Berlin Internship Seminar

Seminar Leader: Agata Lisiak
Course Times: Mondays 1.30-3pm
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Course Description
The Berlin Internship Seminar accompanies students’ undertaking of an internship or period of practical training, and addresses such issues as: the successful functioning of institutions, the role of guiding principles and values in determining the direction and structure of projects and initiatives, and the relationship between the various spheres of society (the state, the market, individual or collective agency) in influencing the way institutions operate. Particular focus will be on Berlin and its unusually diverse combination of political, artistic and citizen-activist organizations. This course offers a platform for exchange of observations, reflections, and comments on students’ internships.

Each class is divided in two parts: the first 20 minutes are devoted to discussing the practicalities of students’ internships, and during the rest of the class we discuss the assigned readings (when possible, in relation to the internships).

Requirements
Attendance
Class attendance is mandatory and a class participation mark will be awarded on the basis of your engagement with class discussions. You should come prepared to class. After reading the assigned texts, formulate a question or a concern that you would like to discuss in class and email it to all class participants no later than 10 pm on the day before the class. All students should read all submitted questions or comments and prepare their responses.

Writing Assignments
Reading responses
Each student submits a total of two short reading response papers over the course of the semester. The purpose of these responses is not to summarize the readings. Rather, they should engage the readings assigned for the chosen week and take positions either in support of or against the points of view expressed in the readings. Where possible, these responses should draw on your internship experiences and use these to shed light on the reading materials. You should confine yourselves to the assigned readings, no further research is required. You may choose to which two class readings you would like to respond. Each response should be no more than two pages, double-spaced in Times New Roman, size 12, and uploaded to the google drive. The final date the first of these is due is October 26, the second is due on November 30 at the very latest.

Final paper
The 3000-word paper (excluding footnotes and works cited) can be a standard essay or a case-study analysis. Interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies are encouraged. The following deadlines apply for the submission of various parts of the paper:
Policy on Late Submission of Papers
Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. If I agree to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown
Class participation: 30%
Reading responses: 30%
Final paper: 40%

Schedule

INTRODUCTION TO BERLIN ORGANIZATIONS

Class 1
September 1, 2014: Your Internship: Practicalities and Expectations

Learning objectives:
This class will address the practicalities of commencing your respective internships. We will go over the internship documents for the semester: the "Internship Guidelines," your "Internship Agreement" and the "Internship Time Sheet. This class also addresses the course content, pedagogical goals, and grading requirements.

Class 2
September 8, 2014: Berlin Organizations and Institutions in Historical Context

Learning objectives:
We discuss the political and economic situation in Berlin after the fall of the Wall and during the recent economic crisis. Based on the assigned articles and chapters, we will reflect on the new role of Germany and the cultural, political, and economic repercussions of moving (West) Germany’s capital from Bonn to Berlin. This class also introduces some of the main topics we will be discussing this semester: working cultures, creative industries, start ups, Berlin’s role in Germany and Europe, and various levels of citizenship.

Required readings:


**Class 3**
**September 15, 2014**: Bartleby at the Water Cooler – an introduction to office literature

**Learning objectives:**
Compared to the amount of time we spend at work, our offices fill far fewer pages of novels than our adulteries. In this class, we look at several literary workspaces, ranging from mid-19th century New York to pre- and post-internet bubble Silicon Valley. We ask what makes some work more productive, what role we play in work hierarchies, and whether it matters where your desk is in relation to the copier.

**Required reading:**

**Class 4**
**September 22, 2014**: Organizational Culture, Organizations in Changing Environments

**Learning objectives:**
This class offers a brief insight into how organizations work, evolve, and interact with their environment. Drawing from our own experiences as well as assigned readings, we will discuss various types of organizational cultures, the importance of values in the creation and development of organizational cultures, various forms of interaction inside organizations (with focus on the use of new media technologies), and how these interactions reflect institutional engagement.

**Required reading:**
* *The Corporation*, dir. Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott, 2003. (borrow the DVD from the library or watch on YouTube here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y888wY5hzw)

**Class 5**
**September 29, 2014**: The Urge to Create, the Urge to Succeed: Berlin’s Start-Ups

**Learning objectives:**
After a general discussion on the so-called creative industries and their role in urban economies, politics, and cultures, we discuss the role the creative classes play in gentrification and a change in the cultural and political climate.

**Required reading:**

* Pratt, A. C. "The cultural contradictions of the creative city." *City, Culture and Society* 2 (3) (2011). ISSN 1877-9166

**Class 6**

**October 6, 2014:** Visit to a Berlin start-up *(exact date and location TBC!)*

**Learning objectives:**

Read about various recent examples of Berlin’s start-ups before visiting one of them.

**Required reading:**

* Rueckert, Elena. "Berlin Women Entrepreneurs Sweep Geekettes Demo Day." *Venture Village* June 11, 2014: [http://venturevillage.eu/this-was-the-geekettes-demo-day](http://venturevillage.eu/this-was-the-geekettes-demo-day).

**Class 7**

**October 13, 2014:** New Forms of Work: Berlin’s (Co)Working Spaces

**Learning objectives:**

Hierarchies and dynamics at work can have productive or unproductive results—sometimes none of us play too well with others. This class is devoted to exploring new forms of work and organization of work with particular emphasis on co-working spaces.

**Required reading:**

Class 8  
**October 27, 2014:** Visit to a co-working space *(exact date and location TBC)*

**Learning objectives:**
The creative economy requires not just new forms of labour, but also new ways of organizing the office. Students read about recent developments in this field and visit a co-working space.

**Required reading:**

Class 9  
**November 3, 2014:** The Making of an Institution: The Case of the Holocaust Memorial

**Learning objectives:**
Discussing the history and controversies surrounding Berlin’s *(Foundation for the)* Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, we reflect on the role of the individual in the founding of institutions, the intricacies of the implicit and explicit presentation of institutional values, the dynamics of these presentations, and the importance of informal and formal politics.

**Required reading:**

### CIVIL SOCIETY, INSTITUTIONS, AND VALUES

Class 10  
**November 10, 2014:** Civil Society and Values

**Learning objectives:**
Some of the issues we discuss in this class include: definitions of civil society, the role of cities (with focus on Berlin) and new media in the formation and development of civil society, and the difficulties civil society organizations might face in trying to be the voice of a minority.
**Required reading:**

* Strolovitch, Dara S. *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics*. 1-15.

**REMINDER: ESSAY TOPIC DEADLINE November 16**

Class 11

**November 17, 2014:** The "Good Berlin Citizen"

**Learning objectives:**

We discuss the importance of values in citizen participation in general and in Berlin in particular, as well as the impact of values on the specificities of different types of citizenship (EU, national, urban, etc.).

**Required reading:**


**REMINDER: ESSAY ABSTRACT DEADLINE November 23**

Class 12

**November 24, 2014:** Values and Engagement: Rosa Luxemburg

**Learning objectives:**

Based on the writing and biography of Rosa Luxemburg, founder of a Berlin institution, we consider multifarious factors leading to a person’s engagement in a political, social, and/or artistic cause, the impact of individual values on the creation of an institution, and the complex relations between individual and institutional values.

**Required reading:**

REMINDER: FINAL 2-PAGE PAPER DEADLINE November 30

Class 13
December 1, 2014
Visit to the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (exact date TBC!)

REMINDER: ESSAY WORKS CITED DEADLINE December 7

Homework: Bring a print-out of a press release from a museum or a gallery

INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES: LOOKING OUT

Class 14
December 8, 2014: Spreading Institutional Values and Aesthetics

Learning objectives:
With a focus on Berlin’s art scene, we discuss how its institutions are perceived by general public and by people who engage with them in various ways. We study a few recent press releases from museums and galleries, and examine their language. Does Berlin have something unique to offer to the international art scene? How do institutions directly and indirectly shape our sense of aesthetics?

Required reading:

REMINDER: ESSAY DEADLINE December 19