**BERLIN PERSPECTIVES**

**Berlin Sonic: Auditory Collective Explorations**

**Semester:** Summer semester 2019  
**Course instructor:** Banu Çiçek Tülü/Samuel Perea-Díaz, berlinsonicspace@gmail.com  
**Subject area:** Kultur und Gesellschaft / Culture and Society  
**Credits:** 5 ECTS  
**Time:** Wednesday 10-12 c.t.  
**Room:** 0323-26 (HVT 5-7)

**Short Description:**
This course explores Berlin’s sonic perspectives with an approach to architecture, urban planning, human and social sciences as well as art in our everyday life. We will examine different cultural projects and develop, discover, analyze the urban environment while focusing on hearing and sound.

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This course explores Berlin’s sonic perspectives with an approach to architecture, urban planning, human and social sciences as well as art in our everyday life. In everyday life, our vision merges to our listening actions and therefore we continuously follow a rhythm which is created by our own actions and our surroundings. As an intuitive, non-cognitive and unconscious act, listening helps us to understand our environment. The listener creates individual and subjective images because of the fact that any acoustic format is visual. From the urban sonic perspective, every city and every urban space has a particular sonic identity for every individual. Central questions in the course are: What is the sound of Berlin? Which sonic elements in architecture, urban planning, art and cultural events have shaped berlin? How these projects are in relation to Berlin’s socio-political processes? In this course, we respond these questions through the interdisciplinary collective listening exercises with site visits, recordings, readings and discussions. We will examine cultural projects and develop, discover, analyze the urban environment with an approach that focuses on hearing and sound. We will draw a research line for exploring the city and understanding the current urban complexities with a specific methodology that considers the aural environment, acoustic ecologies and listening.

**Learning objectives:**

This BA- and MA- level course aims to develop a critical position to look and understand the urban space which is our constructed environment for living. Students fulfill with an overview of the sound related cultural projects in Berlin (i.e Kulturforum, Berlin Philharmonie, Sound Art Installations, etc,) as well as the construction of the city starting from 20th century, in particular, with an in-depth understanding of the socio-political circumstances in various neighborhoods. The course will enable its participants to listen (with their own ears), experience (with their own body), read (with their own mind) and understand (with their own consciousness) central discussion about the idea of urban
cultural projects as well as to critically reflect on the questions as to how sound and listening can have an actual impact on institutions and individuals in urban space

-Knowledge
- analyze the urban space and sound environment
- interpret and contextualize the urban events
- identify the social and political interactions in terms of urban development
- examine the city as a sonic environment
- use listening as a tool of analyzing the urban space

-Academic/Analytical Skills
- critically reflect on contemporary academic discussion
- analyze academic articles
- adopt and implement academic writing
- proceed and apply research based projects

-Achievement
- understand and interpret the urban space while enhancing the skills academic writing and practical involvement
- produce academic work, differentiate different writing and research styles
- to be able to use different research methods

Requirements and assessment:

This course offers to students diverse options of understanding the urban space in Berlin. Therefore, we strongly encourage the full participation. The site visits are crucial, so please be prepared to meet outside of the classroom. There will be reading material, videos, movies etc. for each class. As we are working with sound, a smartphone or any recorder would be useful. However you don’t need a professional recorder! You can also choose your method to show/record sounds in any kind of media. i.e. photography, video, writing. There will be assignments, a Mid-term Project and a Final Project. Each has a different percentage of your note, please see grading section below. It is necessary to point out that, you don’t have to have knowledge about architectural or urban design or any kind of design practice. This seminar is constructed out of everyday experiences as citizens. Your professional background and knowledge will help you to translate your experiences in urban space into a course format.

Language requirements:
This course mostly will be held in English (both readings and discussions). We will work with some advanced academic articles in English therefore a minimum level of English B2 is necessary. Basic knowledge of German is welcome. Our reading material is not dense but requires in-depth engagement with the texts. This way, the students will improve their academic writing and analytical skills. It will be possible to submit the assignments and final projects in English, German, Turkish and Spanish.

Excursions:
We will have several excursions together during the course time. At the same time, we will ask students to discover urban space alone and analyze the sonic environment. In order to understand the whole concept, please try to be present in all site visits.
Assignment:
For the sixth session of the course, we ask students to record their favorite sounds in Berlin. You are welcome to present your favorites with any kind of media. i.e. sound recordings, photography, video, writing, poster, etc.

Final project:
At the end of the course, we ask students to choose one urban project in Berlin. It could be new museum, a city park or a public swimming pool, etc. Try to describe it with sounds. It is your imagination and creativity, you are welcome to use any kind of media. In addition to any media, it is required to write an academic essay about the relation between the selected project, Berlin’s social and political history. At the halftime of the course, we will discuss together how to proceed and prepare this final project. We aim to have a sound library related to Berlin’s urban space which we will share with all the participants so that each participant can have an aural memory of Berlin, constructed collectively with other participants.

Course Requirements:

In Class Expectations:
Open invitation to Diversity: This is a mature and mindful call for individual responsibility. As Berlin and as your university, our class is open to multiple cultures and choices. We promote an international classroom that should be used by the participants as a learning platform and welcome experiences. It is an inclusive space for exchange, collaboration, engagement and participation. There is also place for discussion and disagreement. Therefore, please come with an open mind and never bring any kind of shaming, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia and any other kind of hate. If you ever feel uncomfortable in our class because of an attitude of your peers or ours, please do not hesitate to contact to us.

Plagiarism: It is unacceptable to copy someone else's ideas or words without properly crediting the source. Be sure, you are using citation, in other case you will be dismissed from this course.

Grading:
Attendance and Participation 40%: The success of the course depends on the presence and active, collegial participation of each participant. We need you to be here and to be engaged. You will be permitted two excused absences (for which you should have contact to us beforehand if it is possible). Subsequent excused absences will impact your grade. If, for any reason, you need to miss more than two class meetings, please let us beforehand, we can think together an alternative exercise. A pattern of late arrivals is likewise detrimental. Yet simply showing up isn’t enough. We expect you to contribute meaningfully to class discussions and in class exercises – and to share your opinion. Attendance and Participation are worth 40% of your final grade. Laptops, iPods, and other communication devices serve as important learning tools, especially in our class. However, we ask you to use them just as learning tools. You must attend at least 80% of our class sessions in order to pass according to HU policy.
Assignment 20%
Final Project 40%

Tools: Moodle - All readings will be available via the Moodle page. The login password will be announced during the first session. Please note that the whole reading list will be available for the participants of the course after first session. You do not have to buy any books or reserve while we will provide the readings every week in PDF format via Moodle.
Timetable:

**Session 1:** 10.04.2019  **Introduction**  
Thematic introduction, Moodle introduction, Presentation of participants, their backgrounds, and motivations.

**Session 2:** 16.04.2019  **Psychogeography**  
In this session, we will focus city, walking and mapping by using different senses, which can be explained by Psychogeography.

**Reading:**
- **Dont Rhine/ Ultra-red** (1996) Sounding the Naked City toward a psychogeography of ambient sound. SoundCulture 96 Conference, San Francisco.

**Session 3:** 24.04.2019  **Rhythmanalysis**  
In this session, we will focus on everyday life and performativity which is created by the users.

**Reading:**

**Session 4:** 08.05.2019  **“Berlin, place to be”**  
In this session, we will talk about urban history of Berlin and analyze different urban transformations over the 20th and 21st century.

**Reading:**
- **Allon, Fiona** (2013) Ghost of the open city. Space and Culture, 16(3) pp 288–305.

**Session 5:** 15.05.2019  **Urban listening approach I**  
In this session, we will focus on the theoretical background of listening.

**Reading:**

**Session 6:** 22.05.2019  **Urban listening approach II**  
In this session, we will continue on the theoretical background of listening and our listening exercises.

**Reading:**

**Assignment:** Please bring your own favorite sound in Berlin!
Session 7:  29.05.2019  **Excursion: Kulturforum: Berliner Philharmonie**
In this session, we will explore the relationship between Architecture and Music in the 20th century starting from this specific area of the city; Potsdamer Platz and Kulturforum.

Reading:
https://www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/phiharmonie/architecture/

Session 8:  05.06.2019  **Audiences**
In this session, we will explore the role of the audience and cultural institutions.
**Guest:** A sound artist will be invited for a talk about the sonic works and their implications with the city.

Session 9:  12.06.2019  **Techno music and the city**
In this session, we will visit Kreuzberg and search for the traces of housing problems, gentrification, social issues migration, etc. and compare the specific sound environment of this neighborhood with our other visits.

Reading:

Session 10:  19.06.2019  **Excursion: Kreuzberg: Sounding politics**
In this session, we will visit Kreuzberg and search for the traces of housing problems, gentrification, social issues migration, etc. and compare the specific sound environment of this neighborhood with our other visits.

Reading:

Session 11:  26.06.2019  **Excursion: Sounding Peripheries**
In this session, we will visit Nord-Neukolln and Tempelhofer Feld to discover the area’s sonic character.

Reading:

Session 12:  03.07.2019  **Collective listening**
Final remarks, completing our Berlin sonic perspectives.

Session 13:  10.07.2019  **Collective listening**
Final presentations.
Literature

