

Exploring Berlin Museums-Focus on Memory and Migration

Fall Term 2023: 4 September – 15 December 2023
(break: 23-27 October 2023)

CATEGORY

Social Sciences and Cultural Studies

COURSE STRUCTURE

3 contact hours à 45 min per week (14 weeks + gap week)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Time

Day: Tuesdays: 12:30-15:00 (ca 13:45-14:00 break)

Place

t.b.a.

COURSE LANGUAGE

English

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. Humboldt Perspectives Study Abroad courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees. This course is directed at students interested in wide range of topics: museology, history, memory studies, ethics, Jewish studies, and migration studies are just a few of the disciplines that this course can complement.

CREDITS = 6 ECTS

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: How are the upheavals of the 20th and 21st centuries remembered and represented? How can the urban landscape be read as a myriad of dynamic sites? What do these sites, in turn, tell us about past traumas and present-day issues? This course aims to enable the students to get to know a number of Berlin museums focussing on key aspects of memory of the Second World War and Post-WWII migration, using anthropological methods. Students are encouraged to critically analyse these representations within larger theoretical frameworks of "self" and "other" constructions, exploring the role of museums in rendering such constructions visible.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to familiarize the students with 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 virtually 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. Rothberg, Michael. (2020). "On the Mbembe Affair: The Specters of Comparison." Goethe-Institut e. V., Online editorial office.
6. Partridge, Damani J. (2010). "Holocaust Mahnmal (Memorial): Monumental Memory Amidst Contemporary Race." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(4): 820–850.
7. Shooman, Yasemin. (2016). "Between Everyday Racism and Conspiracy Theories. Islamophobia on the German-Language Internet." *Media and Minorities*: 136-155.

Readings may be updated closer to the course time as new publications become available. All readings will be accessible via Moodle.

ASSIGNMENT INFO

Workload and assignments

In order to be granted 6 ECTS, participants will be asked to

- actively attend all sessions (a minimum of 80% 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.
 - iii. Submit an individually-written research report (12-15 pages) with bibliography via Moodle.
 - iv. Conduct an individual presentation in person during the final class.

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. In this context,

locations can be explored as dynamic sites that project and reframe key aspects of history and culture. The urban laboratory that is Berlin is particularly well-suited to this endeavour, given the historical and cultural upheavals it has witnessed during the 20th century and beyond. She defended her dissertation on visitor experience at the Jewish Museum Berlin in 2013 at the Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt University Berlin under the supervision of Prof. Wolfgang Kaschuba and Prof. Sharon Macdonald. Her doctoral work was based on ethnography of 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

14 weeks + gap week

Week 1: 05-SEP: 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 in preparation for the museum visits.

Week 2: 12-SEP- Memory Part 1 – 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 (due date tba – usually the weekend before the next in-class session):

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.

Submit your questions on readings 1-2 via Moodle by 16 SEP, 8pm Berlin time.

Week 3: 19-SEP- In-class discussion of JMB Visit and Readings 1-2

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 presentations and research

papers.

Week 4: 26-SEP-: Memory Part 1 – continued

Visit to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Here the students will be asked to compare their impressions of this site with the JMB. If possible, a tour will be arranged. This comparison can form the content for one of the two reflection papers, which are to be submitted (due date tba).

Submission of 2-3 content/discussion questions on the next two readings (due date tba):

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.

Submit your questions on readings 3-4 via Moodle by 7 OCT, 8pm Berlin time.

NB: 03 OCT is a holiday, so no class will take place on that day!

Week 5: 10-OCT-: In-class discussion of visits in comparison and readings 3-4

In this class there will be group work comparing the two sites. In addition, we will discuss your questions on readings 3-4.

Week 6: 17-OCT-Memory Part 2 Perpetrators in Focus

Visit to site in which the perpetrator narrative is the focus. Details tba. Comparison of victim v perpetrator narratives. This visit can also be the basis of a reflection paper.

Week 7-double session on Sunday, 22 OCT, (Visit to Sachsenhausen time tba, likely we meet ca 11:00 am at Friedrichstr. S-Bahn , track 12)

NB: NO CLASS BETWEEN 24-31 OCT (I will be away)!

Week 8: 07-NOV: In-class discussion of visits

Here we will discuss your visits. Guidance will also be given regarding your projects, presentations, and individual research papers.

Week 9: 14-NOV-Memory Part 2 – continued –Lesser known stories

Visit to a site of resistance and assistance. 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. Text Verdana 10,5

Submit your questions via Moodle by 18 NOV, 8pm Berlin time

Week 10: 21- NOV-In-class Discussion and Comparisons of Sites

We will use the constant comparison methods to analyze our impressions of the sites visited so far. We will also discuss your questions on readings 5-6. In addition, the instructor will give a lecture on post-WWII migration.

Week 11: 28-NOV- Migration in Focus Part 1 – city museums

Visit to a neighborhood museum that explores the topic of migration. Details tba.

Week 12: 05-DEC- Migration in Focus Part 1 - continued

Visit to a second neighborhood museum that explores the topic of migration. Details tba.

Week 13: 12-DEC-Student Presentations

You will have conducted short research projects in the weeks preceding. This is the opportunity to share what has most interested you in this learning-through-research process.

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 (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.

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 06.03.2023
