



Asia in Berlin: Critical Heritage Studies

Summer Semester 2024: 15 April– 19 July 2024

CATEGORY

Culture and Society

COURSE STRUCTURE

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

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Friday, 10-14 c.t. (10:15 am – 1.45 pm)

Please note the individual session dates:

19 April, 3 May, 17 May, 31 May, 14 June, 28 June, 12 July

Place

Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, Room 0323-26, and excursions

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 is required. Some basic German (A2) is desirable for the communication in class.

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

English B2

German A1

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).

By assessing various visual and written sources, media and excursions, I present students with examples of geographical, historical and cultural contexts in which concepts of heritage take place. I have been involved in archaeological field work, worked as curator and provenance researcher at museums and excavations what provides an insight into the practical knowledge of cultural studies. These experiences allow practical applications for the students.

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

Berlin is a multi-cultural city with a diverse cultural life and heritage. The course will present critical heritage studies connected to Asia. Starting with the fascination of collectors and travelers to Asia during the colonial period, collections and material culture have lent contemporary relevance to the arts, history, and politics. During the excursions to museums and cultural institutions in Berlin, we want to critically engage in the discourses on what Asian heritage is and how it should be studied and managed. This allows an integration of heritage and museum studies. The course approaches a broad spectrum from crafts, intangible heritage, and memorialization to rights policies and property issues. Monuments, religious sites, or street names reflect Berlin's colonial legacies and minority histories of different communities from Asia.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to equip students with an in-depth understanding of heritage concepts and enable them to read, understand and critically reflect on the most recent theoretical and empirical research in the field. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Knowledge

- understand, describe and identify the social and cultural phenomena of heritage making from an interdisciplinary and non-ethnocentric perspective
- account for the facts and direct empirical tests of the core theories of heritage studies
- provide an overview of recent theoretical and empirical developments in the field of post-colonial theories and critical heritage studies

Academic/Transferable Skills

- transmit practical knowledge of curating and material culture of Asia in Berlin

Competencies

- apply the value of thinking critically and beyond various academic disciplines
- present students with examples of different geographical, historical and cultural contexts in which critical concepts of heritage take place

READINGS

Appadurai, A. (1986) *The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge.

Hauser-Schäublin, B./Prött, L. V. ed. (2016) *Cultural property and contested ownership. The trafficking of artefacts and the quest for restitution*. New York.

Lowenthal, D./Binney, M. eds. (1981) *Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It?* London.

Miller, D. (1997) *Material Cultures. Why some things matter*. London.

Osterhammel, J. (2014) *The transformation of the world*. Princeton.

Troelenberg, E.-M. et al. eds. (2021) *Reading Objects in the contact zone*. Heidelberg.

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)
- prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions
- hand in the following **assignments**:
 - *written paper of approx. 25,000 characters including spaces*
 - two smaller presentations (up to 20 min. each)

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.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz is teaching on Southeast Asia's culture and history at several German universities. She has a PhD. in Art History from Technical University of Darmstadt and an M.A. in Art History, Archaeology, and Southeast Asian regional studies from Goethe Universität Frankfurt M., Germany. She was previously a research assistant and curator in Indonesia and Germany. In the Philippines he was appointed visiting professor. She participated in excavations in Syria and Indonesia. She worked as assistant of the director of the Ethnological Museum and Asian Art Museum at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. Currently she is provenance researcher at the Association of Museums in Thuringia.

COURSE SCHEDULE

4 hours à 45 min every 2 weeks (double sessions)

Week 1: 19.4.2024 – Introduction in critical heritage studies and post-colonial debates on curating museums

Focusing on the understandings and approaches to heritage within the wider frames of material cultural, the session highlights the scholarly interest in memory. New roles of museums linked to activism and participatory approaches will be discussed further so that the history of heritage for the way we approach heritage today and in the future becomes more clear.

Appadurai, A. (1986) *The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge.

Boast, R. (2011): Neocolonial collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited. *Museum Anthropology*, Vol. 34, 1, 56–70.

Lowenthal, D., and M. Binney, eds. (1981) *Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It?* London.

Week 2: 3.5.2024 – Seminar & Excursion: Humboldt Forum

The emergence of memory activism and the critique of the Humboldt Forum have played instrumental roles in propelling Germany towards a more profound engagement with its colonial past. The approach of the “collaborative museum” will be presented in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Arts.

Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz ed. (2021) Humboldt Forum Ethnologisches Museum Museums für Asiatische Kunst. Berlin, vol 1-2.

Week 3: 17.5.2024 – Excursion: Global vs. local and diasporic (im)material heritage: Indonesian House of Culture

This session opens up the dialogue between practitioners and communities that have been marginalised in formulating heritage policy but are part of the Berlin multicultural society. The special highlight in the “Rumah Budaya” is the music class. Playing gamelan gives insights into the intangible heritage of Indonesian culture.

Troelenberg, E.-M. et al. (ed.) (2021) *Reading Objects in the contact zone*. Heidelberg.
Güney, S., Pekman, C., & Kabaş, B. (2012) Diasporic music in transition: Turkish immigrant performers on the stage of “Multikulti” Berlin. *Popular Music and Society*, 37(2), 132–151.

Week 4: 31.5.2024 – Seminar room & Excursion: Learning from German colonial history: Arts and Craft Museum

The Prussian architecture is considered beautiful but they were also the locations of a multifaceted heritage that was marked by racism, exotism, exploitation or violence during colonial times. Monuments or street names reflect Berlin’s urban legacies connected to minority histories of different communities from Asia. In the Arts and craft museum we learn more about the internationally interlinked (art)histories of fashion, design and porcelain.

Osterhammel, J. (2014) *The transformation of the world*. Princeton.

Steckenbiller, C. (2019) Berlin’s colonial legacies and new minority histories: The case of the Humboldt Forum and Colonial Street names in the German capital. *Monatshefte*, 111(1).

Week 5: 14.6.2024 – Excursion: “Behind the scene” Study collection of the Staatliche Museen in Berlin-Dahlem

Most of the artefacts in museums are stored unseen from the public. The study collection in Dahlem contains works of art, cultural artefacts, and archaeological finds from Asian peoples and societies that range in date from early times to the 19th century. Curatorial and conservation issues are discussed with a museum curator.

Oswald, M. v. (2022): Working through colonial collections. Leuven.

Stoye, M. Der Berliner Abguss des Sanchi-Tores. 119-131

file:///C:/Users/MVT/Downloads/arthistoricum-536-978-3-947449-77-4-CH14.pdf

Week 6: 28.6.2024– Seminar Room & Excursion: Provenance, loot and restitution. Sunken treasure in the China Sea, Technikmuseum

The maritime cultural heritage of sunken ships addresses contested ownership, economic interests by salvage companies or collectors as well as preservation interests. The provenance research need to be drawn on to provide theoretical insights and techniques to study “heritage” from approaches of preservation to property rights.

M. L. Tjoa-Bonatz (2016) Struggles over Historic Shipwrecks in Indonesia. Economic versus Preservation Interests, in: B. Hauser-Schäublin, L V. Prott (ed) *Cultural Property and Contested Ownership. The Trafficking of Artefacts and the Quest for Restitution*. New York, 85-107.

Week 7: 12.7.2024 – Seminar Room: Final Session: conclusions, evaluation

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: 22.1.2024