



Mapping Berlin, Geography of Sound

Summer Semester 2022: 17 April - 22 July 2023

CATEGORY

Urban Culture and Society

COURSE STRUCTURE

2 contact hours à 45 min per week (summer semester: 14 weeks)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Tuesday, 10-12 c.t. (10:15am–11.45am)

Place

Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, 10117 Berlin, 0323-26

This course will be held in a blended format with some sessions taking place online, with a mix of face-to-face sessions and online Zoom sessions.

COURSE LANGUAGE

English language skills are required for participation in the course, and a minimum level of English B1 is necessary. The student will work with some advanced academic articles in English during the semester.

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
English B1

TARGET GROUP

The course is structured for all international exchange students and domestic students interested in a trans- and cross-disciplinary exchange on academic research exploring and mapping Berlin through sound. The course, structured in both theory and practice, offered a syllabus focusing on mapping and listening to acoustic territories in Berlin. Exploring the site-specificity embedded

in Berlin's sonic spaces, it focuses on the critical act of navigating and mapping through acoustic cartographies and diagrams while focusing on urban sounds. It will approach different research fields such as geography, musicology, architecture, acoustic ecology, and media arts. Previous knowledge in the mentioned disciplines or audio technology is not required. The course requires active participation in each session during the semester.

*This course is prepared for all international exchange students with a strong interest in the course topic. Berlin Perspectives courses are designed for undergraduate students, and master students may participate if their home university agrees. Regular degree-seeking students can select the course within the elective part of their study program (überfachlicher Wahlpflichtbereich üWP).

CREDITS = 5 ECTS

The Berlin Perspectives courses are offered by the Career Center as part of the elective program üWP. Registration takes place via Agnes.

All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course focuses on mapping and listening to acoustic territories in Berlin. It allows academic research for exploring and understanding the city by sensing aural environments. Structured in theory and practice, the central questions of the course are: which sonic elements can we encounter in navigating historical and contemporary maps? Which methods of research and practices exist in the act of mapping with sound? How can we generate sound maps? The course reflects the city's cultural, social, and political dimensions from a transdisciplinary approach through analyzing and creating maps by listening. It allows students to explore auditory territories, gain strength, and develop knowledge and individual perspectives on cultural and urban studies. The mapping methods are practice-based on field recordings, soundwalk, and sound diagramming exercises. The academic readings and discussions will introduce the student to the field of sound studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This BA- and MA-level course aims to develop a critical position in understanding auditory territories and sound maps, taking Berlin as a case study. The course will enable its participants to sense the city through hearing and listening and critically reflect on how sound can have an actual impact on their disciplines. Students fulfill with an overview of the sound-related cultural projects of the city.

Knowledge

- Analyze the urban space and sound environment.
- Interpret and contextualize the aural territories.
- Identify the social and political interactions in terms of urban development.
- Examine the city as a sonic environment through navigating maps.

-Use listening as a tool for analyzing the social space contained in maps.

Academic/Analytical Skills

- Critically reflect on the contemporary academic discussion.
- Analyze academic articles.
- Adopt and implement academic writing.
- Proceed and apply artistic research and practice-based projects.

Achievement

- Understand and interpret cultural production by approaching documents like maps, diagrams, and cartographies, while enhancing academic writing and artistic research skills.
- To be able to use different research methods.
- Analytical listening skills.
- Basic on audio technology edition, audio documentation, and field recording.

Requirements and assessment:

This course offers students diverse options for understanding the urban space in Berlin. Therefore, I strongly encourage full participation. I am holding the course in a hybrid format with some online sessions, others face-to-face in rooms 0323-26 at Hausvogteiplatz 5-7. You must join the online discussion and in-person sessions. Please be prepared to write about sonic environments and your interest in researching sound, maps, and cartographies. There will be reading material for each class. As we are working with sound, a smartphone or any recorder would be helpful. However, you don't need a professional recorder. You can also choose your method to record sounds in any media. i.e., photography, video, writing, and drawing. There will be assignments (one presentation of a mandatory reading), a mid-term exercise, and a final project. Each has a different percentage of your note. Please see the grading section below.

In Class Expectations

Open invitation to Diversity: The class is open to multiple cultures and choices. It is an inclusive space for exchange, collaboration, engagement, and participation. There is also a place for discussion and disagreement. Therefore, please come with an open mind and never bring any shaming, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia, or other hate.

Plagiarism: It is unacceptable to copy someone else's ideas or words without properly crediting the source. Be sure you are using citations. In other cases, you will be dismissed from this course.

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Workload and assignments

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)
- hand **exercises** and the **final project**.

We will have several exercises using virtual tools (Moodle and Zoom.) Depending on the circumstances and regulations, virtual tours can differ from online to on-site excursions, announced at the beginning of the semester.

EXERCISES

a) Presentation and discussion about one reading

Each student should present 20 minutes of one of the mandatory readings. The presentations can be performed in groups (two or three students) or individually. It is expected to be a 10 minute presentation that summarizes the text. Another 10 minutes will be dedicated to a group discussion. The student can use a slide show to structure the presentation.

b) Field recordings

During the course, it will be asked to bring different field recordings of different acoustic territories of Berlin. The recording will be max. 2 minutes and should be presented in class. Any kind of audio recorder is accepted, for example, a handy phone, iPad, or computer. If the student does not have technical equipment, there will be shared possibilities to get rental equipment free of charge.

FINAL PROJECTS

- **Option 1** - Sound mapping in the form of a portfolio of several multimodal work performances - without a precise definition of the length (e.g., audio or video material, internet pages, online maps). The sound mapping project should be complemented with an explanatory text approx. 2500 characters with references and bibliography.
- **Option 2** - A written paper of approx. 25,000 characters, including spaces (bibliography not included for characters account.)

Both options will be presented within a 15 minute presentation in the last session. The final project can be written in English or German. For option 1, the student should develop a "sound map" using the methodologies explained in class, including soundwalk, field recording, audiowalk, and audio collage. The aim is to generate sonic diagrams or digital maps in a hybrid format during the act of mapping (option 1). Theoretical research in the form of an academic paper is also allowed (option 2).

For option 1, the student is welcome to use any kind of media in the process of mapping. It is their imagination and creativity. It must write an explanatory text about the relation between the selected area and argue with a historical, political, and social analysis approach. Suppose it is an academic essay, option 2, the written requirements are 25,000 characters, including spaces. In that case, the students must reflect on the research question, methodologies, objectives, aims, etc., till styling, citing, paraphrasing, referencing, etc.

Please be aware that the course is theory and practice-oriented. The student should engage with discussion in classes, attend excursions in the city, do small presentations during the first two blocks of the seminar, and actively present the ongoing work of the final project during block 3 (see time schedule).

We will be working in different steps to proceed and prepare the final project during the course. At the halftime of the course, we will discuss how to proceed and prepare those final projects. The last six classes of the course will be dedicated to combining theory, talks, and visits with corrections of the final projects. The project could be performed individually or in groups.

Assessment Components

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

Contributions and presentations about the required readings 30%

First assignment 20%

Final project 50%

Failure to fulfill one of the mentioned components fails the class.

Teaching tools

MOODLE

All readings will be available via the Moodle page. The course key (password) for self-enrollment will be sent to registered students before the beginning of the semester. If you have trouble finding the course or cannot get the password on time, please write an e-mail to **samuel.perea-diaz@hu-berlin.de**, and I will provide you with the password.

ZOOM

We will meet every week in Zoom on the day and at the time of the course.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Samuel Perea-Díaz is an architect and researcher based in Berlin. Along with architecture and spatial design, Samuel's practice incorporates exhibition scenography, curating, and sound art. Samuel holds a degree in Architecture from the University of Seville and a MA in Sound Studies and Sonic Arts from the Berlin University of the Arts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blesser, B. and Salter, L-R. *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*. England: MIT Press, 2009.

Careri, Francesco. *Walkscapes. Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*. USA: Culicidae Architectural Press, 2017.

Gandy, M. and Nilsen, B.J. (eds.). *The Acoustic City*. Berlin: Jovis, 2014.

Goldsmith, Mike. *Sound - A Very Short Introduction*. United Kingdom: Oxford, 2015.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The eyes of the skin: architecture and the senses*. Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley, 2012.

Steingo and Sykes, Gavin and Jim (eds.). *Remapping Sound Studies*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2019.

Schulze, Holger. *The Bloomsbury Handbook of the Anthropology of Sound*. USA & UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.

READINGS

Cusack, Peter. "Introduction." In *Berlin Sonic Places. A Brief Guide*, 4-7. Berlin, wolke, 2017.

Jasper, Sandra. "Acoustic ecology: Hans Scharoun and modernist experimentation in West Berlin." In Gandy, M. & Nilsen, B.J. (eds.) *The acoustic city*, 145-155. Berlin: Jovis, 2014

Jasper, Sandra. "**Sonic refugia: nature, noise abatement and landscape design in West Berlin.**" In *The Journal of Architecture*, 23:6, 936-960, DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2018.1505773, 2018.

Jasper, Sandra. "Acoustic botany: listening to nature in a former airfield." In M.Gandy and S.Jasper *The botanical City*, 2020.

Kelly, Caleb. "Walking and listening." In *Gallery Sound*, 94-110. Print. Ex:centrics, 2017.

LaBelle, Brandon. "**Underground: Busking, Acoustic, and the Echo.**" In *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*, 3-19. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

Lane, Cathy & **Carlyle**, Angus. "**Interview with Christina Kubisch.**" In *In the Field. The Art of Field Recording*, 61-70. Uniformbooks. CRiSAP. UK, 2013.

Ndikung, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng. "**That around Which the Universe Resolves. On the Rhythms of Memory, Times, Bodies, and Urban Space.**" In *While or Two We Will Find The Tone. Essays and Proposals Curatorial Concepts and Critiques*, 69-82. Archive Books, 2020.

Ouzounian, Gascia. "**Mapping the Acoustic City: Noise Mapping and Sound Mapping.**" In *Stereophonica. Sound and Space in Science, Technology, and the Arts*, 125-148. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2021.

Schafer, R. Murray. "**Introduction**" and "**Glossary of Soundscape Terms.**" In *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, 3-12 & 271-275. Rochester, V.: Destiny Books, 1993 (1977).

Voegelin, Salomé. "**Geographies of sound: Performing impossible territories.**" In *The Political Possibility of Sound*, 75-101. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2018.

Wildner, Kathrin. "**Soundmapping.**" In the Booklet to the exhibition *Mapping Along. Recording Margins of conflict*, 47-48. 2021.

COURSE SCHEDULE

BLOCK 1

Week 01 **Introduction**

Week 02 **Perspectives on Mapping** (guest talk)
 "*Mapping Along. Recording Margins of Conflict*"

Week 03 **Perspectives on Sound**
 "*A Geography of Sound*"

BLOCK 2

Week 04 **Berlin Maps and Sounds**
 First assignment

Week 05 **Perspectives on Listening to Urban Sounds**
 "*Sidewalk, Soundwalk and Audiowalk*"

- Week 06 **Perspectives on Berlin Lands**
 "Wasteland and Containers of Silences"
- Week 07 **Perspectives on Soundscapes**
 "From Soundscape to Field Recordings"
- Week 08 **Perspectives on Acoustic Territories**
 "Acoustic Arenas"

BLOCK 3

- Session 09 **Mapping Berlin 01** *Berlin Sonic Lands and Sonic Research*
- Session 10 **Mapping Berlin 02** *Examples of soundwalks*
- Session 11 **Mapping Berlin 03** *Excursion (guest talk)*
- Session 12 **Mapping Berlin 04** *Examples on Sound Maps*
- Session 13 **Mapping Berlin 05** *Examples on Audiowalk*
- Session 14 **Mapping Berlin Final Presentations**

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Registration on Moodle (HU's e-learning platform)

in case of online sessions

- Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC)
- Stable internet connection
- Software: Zoom (video/audio)
- *Recommended* hardware: external headset for better sound quality

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Preparation for lively discussions: 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 the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

Commitment: pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions in this international classroom.

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies. Plagiarism in even a small assignment will result in failing the entire course.

Attendance policy: Students must contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the lecturer.

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 18 January 2023