More than any other city, Berlin has been a source and a theater for the forces shaping Western modernity. The city’s importance and its by turns glorious and catastrophic role in European culture and history have their origins in its peculiar development. Built on a swamp, in a poor duchy surrounded by more powerful states, it was remade during the Enlightenment as a center not only of military discipline and administrative control but also of learning and innovation. Increasingly characterized in the later nineteenth century by almost uncontrolled growth, it rose to the status of capital of the German Empire and became a center of science and technology. With rapid industrialization came sharp social polarization and bitter political conflict, but also the birth of aesthetic modernism and avantgarde culture. After the clamor for imperial power and colonial expansion culminated in the cataclysm of World War I, Berlin witnessed the unparalleled artistic explosion of the Weimar Republic. During the Nazi dictatorship the city became the point of origin of political terror, war and genocide. Still reduced to little more than “a pile of rubble near Potsdam” (Brecht), Berlin found itself after World War II on the frontline of the Cold War and remained forcibly divided for more than four decades between two radically different political and economic systems. Through a combination of historical sources, literature, philosophy, and a wide range of artifacts—from paintings over photographs to film, from archival to contemporary—we shall seek to understand Berlin’s significance and its current position at the heart of Europe. And we will speculate about its possible futures as a place of gathering and experiment for a population from across the world.

Class Format

Although “Berlin: Experiment in Modernity” is a single-credit course (4 US credits/ 8 ECTS), you should expect to spend more time on this course than you would for a “regular” course, e.g. a US junior seminar or Bard College Berlin elective. In addition to the two 90-minute seminar meetings each week (on Mondays and Wednesdays), we will go on excursions almost every Friday afternoon. Excursions may involve student presentations, lectures or discussions. Most of them will take us to places in central Berlin. Excursions farther afield may take place on Saturdays. There is one overnight trip, to Weimar, probably from Friday, May 9, to Sunday, May 11. All excursions are an integral and mandatory part of the course.
Required Texts (available for pickup at the Library)
Course Reader
Frank Mecklenburg and Manfred Stassen (eds.), *German Essays on Socialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Continuum, 1990)
Peter Weiss, *The Investigation* (Marion Boyars, 2000)

Additional texts are available on your Bard College Berlin “Google Drive” for download. Please print double-sided whenever possible, get a binder for the course, and bring paper copies of all readings to class.

Requirements
- Short weekly responses to the readings. (Please post them on the Google Drive.)
- Three essays (draft and final versions).
- Informal writing assignments and quizzes.

Participation
This course is a seminar. Your consistent, vociferous, and thoughtful participation in our discussions is crucial to your success. Class sessions may include brainstorming and writing periods, in which you may work alone or with a partner. You are expected to take an active part in all activities.

***Please note: Use your new Bard College Berlin email account (j.doe@berlin.bard.edu) for all correspondence. The use of laptop computers, tablets, smartphones or other electronic devices in the classroom is prohibited.***

Seminar Preparation and Weekly Responses
Please come prepared to seminar meetings and excursions. Upon reading the assigned texts every week, formulate a question or observation that you want the group to address. Paste it into the blank document shared with you on the Google Drive (labeled “Response Week x”), no later than Sunday, 16.00h. Before our meeting on Monday, please print out the document, read everybody else’s questions and prepare responses to a couple of them. Your notes should help you present your thoughts coherently in class.

Essays and Tutorials
All essays must be submitted both through the Bard College Berlin online system and in hard copy.

Students write two versions of each essay. The first version has to be a complete and coherent essay. For the first paper: After handing in the first version, students will have individual tutorial meetings with me. For the second and final essays: Students bring two paper copies to class, one for me and one for a writing partner of their choice. Writing partners are expected to provide critical questions, comments, and suggestions for each other and to bring these (in writing) to the next seminar meeting. It is worth spending a substantial amount of time on revisions for your final version.
For this process to function, hard copies of both the first and second versions have to be handed in on time. Extensions can only be granted in medical or other emergencies.

***Please note: All electronically submitted papers have to be in the European “A4” format! In the MS Word “File” menu, choose “Page Setup,” then change the “Paper Size” from “US Letter” to “A4.”***

**Academic Honesty**

Bard College Berlin does not tolerate plagiarism. Intellectual honesty is at the heart of academic ethics, and plagiarism is the most serious offence against it. Penalties include failure of the course, suspension from the university and expulsion. Please cite the ideas of others properly. See me if you have any questions about when or how to acknowledge your sources.

**Default Due Dates**

Unless announced otherwise, papers are due at the following times:

- Essay 1, First Version: Monday, February 17, 12.30h
- Essay 1, Final Version: Monday, February 24, 23.59h
- Essay 2, First Version: Monday, April 2, 12.30h
- Essay 2, Final Version: Monday, April 9, 23.59h
- Final Essay, First Version: Wednesday, May 13, 12.30h
- Final Essay, Final Version: Wednesday, May 21, 23.59h

**Grading**

- Seminar Participation: 25% (quality and quantity of preparation and contributions)
- Essay 1: 20%
- Essay 2: 20%
- Final Essay: 25%
- Excursion Participation: 10% (visual analysis exercises; quality and quantity of preparation and contributions)

***Please note: At Bard College Berlin, professors submit midterm grades for essays and participation to the Registrar, from whom students can then retrieve them.***

**Absences**

In accordance with the Academic Statutes of Bard College Berlin, you are allowed no more than three unexcused absences (for seminars and excursions combined) during the semester. I will notify you after your third unexcused absence. Excused absences are limited to documented health problems or emergencies, certain close family functions or emergencies, and observance of major religious holidays. Whenever possible, please inform me about any potential absence in advance.

***Any additional unexcused absence results in automatic failure of the course.***

Finally, please be punctual and considerate. Switch off your mobile phone and keep bathroom breaks to a minimum.

This syllabus is subject to change. You remain responsible throughout the semester for knowing where and when we meet for classes and outings, and what your assignments are for each meeting.
Semester Overview

Orientation Week

Events with Professor Becker:

Januar 22
Welcome to Bard College Berlin, Student Center, 16.00

January 23
Administrative Orientation, 10.30 (Seminar Room 2, P98)
General Academic Orientation, 13.00 (Seminar Room 2, P98)
Study Abroad Welcome Dinner, 18.30.

January 24
Study Abroad Academic Orientation, 11.30 (Seminar Room 2, P98)
Individual Advising Meetings, 15.30-17.30 (Room 010, P24)

January 25
Berlin Excursion: Visit to “The Story of Berlin.” You will be taken from campus to meet Florian at the museum’s entrance inside the mall located at Kurfürstendamm 207, at 13.50 (U1 Uhlandstraße). Return by 19.00.

Week One

January 27
Berlin Excursion: “Wien—Berlin” Exhibition, Berlinische Galerie, Alte Jakobstraße 124, Kreuzberg. You will be escorted from campus to arrive at the museum at 10.30. Your classes have been rescheduled accordingly.

January 29
2013: Where Are We Now? (Introduction to the Course)
David Bowie, “Where Are We Now?” (Video, January 2013)

February 1-2
Berlin Weekend (Excursions)

Week Two

February 3
1237-1871: Berlin, Brandenburg, Prussia
With Dr. Aya Soika, Professor of Art History.
“Chronology: Germany, 1800-1990,” in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), German History since 1800 (London: Arnold, 1997), pp. 585-595
Architecture: Study images of the Berlin City Palace;
Carl Gotthard Langhans (1732-1808), Brandenburg Gate (1788-1791);
Johann Gottfried Schadow (1764-1850), Quadriga (1793);
Friedrich August Stüler (1800-1865), Old National Gallery (1876);
Paul Wallot (1841-1912), Reichstag Building (1884-1894).
February 5

**1870-1890: Berlin, Capital of the German Empire**


February 7

**Friday Excursion:** Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum), Unter den Linden 2.

**Week Three**

February 10

**The Metropolis and the Arts I**

With Professor Soika.

Large, *Berlin*, “World City?” pp. 62-81


Shearer West, *The Visual Arts in Germany, 1890–1937: Utopia and Despair*, Chapter 1, pp. 12-32


Anton von Werner (1843-1915): *A Billet outside Paris, October 24, 1870* (1894), *The Proclamation of the German Empire (18th January 1871)* (1885)

Robert Köhler (1850-1917), *The Socialist* (1885), *The Strike* (1886)

Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), *Misery* (1895-1896), *The Weavers’ Revolt* (cycle of six prints, 1895-1897)

Max Liebermann (1847-1935), *Cobbler’s Workshop* (1881), *The Net Menders* (1887-1889)

Walter Leistikow (1865-1908), *Lake Grunewald* (1895)

Lovis Corinth (1858-1925), *Self-Portrait with Skeleton* (1896), *The Blinded Samson* (1912)

February 12

**1888-1914: Berlin under Wilhelm II**


February 14

**Friday Excursion:** Alte Nationalgalerie (Museum Island)

**Week Four**

February 17

**1891-1918: The German Empire and German Colonialism**


*Exberliner* 108: “Africa in Berlin” (September 2012)

Otto von Bismarck, Speech on “Pragmatic” Colonization (June 26, 1884), PDF


Wilhelm II., The “Hun Speech” (1900), PDF


**Essay 1, First Version Due.**

February 19

Individual Tutorials on Your Essays
February 21

Friday, 15.15-16.45

The Metropolis and the Visual Arts II: Expressionism

With Professor Soika.

Large, Berlin, pp. 136–146 ("Keep Hittin' 'Em"), and reread p. 73

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), in Donald N. Levine (ed.) Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms (University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 174-185

Shearer West, The Visual Arts in Germany, chapter 2, pp. 48-58


Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1937), Berlin Street Scene (1913), Street Scene (1913), Potsdamer Platz (1914)

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976), Three Nudes (Nidden) (1913)

Erich Heckel (1883-1970), Glassy Day (1913)

Max Pechstein (1881-1955), The Yellow and Black Tricot (1910); On Hidden Beach, Portrait of his Wife Lotte (1911)

Emil Nolde (1867-1956), Papua Boys (1914)

Week Five

February 24

The German Empire and the Labor Movement

Special Session with Sebastian Gerhardt, Topography of Terror and Haus der Demokratie und Menschenrechte.


Paul Göhre, Three Months as a Factory Worker and Journeyman (Leipzig, 1891)


Essay 1, Final Version Due.

February 26

1918-1923: Defeat, Revolution, Inflation


Photographic documents of Berlin, 1918-1919


February 28

Friday Excursion: Professor Aya Soika’s Kreuzberg,
Meet Aya at U-Bahnhof Schlesisches Tor.

Week Six

March 3

“Wer gegen Dada ist, ist Dadaist”


Richard Huelsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann, “What is Dadaism and What Does It Want in Germany?” (1919), in Motherwell (ed.), pp. 41-42

Hannah Höch, *Cut With the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany* (1919)

Georg Grosz and John Heartfield, *Life and Activity in Universal City, 12:05 pm* (1919)

**March 5**

**1924-1932 The Glittering Thing**


Film: Walter Ruttmann, *Berlin Symphony of a Great City* (1927)


Alfred Döblin, “East of Alexanderplatz,” in Constantine (ed.), *Berlin Tales*

**March 7**

**Friday Excursion:** Museum für Film und Fernsehen (Museum of Cinema and Television). Potsdamer Straße 2 (Sony Center).

**Week Seven**

March 10

Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera* (1928)

March 12

Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera*

March 13

**Thursday Excursion:** Brecht-Haus, Chausseeestraße 125. Meet there by 18.00; the tour starts promptly at 18.15.

—Spring Break—

**Week Eight**

March 24

**The New Architecture: Modernism for the Masses**

Reread Large, *Berlin*, pp. 206-207, 241


Photographic evidence of Weimar housing, in Course Reader


March 26

**Special session, 19.30-21.00** “Modernist Architecture and Its Legacies in Fascism and Stalinism.” With Professors Ewa Atanassow, Laura Scuriatti and Aya Soika.


Study images of Nazi architecture, especially:
Ernst Sagebiel: Imperial Aviation Ministry (1935), Tempelhof Airport Terminal (1935-1941);
Werner March: Olympiastadion (1936);
Plans for “Germanyia”: Albert Speer, model of the “Great Hall” (ca. 1940), model of the “North-South Axis” (ca. 1940);
Wilhelm Kreis, model of the “Soldiers’ Hall” (ca. 1943).
Study images of Stalinallee (now Karl-Marx-Allee), especially:
Herbert Henselmann, Straußberger Platz, Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, Frankfurter Tor;
Ludmilla Herzenstein, Hans Scharoun, Richard Paulick, Residential Blocks.

March 27

March 28
All day Friday: Bard College Berlin Annual Conference: “What Europe?” (ICI)

Week Nine

March 31
1939-1945 War and Genocide
Large, Berlin, “Now People, Arise, and Storm, Break Loose!”, pp. 319-367

April 2
Peter Weiss, The Investigation (1965) (Marion Boyars, 2000)

Essay 2, First Version Due.

April 4

Friday Evening Excursion: Visit to the Bundestag (Reichstag Building), Special Art and Architecture Tour and visit of Norman Foster’s dome. Please bring your passport or driver’s license; you will need it to be admitted. Meet Aya at security at 19.30.

Week Ten

April 7
Peter Weiss, The Investigation

April 9
1945-1961 Four-Power Occupation and “Denazification”
Large, Berlin, “Coming into the Cold,” pp. 369-417 (to “…richer relatives.”)
Film: Wolfgang Staudte, The Murderers Are among Us (1946)
The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (1949)

Essay 2, Final Version Due.

April 11
Friday Excursion: Exhibition on “Everyday Life in the GDR” (Haus der Geschichte), Kulturbrauerei (U2 Eberswalder Straße). Meet at the museum desk at 16.15.
Week Eleven

April 14
“Berlin, Capital of the German Democratic Republic”
Large, Berlin, “Coming into the Cold,” pp. 418-443
Film: Frank Beyer, The Trace of Stones (1966)

April 16
1961-1989 The Wall
Large, Berlin, “The Divided City,” pp. 445-460 (to “…size and beauty”)
Film: Frank Beyer, The Trace of Stones (1966)

April 18
Federal Holiday

Week Twelve

April 21
Federal Holiday

April 23
Large, Berlin, “The Divided City,” pp. 496-515 (“Real, Existing Socialism,” “Cultural Dissidence”), and reread pp. 431-438 (“Spy Stories”)

April 25

Week Thirteen

April 28
West Berlin: The City as Theater
Large, Berlin, “The Divided City,” pp. 460-466 (to “over the wall.”), 469-495
Ulrike Meinhof “Napalm and Pudding,” “Vietnam and Germany,” in Meinhof (ed. Karin Bauer), Everybody Talks About the Weather . . . We Don’t: The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof (Seven Stories Press, 2008)
Rudi Dutschke, The Students and the Revolution (Russell Peace Foundation, 1971)

April 30
1989-1994 Peaceful Revolution and Reunification

May 2
Friday Excursion: Christian Boros Collection. Enter the former railway bunker’s (forbidding-looking!) entrance at Reinhardtstr. 20, at 16.15.

Week Fourteen

May 5
1961-2013 Berlin, City of Immigration
Large, Berlin, pp. 466-469 (“Little Istanbul”), pp. 572-580 (“Arrivals and Departures”), and reread pp. 8-12
Emine Sevgi Özdamar, "My Berlin," in Constantine (ed.), Berlin Tales
Ruth Mandel, “We Called for Labor, but People Came Instead” and “Making Ausländer,” in Mandel, Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany (Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 51-79, 80-108

May 7
Wladimir Kaminer, Russian Disco (Ebury Press, 2009)

May 9-11
**Weekend Excursion to Weimar**
Leave: Berlin Hbf on Friday afternoon.
Return: Berlin Hbf on Sunday, late evening.

**Week Fifteen**

May 12
**1990-2013: Berlin and the Future of Europe**

May 13
17.00-18.30 With Professor Soika.
Andreas Huyssen “The Voids of Berlin,” Critical Inquiry 24:1 (Fall 1997), pp. 57-81

Final Essay, First Version Due.

**Completion Week**

Wednesday, May 21
Final Essay, Final Version Due.