Course Title

Online Course Exploring Difficult Heritage

Semester: Summer semester 2020
Course instructor: Dr. Victoria Bishop Kendzia (vbishopkendzia@gmail.com)
Subject area: Kultur und Gesellschaft / Culture and Society
Credits: 5 ECTS
Time: online course, note actual Zoom meeting dates and times!
Room: Cyberspace

Moodle Info: The course title on moodle is: Exploring Difficult Heritage SoSe 2020. The course key (password) for self-enrollment will be sent to registered students before the beginning of the semester.

Course description:

This anthropologically inflected course is interdisciplinary in nature. The aim of the course is to explore and critically analyse certain key aspects of Berlin’s difficult heritage. The focus is on two particularly visible and conflict-ridden aspects of this landscape, namely the Jewish narrative and the topic of migration. The exploration will be realized through a variety of virtual museum visits, online lectures, video material, and dedicated scholarly readings. The materials, which are to be understood as dynamic resources, will be approached using ethnographic methods and critical analyses.

Learning objectives:

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to familiarize the students with how Berlin’s difficult heritage is represented in a variety of museums and/or memorial sites and in the media. In addition, they are to be equipped with ethnographic methods in order to critically approach the material, reflecting on their own postionalities. They will also develop their abilities to read and reflect on a variety of relevant academic literature.

By the end of the course, students will have gained:

Knowledge

• Understand, describe and identify key aspects of Berlin’s difficult heritage.
• Reflect critically on scholarly texts and sites and media output relevant to the Jewish Narrative in Germany and the topic of migration.

and

Academic/Transferrable Skills

• Use ethnographic and critical analysis methods to virtually explore settings and sites.
• Identify and reflect on the positionality of scholarly authors, museum stakeholders, and themselves in a learning through research approach.

• Communicate and discuss key ideas in difficult heritage.

Competencies

• Read the most recent and relevant theoretical and empirical research on the topics.
• Apply relevant theories and concepts in independent work to analyze further narratives and representational strategies.

Assessment portfolio:

I. Completion of each assignment as outlined in the moodle course. For each topic, this will include various tasks (such as visiting a website/watching a video and exploring certain artefacts and narratives there), reading a scholarly text, submission of the assigned written work by the due date.

II. Submission of the content/discussion questions on the scholarly texts, as assigned, accounts for 25% of the grade.

III. Active attendance and participation in Zoom meetings (at least 3 of the 5), which will include group discussions and workshops. The group discussions and contributions, based on these, will make up the oral requirement. The tentative dates for the Zoom meetings will be indicated below. Should time zone/other scheduling issues arise for a significant number of students, I can open up alternate Zoom meeting times.

IV. An individually-written research report with bibliography (6-8 pages, not including bibliography or photos), double-spaced, Times New Roman as a (word document or pdf file only!) to be uploaded onto the moodle assignment section by the due date indicated, midnight, Berlin time. The topic should be relevant to the course. Do discuss this with the instructor in advance. You may write in English, German, Spanish or French. Late papers will lose 2% of a grade per day late.

Language requirements:

English B2 required. English is the language spoken in class and the language of the required readings and presentations. German at any level is an asset, and would help in a more in-depth understanding of the field sites we explore.

Any written work may be submitted in English, German, Spanish or French.
Course Outline

NB: all the material will be available on moodle, much of the work can be done on your on time, just do note the due dates for the assignments and the Zoom meetings! Since the situation is still fluid, certain due dates can be postponed, and other changes can be made, based on students’ needs, if necessary.

Topic 1: Watch a short video in which the instructor introduces herself

You also have the option to read the Introduction to her 2018 book: Visitors to the House of Memory. Identity and Political Education at the Jewish Museum Berlin. This is not a requirement. It is just a way to get to know the instructor a bit better. There is no assignment based on this reading, but I will be happy to address any questions or comments you have during our first Zoom meeting.

Assignment due tba / 24 April midnight Berlin time:

Write two 150-word answers in English to the following questions:

a. Which sites of difficult heritage (whether in Berlin, Germany or elsewhere have you been to? Write about your impressions of them. (If you haven’t been to any, that’s fine, just write this in a sentence. I just want to get to know your previous experience)

b. Why have you chosen to take this class? What do you hope to get out of it?

Topic 2 Visit the Jewish Museum Berlin

The relevant links (one to the museums own online material) and another to a very good Youtube video that shows you the museum in detail with an interview with Daniel Libeskind, the architect of the museum, will be posted on moodle.

Read the required reading by Robin Ostow,


The assignment to be submitted in moodle before 1 May, midnight Berlin time is as follows:

1. Chose an object/story from the JMB online material that you find most interesting. Write a short description of the object and most importantly an explanation of why you chose it and what you find interesting about it. (200-300 words)

2. Regarding the Youtube video: Write a short reaction paper to it: Tell us what most surprised you about the material, what you most remember, again what and why you feel this way (250-350 words)
3. Read the text by Robin Ostow and submit 2-3 content or discussion questions on it. Please refer to the text directly. You may also submit additional questions that bring the video and online material and the text together.

**First Zoom Meeting will take place on tba / May 5th at 14:00 and will last 1.5 hours.**

During this session we will see each other for the first time! After a short introduction round and lecture from me on the post WWII Jewish narrative in Germany, I will put you into smaller groups to discuss your impressions of the JMB material and to share your questions and comments on the Ostow reading. I will check in on the groups throughout the session.

**Topic 3 Visit the Holocaust Memorial Berlin**

There will be a video to watch posted on moodle, and a text by Irit Dekel:


The assignment to be submitted in moodle before 10 May, midnight Berlin time is as follows:

1. Regarding the Youtube video: As with the JMB task, write a short reaction paper to it: Tell us what most surprised you about the material, what you most remember, again what and why you feel this way (250-350 words).
2. Read the text by Irit Dekel and submit 2-3 content or discussion questions on it. Please refer to the text directly. You may also submit additional questions that bring the video and online material and the text together.

**The Second Zoom Meeting will take place on tba / May 19th at 14:00 and will last 1.5 hours.**

During this meeting there will be group discussions based on your questions on the Dekel text and your impressions of the Holocaust Memorial. I will also hold a short lecture on post WWII migration to Germany.

**TOPIC 4 Migration in Germany Part 1 General history and key issues:**

Watch the video posted on moodle

Read the text by Costoiu:


Read text by Rothberg and Yildiz:
Assignment Due 26 May

1. Based on the Costoiu text, into which category does your home country fit in terms of migration policy? Write a 250-300 word explanation of this, based on your understanding of migration to your home country.

2. Based on the Rothberg/Yildiz text: Submit 2-3 content and/or discussion questions.

TOPIC 5 Migration in Germany Part 2

More Recent Issues Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism

watch video material (link to be posted on moodle)
news material (to be posted on moodle)


Assignment Due: June 2

1. Based on the video and news articles: summarize the issues briefly (max 250 words) and note how this is similar or different to issues your own country is dealing with.

2. Based on the Shooman text: submit 2-3 discussion questions.

Fourth Zoom Meeting tba/ 9 June, 14:00

We will have group workshops, based on your submissions above

Fifth and Final Zoom meeting tba/ 16 June 14:00

Concluding impressions and clarification of research paper topics and due dates!

Research Paper Due: date 03 July.

Literature: All the required readings (and some optional material) will be made available on Moodle. Titles may be subject to change.

Required:


Several additional media resources will be made available on moodle and assigned in addition to each reading.

Optional:


Remarks:

NB: This is a BA-level course. Preference will be given to BA-level students, should there be a waiting list. MA-level students who wish to take this course must discuss this in advance with the instructor (via email is fine), to ensure that the course meets their needs.

Attendance Policy:

You may not miss more than two Zoom meetings. If you do know that you have to miss a session in advance, let me know beforehand and we can arrange a make-up task, if necessary. In case of illness or other emergency, let me know as soon as possible and provide proof of the problem. I can be flexible with make-up tasks, provided I am kept informed.

Plagiarism Policy:

The presentation of another person’s words, thoughts, ideas, judgments, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism. The penalty for this is failure of the course.