

Berlin: History, Memory, Literature

Dr. Marita Roth

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Time Slot:	Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m.
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	45
ECTS Credits:	6

Course Description

Berlin is a quintessentially modern city. It was invented as a capital when Germany was unified in 1871 in order to minimize regional rivalries, then reinvented in 1990 to effect the reunification of East and West. This course will explore representations and topographies of Berlin between the first German unification and the second, focusing on the major events and conflicts that have left their mark on this urban landscape: the rise of the modern metropolis, economic depression and social unrest, the two World Wars, Nazism and the Holocaust, and the Cold War and its aftermath — in short, the most disruptive and defining events of the twentieth century.

Of central concern will be the conflicting identities, informing the events that have shaped Berlin's — and the world's — history: East and West, communist and capitalist, German and Jew, avant-garde and reactionary: these opposing terms have performed a mad dance over the past 140 years, sometimes settling in temporary alliances, sometimes in violent opposition, and always leaving their traces in literature, memory, and urban geography. Berlin is a palimpsest of the discarded ideologies of the twentieth century, both political and aesthetic; it is also one of the premier stages of Europe's transnational future. Reading its literature and traversing its spaces provides an object lesson in the history of modernism, modernity, and globalization.

Part of the course will involve developing strategies for reading and walking through this multi-layered and contradictory landscape. Thus in addition to discussing the regular reading assignments, we will devote some time to discussing the complex relations between history, text, and memory.

Schedule permitting, we will watch relevant films and organize field trips inside and outside of regular class times. Possible dates for these activities are listed on the syllabus.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- identify the major cultural, social, and political moments from the end of 19th to the beginning of the 21st century as illustrated by historical events centered in Berlin.
- articulate and integrate into their research and discussion key concepts of change within Berlin's ongoing development as an urban society.

Student Profile

Should be in their fourth semester of college/university education or beyond.

Assignments and Grading

Presentation: 200 Points

Class participation (incl. Independent Project): 250 Points

Reading notes: 100 Points

Midterm exam: 200 Points

Final exam: 250 Points

Completion of the Midterm Exam as well as the Final Exam is needed for a grade.

FUB Grade	Points of 1,000
1.0	980-1,000
1.3	950-979
1.7	900-949
2.0	850-899
2.3	800-849
2.7	750-799
3.0	700-749
3.3	650-699
3.7	600-649
4.0	500-599
5.0	< 500

Presentation (200 Points)

You will give your “Expert” presentation on one of the history topics of the syllabus. Therefore, you will give a 10-minute presentation on one of the chapters of Large’s history book “Berlin” (2000) assigned for that session (see my Drop Box at <https://bit.ly/2Nku5bc>).

Your grade will be based on this presentation including PPT (except for Field Trips). Please upload it in the cloud independently and check it in our classroom before the class will start.

Class participation (250 Points)

Since a substantial portion of your grade depends on active class participation, regular attendance is crucial.

Active participation means:

- Being prepared for class.
- Regularly volunteering with constructive comments.
- Listening to and respecting the ideas and comments of your peers.

Independent Course Project

As an Independent Course Project you will visit the Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer at Bernauer Straße on your own. You will receive an additional hand out for doing that according to the schedule.

Reading Notes (100 Points)

Reading is an essential part of this class. To be well prepared for the in-class discussion you will have to read the literature carefully and make notes which will help you to remember details, such as characters, place, time, plot, style, your own impression. You don’t have to write whole sentences but instead you may also draw an illustration. After each class you will hand in your notes. I won’t correct them but will skim them over and return it back to you the following week.

Midterm Exam (200 Points)

The Midterm Exam will be based on the issues we discussed in class so far.

Final Exam (250 Points)

The Final Exam will be based on the issues we discussed in class. It will also include an essay question.

Attendance

Attendance in class is **mandatory**. We also expect you to be **punctual** out of respect to both your instructor and your fellow students. An absence for more than half of a particular day's session will be considered an absence for that day.

If you cannot attend class because you are ill, please **notify your instructor** by e-mail (not via messenger service or through another student) before class. Any absence **without a notification** of your instructor before class will automatically be considered **unexcused**.

Absences because of **illness** are **excused**; however, for the **third** sick day and every other sick day after that (per course), you will need to turn in a **doctor's notice** ("Attest" in German) in order for them to count as excused, too. It is **your** responsibility to keep track of your absences and to know when a doctor's note is required. No doctor's notice issued more than three days after the day of illness will be accepted.

If you miss an **exam** due to an excused absence, your instructor and the FU-BEST team will arrange a make-up exam for you; you may also be entitled to a term paper **deadline extension**. If you, however, do not fulfill all course requirements needed for a grade by the (later) date determined by the program, passing the course is no longer possible.

Please also note that if you miss **more than half** of a course's sessions (even if due to excused absence), passing the course is no longer possible.

Personal travel and visits by relatives or friends are **not** accepted as reasons for absence (i.e., absences for these reasons always count as **unexcused**).

Regarding **unexcused** absences, please note the following:

- Any unexcused absence has consequences for at least the participation portion of the grade.
- Two unexcused absences lead to a lowering of the course grade by a fraction.
- Three unexcused absences will result in a 5.0 (equivalent to an "F") on the transcript.

Literature

Readings and other materials are posted on the FU Berlin online platform Blackboard except Schneider's "Wall Jumper" (book is handed out)

Course readings include (selections from) the following:

- Braun, Volker (1990). *Das Eigentum*. In: Poetry Oktober-November 1998. Contemporary Poetry. A Special Double Issue.
- Deutschkron, Inge (2008). *We Survived Berlin Jewish Underground*. German Resistance Memorial Center. German Resistance 1933-1945.
- Döblin, Alfred (2003 [1929]). *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. Continuum New York.
- Large, David C. (2000). *Berlin*. Basic Books New York.
- Mann, Heinrich (1998 [1914]). *The Loyal Subject*. Continuum New York.
- Niven, Bill/ Paven, Chloe (Eds.) (2010). *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*. Palgrave Macmillan Hampshire.
- Rothberg, Michael (2009). *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford University Press.
- Schneider, Peter (1998 [1983]). *The Wall Jumper*. University of Chicago Press Chicago. (book)
- Simmel, Georg (1959 [1903]). *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. Free Press New York.
- Speer, Albert (1970 [1969]). *Inside the Third Reich*. Macmillan New York.
- Turner, Henry A. (1985). *The Nazi Who Made a Comeback*. Review on Mathias Schmidt. *Albert Speer. The End of a Myth*. St. Martin's Press New York. Published in the New York Times.
- Current newspaper articles

Calendar	Topics, Readings, etc.
Session 1	<p>Topic: Introduction</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simmel, Georg (1950 [1903]). <i>The Metropolis and Mental Life</i>. In: <i>The Sociology of Georg Simmel</i>. Free Press New York. pp. 69-79.
Session 2	<p>Topic: Imperial Times: Heinrich Mann</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mann, Heinrich (1998 [1914]). <i>The Loyal Subject</i>. Continuum New York. pp. 1-70. <p>Video: <i>All quiet on the Western Front</i></p>
Session 3	<p>Topic: The Great Disorder: Alfred Döblin</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Döblin, Alfred (2003 [1929]). <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i>. Continuum New York. pp. 1-30. <p>Video: <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz, Cabaret</i></p>
Session 4	<p>Topic: Berlin under Nazi Reign</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speer, Albert (1970 [1969]). <i>Inside the Third Reich</i>. Macmillan New York. pp. 71-82, 132-160. Turner, Henry A. (1985). <i>The Nazi Who Made a Comeback</i>. Review on Mathias Schmidt. <i>Albert Speer. The End of a Myth</i>. St. Martin's Press New York. Published Online on the New York Times from 3.3.1985. <p>Video: <i>Olympia</i></p>
Session 5	<p>Topic: Victims and Perpetrators. Otto Weidt and the Berlin Workshop of the Blinds.</p> <p>Field Trip I: Jewish life at the Scheunenviertel incl. visit of the Workshop of the Blinds</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutschkron, Inge (2008). <i>We Survived Berlin Jewish Underground</i>. German Resistance Memorial Center. <i>German Resistance 1933-1945</i>. pp. 1-42.
Session 6	MIDTERM EXAM
Session 7	<p>Topic: Cold War and Division: Peter Schneider (book)</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schneider, Peter (1998 [1983]). <i>The Wall Jumper</i>. University of Chicago Press Chicago. <p>Video: <i>One, Two, Three</i></p>

<p>Session 8 + 9</p>	<p>Topic: The Divided City</p> <p>Field Trip II: From the Palace of Tears to Checkpoint Charlie</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, David C. (2000). Divided City. In: <i>Berlin</i>. Basic Books New York. pp. 445-515.
<p>Session 10</p>	<p>Topic: Reunification</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volker Braun (1990): <i>Das Eigentum</i>. In: <i>Poetry Oktober-November 1998. Contemporary German Poetry. A Special Issue</i>. • Large, David C. (2000): From Bonn to Berlin. In: <i>Berlin</i>. Basic Books New York. pp. 517-583. <p>Video: Good bye, Lenin!</p> <p>Independent Project Bernauer Straße Due</p>
<p>Session 11</p>	<p>Topic: Berlin of Today</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niven/Paver (Eds.) (2010). <i>Memorialization in Germany since 1945</i>. Palgrave Macmillan Hampshire. • Interview with Michael Rothberg et al. (2022). • Further readings TBA
<p>Session 12</p>	<p>Topic: What now?</p> <p>Field Trip III: Humboldt Forum at the Berliner Schloss and Meeting with a Guest Speaker.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wainwright, Oliver (2021). <i>Berlin's bizarre New Museum: A Prussian Palace Built for €680m</i>. Published online on <i>The Guardian Online</i> from 9.8.2021. • Oltermann, Philip. 'Inconvenient Truths'. Berlin's Humboldt Forum faces up its colonial past. Publishes online on <i>The Guardian online</i> from 19.7.2022. • Further readings TBA
<p>Session 13</p>	<p>FINAL EXAM</p>