

## Be your own Berlin! Urban performance in tourism

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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: Tuesday, 4:00-6:30 pm

#### 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 exploring cultural and creative research methods. Humboldt Perspectives Study Abroad courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees.

### CREDITS = 6 ECTS

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

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we explore the contemporary utilisation of typical Berlin discourses in the context of tourism and city marketing, such as Berlin-specific subcultures, economic developments a la Smart City, political activism and environmental concerns for tourism. By testing different approaches to experiencing and sensing the city, we critically examine the basis of diverse ways of "knowing Berlin". We will ask: what makes the tourist perspective so intriguing and specific? Who profits from this way of experiencing a city? How is cultural diversity and complexity practically channelled into profitable tourism sites and activities?

*In small groups and workshop-based, we will develop and analyse contents and methods of explorative walking performances based on contemporary urban discourses and projects. In an application of our seminar findings and self-produced material, we will go on tours of Berlin addressing contemporary urban discourses centring on smart city, participation, touristification and urban activism.*

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objectives of this course are closely linked to the specific theme of the course. First, students will gain an understanding of current tourism research discourses concerning sustainability and the future of tourism post-COVID. With reference to contemporary Berlin, students will learn to identify main research parameters, discuss, and apply their knowledge. Moreover, they will encounter research designs and parameters from the younger field of performance studies, in particular with reference to urban sensography and walking.

In so doing, students will have to integrate and handle a diverse set of data and forms of knowledge. As an interdisciplinary group, they practice to communicate across disciplines and apply collaborative learning tools. Moreover, they are held to search for different creative modes to translate their research findings for a non-academic audience.

Another aspect of this course concerns transferable skills such as the practice and improvement of communication skills in the context of academic research and analysis. In a mixed-method approach, students will find numerous means to expand their knowledge and command of the English language.

## READINGS

Bernt, M., Grell, B., Holm, A. (2013) Eds. The Berlin Reader: A compendium on urban change and activism. Transcript, Bielefeld. Online:

<https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/25376/1004720.pdf?sequence=1>

Parker-Starbuck, J. & Mock, R. (2011) Research Methods in Theatre and Performance.

Kershaw, B. & Nicholson, H., Eds. Edinburgh, United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 210-235.

Rohde, K., d'Auria, V. (2018) Building Cosmopolitan Citizenship Through the Mundane: Insights from Walking Conversations in the Public Spaces of Berlin. European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes, 1 (1), pp. 33-52.

<https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/8510>

Whybrow, N. (2020) Ed. Urban Sensographies. Routledge, London.

Aporee, a global soundmapping project: <https://aporee.org/mfm/#about>

The transition town network in Berlin, an example: <https://transitiongroups.org/group/berlin-transition-town-pankow/>

The smart city concept for Berlin: <https://smart-city-berlin.de/en/>

## 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)
- presentation of final project during session on **Nov 28, 2023**
- prepare and revise the classroom/online sessions
- hand in the following **assignments**:
  - presentation in class and during the tours (10 min max)
  - a multimodal log-book containing reflections on classroom work (incl. audio and video pieces)
  - a longer final piece of academic work that includes a written reflection on a self-developed research question (approx. 20.000 characters incl. spaces)

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

**Maria Hetzer, PhD**

As a Berlin-based anthropologist and performance researcher, Maria is currently engaged in researching performance walking for tourists and inhabitants. She works for different cultural organisations and universities. Her main areas of expertise are crisis research, rural anthropology and tourism studies. For her MA thesis in performance and anthropology at the University of Leipzig, she conducted field research about the impact of tourism on cultural identity politics. She received her practice-based PhD in Performance and German Studies from the University of Warwick (UK) in 2016, exploring memory culture and everyday life in the context of 1989 and its potential for intercultural translation in performance.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

14 weeks + gap week

## **Week 1: Course introduction: Tourism studies and creative research**

Introduction to course content and schedule; input on relevant research topics in tourism studies and urban marketing relating to the commodification of culture(s), the concept of the tourist gaze and research approaches to the tourist experience;  
Introduction to performance research approaches with a particular focus on the tools used in ethnography and performance studies for data collection and analysis, quiz

## **TRANSFORMER CITY**

### **Week 2: THEMATIC INTRODUCTION: "Transforming the city through participation"**

Introduction to urban discourses on the commons and the right to the city, gentrification debates and urban counter discourses. Based on approaches to public participation in decision-making processes on the future development of Berlin's infrastructure, we will discuss urban activism and city politics in other European cities and beyond based on participant backgrounds. We will examine the translation of activist concerns into playful urban interventions.

### **Week 3: METHODS & TOOLS for "Transformercity"**

Activist and city marketing strategies are evaluated and discussed. We will introduce the set-up of the tour and the different tour roles in preparation of our first exploration of Kreuzberg.

### **Week 4: FIELD TRIP "Transformercity" (3 hours)**

On a field trip to Kreuzberg, we explore the history and contemporary performance of urban activism and their utilisation for city tourism. Sustainability start-ups, feministic organic food collectives, night clubs and international building exhibitions all form part of the tourism matrix centring on changing the urban paradigm. Testing a novel approach to tourist walking, we critically examine the different parameters of the tourism experience.

## **SMART CITY**

### **Week 5: INTRODUCTION "Smart City Berlin"**

Introduction to European smart city discourses and the digital drive in infrastructure management with a particular focus on Berlin and its political performance of urban futures.

### **Week 6: METHODS & TOOLS "Smart City Berlin"**

How can we experience the digitalisation and smart approaches to urban issues in tourism today? Performance research methods provide potential to showcase the invisible matrix of urban futures. Some of them will be applied to an urban aspect of participants' choice and further developed into a tour element.

**BREAK: 23 – 27 October 2023**

**Week 7: WORKSHOP**

Development of tour elements for a smart city tour.

**Week 8: FIELD TRIP "SMART CITY BERLIN" (3 hours)**

Thematic tour including participant presentations of their workshop outcome.

**SENSABLE CITY**

**Week 9: THEMATIC INTRODUCTION "The sensible city"**

Introduction to somatic research on aspects of tourism; urban soundscapes, performance walking, urban stories of the body and the anthropology of the senses.

**Week 10: METHODS & TOOLS for "The sensible city"**

We will learn about somatic approaches to the urban fabric and performances of identity in "travel to self"- experiences and try out some of them.

**Week 11: WORKSHOP**

In preparation of our tour, we will practice somatic approaches for an analysis of urban tourism and the economy of the senses.

**Week 12: PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECTS (NOV 28)**

Students will present their final projects to each other in class (attendance mandatory, please plan ahead to be there).

**Week 13: FIELD TRIP: "SENSABLE CITY" (3 hours)**

Thematic tour.

**Week 14: SEMINAR WRAP UP**

We will discuss performance walking and its potential to experience and showcase alternative modes of being in the city. The future of tourism in the context of sustainable development is critically examined. Participants can showcase their logbooks and final projects, there is space for seminar feedback and course 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, especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct. 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.

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The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: March 24, 2023