

Exploring Difficult Heritage Through Berlin Museums

Winter Semester 2023/24: 16 October 2023 – 17 February 2024

CATEGORY

Museums and Archives

COURSE STRUCTURE

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

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Thursdays 12:00-16:00 c.t. (12:15 – 15.45) – Note the exact dates as these are 4-hours sessions in order to accommodate site visits.

Place

Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, room 0323-26

COURSE LANGUAGE

English required B2, and German an asset, but not required. All students must function at the B2 level in English in order to manage the scholarly readings and oral components of the course. Instruction is in English. Materials for general class participation have to be in English so that all can participate. Any written assignments, submitted directly to the instructor, may be written in: English, German, Spanish or French.

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

English B2

German not required, but an asset

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).

This course is directed at students interested in wide range of topics: museology, history, memory studies, ethics, Jewish studies, and migration studies are a few disciplines that this course can complement. The students should be able to read and critically analyse academic writing.

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's rich museological landscape lends itself to in-depth exploration of Germany's difficult heritage: How are the upheavals of the 20th and 21st centuries, especially, remembered and represented? This course aims to enable the students to get to know a number of Berlin museums focusing on Memory and Post-WWII migration using anthropological methods and to critically analyse them within larger theoretical frameworks of "self" and "other" constructions. The aim is to explore the role of museums in rendering such constructions visible and therefore debatable. In addition to visiting the sites, there are scholarly readings and in-class discussions. The discussions will be based on the museum visits and the students' questions on the readings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to familiarize the students with how Germany's difficult heritage is managed in a number of key Berlin museums. In addition, they are to be equipped with ethnographic methods in order to critically approach the material, reflecting on their own positionalities. They will also develop their abilities to read and reflect on a variety of relevant academic literature.

Learning Objectives

The aim is to have students:

- Understand, describe and identify key aspects of Berlin's museological landscape
- Reflect critically on scholarly texts and sites and media output relevant to the Museology, Memory and Migration in Germany.

and acquire the following skills and competencies:

- The use of ethnographic and critical analysis methods to explore settings and sites.
- Identifying and reflecting on the positionality of scholarly authors, museum stakeholders, and themselves.
- Communicating and discussing key ideas in a constructive and respectful way

READINGS

1. Ostow, Robin. (2007). "From Displaying 'Jewish Art' to (Re)Building German-Jewish History: The Jewish Museum Berlin." In Vijay Agnew (ed.). *Interrogating Race and Racism*. University of Toronto Press. 289-319.

2. Feldman, Jackie and Anja Peleikis (2014). "Performing the Hyphen: Engaging German-Jewishness at the Jewish Museum Berlin." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*. 23 (2): 43-59.
3. Dekel, Irit. (2014). "Jews and Others at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* Volume 23, No. 2 (2014): 71-84
4. Rothberg, Michael and Yasemin Yildiz. (2011). "Memory Citizenship: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Germany." *Parallax (Special Issue on Transcultural Memory)* 17.4, 32-48.
5. Partridge, Damani J. (2010). "Holocaust Mahnmal (Memorial): Monumental Memory Amidst Contemporary Race." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(4): 820–850.
6. Shooman, Yasemin. (2016). "Between Everyday Racism and Conspiracy Theories. Islamophobia on the German-Language Internet." *Media and Minorities*: 136-155.

Some readings may be updated, as new relevant publications become available. All readings will be made available via Moodle.

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**
 - i. Submit two to three discussion/content questions on each scholarly reading, as assigned via Moodle.
 - ii. Submit an individually-written research report with bibliography via Moodle. Due: 30 JAN 2024, 20:00 Berlin time.
 - iii. Take part in a short presentation in person

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. Victoria Bishop Kendzia

The instructor's teaching method, although anthropologically inflected, is interdisciplinary in nature and is, therefore, not limited to the social sciences. It appeals to students from a wide variety of academic backgrounds from history to art, through to geography, theology, and politics. The focus of her work is on the urban landscape, especially, but not only, museums and memorials in and around Berlin. She defended her dissertation on visitor experience at the Jewish Museum Berlin in 2013 at the Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt University Berlin. Her doctoral work was based on empirical research with young Berlin-based high school students in and around the Jewish Museum Berlin. She has a background in Museum Studies, having completed her master's degree in this field from the University of Toronto, Canada in 2001 and her Bachelor of Arts Honours at the same university in 1999. She has been publishing scholarly articles in her field since 2009 and teaching at the university level since 2008. Her most recent publication is the 2018 monograph: *Visitors to the House of Memory. Political Education and Identity at the Jewish Museum Berlin*. London and New York: Berghahn Books. A new paperback edition of this book was published in December 2020.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Thursdays 12:00-16:00 c.t. (12:15 – 15.45)

Note that the sessions are double sessions in order to accommodate the museum visits. Therefore, there will be a total of eight sessions.

19-OCT-Week 1: Introduction to the course

Here the instructor will explain the syllabus and course requirements in detail and hold a lecture on the Jewish narrative in Germany. The concepts of Self and Other constructions and the power to interpret are key issues. In addition, the ethnological method – perception walk- will be explained and practiced – outside of the classroom – in preparation for the museum visits.

NOTE: THERE IS NO CLASS ON 26 OCT

02-Nov-Week 2: Visit to the Jewish Museum Berlin

Students will visit the Jewish Museum Berlin and undertake a perception walk, using the tools and critical analyses outlined in the previous class.

Submission via Moodle of 2-3 content/discussion questions on the first two required readings:

1. Ostow, Robin. (2007). "From Displaying 'Jewish Art' to (Re)Building German-Jewish History: The Jewish Museum Berlin." In Vijay Agnew (ed.). *Interrogating Race and Racism*. University of Toronto Press. 289-319.
2. Feldman, Jackie and Anja Peleikis (2014). "Performing the Hyphen: Engaging German-Jewishness at the Jewish Museum Berlin." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*. 23 (2): 43-59.

09-NOV-Week 3: In-class Discussion of Visit and Readings

In this class, we will share our impressions of the museum via a narrative interview workshop. In addition, we will address and discuss your questions on the above readings. Guidance will also be given regarding your research projects, short presentations, and written reports. During the in-class sessions at 14:00 I will take you out of the classroom to explore further key sites in the area.

16-NOV-Week 4: Visits to Another Key Site

Visit to another large key site. Details to be announced. This will depend on what is open and most relevant at the time of the course.

Submission of 2-3 content/discussion questions on the next two readings:

3. Dekel, Irit. (2014). "Jews and Others at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* Volume 23, No. 2 (2014): 71-84

4. Rothberg, Michael and Yasemin Yildiz. (2011). "Memory Citizenship: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Germany." *Parallax (Special Issue on Transcultural Memory)* 17.4, 32-48.

23-NOV-Week 5: Discussion of Visits in Comparison and Readings 3-4.

These discussions take place in smaller groups and are moderated by the instructor. In addition, the instructor will outline important aspects of post-WWII migration to Germany. Guidance for your own projects will be offered throughout the course.

30-NOV-Week 6: Migration in the City – Visit to a local Museum

We will visit a local museum in a part of the city that reflects migration to Berlin. Details tba.

Submission of 2-3 content/discussion questions on the final two readings:

5. Partridge, Damani J. (2010). "Holocaust Mahnmal (Memorial): Monumental Memory Amidst Contemporary Race." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(4): 820–850.

6. Shooman, Yasemin. (2016). "Between Everyday Racism and Conspiracy Theories. Islamophobia on the German-Language Internet." *Media and Minorities*: 136-155

07-DEC-Week 7: Discussion site visit and Readings 5-6

We will discuss your visit to the local museum as well as your questions on the final two readings.

14-DEC-Week 8: Presentations and Summary Discussion

This final session is set aside for your short presentations. This is the opportunity to share what has most interested you in your learning through research process. The instructor will offer feedback and guidance for your final papers, which are to be based on your own projects. Reminder, the final paper is due 30 JAN 2024, 20:00 (8 pm) Berlin time.

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. 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 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: 08.08.2023