

Artists from Abroad in Berlin: A Journalistic Exploration

Winter Semester 2022/23: 17 October 2022 – 18 February 2023

CATEGORY

Literature and Journalism

COURSE STRUCTURE

2 contact hours à 45 min per week (16 weeks)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Wednesdays 12-14

Place

Room 0323-26, Hausvogteiplatz 5-7

COURSE LANGUAGE

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 city of Berlin's rich artistic life, issues of migration and displacement, and story-telling are equipped to take this class. Humboldt Perspectives Study Abroad courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees.

CREDITS = 5 ECTS

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

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

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

in case of online classes

- 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 (classmates', lecturers).

Academic guidelines: Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Short description:

"Artists from Abroad in Berlin: A Journalistic Exploration" is a hands-on course that invites students to discover and engage with artists who have come to Berlin from abroad. Berlin's thriving and dynamic arts scene has long drawn theater-makers, writers, actors, poets, musicians and visual artists from all over the world. In this course, we want to critically examine the experience of displacement and dislocation, the challenges of mobility and the demands of integration, but also the positive aspects of finding oneself in a new place and making it one's own, establishing a life and finding a community here. In addition to this theory-driven component, students will also learn and apply basic journalistic skills as part of a hands-on exploration of the worlds created by these artists from abroad, in Berlin. Finally, students will have a chance to meet and speak with artist guest speakers from a range of fields, in addition to doing a deep dive on the life and work of one artist from abroad, who they will profile for their final project.

Long description:

"Artists from abroad in Berlin: A Journalistic Exploration" is a hands-on course that invites students to discover and engage with artists who have come to Berlin from abroad.

Berlin's thriving and dynamic arts scene has long drawn theater-makers, writers, actors, poets, musicians and visual artists from all over the world. Malakoff Kowalski, Lorna Hartling, Daniel Brunet, Nurkan Epulat, Yuryi Gurzhi, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Olafur Eliasson, Mai-An Nguyen, Widad Nabi: these artists are among the many who have left their countries of origin, by choice or as refugees, and now practice their craft, permanently or temporarily, in Berlin.

In this course, we want to critically examine the experience of displacement and dislocation, the challenges of mobility and the demands of integration, but also the positive aspects of finding oneself in a new place and making it one's own, establishing a life and finding a community here. The course is particularly interested in the various new communities people who find themselves in expat or exile situations form (or join)

and which make up such a vital part of the cultural life of Berlin. A further area of interest is the images of Germany, its politics, culture, and its institutions, developed by these groups coming from the outside, and looking at and experiencing Germany simultaneously from within.

In addition to this theory-driven component, students will also learn and apply basic journalistic skills as part of a hands-on exploration of the worlds created by these artists from abroad, in Berlin. After identifying an artistic field of interest (theater, letters, music, or visual arts), students will break into small groups, according to their chosen fields. Each group will seek out artists from abroad who are working in their group's field, in Berlin. After an initial research phase, each group of students will contact an artist of their choosing and conduct an interview, as well as attend relevant performances, readings, plays, or exhibitions. The final project will be to produce a profile of an artist in Berlin. This profile may be written, or submitted in the form of audio files. Audio files will be used to create a podcast episode about each subject, which will then be published as a series at the end of the semester.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to help students explore Berlin's rich artistic life and the vital role played by artists from abroad in it through the practice of profiling a subject. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze and critically reflect on experiences of displacement and dislocation in Berlin
- Analyze and address political and cultural issues through individual stories
- Learn about the city, its life and cultural practice from the double perspective of outsiders who are also insiders
- Reflect on the diversity of experiences and perspectives on Germany today
- Practice basic journalistic skills: From finding "a story," to finding and contacting a subject, and conducting research and interviews
- Organize ideas and research to communicate a story with others, making it interesting and relevant to the broader public

READINGS

1. Funder, Anna. (2003). *Stasiland: Stories From Behind the Berlin Wall*. Granta Publications
2. Terkessidis, Mark. (2015). „Four Theses for an ‚Audit of Culture.‘“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 69-86.
3. Bal, Mieke. (2015). „In Your Face: Migratory Aesthetics.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 147-170
4. Jorholt, Eva. (2015). „Taking the Strangeness out of Strangers: Cinematic Strategies for Emphasizing Sameness over Difference in Multi-Ethnic Europe.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 171-188
5. Sharifi, Azadeh. (2015). „Moments of Significance: Artists of Colour in European Theatre.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 243-256
6. Dogramaci, Burcu. (2015). „My Home Away From Home: Artistic Reflections on Immigration to Germany.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 309-308

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:**

- Various short written and audio assignments throughout the course
- Final project will be an artist profile. For this, students, working in small groups, must EITHER hand in audio material to create a 30 minute podcast OR a 1500-3000 word written profile

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

Sally McGrane is a Berlin-based American journalist and author. As a journalist, she writes for the New York Times, The New Yorker Magazine, Die Zeit and many others. Her first spy novel, "Moscow at Midnight," was published in German and English. The sequel "Odesa at Dawn" is forthcoming. Her podcast work includes episodes for the Goethe-Institut's "Big Ponder" series and "Ollarikchen," a German-language podcast of children's stories.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

The instructor will explain the syllabus and course requirements and give a short lecture on artists from abroad in Berlin. Students will choose a field of artistic interest and break into small groups. Together, we will discuss how to go about finding artist subjects to research this semester.

An artist guest will come to class to talk about their work, how they came to Berlin, and to take questions.

Homework is to read page one to page 46 of "Stasiland":

Funder, Anna. (2003). Stasiland: Stories From Behind the Berlin Wall. Granta Publications

Week 2: Interviewing

After a discussion of the reading from „Stasiland,“ which we'll look at both from a content and a methodological perspective, students will pair off and interview one another. The homework assignment will be to write up these interviews in a short text.

In addition, homework will be to read and reflect on the following reading:

Dogramaci, Burcu. (2015). „My Home Away From Home: Artistic Reflections on Immigration to Germany.“ The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories. 289-308

Week 3: Brainstorming

We will discuss the reading, and how these ideas might play a role in the stories we will be looking for in Berlin.

Then, we'll take a look at newspaper and magazine profiles, to see what goes into a profile of a person. What kinds of information is conveyed? How?

An artist guest will come to class to talk about their work, how they came to Berlin, and to take questions.

Homework will be to listen to two podcast profiles, and read two different written profiles.

Week 4: Finding a story

Now, we'll talk about how to find interview subjects. Where do you look? How do you get in touch? We'll look at a list of artists from abroad in Berlin compiled by the instructor for ideas, as well. Based on common interests, the class will break into small groups of two to three people who will work together on the final artist profile.

Homework assignment: each group should find 3 people you could approach about being interview subjects, as well as to read and reflect on the following readings:

Sharifi, Azadeh. (2015). „Moments of Significance: Artists of Colour in European Theatre.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 243-256

Week 5: Getting in touch and gathering information

We'll talk about the ideas each group has come up with, and discuss potential opportunities and challenges. We'll also talk about how to record and/or take notes on interviews. As a class, we will also hash out some of the "big picture" issues. Why are the stories each group is interested in important? Why are they important, now? What do each of these profiles have in common? How are they different? While each group is working individually, we want to learn from each other – about each artist, and the profiling process.

An artist guest will come to class to talk about their work, how they came to Berlin, and to take questions.

Homework assignment: get in touch with your subject and set up an interview.

Week 6: Background

How do you flesh out a story? What kinds of background information and expertise do you need? Cultural critics, colleagues, political scientists, friends, family members, curators, lawyers: This week, we'll look at who to contact to get important context on your artist.

Homework assignment: analyze a podcast or magazine profile. What kinds of background research did the journalist do? How do you take, keep, and organize notes? Read and reflect on the following:

Terkessidis, Mark. (2015). „Four Theses for an ‚Audit of Culture.‘“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 69-86.

Week 7: Color

One of the best things about journalism is that you get to get out into the world and see and experience things, first-hand. You want to bring this tactile immediacy to your profile, as well. What has struck you, so far? We'll talk about atmosphere and details.

An artist guest will come to class to talk about their work, how they came to Berlin, and to take questions.

Homework is to write three very short (one to three sentence) descriptions of places you've visited in your research of your artist, as well as to read and reflect on the following:

Bal, Mieke. (2015). „In Your Face: Migratory Aesthetics.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 147-170

Week 8: Check-in

How is the process going? You might have encountered unexpected problems. You might even have had to change course. Students will bring any issues they've encountered to class, as well as play or read aloud a one-minute excerpt of one interview they've completed. What are some of the common threads in the work each group is doing? We'll compile a list of overlapping interests.

Homework is to read from page 47 to page 97 in „Stasiland“, and hand in a short (one to three paragraph) response. Are any of the interactions the author describes resonating with the work you are doing?

Funder, Anna. (2003). *Stasiland: Stories From Behind the Berlin Wall*. Granta Publications

Week 9: Learning process

We'll continue the presentations from last week this week. By now, you should be well on your way to collecting the material you need for your profile.

Homework assignment:

Jorholt, Eva. (2015). „Taking the Strangeness out of Strangers: Cinematic Strategies for Emphasizing Sameness over Difference in Multi-Ethnic Europe.“ *The Culture of Migration: Politics, Aesthetics and Histories*. 171-188

Week 10: Editing

Now that you've got all or most of your recorded material, it's time to start editing. We'll talk about how to decide what goes in and what has to be left behind on the cutting room floor. What is your "lede"—that is, how will you start the profile?

Homework: decide what your "lede" is going to be.

Week 11: Nutgraph

Now that you've got your lede, it's time to nail down the "nutgraph"—usually the second paragraph in a newspaper story—it's basically where you say what the story is going to be about. We'll talk about this together, and for next week you'll need to nail it down.

Read page 98 to page 167 of *Stasiland* for homework.

Funder, Anna. (2003). *Stasiland: Stories From Behind the Berlin Wall*. Granta Publications

Week 12: Final draft

Now, it's time to get the final draft in place. We'll talk about strategies for making the most of limited space. We'll also check in again, as a group, on what is similar and what is different, when it comes to the artist profiles the class is working on.

An artist guest will come to class to talk about their work, how they came to Berlin, and to take questions.

Week 13: Podcasting/Writing/Presenting

Each student group creating a podcast should have the sound files in order, to turn in. Students who are writing should have a rough draft of their final piece ready.

Starting this week, each group will begin presenting their final project. Even though the projects are not finished, they should be in the final stages, and the presentations will serve as a kind of workshopping exercise, as you present your artist and your background research to the class as a whole and can ask for feedback when it comes to what to emphasize, what to cut, and what to keep.

Week 14: Check-in

This week, group presentations will continue. We'll also take a moment to talk about what we've learned, both individually and together.

Week 15: Publishing

This week, group presentations will continue. We'll also talk about publishing, social media, getting the story out there, and what stories you encountered along the way that you might want to pursue in "Season Two."

Finish reading „Stasiland.“

Week 16: Wrap-up

The final group presentations will be made. After that, our last class will be devoted to going over what we learned this semester—about the city, history, art, culture, and displacement, and the experience of trying to tell the stories we've encountered.