom Meeting – Introductory lecture by the instructor and discussion of the above in real time. Here the concept of Self and Other constructions and the power to interpret are key issues.

Week 3 – Focus on sites of WWII memory. Part 1 – Virtual visits<sup>1</sup> to the Jewish Museum Berlin and/or the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe; submission of reactions to this.

Submission of questions on the first two required readings:

1. Ostow, Robin. (2007). "From Displaying 'Jewish Art' to (Re)Building German-Jewish History: The Jewish Museum Berlin." In Vijay Agnew (ed.). *Interrogating Race and Racism*. University of Toronto Press. 289-319.
2. Feldman, Jackie and Anja Peleikis (2014). "Performing the Hyphen: Engaging German-Jewishness at the Jewish Museum Berlin." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*. 23 (2): 43-59.

Week 4 – Submission of commentary on your impressions of the sites via Moodle Forum. Commentary on each others' submissions. *This submission on Moodle Forum can be a substitute for any student who is unable to make it to Zoom Meetings. You do not need to do both.* An important methodology here is the Conversation or Perception Walk (which can be adapted to virtual tours).

Week 5 – Focus on sites of WWII memory – Part 2 – A selection of media will be made available from which the students can choose two of four assignments, based on the following sites (the German Historical Museum, The Topography of Terror, The German Resistance Memorial Center, The Stumbling Stones Project).

Submission of assignments, which will include a reaction paper to the sites and questions from required readings 3 and 4:

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<sup>1</sup> Should site visits in small groups be possible, these can replace submission of certain written assignments.

3. Dekel, Irit. (2014). "Jews and Others at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* Volume 23, No. 2 (2014): 71-84

4. Rothberg, Michael and Yasemin Yildiz. (2011). "Memory Citizenship: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Germany." *Parallax (Special Issue on Transcultural Memory)* 17.4, 32-48.

Week 6 – Second Zoom Meeting – Discussion of the questions on the readings and any open questions in real time. Here the concepts of activist citizenship and belonging can be explored in depth.

Short lecture on migration policy in Germany by the instructor.

Week 7 – Submission of commentary based on the above sites on Moodle Forum. Commentary on each others' submissions. *As above, this submission and commentary exchange on Moodle Forum can be a substitute for any students who are unable to make it to Zoom Meetings. You do not need to do both.*

Week 8 – Focus on Migration Part 1, Focus on larger museums content, material will be available via Moodle. Here the agency and challenges of groups with migration background is to be explored in a comparative framework. Students are encouraged to reflect on the situations in their own countries of origin to relate them to the policies in Germany.

Submission of assignment and questions on the required readings 5 and 5, as individual assignments:

5. Partridge, Damani J. (2010). "Holocaust Mahnmal (Memorial): Monumental Memory Amidst Contemporary Race." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(4): 820–850.

6. Shooman, Yasemin. (2016). "Between Everyday Racism and Conspiracy Theories. Islamophobia on the German-Language Internet." *Media and Minorities*: 136-155.

Week 9 – Third Zoom Meeting – Discussion of the above in real time.

Week 10 – Focus on Migration Part 2, Focus on smaller local museums, material will be made available via Moodle. Here, we return to the issue of the power to interpret.

Week 11 – Submission of commentary on Migration Parts 1 and 2 via Moodle Forum. *As above, this submission and commentary exchange on Moodle Forum can be a substitute for any students who are unable to make it to Zoom Meetings. You do not need to do both.*

Week 12 – Fourth Zoom Meeting - Student Presentations and Feedback

Week 13 –Fifth Zoom Meeting - Student Presentations cont'd.

Summary discussion, clarification of any outstanding issues re: research project.

## **Workload and assignments**

In order to be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to

- actively attend all sessions (a minimum of 75% attendance is required for classroom and online sessions), and participate in active exchange in **either** Moodle Discussion Forums (asynchronous) **or** Zoom meetings (synchronous)
- prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions
- hand in the following **assignments**:

- i. Submit of short written assignments based on the virtual visits and related media via Moodle.
- ii. Submit of two to three discussion/content questions on each scholarly reading, as assigned via Moodle.
- iii. Submit an individually-written research report with bibliography (6-8 pages), or a short presentation of your topic **either** in Zoom, Discussion Forum, **or - the pandemic allowing -** in person.

Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.

### **Assessment Components**

The final grade will be composed of the above-mentioned assignments.

### **Expectations & Policies**

Preparation for lively discussions in the classroom: Be on time, have at least the required readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

Assignments: Complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on schedule including handing over to the lecturer.

Commitment in class: Pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers, locals engaged with on the visits).

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

Attendance policy: 75% class attendance are required. Students must contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work.

Field trips: If classes involve a field trip or other external visits, these require attendance as well as appearance in time.

### **Your Instructor**

Dr. Victoria Bishop Kendzia's teaching method, although anthropologically inflected, is interdisciplinary in nature and is, therefore, not limited to the social sciences. It appeals to students from a wide variety of academic backgrounds from history to art, through to geography, theology, and politics. The focus of her work is on the urban landscape, especially, but not only, museums and memorials in and around Berlin. In this context, locations can be explored as dynamic sites that project and reframe key aspects of history and culture. The urban laboratory that is Berlin is particularly well-suited to this endeavour, given the historical and cultural upheavals it has witnessed during the 20th century and beyond. She defended her dissertation on visitor experience at the Jewish Museum Berlin in 2013 at the Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt University Berlin under the supervision of Prof. Wolfgang Kaschuba and Prof. Sharon Macdonald. Her doctoral work was based on ethnography of young Berlin-based high school students in and around the Jewish Museum Berlin. She has a background in Museum Studies, having completed her master's degree in this field from the University of Toronto, Canada in 2001 and her Bachelor of Arts Honours at the same university in 1999. She has been publishing scholarly articles in her field since 2009 and teaching at the university level since 2008. Her most recent publication is the 2018 monograph: *Visitors to the House of Memory. Political Education and Identity at the Jewish Museum Berlin*. London and New York: Berghahn Books. A new paperback edition of this book is forthcoming in December 2020.

Please note that the course and its syllabus are subject to change.  
Last update: 04.01.2021