



## Echoes Across Borders: Navigating the Musical Tapestry of Berlin's Migrations

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Summer Semester 2024: 15 April– 19 July 2024

### CATEGORY

Music and Film

### COURSE STRUCTURE

4-hour block seminars every fortnight

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

#### Time

Day: Monday, 10-14 c.t. (10:15am-1:45pm)

Please note the individual session dates:

22 April, 29 April, 13 May, 27 May, 10 June, 17 June, 1 July

#### Place

Room 0323-26, Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, 10117 Berlin

### COURSE LANGUAGE

The language of the course is English (B2 minimum level required), and conversational German (A1) is recommended for class assignments. Academic articles, recordings, and videos are English language-based

**Language requirements** (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

English: B2

German: A1

### TARGET GROUP

International exchange students and domestic students of all subjects. The diverse and interdisciplinary nature of the content makes it appealing to those who are curious about the cultural dynamics of Berlin and the role of music in reflecting and shaping its history. Moreover, students with a passion for exploring the impact of migration on artistic expression and cultural identity would find this course engaging their interests.

This course is designed for undergraduate students. 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. No background knowledge in ethnography, musicology, or ethnographic research methods is required.

## **CREDITS = 5 ECTS**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The aim of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the intricate interplay between music and migration in shaping Berlin's dynamic cultural landscape. By examining historical events such as the forced migration of German musicians before and during the Second World War, the division and subsequent reunification of the city, and the continuous inflow of creative minds from around the world, students gain insights into how these complex factors have influenced the evolution of Berlin's music scene. The course not only delves into the emergence of experimental and electronic genres but also emphasizes the impact of recent migrations on contemporary musical expressions. By fostering an interdisciplinary approach, students develop analytical skills to explore connections between history, cultural studies, and musicology. The highlight lies in encouraging students to critically analyze case studies and participate as observers in the Fête de la Musique, conduct independent research, and ultimately present their findings, allowing them to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the symbiotic relationship between music and migration in one of the world's most culturally vibrant cities.

Berlin has a rich history of attracting artists and musicians from around the world, particularly during periods of political and social upheaval. This historical interplay begins with the forced migration of musicians during the 1930s and 1940s due to the rise of National Socialism. Another notable era is the post-World War II period and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 which physically separated the city but also created a unique cultural dynamic. In West Berlin, artists sought refuge, drawn by a sense of freedom and countercultural spirit. This influx of creative minds fueled the emergence of experimental music scenes, including electronic and avant-garde genres. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent reunification of the city marked another significant chapter in the relationship between music and migration. Berlin reunified became a symbol of artistic and cultural freedom, attracting a new wave of musicians and artists eager to contribute to the city's evolving identity contributing to the globalization of its music scene. Electronic music continued to grow in Berlin during the 1990s, with the city's abandoned industrial spaces serving as the backdrop for legendary techno parties.

Current waves of migration also play a crucial role in the diversity of musical influences present in Berlin; its cosmopolitan nature, with a substantial immigrant population, has resulted in a melting pot of musical styles and genres. This multicultural environment has given rise to hybrid forms of music that blend traditional elements with contemporary sounds. World music, fusion, and cross-genre collaborations have become common, reflecting the dynamic interplay between different cultural backgrounds within the city.

Moreover, Berlin's status as a haven for creativity and artistic expression continues to attract musicians seeking an open and inclusive environment. The city's numerous clubs, independent venues, and cultural spaces provide platforms for both established and emerging artists, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. The convergence of diverse musical

influences, driven by the ongoing influx of creative minds from various corners of the globe, ensures that Berlin remains a dynamic hub for musical innovation and experimentation shaped by the continuous flow of migration.

In the context of this seminar series, participation as observers will also take place during the Fête de la Musique. This festival in Berlin will offer students a real-world opportunity to witness the city's dynamic and multicultural music scene in action. Students can observe performances that may reflect the influence of migration on various musical styles, fostering a deeper understanding of the course themes. Additionally, the festival serves as a source for student projects, enabling them to analyze specific performances, interview musicians, or explore the festival's role in promoting cultural diversity within Berlin's music landscape.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **Knowledge**

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the historical and socio-political context of Berlin, particularly during key periods such as post-World War II, the division of the city, and the reunification.
- Explore the evolution of Berlin's music scene, focusing on the impact of migration on the development of genres like electronic and experimental music.
- Examine the multicultural aspects of Berlin's music landscape, highlighting the influence of immigration on the city's musical identity and the emergence of hybrid musical forms.

### **Acquisition of Academic & Analytical Skills**

- Hone critical thinking skills through the analysis of primary and secondary sources, including historical documents, musical compositions, and scholarly articles, to understand the relationship between music and migration in Berlin.
- Develop research skills to independently explore and synthesize information from diverse academic disciplines, such as history, cultural studies, and musicology, to gain a multidimensional perspective on the subject.
- Enhance analytical skills by examining case studies and real-world examples of musicians and events, encouraging students to identify patterns, trends, and the cause-and-effect relationships between migration and musical developments in Berlin.

### **Achievement**

- Demonstrate proficiency in articulating complex historical and cultural concepts related to Berlin's music and migration through written and oral presentations.
- Produce well-reasoned arguments and critiques, integrating theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence to support their analyses of the impact of migration on musical genres and cultural identity in Berlin.
- Showcase a deep appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of the topic by synthesizing knowledge from various academic domains, fostering a holistic approach to cultural analysis.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

2 hours à 45 min every week, structured in block bi-weekly seminars (14 weeks)

## **Block Seminar 1 (Week 1 & 2) – 22/4/2024**

### **Part I: Introduction to Berlin's Cultural Landscape**

- Overview of Berlin's historical and cultural context
- Exploration of key historical periods (pre-WWII, post-WWII, Cold War, reunification)

### **Part II: Classical Maestros in Berlin: 17<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

- Explore the classical music history of Berlin from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emphasizing the influence of royal patronage, courtly environments, and societal changes
- Highlight significant domestic and foreign composers associated with Berlin, delving into compositions and their impact on the classical music landscape of the city
- Investigate the international dimension of Berlin's classical music scene and see how visiting composers contributed to the global significance of Berlin's classical music heritage

## **Block Seminar 2 (Week 3 & 4) – 29/4/2024**

### **Part I: Musical Imports and Exodus from Germany before and during WW II.**

- Delve into the historical circumstances leading to the mass departure and/or persecution of musicians during the rise of National Socialism in the 1930s and throughout World War II.
- Examine the contributions of departing musicians to global music, and how their challenges and experiences influenced their creative output. Consider how their absence affected Germany's cultural landscape.

### **Part II: Music during wartime: resilience, propaganda, and impact**

- Explore the significance of music in Germany as a form of cultural expression, propaganda, and resilience amidst the challenges of war by importing musical genres/styles from abroad.
- Discuss the impact of wartime music on cultural identity, both within and outside Germany.

## **Block Seminar 3 (Week 5 & 6) – 13/5/2024**

### **Part I: Berlin's division and musical responses**

- Berlin Wall: its profound impact on the cultural and artistic climate in East and West Berlin.
- Analysis of music as a powerful form of expression during the division, exploring how musicians responded to the unique challenges and dynamics of the divided city
- Case studies highlighting musicians and genres that emerged during this period, illustrating the relationship between the city's geopolitical circumstances and its musical evolution.

### **Part II: Reunification and the Transformation of Berlin**

- Exploration of the impact of reunification on the city's cultural identity
- Discussion on the reunified Berlin as a cultural and artistic hub
- Examination of factors that attracted artists and musicians to Berlin

## **Block Seminar 4 (Week 7 & 8) – 27/5/2024**

### **Part I: Emergence of Experimental Music Scenes**

- Exploration of experimental and avant-garde music movements
- Analysis of how political and cultural changes influenced musical experimentation
- In-depth analysis of specific musicians or bands and their migration to Berlin, incorporating migrant populations.

### **Part II: Rise of Techno in Berlin**

- Historical overview of the techno movement in Berlin
- Examination of the role of abandoned spaces in shaping the techno scene, and how space contributes to the diversity and innovation in Berlin's music scene.

## **Block Seminar 5 (Week 9 & 10) – 10/6/2024**

### **Part I: Musical Crossroads in Berlin Today - Multicultural influences and collaborations**

- Examine how Berlin's migrant population profoundly influences the city's music scene, fostering cross-cultural collaborations and hybrid musical forms.
- Explore the global influences on Berlin's music, particularly in the realm of world music.
- Highlight case studies of musicians exemplifying the vibrant diversity of the city's musical landscape, showcasing innovative fusion of cultural elements in their work.

### **Part II: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Recent Migration**

- Discussion on the intersectionality of recent migration, music, and cultural identity
- Exploration of how scholars from various disciplines approach the study of music in the context of contemporary migration
- Discuss the impact of xenophobia on the city's social fabric and explore how it intersects with musical expressions.
- See how musicians in Berlin respond to/confront xenophobia through their creative work, and how musical narratives contribute to social awareness and challenge xenophobic attitudes.

## **Block Seminar 6 (Week 11 & 12) – 17/6/2024**

### **Observation Workshop: Exploring Music and Migration in Berlin from up-close.**

- Address ethical considerations associated with observational fieldwork, stressing the importance of cultural respect, and obtaining informed consent.
- Explore the significance of observation as a qualitative research method
- Provide practical guidance on conducting observational fieldwork related to the course themes, emphasizing techniques for unobtrusive observation and effective note-taking.
- Discuss reflexivity, prompting students to critically reflect on their positionality and biases during fieldwork in the context of music and migration.

## **[INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATION SESSION IN THE FIELD] – 21/6/2024**

### **Fête de la Musique in Berlin**

- Attend Fête de la Musique in Berlin to directly experience the city's diverse music offerings.
- Observe and document various performances, noting genres, cultural influences, and the overall atmosphere.
- Analyze the observed performances in the context of the course themes.
- Reflect on how the festival exemplifies the impact of migration on Berlin's music scene.

## **Block Seminar 7 (Week 13 & 14) – 1/7/2024**

### **Synthesis and Reflection - Student Presentations**

- Students present their research on specific topics related to music and migration in Berlin
- Peer feedback and discussion on the diversity of perspectives
- Synthesis of key themes and concepts covered in the course
- Reflection on the ongoing influence of migration on Berlin's music scene and cultural identity
- Guide students in creating well-structured outlines for their final papers, ensuring logical coherence in their arguments.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Registration on Moodle (Humboldt-Universität's e-learning platform)
- The course is delivered on-site. However, in case online sessions take place due to illness or a pandemic outbreak, students are responsible for having a fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC) and a stable internet connection.

## ASSIGNMENT INFO

### 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)
- hand in a final written project assignment (approx. 25000 characters), which is relevant to the aspect of Berlin's musical landscape.
- present the topic of their final assignment in a classroom presentation.

Project options include researching and presenting case studies in the form of a paper either on specific musicians and musical movements that emerged in Berlin during key historical periods; analyzing the impact of recent migrations on Berlin's contemporary music scene; or presenting an observational case study based on material collected during the Fête de la Musique in Berlin. Alternatively, students can develop their own multimedia project, creating a documentary or podcast that explores the diverse musical influences shaped by migration in the city.

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

## Assessment Components

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

**Presentation** 15%

**Final project** 85%

## EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

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

**Assignments:** complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule.

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

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies. **Plagiarism** will result in failing the entire course. See **ZSP-HU** (Fächerübergreifende Satzung zur Regelung von Zulassung, Studium und Prüfung der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), **§ 111** (Täuschung).

**Attendance policy:** Students must contact their lecturer to catch up on missed work. To excuse absence, please contact the lecturer.