**Berlin as refugee city**

**Semester:**  
Summer semester 2020

**Course instructors:**  
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**Subject area:**  
Culture and Society

**Credits:**  
5 ECTS

**Time:**  
Wednesdays 12-14 c.t. (12:15-13:45)

**Room:**  
0323-26, 3rd floor, Hausvogteiplatz 5-7

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**Course description:**

The course “Berlin as refugee city” explores the recent history of (forced) migration to the city of Berlin from an anthropological perspective. How and where are refugees visible in urban spaces of Berlin? What are the challenges they are confronted with and what are their practices of space-making and maneuvering the city? The temporal focus of this course is set on the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ in 2015 and its aftermath, yet we also discuss Germany’s migration regime from a historical perspective. In doing so, the seminar invites critical engagement with classifications and terminology (“refugee”, “crisis”, etc.) and a multidimensional exploration of Berlin as space of refuge, settlement and activism.

Besides reading and discussing a variety of critical sources, such as field reports, academic articles and media coverage, this course offers an exploration of mapping methodologies, and participation in excursions to different locations in Berlin that have played a role in the ‘refugee crisis’ and its aftermath.

Furthermore, there is a reflective dimension to this course that strongly motivates us: students are encouraged to engage with their own and their families’ immersion in migration, are asked to reflect in which ways they experience Berlin as a ‘refugee city’, and what it meant for them to arrive and settle in Berlin.

**Learning objectives:**

The objective of this Bachelor-level course is to encourage students to critically engage in self-positionality vis-à-vis topic and literature, critical reflect on terminology and representations of the topic, acquire knowledge on historical background and German migration regime. A further and essential learning objective is to study beyond text and discussions through excursions in Berlin.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

**Knowledge**

- Understand, describe and identify the core developments of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in Berlin
• Understand recent theoretical and empirical developments in the field

**Academic/Transferable Skills**

• Analyze and critically reflect on relevant debates
• Apply relevant theories and methods for migration-related questions
• Communicate and discuss key concepts of the refugee crisis

**Competencies**

• Understand recent developments in scholarship on forced migration as well as classical theories and concepts
• Apply relevant theories and concepts in independent work to analyze new developments

**Examples for assessment portfolio:**

• Regular attendance, active participation
• 5 Critical response papers (to be submitted via Moodle) 40%
• Presentation (no longer than 10 minutes / with questions for the audience / drawing on academic literature) 10%
• Final essay (Deadline: 01.07.2020 / Format: 3000 words, double-spaced, Times New Roman ft.12) 50%

**Language requirements:**

Students need to be proficient in English:

English is spoken in class and is the language to be used when presenting and writing essays. Core readings, class discussions, and course work are in English. Strong German skills are a plus in order to read additional sources (academic and media articles) but are not a requirement. If students are able to incorporate sources in other languages (Arabic, French, Farsi, etc.), it is a plus.

**Timetable:**

**Session 1: 15.04.2020 Berlin as refugee city - Introduction**

Introduction of required readings, course structure and assessment & getting to know and warming up

**Required Readings**

• Pries, L. 2020. ""We will Manage It” – Did Chancellor Merkel's Dictum Increase or Even Cause the Refugee Movement in 2015?", *International Migration*. DOI: 10.1111/imig.12684.

**Session 2: 22.04.2020 Looking back at the events of 2015/2016**
The “refugee crisis” reaches Berlin: By looking at the cases of LaGeSo and Tempelhof we will discuss structural problems of Berlin’s administration that emerged when dealing with the “crisis”.

**Required Readings**


**Session 3: 29.04.2020 Analysing the notion of ‘crisis’**

In this week, we will discuss the notion of ‘crisis’. Whose crisis was it? What kind of crisis was it? And was it really a crisis?

**Required Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Session 4: 06.05.2020 Excursion: Walking tour in Neukölln**

We will explore Neukölln by foot, particularly the area of Sonnenallee (also called “the Arab street”). We will visit REFUGIO, a project by the Berlin City Mission, and will meet with the group *Eed be Eed* who initiated a multimedia platform for newcomers to Berlin.

**Required Readings**


**Session 5: 13.05.2020 Using the term ‘refugee’**

We will discuss the use of concepts and terminology that we draw on in this course, for instance, the term ‘refugee’. Who is marked and /perceived as refugee and which connotations are implied? Are there alternatives?

**Required Readings**

Further Readings


Session 6: 20.05.2020 Historical and legal perspective

In this session, we will shed light on Germany’s migration regime: both from a historical and legal perspectives which build a necessary framework to understand Berlin as a refugee city.

Required Readings


Further Readings


Session 7: 27.05.2020 Refugees & the Urban Space in Berlin

The focus of this week’s session is refugees’ navigation of the urban space. Where are refugees visible in the city? In which parts of the town are the community shelters located and which contestations do take place? How is the “refugee presence” negotiated in different parts of Berlin vis-à-vis other migrant communities?

Required Readings

Media articles on refugees in different areas in Berlin (provided via Moodle).


Further Readings

Session 8: 03.06.2020 Shelter and Housing

In this session, we will shed light on different types of accommodation in Berlin. In response to the rising number of people arriving in Germany in 2015/2016, Berlin opened various emergency shelters, camps, and long-term group accommodations. We ask: what are the challenges that newcomers face in these accommodations and once they enter the Berlin housing market?

Required Readings


Further Readings


Session 9: 10.06.2020 Volunteers and Germany’s ‘culture of welcome’

In this week, we discuss responses to the ‘refugee crisis’ in German society. Several months of 2015 were defined by a so-called ‘culture of welcome’, which however did not last.

Required Readings


Further Readings


Session 10: 17.06.2020 Berlin’s Arab Activists

Since the ‘refugee crisis’, Berlin hosts a rising number of activists and witnesses a plethora of events dealing with issues pertaining to the Arab world. How does the presence of young ‘Arab activists’, artists, and academics shape Berlin? Which networks and initiatives are present and how do they negotiate their presence and involvement in politics “at home”?

Required Readings
Session 11: Date TBA Excursion 2

In this week, we will visit two cultural spaces in Wedding (Be’kehr and Bi’bak) that have become meeting points for Arab and other political and cultural activists. We will arrange the exact dates according to the program in these spaces and in discussion with the course participants.

Session 12: 01.07.2020 Gender and the ‘Refugee Crisis’

We will analyse the ‘refugee crisis’ from a gendered lens, by investigating what it means to be a man and a woman in the context of forced migration. What are the gendered implications of refugee-ness?

Required Readings


Further Readings


Session 13: 08.07.2020 Coming of age during forced migration

In this week, we ask what it means to be a minor in the context of forced migration and how the transition to adulthood has severe implications.

Required Readings


Further Readings


**Session 14: 15.07.2020 Refugees social media usage & feedback session / wrap-up of seminar**

In the first part of the last session we will discuss how mobile devices are used for navigating in and into Europe. In the second part we will then wrap-up the seminar and leave room for feedback.

**Required Readings**


**Further Readings**


**Literature:** we will make literature available via Moodle

**Academic articles/book chapters**


Pries, L. 2020. “”‘We will Manage It” – Did Chancellor Merkel’s Dictum Increase or Even Cause the Refugee Movement in 2015?”, International Migration. DOI: 10.1111/imig.12684.


Media articles on refugees in different areas of Berlin: provided via Moodle
Remarks:

- Diversity Learning mission statement: Please bear in mind the fact that this is an international, inclusive learning environment.
- Attendance policy according to HU rules: 80% attendance needed in order to pass; absences need to be excused and backed up by doctor’s certificate etc.
- Plagiarism is a fundamental violation of academic standards and will result in your failing the paper. In severe cases it may have disciplinary effects beyond this. (See also: https://www.angl.hu-berlin.de/studying/tools/american-studies_how-to-write-a-term-paper_mla-8-sept2018.pdf)