

Course Information

Program Director and Course Instructor: Christina Neuhaus

Course Book: Brian Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997)

Materials: Film: *Das Leben der Anderen* (*The Lives of Others*)

Good Bye, Lenin!

All other readings, resources, and videos will be made available on Collab.



There is quite a bit of reading. Please try and get a big chunk of it done before leaving for Berlin. Once we're in Berlin, we will be very busy. For last-minute preparation, spend the entire flight reading. Additionally, watch the two films on your own prior to arrival.

Course Description & Objectives:

What does it mean for a country to confront its past, define its present and imagine its future? This course will introduce you to modern German history and culture by looking at the interaction between culture and memory. We will approach the cities of Berlin and Weimar not just as a collection of streets and buildings, but as multi-layered cultural and historical texts.

Some of the questions guiding us in this class will be: How does Germany remember its oftentimes complicated past, including its greatest cultural accomplishments but also its darkest hours? Which parts of Germany's history are actively remembered and rendered visible? What remains hidden or absent? How does German discourse on dealing with the past differ from American strategies? And how does Germany's current political situation, such as the rise of far-right populism or Germany's evolving role in the European Union, fit into this?

On-site visits will combine lectures with active student participation, so you can practice strategies to analyze and interpret German narratives of history and culture. We will visit museums, the archives of the Stasi (the East German secret police), government buildings (including the German Bundestag or parliament), memorials (including the former concentration camp Buchenwald as well as Berlin's famous Holocaust memorial). We will meet people who are working in the fields of social activism, journalism, publishing, politics, and the arts.

Students will also be given plenty of time to research their own projects in an experiential manner: students interested in Jewish-German culture can gather their own materials from Berlin's monuments and museums; students interested in Islam in contemporary Europe can visit the Islamic Cultural Center in Kreuzberg; those interested in life in the former East Germany can walk the formerly working-class neighborhoods of Prenzlauer Berg. Weimar offers plenty of opportunity to learn more about Germany's

DRAFT: Final syllabus information will be provided to students after acceptance.

cultural and intellectual history. You can visit the residences of some of Germany's most distinguished "Poets and Thinkers," such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, or Friedrich Hölderlin, bibliophiles can visit the beautiful Anna Amalia library, and the Bauhaus museum may be of interest to architectural historians. Excursions will take us to Johann Sebastian Bach's home town Eisenach and the nearby Wartburg, where Martin Luther sought refuge and translated the Bible into German for the first time. This course will be an intense and rewarding experience of two very different German cities and regions, both marked with cultural and historical diversity at every corner.

Grading and Expectations:

Most days will begin with a seminar to discuss the assigned readings and outline the scheduled site visits and excursions. Students are expected to come prepared, having read the material and loaded with smart questions. Our seminar will continue for the remainder of the day, albeit on the go as we visit the places and spaces discussed in the readings. With only a few exceptions, Ms. Neuhaus will lead the daily excursions and on-site discussions. (It might well be a bit chilly, so we'll make coffeehouse stops to discuss the bigger questions in comfort.) For some excursions, there is an accompanying Google Map with annotated routes and links on the important places. Please familiarize yourselves with these before coming to seminar. After the day's excursions you will have most evenings free, with certain exceptions for group events (dinner, theater, etc.).

Your success in this course depends on the following factors:

% of grade

1. Attendance and Participation

20%

- Students must thoroughly familiarize themselves with the day's materials before each excursion.
- To avoid interruptions, it is essential to be on time, especially in the mornings (as you know, Germans treasure punctuality).
- Lively participation in on-topic discussions is crucial and will be rewarded.

The use of electronic media during seminars, site visits, presentations, etc. should be limited to topic-related applications. Please be considerate.

2. Presentations

15%

Opening-Excursion Presentation: Before leaving the country, each student will be assigned one specific Berlin "space." This could be a memorial, a street corner, a building, or even a tiny plaque. Our initial excursion will be an eight-hour walking seminar – spread out over two days – led by Ms. Neuhaus, which will provide you with a hands-on overview of German history. We will make 20 different stops, each one represented by one of your sites. You will be responsible for a 5-10 minute presentation of your "space" on site (its history, the debates surrounding its condition, and its cultural and historical significance).

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Reflections about the importance of your site for our seminar topic – memory and identity – will be particularly welcome.

3. Course Documentation

20%

Each student will be expected to submit at least five contributions to a shared documentation of our course. This will include an Instagram account for the course and a shared blog. Post your best pictures from the day and include short descriptions of what we have been doing. These posts can be serious and reflective, or they can include amusing anecdotes or observations on the go. These posts will be visible to all participants of the seminar, and you are welcome to share the Instagram page with friends and family, so you might wish to include relevant background information.

4. Personal Blog

20%

The personal blog is somewhat different from the other requirements in that it is meant to reflect your own, personal discoveries about the cities of Berlin and Weimar. Every day, reflect on what you have seen. What was particularly interesting, surprising, inspiring, shocking, or even frustrating? Despite the subjective nature of these entries, try to keep an eye on our seminar topic. Creative entries will be particularly welcome – for instance, you may write a poem, embed a short video, include photographs or drawings, or direct attention to some feature of our daily excursion that we may have overlooked.

5. Final Project

25%

For your final project, please write a 2000-word essay on a “space” of your choice. It will be due on Sunday, January 20, at 5 p.m. Electronic submissions via email are fine, as long as the formatting is correct (a handout will be provided). This essay should discuss the cultural history of one particular “space” in terms of the broader questions of the course: How does Germany remember itself? What are the limits of memorialization? Are some events un-representable? You can also write about a space that does not yet exist, but should exist. How would an adequate representation look? Why do you think this space does not yet exist? What are some of the potential issues that may arise, should such a space be created? The project should draw on the course readings and your particular experiences while in Germany. You’re welcome to include photos or drawings.

Program Director

- **Faculty Director:** Christina Neuhaus

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Lecturer in the Department of Germanic Languages and Culture, Ms. Neuhaus was born and raised in Germany. Her main research interests include the narrative creation of identity, as well as the transnational reception of literature. She has previously taught at universities in Germany, Hungary, and the United States. She joined UVA’s German Department in 2017.

Academics

Registration Information

Clicking the “commit” button on your ISO education abroad application at www.virginia.edu/studyabroad confirms your participation in this study abroad program. As such, it is an essential step in your choice to participate. Your online post-acceptance requirements must be completed by November 1st. Note: The only questionnaire that can be edited after being submitted is Travel Information. You should enter **confirmed ticket information** in this questionnaire, not just intended plans. In the event that your flight reservations need to be changed, you can edit the information.

With these steps completed, the ISO will register you into a course titled ZFOR 3553 International Study that will appear in the Student Information System (SIS). In addition to maintaining your UVA enrollment for the term, allowing you to be billed appropriately, and facilitating the use of financial aid, this registration adds a note to your academic transcript documenting your study abroad experience. The ISO will also register you in the content course, GETR 2770.

UVA Students - Grades

Upon completion of the program, the course instructor will submit grades in SIS. Grades will be factored into your GPA.

Consult your academic advisor to ensure the courses/credits are attributed to completion of the correct requirements.