

# IS331 BERLIN INTERNSHIP SEMINAR: WORKING CULTURES, URBAN CULTURES

Seminar Leader: Agata Lisiak

Course Times: Wednesdays 9:00-10:30 (Group A) / 10.45-12.15 (Group B)

Room: P98A Seminar Room 4

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Office hours: Wednesdays 1.15 – 3 pm

## Course Description

The Berlin Internship Seminar accompanies **third-year students'** undertaking of an internship or period of practical training. The seminar offers a range of theoretical and analytical tools for thinking critically about how and why we work and how work affects our daily lives. Over the course of the seminar we will talk about contemporary ways of living and working in Berlin and beyond: What do we mean when we talk about work? Do we need to love what we do? What renders work in/visible? How is work gendered and classed? How is work organized temporally and spatially and how does it, in turn, affect the city and its residents? What distinguishes the spaces in which we live and work today? Which new forms of work have emerged in Berlin recently? Which of them seem to thrive? What is the future of work?

One of the major issues we will tackle in class is the very phenomenon of unpaid internships and what it means for you to be working for free. We will address this question by discussing the precariat, creative industries, and affective labor. Drawing from Kathi Weeks' work, we will consider what the problem with work actually is and why we tend to define and value ourselves through what we do professionally. We will dissect Steve Jobs' mantra (*do what you love*) and discuss how work and love are interwoven. We will approach contemporary working cultures from an intersectional perspective and remain sensitive to the workings of inequalities in structural, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains.

Besides in-class discussions, invited lectures, and off-campus visits, the seminar offers a platform for a regular exchange of observations, reflections, and comments on students' internships. The assigned readings will be discussed in class in the context of students' internships. Students are required to keep an internship journal and provide regular updates on their internship progress.

## Requirements

### Attendance

Your preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial. Please complete the required readings, be on time for each class (yes, even for the 9 am class – impossible is nothing), and contribute energetically to the discussions. A class participation mark will be awarded on the basis of your engagement in class discussions. This mark makes up 30% of the final grade. A course reader is required for this class, but keep in mind that a few readings are not included in it. All the obligatory texts you will be asked to read online are included in the syllabus (marked red) and on the course website.

### Writing Assignments

Students are required to write two 1000-page papers and one blog post. Please see below for more details including deadlines. Both papers are to be submitted by email to the course instructor. The blog entries are

to be posted on the course website.

### Internship Course Website

The website accompanying this seminar features the syllabus, online readings, and some additional materials on the seminar's main subjects, as well as blog posts created by students. Students are encouraged to comment on each other's blog posts and upload images to the website gallery. The website facilitates an exchange of students' reflections on their internships and the assigned readings beyond the classroom.

### Internship Journal

Students are required to keep an internship journal, in which they regularly (at least once a week) reflect on their work experiences. The journal can be kept in any preferred form (analog or electronic). Students will be asked to share the journal with the instructor at least twice during the semester: at midterm and towards the end of the semester. For more details see the Internship Journal Handout.

### 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 higher than a C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

## Grade Breakdown and Deadlines

Class participation: 30%  
Assignment 1 (blog post): 15% // 19 February 2017  
Assignment 2 (midterm paper): 25% // 19 March 2017  
Assignment 3 (final paper): 30% // 18 May 2017

## Schedule\*

### Class 1

**February 1, 2017:** Your Internship: Practicalities and Expectations

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. You will also be introduced to the website accompanying this class, as well as the internship journal. No readings are required for this session.

*NOTE: No class on February 8, 2017 (professor away at a conference)*

### Class 2

**February 15, 2017:** The Elephant in the Room: The (Many) Problems with Unpaid Internships

- Excerpt from Ross Perlin's *Intern Nation* (2011). 23-41.

\* The schedule is subject to change. You will be informed about any changes via email. Please always update your calendar accordingly. 2

- Joshua Schwebel's *Subsidy* (2015). Excerpts.
- Madeline Schwartz, "Opportunity Costs: The True Price of Internships," *Dissent* Winter 2013: <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/opportunity-costs-the-true-price-of-internships>

**ASSIGNMENT 1** (15% of final grade)

Find an article on contemporary Berlin (you will be assigned a focus of the article in class: work, gentrification, migration, refugees, start ups, co-working, creative industries) and write a short blog post (500 words) engaging with it by **midnight February 19** latest. Do not simply summarize the article, but discuss why you picked it, how it relates to your thinking about work, internships, living in a city, migration, etc. Feel free to discuss the article in relation to other texts (IMPORTANT: make sure to include in your blog entry the links to the main article, as well as any other sources you refer to). You are encouraged to comment on your fellow students' posts.

Class 3

**February 22, 2017:** An Introduction to Berlin (It's Not All About Sex)

- Nicolas Hausdorf and Alexander Goller's *Superstructural Berlin* (2015). Excerpts.
- Katy Dabyschire, "Berlin: It's not all sex, all the time," *Lit Hub* (2016): <http://lithub.com/berlin-its-not-all-sex-all-the-time/>

Class 4

**March 1, 2017:** The Problem with Work

- Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Excerpts.
- Miya Tokumitsu, "In the Name of Love," *The Jacobin* 2014: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-the-name-of-love/>.

Class 5

**March 8, 2017:** Work and Class

- Excerpt from Guy Standing's *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (2011). Excerpts.
- Isabell Lorey, "Precarization and the Doubly Indebted Personality" (2016)

Class 6

**March 15, 2017:** Affective Labor

- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* (1983). Excerpts.
- Angela McRobbie's *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries*. 103-114.
- **Watch ONLINE: Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm5vZaE8Ysc>.

**ASSIGNMENT 2** (25% final grade)

Write a short essay in response to **two readings** we have discussed in class. The purpose of this paper is not to summarize the readings. Rather, it should engage with the readings and take positions in support of, or against, the points of view their authors express. Where possible, these responses should draw on your internship or work experiences and use these to shed light on the reading materials. It is entirely up to you which class readings you would like to respond to. Each response should be 1000 words, double-spaced in Times New Roman, size 12, and emailed to [a.lisiak@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:a.lisiak@berlin.bard.edu) by **midnight March 19, 2017**.

Class 7

**March 22, 2017:** The Artist at Work

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- Angela McRobbie, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries*. 70-86.
- Hito Steyerl, "Art as Occupation," *e-flux* (2011).
- Anton Vidokle, "Art without Work?" *e-flux* #29 11(2011): <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/art-without-work/>.

#### Class 8

**March 29, 2017:** INVITED LECTURE by Dr. Emma Jackson, Goldsmiths, University of London

#### Class 9

**April 5, 2017:** Creative Labor, Creative Class

- Richard Florida, "Cities and the Creative Class," *City and Community* 2.1 (2003): 3-19.
- Angela McRobbie, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries*. 33-59.

\*\*\* SPRING BREAK \*\*\*

**HOMEWORK 1:** Watch *Office Space* (dir. Mike Judge), 1999.

#### Class 10

**April 19, 2017:** The Office and Beyond

- Excerpts from Nikil Saval's *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace*. 278-311.
- **READ ONLINE:** Nikil Saval's, "The Post-Cubicle Office and Its Discontents," *New York Times* 2016: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/the-post-cubicle-office-and-its-discontents.html#>
- **READ ONLINE:** Cutting edge offices from around the world <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/the-post-cubicle-office-and-its-discontents.html#slideshow/100000004220625/100000004220627>.

#### Class 11

Visit to a co-working place (DATE TBA)

#### Class 12

**April 26, 2016:** Startups

- Excerpts from *Start Up Berlin*. 14-21, 52-55, 102-103, 119-131.
- Rebecca Solnit, "Get Off the Bus," *London Review of Books*, 20 February 2014.
- **READ ONLINE:** Gideon Lewis-Krauss, "One Startup's Struggle to Survive the Silicon Valley Gold Rush." *Wired*, 22 April 2014: <http://www.wired.com/2014/04/no-exit/>. (LONGREAD!)
- **WATCH ONLINE:** Berlin startups ecosystem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzX3YVyxSx8>.

#### HOMEWORK 2

Read Holm's chapter and the two shorter articles assigned for Class 13, note down comments and questions, then go for a walk or take the tram and explore a Berlin neighborhood or street. Take pictures of what you think are signs of gentrification or touristification. Choose one of the pictures and post it on our course website. Make sure to include the location where the photo was taken. Deadline for this post is midnight April 30.

Class 13

**May 3, 2017:** gentrification and touristification: who owns Berlin?

- Andrej Holm, “Berlin’s Gentrification Mainstream” (2013).
- **READ ONLINE:** Lutz Henke, “Why we painted over Berlin’s most famous graffiti,” *The Guardian*, 19 December 2014:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/19/why-we-painted-over-berlin-graffiti-kreuzberg-murals>.
- **READ ONLINE:** <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/may/01/berlin-authorities-taking-stand-against-airbnb-rental-boom>.

Class 14

**May 10, 2017:** work and/in the future

- John M. Keynes, “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren.” 1930.
- Nick Srnicek & Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future. Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*. 2016. Excerpts.

**ASSINGMENT 3** (30% of final grade)

Go through your internship journal, your reader and the course website in preparation for your final paper. Write a **1000-word** essay reflecting on your internship experience. Make sure to refer to at least **two readings** we have covered during the semester. Interdisciplinary and creative approaches and methodologies are encouraged. Deadline for submission of the final essay is **midnight May 18, 2017**.