

Mapping Berlin, Geography of Sound

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

CATEGORY

Urban Culture and Society

COURSE STRUCTURE

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

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Tuesday, 10-12 c.t. (10:15 – 11:45 am)

Place

Room 0323-26, Hausvogteiplatz 5-7

This course will be held in a blended format with some sessions taking place online, with a mix of face-to-face sessions and online Zoom sessions.

COURSE LANGUAGE

English language skills are required for the course, and a minimum level of English B1 is necessary. The student will work with some advanced academic articles in English during the semester.

Language requirements (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
English **B1**

TARGET GROUP

The course is structured for all international exchange students and all domestic students interested in a trans- and cross-disciplinary exchange on academic research exploring and mapping Berlin through sound. The course, structured in theory and practice, offered a syllabus focusing on mapping and listening to acoustic territories in Berlin. By exploring the site-specificity embedded in Berlin's sonic spaces, the course focuses on the critical act of navigating

and mapping through sonic cartographies, diagrams, and digital maps while focusing on urban sounds. The course requires active participation in each session during the semester. It will approach different research fields such as geography, musicology, architecture, acoustic ecology, and media arts. Previous knowledge in the mentioned disciplines or audio technology is not required.

*This course is prepared for all international exchange students of all subjects with a strong interest in the course topic. Berlin Perspectives courses are designed for undergraduate students, and master's 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

The course focuses on mapping and listening to acoustic territories in Berlin. It allows academic research to explore and understand the city by sensing aural environments. Structured in theory and practice, the central questions of the course are: which sonic elements can we encounter in navigating historical and contemporary maps? Which methods of research and practices exist in the act of mapping with sound? How can we generate sound maps? The course reflects the city's cultural, social, and political dimensions from a transdisciplinary approach through analyzing and creating maps by listening. It aims to allow students to explore auditory territories, gain strength, and develop knowledge and individual perspectives on cultural and urban studies. The mapping methods are practice-based on field recordings, soundwalk, and sound diagramming exercises. The academic readings and discussions will introduce the student to the field of sound studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This BA- and MA-level course aims to develop a critical position in understanding auditory territories and sound maps, taking Berlin as a case study. Students fulfill with an overview of the sound-related cultural projects of the city. The course will enable its participants to sense the city through hearing and listening to a central discussion about the idea of urban cultural projects and critically reflect on how sound and listening can have an actual impact on their disciplines.

-Knowledge

- Analyze the urban space and sound environment.
- Interpret and contextualize the aural territories.
- Identify the social and political interactions in terms of urban development.

- Examine the city as a sonic environment by navigating maps.
- Use listening as a tool for analyzing the social space contained in maps.

-Academic/Analytical Skills

- Critically reflect on the contemporary academic discussion.
- Analyze academic articles.
- Adopt and implement academic writing.
- Proceed and apply artistic research and practice-based projects.

-Achievement

- Understand and interpret cultural production by approaching historical documents like maps, diagrams, and cartographies while enhancing academic writing and artistic research skills.
- Produce academic work, and differentiate different writing and research styles.
- To be able to use different research methods.
- Analytical listening skills.
- Soundwalk as a method of analyzing acoustic spaces.
- Basic in audio technology edition, audio documentation, and field recording.

Requirements and assessment:

This course offers students diverse options for understanding the urban space in Berlin. Therefore, I strongly encourage full participation. We are holding the course in a hybrid format, with some sessions taking place online and others face-to-face in rooms 0323-26 at Hausvogteiplatz 5-7. You must join the online discussion and in-person sessions. Please be prepared to write about sonic environments and your interest in researching sound, maps, and cartographies. There will be reading material for each class. A smartphone or recorder would be helpful as we work with sound. However, you don't need a professional recorder. You can also choose your method to record sounds in any media—i.e., photography, video, writing, and drawing. There will be assignments, a mid-term Project, and a Final Project. Each has a different percentage of your note. Please see the grading section below.

In Class Expectations

Open invitation to Diversity: The class is open to multiple cultures and choices. It is an inclusive space for exchange, collaboration, engagement, and participation. There is also a place for discussion and disagreement. Therefore, please come with an open mind and never bring any shaming, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia, or other hate.

Plagiarism: Copying someone else's ideas or words is unacceptable without properly crediting the source. Be sure you are using citations. In other cases, you will be dismissed from this course.

READINGS

Cusack, Peter. "**Introduction.**" In *Berlin Sonic Places: A Brief Guide*, 4-7. Berlin, Wolke, 2017.

Jasper, Sandra. "**Acoustic ecology: Hans Scharoun and modernist experimentation in West Berlin.**" In Gandy, M. & Nilsen, B.J. (eds.) *The acoustic city*, 145–155. Berlin: Jovis, 2014.

Kelly, Caleb. "**Walking and listening.**" In *Gallery Sound*, 94-110. Print. Ex:centrics, 2017.

LaBelle, Brandon. "**Underground: Busking, Acoustic, and the Echo.**" In *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*, 3-19. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

Lane, Cathy & Carlyle, Angus. "**Interview with Christina Kubisch.**" In *In the Field. The Art of Field Recording*, 61-70. Uniformbooks. CRiSAP. UK, 2013.

Ndikung, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng. "**That around Which the Universe Resolves. On the Rhythms of Memory, Times, Bodies, and Urban Space.**" In *While or Two We Will Find The Tone. Essays and Proposals Curatorial Concepts and Critiques*, 69-82. Archive Books, 2020.

McMurray, Peter. "**Ephemeral Cartography: On Mapping Sound,**" *Sound Studies* 4, no. 2 (July 3, 2018): 110–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20551940.2018.1512696>, 2018.

Ouzounian, Gascia. "**Mapping the Acoustic City: Noise Mapping and Sound Mapping.**" In *Stereophonica. Sound and Space in Science, Technology, and the Arts*, 125-148. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2021.

Suzuki, Akio. "**Oto-date,**" in *Going Out – Walking, Listening, Soundmaking*, ed. Elena Biserna. Umland editions, Brussels: 254-260, 2022.

Schafer, R. Murray. "**Introduction**" and "**Glossary of Soundscape Terms.**" In *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, 3-12 & 271-275. Rochester, V.: Destiny Books, 1993. First published in 1977.

Thulin, Samuel. "**Sound Maps Matter: Expanding Cartophony,**" *Social & Cultural Geography* 19, no. 2: 192–210, 2018.

Voegelin, Salomé. "**Geographies of sound: Performing impossible territories.**" In *The Political Possibility of Sound*, 75-101. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2018.

Waldock, Jacqueline. "**SOUNDMAPPING: Critiques And Reflections On This New Publicly Engaging Medium,**" *Journal of Sonic Studies*, no. 01, 2018.
online resource: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/214583/214584>.

Wildner, Kathrin. "Soundmapping." In the Booklet to the exhibition Mapping Along. Recording Margins of conflict: 47-48, 2021.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blessner, B. and Salter, L-R. Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture. England: MIT Press, 2009.

Careri, Francesco. Walkscapes. Walking as an Aesthetic Practice. USA: Culicidae Architectural Press, 2017.

Gandy, M. and Nilsen, B.J. (eds.). The Acoustic City. Berlin: Jovis, 2014.

Goldsmith, Mike. Sound - A Very Short Introduction. United Kingdom: Oxford, 2015.

Hoyt, Satch. Afro-Sonic Mapping Tracing Aural Histories Via Sonic Transmigrations. Berlin: Archive Books, 2022.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. The eyes of the skin: architecture and the senses. Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley, 2012.

Steingo and Sykes, Gavin and Jim (eds.). Remapping Sound Studies. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2019.

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Workload and assignments

To be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to

- actively participation
- hand **exercises** and the **final project**.

We will have several exercises using virtual tools (Moodle and Zoom.) Depending on the circumstances and regulations, virtual tours can differ from online to on-site excursions, which will be announced at the beginning of the semester.

EXERCISES

Presentations, summaries, and discussions about the required readings

There are different mandatory readings for each week. Each participant should lead the discussion of one of the readings during the semester. Two short summaries about the different readings will be asked during the course (each 1000 characters long). The short presentation should include a summary, opinion, questions, and keywords of the reading to initiate a group discussion. Deadlines about presentations and summaries will be informed at the beginning of the semester.

Field recordings

During the course, you will be asked to bring different field recordings of different acoustic territories of Berlin. The recording will be max. 2 minutes and should be presented in class. Any kind of audio recorder is accepted, for example, a handy phone, iPad, or computer. If the student does not have technical equipment, there will be shared possibilities to get rental equipment free of charge.

FINAL PROJECTS

- **Option 1** - Sound mapping. In the form of a portfolio of several multimodal work performances (e.g., audio or video material, internet pages, online maps) (without a precise length definition). Explanatory text approx. 2500 characters with references and a bibliography.
- **Option 2** - A written paper of approx. 25,000 characters, including spaces (bibliography not included for characters account.)

Both options will be presented within a 15-minute presentation in the last session. The final project can be written in English or German. For option 1, the student should develop a "sound map" using the class methodologies, including soundwalk, field recording, audiowalk, and audio collage. The aim is to generate sonic diagrams or digital maps in a hybrid format during mapping (option 1). Theoretical research in the form of an academic paper is also allowed (option 2). For option 1, the student is welcome to use any kind of media in the process of mapping. It is their imagination and creativity. It must write an explanatory text about the relation between the selected area and argue with a historical, political, and social analysis approach. Suppose it is an academic essay, option 2, the written requirements are 25,000 characters, including spaces. In that case, the students must reflect on the research question, methodologies, objectives, aims, etc., till styling, citing, paraphrasing, referencing, etc.

Please be aware that the course is theory and practice-oriented. The student should engage in class discussion, attend excursions in the city, do small presentations during the first two blocks of the seminar, and actively present the ongoing work of the final project during block 3. We will take different steps to prepare the final project during the course. At the halftime of the course, we will discuss how to proceed and prepare this final project. The last six classes of the

course will be dedicated to combining theory, talks, and visits with corrections of the final projects. The project could be performed individually or in groups. These sections will cover the research question, objectives, aims, research methodologies, etc.s

Assessment Components

The final grade will be composed of the assignments mentioned above.

Contributions, such as presentations or summaries about the required readings, 30%

Short Assignments, 20%

Final project, 50%

Failure to fulfill one of the mentioned components fails the class.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Samuel Perea-Díaz is an architect and researcher based in Berlin. Along with architecture and spatial design, Samuel's practice incorporates exhibition scenography, curating, and sound art. Samuel holds a degree in Architecture from the University of Seville and a MA in Sound Studies and Sonic Arts from the Berlin University of the Arts.

COURSE SCHEDULE

2 hours à 45 min per week (16 weeks)

Christmas Break from 25 December 2023 and 5 January 2024

BLOCK 1

Week 01	Introduction
Week 02	Sonic Research on Archiving and Mapping / Guest Talk
Week 03	Mapping Berlin Sounds / First assignment

BLOCK 2

Week 04	Perspectives on Sonic Archives
Week 05	Historical Approach on Sonic Geographies/Cartographies
Week 06	Expanding Cartographies
Week 07	Critical Cartography on Soundmapping and Noise Mapping
Week 08	Perspectives on Sound Mapping in Berlin
Week 09	Listening to Urban Sounds 1/2
Week 10	Listening to Urban Sounds 2/2

BLOCK 3

Week 11	Mapping Berlin 01
Week 12	Mapping Berlin 02 / Guest Talk
Week 13	Mapping Berlin 03
Week 14	Mapping Berlin 04
Week 15	Mapping Berlin Final Presentations 1/2
Week 16	Mapping Berlin Final Presentations 2/2

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: 06 June 2023