HIST 3734: Berlin as a Site of History (4 credits)
University of North Carolina Asheville
May 9-13 (UNCA) May 25 – June 14, 2015 (Berlin, Germany)

Instructors: Prof. Eric Roubinek

Contact information and office hours: TBA

Course description: This interdisciplinary course will focus on the intersection of space and history in the vibrant city of Berlin, Germany. The class will begin with spatial and historical orientation after which students will have the opportunity to explore the city’s monuments and memorial sites, politically contested spaces, archives and libraries.

Student Learning Outcomes:
- Practice critical analysis of primary and secondary texts
- Practice critical analysis of the built environment as a form of historical document
- Create a new form of historical narrative and argument through a travel guide
- Reflect upon the process of historical memory from an outside perspective

Assessment:
- Class Participation: 50%
- Museum Paper: 10%
- Memorials Everywhere Paper: 10%
- Discussion Introduction: 5%
- Presentations for ‘Walking the City’: 10%
- Written Elements of ‘Walking the City’: 15%

Required Readings:

All additional readings can be found on the course Moodle page.

Additionally, we will be working with a collection of historical travel guides, which you will check out from us at IES:

Fodors´ Germany. 1969.
Schedule:

UNCA

Week 1: Introduction to Course and Berlin
9-13 May

Readings:
  Intro, Ch. 1, Ch. 4, Conclusion
  Ch. 2

BERLIN

Classroom meetings in Germany will be held at IES Abroad Berlin (Institute for the International Education of Students), Johannisstrasse 6, 10117 Berlin unless otherwise noted. You will have access to a computer lab and other facilities at IES during their regular hours:

M-TH, 9:00 – 20:00
F, 9:00 – 18:00 CLOSED WEEKENDS!

We will provide emergency contact information after we arrive in Berlin.

Attendance at every class session is mandatory. Excuses will be granted only in case of documented illness or emergency. Punctuality is also essential, as we will often be meeting others or traveling together to a location for a set appointment. We will not delay any meetings or activities for individual students.

**Day 1 (Wednesday, 25 May):**

Arrival in Berlin; introduction to accommodations at IES and hotel; Welcome Dinner; Practical Walking Tour

**Day 2 (Thursday, 26 May):**

Activities:
Walking tour with Roubinek and Criser, *Unter den Linden: Sites of Political Power Through Time and Contests over Historical Memory*

Readings:
Day 3 (Friday, 27 May):

Activities:
Group visit to German Historical Museum (DHM); walking tours with Roubinek and Criser of Alexanderplatz and the Ku’damm: the Politics of Consumption in Cold War Berlin

Readings:

Day 4 (Saturday, 28 May):

Activities:
Guided tour of the exhibit “Milestones-Setbacks-Sidetracks: the Development of Parliamentary Democracy in Germany” at the Gendarmenmarkt; guided tour of the German Reichstag

Readings:

Day 5 (Sunday, 29 May):

Activities: Visit to the Neues Museum

Readings:

Day 6 (Monday, 30 May):

Activities: Museum visits on your own in preparation for Museum Paper

Readings:

Day 7 (Tuesday, 31 May):

Activities: Screening of *Die Mörder sind Unter Uns*

Readings:

Day 8 (Wednesday, 1 June):

Activities:
Walking tour with Roubinek and Criser: The Politics of Memorialization/Repression of the Nazi Past; guided tour of Sachsenhausen

Readings:
- Sarah Farmer, “Symbols that Face Two Ways: Commemorating the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen,” Representations (49): 97-119, Winter 1995 [you may skip the section on Buchenwald from 100-108]

**Day 9 (Thursday, 2 June):**

Activities:
Work with group on Walking the City project

Readings:
- Dorothy Rowe, Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 90-129.
- additional brief readings on contemporary prostitution in Berlin TBA

**Day 10 (Friday, 3 June):**

Activities:
Lunch in Neukölln; tour of Sehitlik Moschee (Mosque); Theater event in the evening

Readings:

**Day 11 (Saturday, 4 June):**

Activities:
Work on Group Projects

**Day 12 (Sunday, 5 June):**

Activities:
Work on Group Projects

**Day 13 (Monday, 6 June):**

Activities:
Walking tour with Roubinek: The Politics of Housing, Tour One (Wohnstadt Carl Legien, Stalinallee); walking tour with Roubinek: The Politics of Housing, Tour Two (the Hansaviertel); screening of *Die Architekten*
Readings:

**Day 14 (Tuesday, 7 June):**

Activities: Faculty led tour of the Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer; tour of the East Side Gallery and Treptower Park

Readings:
- Dirk Verheyen, United City, Divided Memories? Cold War Legacies in Contemporary Berlin, 75-90.

**Day 15 (Wednesday, 8 June):**

Activities:
Guided tour of the Stasi Headquarters at Normanenstrasse; screening of Das Leben der Anderen

Readings:
- Dirk Verheyen, United City, Divided Memories? Cold War Legacies in Contemporary Berlin, 155-162.

**Day 16 (Thursday, 9 June):**

Activities: Guided tour of Prenzlauerberg

Readings:
TBA

**Day 17 (Friday, 10 June):**

Activities:
Guided tour of Potsdam and Sansouci Palace

Readings:
TBA

**Day 18 (Saturday, 11 June):**

Activities:
Work on Group Project
Day 19 (Sunday, 12 June):
Activities:
Work on Group Project

Day 20 (Monday, 13 June):
Activities:
Group Presentations; Farewell Dinner

Day 21 (Tuesday, 14 June):
Depart Berlin

Course Assignments [these will also be posted individually to the Moodle site]:

Assignment 1. Museum Assignment
After we visit the German Historical Museum and the Neues Museum, choose one of the following museums to visit and write about: The Jewish Museum (U-bahn stop Kochstrasse), the Pergamon Museum, or the Topography of Terror (U-bahn stop: Potsdamerplatz). Before you go, be sure to read the appropriate reading in the course reader:


While there, pay attention to the organization of the museum’s spaces and its presentations of objects, images and texts to represent to past. Then, write an essay of 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12-pt. font) addressing the following sorts of questions:

How does the museum’s site and spatial organization relate to the history represented there?

What specific evidence did you find in the museum of contests over or debates about how to represent the history on which it focuses or controversies about the museum’s own creation or meaning?
What evidence did you find of the museum’s efforts to reconcile the need to appeal to a large public audience and to tourists, with the mission to represent a past that is tragic or horrifying in many of its details?

Due date TBA

2. Memorials Everywhere Assignment

As you already know from Brian Ladd’s *Ghosts of Berlin*, and as you will begin to really see as we explore the city, Berlin is a city where you find history written explicitly as well as implicitly upon the built environment. In fact, you may soon agree with us that there are memorials to see virtually everywhere in Berlin – if you are paying attention. Your task is to find one of these less spectacular, but ubiquitous, memorials of a smaller or “quieter” character, and reflect in writing upon the questions below.

Examples of the kinds of site we mean might be the Stolpersteine, or ‘stumbling stones’ etched with the names and death dates of Jewish victims of National Socialism, the ‘Missing House,’ street signs or street names, or the many Gedenktäfeln (plaques on buildings, often commemorating a former resident).

Examples of the kinds of site we do not mean might be the large Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the two Soviet Soldiers’ Memorials, the Grosser Stern, and other very centrally placed or especially noticeable memorials.

If you are not sure about your choice of memorial, be sure to consult with us!

Please address the following elements (using the subsidiary questions as a guide) in a paper of 2-3 pages’ length (double-spaced, 12-point font):

(1) **Site:** Where is the memorial? Can you tell why it is there? How does it ‘interact’ with the space and other things around it? Under what circumstances do people encounter it exiting another space; in a space of commerce, travel, etc.)? Would it be possible to miss this memorial?

(2) **Form:** Why do you think it takes the form it does? What is the relationship between the form and what is commemorated in the memorial? What is the relationship between the form of the memorial and your response to it?

(3) **Comparison:** How does this work compare to a grander, more ‘official’ or formal, or centrally located commemoration? You can compare specifically with a larger memorial you’ve seen, or think about this more in the abstract.

Due Date TBA

Assignment 3. Discussion Introduction

On selected dates (see course schedule; a sign-up sheet will be distributed), the discussion of the day’s readings will begin with a ten- to fifteen-minute introduction by at least two students. You
Assignment 4. ‘Walking the City’ Group Presentation and Individual Project

Throughout this summer course we will be walking the city repeatedly: experiencing, learning, and coming to know Berlin. The daily seminars, tours, and readings will further help us engage with the city from different historical, social, and cultural perspectives. This act is not only a scholarly endeavor for us as students, but also one in which we act as travelers and tourists in a new city. Indeed, it is as visitors, as tourists, that most people come to know a foreign city and many, if not most, do so with the aid of a travel guide. For that reason this project “Walking the City” will call upon you to create your own travel guide to Berlin and to analyze a visitor’s relation to a guide as s/he learns a city. The project consists of two parts: the travel guide itself and an accompanying essay that relates the places you choose to include in the guide to at least one of the three main themes of our course (Berlin in flows of capital and power, Berlin as a site of everyday life, and Berlin as a site of historical memory and the contests over it).

Our first preparation in thinking about how to write a travel guide to Berlin will come from readings by Brian Ladd and Eric Weitz on walking Berlin during different historical moments. These readings should help us to begin to think about how one constructs a narrative about a city. What is important to each author’s vision of Berlin? What is left out? To further help us understand how one might right a narrative of a city and eventually a travel guide, we will also be reading excerpts from Rudy Koshar’s German Travel Cultures and investigating German travel guides – in English – to Berlin. Koshar argues that German travel guides served to create and support a kind of German nationalism or at least functioned as an act of national crystallization. If the German-language guides aided in the creation of a national consciousness, created a national narrative, then it is significant that the guides we will be reading are German, but in the English language. They are intended for a completely different audience. In reading these guides, we will be discussing how and what kind of national image or narrative they create and for whom.

In terms of more practical preparation, you will also take part in several guided tours during the period of the course. We want you to learn from these guided tours (especially since we'll be doing a number of them ourselves!), but also to think critically about the tour and the material presented. What narrative is being presented? What perspectives are evident in the construction and presentation of the tour? Who is the intended audience and, if appropriate, why?

The final preparation before you start your final projects will be to find a café/restaurant/bar in a contemporary guidebook to Berlin (this can be a printed book or an online guide version of the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet) and go there. You will then be asked to write a short response to your own experience versus the description in your guide. How do you think the guide affected you experience? Was your experience different than you expected? How so, and what contributed to this discrepancy in your expectations?
This short response will be 2-3, double-spaced pages (12-point font), uploaded to the Moodle site. Due Date TBA

The Travel Guide:

Your guide to Berlin can be about any part of the city and about any time. It may for example be about East Berlin and include information about the Stasi Headquarters at Normannenstrasse, the remnants of the Berlin Wall at the East Side Gallery and the DDR Museum on the Spree. It might also be about the sites of memory devoted to the Holocaust and the Third Reich, including the Topography of Terror and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Additionally, you may want to create a guide to the cultural artifacts of Weimar Berlin as you see them, or select a theme of political power, gender, or class conflict and trace it across different historical periods as it is reflected in Berlin. The possibilities are wide open, but you do need to be sure that there is a thematic and historical cohesion to your guide. The story you tell is up to you, but it should nonetheless have one.

In practical terms, the guide should include a day’s worth of exploring for the prospective audience. It should outline the sites you deem to be important and give a short description of what is to be seen and its relevance. In addition to the sites/attractions you include, you should also reflect upon the historical and contemporary guides we will be reading and decide what kind of practical background one will need for your guide: maps, historical context, etc. The length of your final guide will depend on your creativity and the way you choose to format the document (inclusion of images, etc), but the text you include should be between 1500 and 2000 words. The guide will be due on the presentation date, 3 June 2016.

Presentation:

The class group will be divided into project working groups (which may be as small as pairs or as large as 4 persons) based on temporal, geographical, or thematic connections among tour ideas; we will brainstorm some ideas together after you have read the Koshar and Weitz excerpts and examined the set of tour guides. You will work with your group to develop a 20- to 40-minute presentation (depending on group size) that offers a thematic overview of your tours as well as an individual description of each member’s tour. The presentations will take place on 4 June, during an extended classroom meeting, as the capstone event of the course.

Analytic Essay:

In addition to the guide itself, you will be required to submit an essay that explicitly outlines your reasoning for assembling the guide you created, the way you created it. You should explain not only what you have included and why, but also some of your omissions that might have fit. This is also your opportunity to reflect upon the more theoretical readings we have done in preparation for this project and explain how you chose your audience, your narrative perspective, and how you intend people to react/interact with your guide. This analytic essay should be 3-5 double-spaced pages. The essay will be due by email, by arrangement, to accommodate further travel plans/return to the US.