

Course Syllabus WS 2015/16

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Autobiographical Perspectives on GDR History (5 ECTS)

DDR Geschichte aus autobiografischen Perspektiven

The public memory of the GDR is, more than twenty-five years after Germany's reunification, still contested. In regular intervals it is for example discussed whether the GDR can be described as an „Unrechtsstaat“ (illegitimate state). And while the public interest to learn about the surveillance apparatus of the Stasi is still growing, it is often criticized that the focus on control and oppression does not coincide with the everyday experiences of many GDR citizens. In this seminar we will read mostly autobiographical texts that deal with the system of oppression in the GDR and questions of individual conformity or resistance as well as with everyday experiences. We will discuss these individual memories in order to enable students to contextualize and interpret various memory discourses.

Die öffentliche Erinnerung an die DDR ist auch mehr als fünfundzwanzig Jahre nach der Wiedervereinigung umstritten. In regelmäßigen Abständen wird beispielsweise darüber diskutiert, ob die DDR als „Unrechtsstaat“ zu bezeichnen sei. Und während einerseits das öffentliche Interesse am Überwachungsapparat Stasi weiter zunimmt, wird kritisiert, dass der Fokus auf Kontrolle und Unterdrückung den Alltagserfahrungen vieler DDR-Bürger nicht gerecht werde. In diesem Seminar diskutieren wir überwiegend autobiografische Texte, die sich sowohl mit dem Unterdrückungssystem DDR und Fragen der individuellen Anpassung oder des Widerstandes als auch mit Alltagserfahrungen beschäftigen. Die Seminarteilnehmer_innen werden in die Lage versetzt, unterschiedliche Erinnerungsdiskurse zu kontextualisieren und zu deuten.

Further Information:

- Please purchase **Ash, Timothy: *The File: A Personal History* (Atlantic Books, 2009)** as soon as possible. All other literature will be available on moodle once the seminar has started.
- We will go on three field trips, as listed in the schedule below. On the respective dates **we will meet at the museums / memorial sites.**
- Schedule: **Mondays (starting 19 October, 2015) 16:00-18:00 ct** (ct stands for *cum tempore* (with time) meaning the class starts at 16:15 and ends at 17:45), address: **Hausvogteiplatz 5-7, room 0323-26 (on the 3rd floor)**

Course requirements to obtain 5 ECTS:

- Active participation** in class discussions and field trips.
- Doing the readings in advance of the respective classes and preparing **1-2 discussion questions or short (critical) comments** on each reading. I collect them in the beginning of each session. *(20% of final grade)*
- Oral presentation** (summary of the text and a moderation of the discussion) **or** being an **“expert” for a German text** (help other students to understand the text, e.g. via close reading, vocab training). *(30% of final grade)*
- Written assignment:** You are asked to hand in **two response papers** to topics or texts discussed in class. Each response paper should have approx. 900 words (double spaced, MLA-style citation) and must be handed in within two weeks after the session that it refers to. Response papers can be submitted in English or German. Please send them to me via email. *(50% of final grade)*
- Attendance Policy:** You may not miss more than two sessions. Contact me if you have to be absent more than twice to arrange a make-up task. Please also let me know if you cannot take part in one of the field trips, because the number of participants affects the tour fee (sometimes only free for more than ten people).
- Plagiarism Policy:** The penalty for plagiarism is failure of the course.

Language requirements:

This seminar is suitable for students with a **high academic proficiency in English** (at least B2-level), who are at **the Beginner's stage of learning German** (A1/B2).

The seminar will be bilingual (English/German), with English being our primary working language, as well as opportunities to explore the German language and expand your German skills. Though most texts will be provided in English, there are some autobiographical sources that will be read in German (with support, e.g. close reading of short paragraphs in class, vocab training, with the help of an "expert").

week 1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• getting to know each other, aims & expectations of the course, review course syllabus• introduction: remembering the GDR – the challenged past
week 2	Short introduction to GDR history <ul style="list-style-type: none">• short texts (English / German) about key dates and events will be provided in class• jigsaw method: students inform each other about their respective texts, preferably in German
week 3	Remembering the GDR: Coming to terms with a dictatorship or <i>Ostalgie</i>? <p>Drawing on Memory Studies as a theoretical framework, we will discuss various debates on the GDR, from "state-mandated memory" (Beattie) to often conflicting public discourses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• oral presentation• literature:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Clarke, David / Wölfel, Ute: Remembering the German Democratic Republic in a United Germany, pp. 3-22.– Hyland, Claire: '<i>Ostalgie</i> doesn't fit!': Individual Interpretations of and Interactions with <i>Ostalgie</i>, pp. 101-115.– <u>optional</u>: Beattie, Andrew H.: The Politics of Remembering the GDR: Official and State-Mandated Memory since 1990, pp. 23-34.
Everyday Life in the GDR	
week 4	Exhibition „Alltag in der DDR“. The tour starts at 4:00 pm! We will meet at the Kulturbrauerei. Knaackstr. 97, 10435 Berlin (public transport: M1 / M12 / M 10 / U2 Eberswalder Straße). We will go on a guided tour in English (for free) for approx. one hour. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• literature:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ludwig, Andreas: Representations of the Everyday and the Making of Memory: GDR History and Museums, pp. 37-53.
Conformity or Resistance	
week 5	Grafe: „Die Schuld der Mitläufer“ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• text experts• jigsaw method: each group reads and discusses one text (experts assist), group splits, students inform each other about their respective texts (preferably in German)• literature (one text per group):<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Krawczyk: Bei den Grundsätzen. Von Mitgehern, Mitläufern und Mittätern, S.133-139.– Raeder: Erst später begann ich mich zu wehren. Ja sagen und nein sagen, S. 101-106.– Rathenow: Warum kam ich an die Grenze? Weil ich dorthin wollte, S. 74-79. <i>in: Grafe: Die Schuld der Mitläufer. Anpassen oder Widerstehen in der DDR.</i>
week 6	Jahn: „Wir Angepassten. Überleben in der DDR“ (I) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• oral presentation or text experts (depending on participants' level of German)• literature:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Jahn, Roland: Wir Angepassten. Überleben in der DDR (pp. tba).
week 7	Jahn: „Wir Angepassten. Überleben in der DDR“ (II) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• oral presentation or text experts (depending on participants' level of German)• literature:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jahn, Roland: Wir Angepassten. Überleben in der DDR (pp. tba). - reading in class: Grafe, Roman: Das Schweigen der Mehrheit, S. 9-12.
Surveillance	
week 8	<p>Ash: "The File" (I) – Life in West- & East-Berlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash came to Berlin in 1978 to study and soon came under the scrutiny of the Stasi. Fifteen years later, Ash returned to Berlin to examine the file that had been compiled by the Stasi with the assistance of several secret informers. • oral presentation • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ash, Timothy: The File: A Personal History. Intro & Ch. I-III, pp. 5-73.
week 9	<p>Ash: "The File" (II) – meeting former secret informers (IM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral presentation • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ash, Timothy: The File: A Personal History. Ch. IV-X, pp. 74-146.
week 10	<p>Ash: "The File" (III) – meeting former Stasi officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral presentation • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ash, Timothy: The File: A Personal History. Ch. XI-XV, pp. 147-227.
week 11	<p>We will go on a guided tour at the BStU-Archive (Stasi files). As they only offer tours Monday-Friday 9 am-3 pm we have to find an alternative date/time. Address: Ruschestraße 103, entrance: building 7, 10365 Berlin; public transport: U5 Magdalenenstraße. Tour: 90 min., English, for free</p>
Political Prisoners	
week 12	<p>Flight from the GDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral presentation • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Richter, Karl Heinz: The "Moskau-Paris-Express" to Freedom. An Escape from East to West (pp. tba).
week 13	<p>Punks in the GDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral presentation or text experts (depending on participants' level of German) • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furian, Gilbert: Mehl aus Mielkes Mühlen: Politische Häftlinge und ihre Verfolger - Erlebnisse, Briefe, Dokumente (pp.tba). - <u>optional</u>: Furian, Gilbert / Becker, Nikolaus: „Auch im Osten trägt man Westen.“ Punks in der DDR – und was aus ihnen geworden ist. (Grimm Zentrum, HU library)
week 14	<p>We will meet at the Hohenschönhausen Memorial (Stasi prison, Genslerstr. 66, 13055 Berlin). The tour will start at 4:30 pm! Tour (English or German) takes 90 min., costs 3-6 Euros per person depending on group size. Public transport: M 5 Freienwalder Straße / M 6 Genslerstraße (+ walking 10 min.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jones, Sara: At Home with the <i>Stasi: Gedenkstätte Hohenschönhausen</i> as Historic House, pp. 211-222.
Opposition 1989	
week 15	<p>East German Opposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral presentations • literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Torpey, John C.: Intellectuals, Socialism, and Dissent: The East German Opposition and its Legacy (pp. tba).
week 16	<p>Final discussion</p>

Literatur:

Ash, Timothy: *The File: A Personal History* (Atlantic Books, 2009).

Beattie, Andrew H.: The Politics of Remembering the GDR: Official and State-Mandated Memory since 1990. In: David Clarke / Ute Wölfel (eds): *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany*

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 23-34.

Bickford, Andrew: Red Radiation: East German Army Officers in Post-Unification Germany. In: David Clarke / Ute Wölfel (eds): *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 169-181.

Clarke, David / Wölfel, Ute: Remembering the German Democratic Republic in a United Germany. In: David Clarke / Ute Wölfel (eds): *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 3-22.

Clarke, David / Wölfel, Ute (eds): *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Furian, Gilbert: Mehl aus Mielkes Mühlen: Politische Häftlinge und ihre Verfolger - Erlebnisse, Briefe, Dokumente (Berlin: zba.buch, 2012).

Furian, Gilbert / Becker, Nikolaus: „Auch im Osten trägt man Westen.“ Punks in der DDR – und was aus ihnen geworden ist (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2012).

Grafe, Roman: Das Schweigen der Mehrheit. In: Ders. (Hrsg.): *Die Schuld der Mitläufer. Anpassen oder Widerstehen in der DDR* (München: Pantheon, 2009), S. 9-12.

Grafe, Roman (Hrsg.): *Die Schuld der Mitläufer. Anpassen oder Widerstehen in der DDR* (München: Pantheon, 2009).

Hyland, Claire: 'Ostalgie doesn't fit!': Individual Interpretations of and Interactions with Ostalgie. In: Saunders, Anna / Pinfold, Debbie (eds): *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR: Multiple Perspectives and Plural Authenticities* (Basingstoke [et al.] : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 101-115.

Jahn, Roland: *Wir Angepassten. Überleben in der DDR* (München / Zürich: Piper, 2014).

Jarausch, Konrad H.: Beyond Uniformity: The Challenge of Historicizing the GDR. In: Konrad H. Jarausch (ed.): *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York [et al.] : Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 47-69.

Jarausch, Konrad H.: Care and Coercion: The GDR as a Welfare Dictatorship. In: Konrad H. Jarausch (ed.): *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York [et al.] : Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 47-69.

Jarausch, Konrad (ed.): *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York [et al.] : Berghahn Books, 1999).

Jones, Sara: At Home with the Stasi: *Gedenkstätte Hohenschönhausen* as Historic House. In: David Clarke / Ute Wölfel (eds): *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 211-222.

Krawczyk, Stephan: Bei den Grundsätzen. Von Mitgehern, Mitläufern und Mittätern. In: Grafe, Roman (Hrsg.): *Die Schuld der Mitläufer. Anpassen oder Widerstehen in der DDR* (München: Pantheon, 2009), S.133-139.

Ludwig, Andreas: Representations of the Everyday and the Making of Memory: GDR History and Museums. In: David Clarke / Ute Wölfel (eds): *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 37-53.

Raeder, Walburga: Erst später begann ich mich zu wehren. Ja sagen und nein sagen. In: Grafe, Roman (Hrsg.): *Die Schuld der Mitläufer. Anpassen oder Widerstehen in der DDR* (München: Pantheon, 2009), S. 101-106.

Rathenow, Lutz: Warum kam ich an die Grenze? Weil ich dorthin wollte. In: Grafe, Roman (Hrsg.): *Die Schuld der Mitläufer. Anpassen oder Widerstehen in der DDR* (München: Pantheon, 2009), S. 74-79.

Richter, Karl Heinz: The "Moskau-Paris-Express" to Freedom. An Escape from East to West (Stiftung Aufarbeitung, Gelebte Geschichte Bd. 1, 2003).

Saunders, Anna / Pinfold, Debbie (eds): *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR: Multiple Perspectives and Plural Authenticities* (Basingstoke [et al.] : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Torpey, John C.: Intellectuals, Socialism, and Dissent: The East German Opposition and its Legacy (Minneapolis, Minn. [et al.] : University of Minnesota Press, 1995).