

Berlin, 1945-1990: Divided City

Winter Semester 2015/16, Friday 12.00-16.00

Tutor: Dr. Peter Mitchell

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History/BA level

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Straddling the Cold War's frontline, Berlin has stood at the forefront of not only German history but of European and global developments as well. The divided city symbolized and represented the global conflict between capitalism and socialism; the division of the world, Europe and Germany into East and West; and also the nature, structure and goals of their supporting, antagonistic world political systems. This course will provide insights into the key political developments in Berlin's recent history from the fall of the Third Reich, through the decades of political and physical division, to the collapse of the Wall in 1989 and Germany's subsequent reunification. What is more, the course will also explore post-war Berlin's social and cultural history, paying special attention to common themes, experiences and concerns that transcended the city's physical division, affecting Berliners on both sides of the Wall. The course is composed of seven biweekly seminars and one excursion. Students are provided with suggested reading to prepare themselves for each session.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Students will be asked to maintain a regular attendance, participate actively in class, and submit written assignments.

METHODOLOGY /SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH THIS COURSE

This course is open to students from all academic backgrounds who have an interest in Berlin and its history. The course requires a good or very good command of English. The course will develop transferrable skills, including the ability to argue effectively about intellectual issues, both orally and in writing, and to work together with others in a small group setting. The course seeks to bolster students' confidence in their German language skills through encouraging them to work with German primary sources and short excerpts of German academic texts. An excursion to a local archive will provide a basic introduction to historical research.

DIDACTICS

Participants will develop a close understanding of key political, social, and

cultural developments in Berlin and of the connections between those developments and broader trends in post-war German and European history. They will be introduced to the latest relevant historiography and will learn to engage critically with a range of written and unwritten materials, including novels, films, photographs and public exhibitions. Excerpts from German academic articles and/or primary sources will be circulated and discussed in class, providing students with an opportunity to improve their German language proficiency.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING

Introductory Reading

Tony Judt, *Postwar* (2005).

David Clay Large, *Berlin* (2000).

Week 1: Introductory session

Getting to know each other. We will discuss the aims and expectations of the course.

Tutor will provide an introduction to Berlin and its pre-war history.

Week 2. War, Occupation and the Coming of the Cold War

This session will look at a city in ruins and a people in trauma. We will ask whether 1945 represented a 'Stunde Null' for Berlin and Germany. The session will also examine the role of the Four Powers in Berlin and the coming of the Cold War, paying special attention to an early Cold War flashpoint: the Soviet blockade of 1948-49 and the Allied Airlift.

Suggested reading:

- Antony Beevor, *Berlin: the Downfall, 1945* (2003).
- Ann & John Tusa, *The Berlin Airlift* (1998).
- Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, Chapter 7.

Week 3. Division and Consolidation

The division of Berlin and Germany between two competing world systems will be the subject of this seminar. We will also study the consolidation of the respective German polities in the 1950s and examine the 1953 Uprising in East Berlin.

Suggested reading:

- Mary Fullbrook, *The Divided Nation*, Chapter 7.

- Jonathan Sperber, "17 June 1953: Revisiting a German Revolution," *German History* 22, no. 4 (2004): 619-43.

Week 4. Excursion

This week, instead of our regular seminar in the Hausvogteiplatz, we will go on an excursion to explore Berlin's Cold War history. The time and place of the excursion is to be confirmed.

Week 5. 1961: The construction of the Berlin Wall

The session will focus on the events leading to the construction of the Wall, assessing the role played by the East German leadership as well as the geo-political considerations of the two superpowers. We will also focus on the Berlin Wall and its influence on – and representation in – popular culture.

Suggested reading:

- Hope Millard Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953–1961* (2003).
- Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall: 13 August 1961 - 9 November 1989* (2006).
- Frederick Kempe, *Berlin 1961: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth* (2012).

Week 6. The Spectre of Revolution: Radical Berlin

West Berlin was one of the centres of the West German student movement of the 1960s. This session will examine the radical politics of the sixties protests in the 'Island City', as well as looking at the experience of 1968 in the GDR and the Soviet bloc. The session will also explore some of the longer-term legacies of the 1960s protest movements in Berlin and Germany.

Suggested reading:

- Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (2003).
- Timothy S. Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The antiauthoritarian revolt* (2013).
- Tony Judt, *Postwar*, Chapter 12.

Week 7. Diverging Cultures and Identities?: East and West Berlin in the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1982 Peter Schneider prophetically wrote that 'it will take longer to pull down the wall in the head than any demolition contractor needs for the visible Wall.' Drawing on his novella, *The Wall Jumper*, the session will explore the divided and often conflicting identities held by Berliners during the city's period of division. The seminar will also explore the music, fashions and styles of the seventies and eighties

and ask: to what extent did new cultural patterns of the period transcend Berlin's political and physical division?

Suggested reading

- Peter Schneider, *Wall Jumper: a Berlin Story* (1998).
- Mary Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*.

Week 8. The East German Revolution and the Fall of Communism

This session will explore the events – domestic and international – that lead to the opening of the Berlin Wall on 8 November 1989 and the subsequent dissolution of Communist rule across the Soviet Block.

Suggested reading:

- Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the end of East Germany* (1997).
- Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, Chapter 11.
- Tony Judt, *Postwar*, Chapters 18 &19.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahonen, Pertti, *Death at the Berlin Wall* (2011).

Beevor, Antony. *Berlin: the Downfall, 1945* (2003).

Brown, Timothy S. "'1968' East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History." *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 1 (2009): 69-96.

Brown, Timothy S, "A Tale of two Communes: The Private and the Political in Divided Berlin, 1967-1973," in Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder, and Joachim Scharloth eds., *Between The Prague Spring and the French May 1968: Transnational Exchange and National Recontextualization of Protest Cultures* (2011).

Harrison, Hope Millard. *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953–1961* (2003).

Jarausch, Konrad. *The Rush to German Unity* (1994).

Karapin, Roger. *Protest Politics in Germany : Movements on the Left and Right since The 1960s* (2007).

Ladd, Brian. *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (1997).

Large, David Clay. *Berlin* (2000).

Maier, Charles S. *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the end of East Germany* (1997).

Moorhouse, Roger. *Berlin at War: Life and Death in Hitler's Capital, 1939-45* (2010).

Richie, Alexandra. *Faust's Metropolis: a History of Berlin* (1998).

Schneider, Peter. *Wall Jumper: a Berlin Story* (1998).

Sperber, Jonathan. "17 June 1953: Revisiting a German Revolution," *German History* 22, no. 4 (2004): 619-43.

Steege, Paul. *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (2007).

Strobel, Roland. "Before the Wall Came Tumbling Down: Urban Planning Paradigm Shifts in a Divided Berlin." *Journal of Architectural Education* 46, no. 1 (1994): 25-37.

Thomas, Nick. *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (2003).

Tusa, Ann & John. *The Berlin Airlift* (1998).