

## Reconstructing Berlin: Architectural And Urban Histories Of The City

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Summer Semester 2023: 15 April– 19 July 2024

### CATEGORY

Urban Development

### COURSE STRUCTURE

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

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

#### Time

Day: Tuesday, 14-16 (2:15-3:45pm)

#### Place

Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, Room 0323-26

### COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in English, including the readings. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class, language-level B2/C1 (advanced) is required.

**Language requirements** (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)  
English B2

### TARGET GROUP

International exchange students of all subjects with a strong interest in the course topic. Berlin Perspectives courses are 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 (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**

What is at stake in reading, writing, depicting and telling the histories of Berlin's architectural and urban landscape? How do historical and analytical frameworks shape scholarly understandings of the city? How does the architecture of Berlin shape its history and theory? Conducted as a discussion seminar, this course uses recent architectural and urban histories of 20th century Berlin to explore different ways of narrating the city's history. Each week, students will approach Berlin's urbanity through different textual and visual media to discuss the themes and methods—from femininity to migration, politics to privatization—by which they narrate the entanglement of Berlin's physical and social landscape. Over the course of the semester, students will develop their scholarly reading techniques, and their fluency in the multipolar and manifold circumstances of the city. The premise of the course is that engaging the narrative can lead to 'changing the narrative,' thereby opening the door for students to develop an original final project, situating their worldly experience in the past, present and future of Berlin.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to equip students with an in-depth understanding of historical and analytical frameworks in architectural and urban history and enable them to read, understand and critically reflect on the most recent theoretical and empirical research in the field. In doing so, the course endeavors to further and deepen students' understanding of diverse cultural and social contexts, and help them translate that understanding into advocating for built environments that equitably support and include people of different backgrounds, resources, and abilities. The course takes a historiographical approach to Berlin, meaning that the objects of the course are both the city and the production of its history. Seminar will discuss the methods and stakes of various historical narratives about the city, in order to make explicit the analytic frameworks by which architecture and urban understandings are formed, and to speculate on what kinds of possible interventions might follow. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

### Knowledge

- Understand, describe and identify key frameworks of place based architectural and urban history.
- Analyze historical narratives of Berlin and account for the diverse social, cultural, economic, and political forces, nationally and globally, which frame the city.
- Provide an overview of recent theoretical and empirical developments in the field.

### Academic/Transferable Skills

- Analyze and critically reflect on the construction of historical narratives, arguments and evidence.
- Strategically read academic scholarship, accounting for format differences between scholarly books and articles.
- Select relevant theories and methods for analyzing topic-related questions.
- Communicate and discuss key concepts in architectural and urban history.
- Research and write place based history.

### Competencies

- Read the most recent theoretical and empirical research in architectural and urban history of Berlin.
- Apply relevant theories and concepts in independent work to analyze new problems and conditions.

- Engage and participate in architectural research to test and evaluate innovations in the field.

## READINGS

See course schedule

## 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 for classroom and online sessions) and participate in discussion.
- do the assigned reading each week and actively participate in in-class discussion.
- complete the following **assignments**:
  - Weekly 150-word reading responses, to be submitted prior to the class discussion.
  - Once during the semester, each student will give a 15 minute presentation. The presentation will cover: Overview of the text assigned for the week; A review of one primary source engaged in the reading; Questions to prompt peer discussion.
  - Final Assignment: Collective Tour of the City. Each student will give a 5-10 minute presentation on one Berlin site of their choosing. The aim is to tell a story about the site based on their own research that mobilizes a selection of the scholarly frameworks reviewed in class. Pending site selection and course size, the presentations may be delivered on site or in class with appropriate visual aids. The presentation will also be submitted in writing, with a bibliography.

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.

## YOUR INSTRUCTOR

### Carrie Bly

Carrie is a 20th century architectural historian. She is currently working on her dissertation, an architectural history of economy in the United States between 1920-30s, at Princeton University. The project seeks to contribute to growing contemporary literature in architectural history on capitalism, labor and materials. Carrie is also a licensed architect and a Visiting Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture at Pratt Institute in New York.

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# COURSE SCHEDULE

2 hours à 45 min per week

## Week 1: Historiography & Method

Content	An introduction to reading and analyzing recent histories of the built environment. Berlin's spatial conditions have been narrated in the past by thinkers such as Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Krakauer, who tied their own experiences to history. What kinds of knowledge do the stories of architectural and urban environments produce? To what end might these stories be mobilized?
Themes	History, historiography, experience, narrative, sources, evidence, analysis, argument, materiality, sociality.
Required Reading	Bruno Latour, "The Berlin Key, or How to Do Words with Things," in <i>Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture</i> , ed. P.M. Graves-Brown, 2000, 10–21.
Assignment	Write 150 words on your experience so far in Berlin.
Optional Excursion	"BerlinZEIT" exhibition at the Stadtmuseum Ephraim-Palais.

## Week 2: Urban Subjects [1871-1914]

Content	Who are/were the 'subjects' of Berlin? How does the built environment condition ways of being?
Themes	subjectivity, gender, modernity, urban spaces, public/private space, institutions
Readings	Despina Stratigakos, "Introduction: A Forgotten Metropolis" and "Chapter 3. A Home of Our Own: Single Women and the New Domestic Architecture," in <i>A Women's Berlin: Building the Modern City</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.
Assignment	Reading response (150-words)
Optional Excursion	"Here and Now. Women Experiencing Homelessness in Berlin" exhibition at the Humboldt Forum.

## Week 3: Modern Objects and Social Projects [1907-1930]

Content	How is the design and production of objects integral to social projects?
Themes	Community, modernism, social, style, ideology
Readings	Robin Schuldenfrei, "Chapter 1. Consumption: Peter Behrens At The Aeg And The Luxury Of Technology" and "Chapter 2. Objectivity: The

Werkbund Display Window And Architecture's Object" in *Luxury and Modernism: Architecture and the Object in Germany 1900-1933* (Princeton University Press, 2018). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursion Museum der Dinge

#### **Week 4: Class, Space & Society [1923-1933]**

Content Who were/are the workers of Berlin? How does capital, business and labor, structure the city?

Themes Marxism, capital, labor, class, New Urbanism, "masses," style, guest workers, migration, transmigration

Readings Sabine Hake, "Chapter 2. Mapping Weimar Society: On Masses, Classes, and White-Collar Workers" and "Chapter 3. Organizing the Modern Masses: New Building in Weimar Berlin" in *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursion and Media FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum; Watch *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm – Liebe, D-Mark und Tod*, Documentary (Cem Kaya, 2022); Read graphic novel *Madgermanes* (Birgit Weyhe, avant-verlag, 2016).

#### **Week 5: Plots & Property [1938-1945]**

Content How does property ownership change the city?

Themes Property, Expropriation, Restitution, Stolpersteine, Aryanization

Readings Harold James, "Nazi Looting and Its Aftermath" (Lecture, Exhibition Opening of "Stolen Heart," Center for Jewish History, March 29, 2016), <https://www.lbi.org/events/harold-james-on-nazi-looting-and-its-aftermath/>.

Paul B. Jaskot, "Anti-Semitic Policy in Albert Speer's Plans for the Rebuilding of Berlin," *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 4 (December 1996): 622.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursions Topography of Terror; Schwerbelastungskörper; Jewish Museum; Stolpersteine [<https://www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/de>]; Marienfelde Refugee Centre Memorial Site; Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation.

## **Week 6: Planning and Political Objects [1945 to 1989]**

Content	By what means and mechanisms do architecture and the city channel political debates and ideologies?
Themes	Ideology, planning, East and West Germany, Cold War, state, housing
Readings	Emily Pugh, "Chapter 1. Modern Capital, Divided Capital," "Chapter 3. The Unbridled Buildup of Socialism: Defining and Critiquing Heimat-GDR," and "Chapter 7. Collapsing Borders: Housing, Berlin's 750th Anniversary, and the End of the GDR" and <i>Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin</i> (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.
Assignment	Reading response (150-words)
Optional Excursions and Media	DDR Museum; "Alvar Aalto in Germany: Drawn Modernism" at the Tchoban Museum; East Side Gallery; Berlin Wall Memorial and Documentation center; Watch <i>Berlin Bouncer</i> (David Dietl, 2019).

## **Week 7: Counter-History [1989-c2009]**

Content	How does 'everyday' architecture shape or convey historical narratives of the city?
Themes	Ruins, "low architecture," "everyday" architecture, historic monuments, preservation, gentrification, counterculture.
Readings	Daniela Sandler, "Counterpreservation," <i>Third Text</i> 25, no. 6 (November 2011): 687-97.
Assignment	Reading response (150-words)
Optional Excursion	Urban Nation Museum for Contemporary Art

## **Week 8: Field Trip**

Content	Class time to be used for city excursions.
Readings	None
Assignment	Self-guided student excursion to the Berlin site of their choosing. Students must provide photographic evidence of their visit (a selfie or ussie) and a 150-word reflection.

## **Week 9: City Systems [1920-2020]**

Content	What kinds of knowledge are mobilized in developing city infrastructures? What kinds of spaces are produced by infrastructures
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that exceed city limits? In what ways is the landscape of the city more than just background or setting?

Themes Environment, suburbs, infrastructure, technical knowledge, political plans

Readings Timothy Moss, "Chapter 2. Trajectories of Technological Urbanism" "Chapter 4. Weimar's Networked Municipalism" and "Chapter 9. Contested Infrastructures in a Reunified Berlin" in *Remaking Berlin: A History of the City through Infrastructure, 1920-2020* (MIT Press, 2020). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursions Digital Tour: <https://www.iri-thesys.org/outreach/art-science/remaking-berlin-digital-tour/>  
Berliner Wasserbetrieb Tour: <https://www.bwb.de/de/fuehrungen.php>

### **Week 10: The Green City [19-20th century]**

Content What aspects of cities have become naturalized? How are urban landscapes maintained? How unique are the environmental conditions of Berlin?

Themes Nature, sustainability, environment, landscape, non-human

Readings Sonja Dümpelmann, "Chapter 6. Greening Trees: Replanting East and West Berlin" and "Chapter 7. Shades of Red: Art, Action, and Aerial Photography for a Green Berlin" in *A History of Street Trees in New York City and Berlin* (Yale University Press, 2019). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursion A park in the city; "Klima\_X" Exhibition at Das Museum für Kommunikation Berlin; "After Nature" Exhibition at the Humbolt Forum.

### **Week 11: Translation and Urban Ethnography**

Content How does the neighborhood function as a transnational site? Does architectural knowledge or urban experience transform as it crosses national and linguistic borders? How can we understand local and global conditions of the city?

Themes Housing, migration, integration, neighborhood, translation, modernism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism

Readings Annika Marlen Hinze, "Chapter 3. Mein Block: The Neighborhood as a Site of Identity" and "Chapter 4. Location as Destiny: Integrating Kreuzberg and Neukölln" in *Turkish Berlin: Integration Policy and Urban Space*, 1st edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2013). Students are encouraged, but not required, to read the entire book.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursion Digital Tour: <https://www.deutschesmigrationsmuseum.de/>

## **Week 12: Privatization and Publicity**

Content Do visual narratives of the city offer ways of contesting textual narratives? Are there discrepancies between the visible city and sub-surface processes of the city? How does art intervene in the city?

Themes Financialization, housing, politics of space, resistance, visual culture

Readings Daniel Young and Christian Giroux, Introduction and Photographs in *BERLIN 2013/1983*, 2 vols. (ARCH+).

Anne Kockelkorn, "Financialized Berlin: The Monetary Transformation of Housing, Architecture and Polity," *Architectural Theory Review* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 76–104.

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

Optional Excursions and Media ARCH+ gallery; "We're staying! Gentrification and resistance in Berlin" Exhibition at the Humbolt Forum; Watch *Capital B - Wem Gehört Berlin?*, TV Miniseries, 5 parts, Dokus und Reportagen (arte, 2023).

## **Week 13: Future Berlin**

Content How is the future of the city embedded in its historical narratives? What frameworks are used to propose interventions in the city? What other approaches could be imagined? How are relationships between material and immaterial aspects of the city articulated?

Themes Planning, history and future

Readings Selections from Architekten-und Ingenieurverein zu Berlin-Brandenburg e V et al., eds., *Unfinished Metropolis: Volume 1: 100 Years of Urban Planning for Greater Berlin / Volume 2: International Urban Planning Competition for Berlin-Brandenburg 2070. Perspectives from Europe* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2020). (We will be focusing on Volume 2).

Assignment Reading response (150-words)

## **Week 14: Conclusions**

Content Class time to be used for final presentations

Readings None

Assignment Final Presentation



## 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.

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The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 28 January 2024