SO312 City for Citizens: Urban Design and Social Change in the European Metropolis

Module: Exhibition, Culture and Public Space
Instructors: Dominik Bartmanski, Irit Dekel (within co-operation between TU Berlin and BCB)
Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits
Course Time: Thursdays 13:30-16:45
Place: First 10 meetings & the last one @ seminar room 2, BCB campus, Pankow; meetings 11th, 12th and 13th @ TU, room TBA
Study tours: Fridays 15:15-19:00 unless otherwise indicated

This seminar consists of three self-standing but interconnected parts: (1) the theoretical part consisting of 5 sessions; (2) the empirical part devoted to the issues of method and concept application consisting of 5 sessions; and (3) the practical part foregrounding case studies, field trips and preparation for writing the final project. The final part is open to TU students as an intensive “Blockseminar”.

All parts center around the question of what makes Berlin – and big city more generally - central to contemporary cultural civil struggles, and crucial for understanding of late modern urban and political action as well as migration-related issues. We will seek to show the relations between culture, cityscape, participation and direct democracy, display and media, collective memory and social change. We will read Alexander, Scott, Casey, Simmel, Löw, de Certeau, and Sennett, among others who deal interpretively, historically and phenomenologically with the questions concerning the design and representation of spaces and things, social conditions such as foreignness and strangeness in cities, and diversity and its representations (or lack thereof). Our conceptual frameworks will be connected to some illustrative European & American cases developed both by classics and cutting-edge authors within the relevant disciplines, from Carl Schorske to Gerard Delanty, Jane Jacobs to Karen Till. Students will link up with other Bard campuses for a workshop that will enable close examination of a key issue in the study of urban space.

Evaluation criteria:

1. Participation in class discussions: 10%
   Attendance at all classes is mandatory. More than one absences in a semester (from a 180-minute session) will significantly affect your grade.

2. Presentation in class: 10%

3. Conceptual paper based on the readings of the first part (1000 words): 20% Due 26.2.15

4. Case study paper based on the second part (1000 words): 20% Due 9.4.15

5. Final project devoted to specific Berlin-related theme (3000 words): 40%
   The final project deadlines: draft due on May 10th, the finished paper due on May 20th.
Note that the BCB policy on late written work is that it will be downgraded one full letter grade if 24 hours late. After that time, submitted work can only be accepted with the agreement of the instructor, and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. No work will be accepted after the elapse of four weeks from the deadline.

Weekly themes in chronological order:

I. Theoretical Part:

1. Introductory Readings: 29.1.15
   * Simmel Georg 1903 ‘Metropolis and Mental life’
   * Alexander on Simmel in Dark Side of Modernity
   Additional reading: Simmel Georg 1908 The Stranger

2. Public space and urban civic sphere 5.2.15
   * Alexander, Jeffrey, 2014, Dark Side of Modernity, Introduction + the chapter on civil sphere

3. Cityscape: Built Environment and the ‘New Berlin’ 12.2.15

4. Cityscape: gardens, parks, square and nature 19.2.15
5. Media, communication and urban experience 26.2.15


II. Empirical Part

6. Migration: city for citizens? 5.3.15

*Partridge, Damani “We Were Dancing in the Club, Not on the Berlin Wall: ‘Black’ Bodies, Street Bureaucrats, and Exclusionary Incorporation in the New Europe,” Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 660–687


7. Urban in-equality: gentrification, renewal and development 12.3.15


[Spring break 16-20.3]
8. Participation and direct democracy 26.3.15

*Torre Susana “Claiming the Public Space: the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo”

9 Urban Mobility 2.4.15

*Vivant Elsa 2013 Creatives in the city: Urban contradictions of the creative city City, Culture and Society, Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2013, Pages 57-63

Guest lecture and walk: Dr. Ruth Preser ICI berlin and University of Haifa: Critical exploration of affect as methodological intervention of bodies in urban space

10 Design, Atmosphere, Identity 9.4.15


III Practical Part

11. The Ruins, Voids & Interstices: 16.4.15


Additional Reading: Alice Bucknell, What Can the Void Do? The Politics and Aesthetics of Emptiness in the Urban Imaginary (Detroit vs. Berlin)
Field excursion (details TBA).

12. Bodies and Places 23.4.15

*Sennett Richard 1996 Introduction: Body and City in his *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*

**Additional readings**

*Casey Edward 2009 The Body in Place pp 41-106 in his *Getting Back into Place: toward a renewed understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

An excursion to the Kreuzberg Museum

13. Memory and Heritage 30.4.15

*Partridge Damani 2010 *Holocaust Mahnmal: Monumental memory amidst contemporary race* Comparative Studies in Society and History 52 (4) 820-850.

* Dekel, Irit 2009 'ways of looking:observation and transformation at the Holocaust Memorial Berlin memory Studies 2(1) 71-86.


Field trip to Tempelhof

14. Concluding Class: 12.5.2015