**Course:**

Twentieth-Century Berlin: An Urban Historical Perspective

**Semester:** Summer semester 2019

**Course instructor:** Lily Philipose (lilyphilipose@gmail.com)

**Subject area:** Geschichte und Literatur / History and Literature

**Credits:** 5 ECTS

**Time:** Monday 16-18 c.t. (16:15-17:45) + excursions (10.5., 14.6., 22.6.) + double session 8.7. (16-20 c.t.)

**Room:** 0203, 2nd floor, Hausvogteiplatz 5-7

**Course description:**

Urban history is a form of historical inquiry that enriches our understanding of cities and urban landscapes, often using an interdisciplinary approach. This course is an introduction to specific points of interest in the political, social and cultural developments in Berlin between the 1920s and 1990s, showing how they illuminate German twentieth-century history. City sites, monuments and buildings are linked to collective memory, citizen participation and political debates.

We learn about the fascinating stories behind twentieth-century social and political events, places, people, buildings and monuments in Berlin as presented by urban historians, but we also learn the basic principles and approaches of urban history. We make urban history come alive through site visits and city walks, and have a close-up look at an urban preservation project that brings this city’s history directly into the present moment.

**Learning objectives:**

Students learn:

- the basic principles of urban history, urban biography and micro-history;
- close reading of key texts;
- how to organize critical thinking in short written pieces;
- the role played by memory and memorialization of the past in urban monuments and sites;
• methods of using primary and secondary sources in writing urban history;
• how to apply theories of urban history to an ongoing urban preservation project.

Assessment:

• Regular attendance, and participation in excursions (20%)
• Active participation in class activities and discussions, showing preparedness and reading (20%)
• Response paper and short class presentation (20%)
• Preliminary proposals for final project, showing evidence of planning and preparation (20%)
• Final research project (either academic essay or creative project with accompanying written document, including theory background and list of references ( 20%)

Language requirements:

A high level of academic spoken and written English is required for the course (at least B2). Some of the theory texts require a near-native grasp of the language. While the class is in English, exploration of the historical eras and monuments in Berlin will naturally introduce students to concepts in history, culture, art and architecture expressed in the original German.

Timetable:

Session 1: 15.04.2019
Introduction to Urban History
Background Reading: Ewen, S. “Introduction. Why Urban History?”

Session 2: 22.04.2019
EASTER MONDAY
Session 3: 29.04.2019
Introduction to Urban History (continued)
Introduction to the Alexander Haus, Potsdam (urban history project)
Discussion: Urban History Approaches
Background Reading: Ewen, S. Chapter 1: “The Development of Urban History”

Session 4: 06.05.2019
The City with a Wall
Reading Assignment: Ladd. B. Chapter 1: “Berlin Walls”
Writing Exercise: Monuments/City Spaces that speak of Collective Memory or Contested Space

Additional Session: 10.05.2019 (Friday)
Excursion 1: Berlin Wall Memorial (60 minutes)
Time: to be arranged, but probably 16:00

Session 5: 13.05.2019
Class presentations (based on writing exercise) _ Round (I)

Session 6: 20.05.2019
Reading Assignment: Ladd, B. Chapter 2. “Old Berlin.”
Talking points: city walk
City Walk: Unter den Linden/Humboldt Forum/Bebelplatz
From: Brandenburger Tor to the Holocaust Memorial
Session 7: 27.05.2019

Reading Assignment: Koshar, R. *From Monuments to Traces* (selected extract available on Moodle)

Class Discussion: Authentic sites/the Holocaust Memorial_your impressions/the Museum Blindenwerkstatt Otto Weidt.

Session 8: 03.06.2019

Class Presentations (round II)

Session 9: 10.06.2019

PFINGSTEN

Additional Session: Friday, 14.06.2019

Time: to be arranged; probably 16:00.

Excursion 2: Museum Blindenwerkstatt Otto Weidt, and walk through the Spandauer Vorstadt (60 minutes + 60 minutes)


Session 10: 17.06.2019

Guest Talk, Mr John Owen, assistant to trustees of the Alexander Haus

Reading Assignment: Harding, T. *The House by the Lake* (selected chapters)

Ground Plan for the final project.

Additional Session: Saturday, 22.06

Excursion 3: Site Visit, Alexander Haus, Groß Glienicke (180 minutes, with travel time)

Reading Assignment: Harding, T. *The House by the Lake* (selected chapters)
Session 11: 24.06.2019
Discussion: Preliminary Plans for the final project _ Round (1)
Reading Assignment: Harding, T. *The House by the Lake* (selected chapters) and Koshar, R. *From Monuments to Traces* (selected extract available on Moodle)

Session 12: 01.07.2019
Discussion: Preliminary Plans for the final project _ (Round 2)

Sessions 13/14: 08.07.2019
Final Presentations
Double session: 90 + 90 minutes
Literature:

Readings will be available on Moodle or online, except for the Thomas Harding book, which students are required to buy.


Remarks:

Attendance policy (HU rules: 80% attendance needed in order to pass; absences need to be excused and backed up by doctor’s certificate).