

Freie Universität Berlin  
FU-BEST Program  
Dr. Marita Roth

## **Berlin: History, Memory, Literature**

Berlin is a quintessentially modern city. It was invented as a capital when Germany was unified in 1871 in order to minimize regional rivalries, then reinvented in 1990 to effect the reunification of East and West. This course will explore representations and topographies of Berlin between the first German unification and the second, focusing on the major events and conflicts that have left their mark on this urban landscape: the rise of the modern metropolis, economic depression and social unrest, the two World Wars, Nazism and the Holocaust, and the Cold War and its aftermath — in short, the most disruptive and defining events of the twentieth century.

Of central concern will be the conflicting identities, ideologies, and aesthetic theories informing the events that have shaped Berlin's — and the world's — history. East and West, communist and capitalist, German and Jew, avant-garde and reactionary: these opposing terms have performed a mad dance over the past 130 years, sometimes settling in temporary alliances, sometimes in violent oppositions, and always leaving their traces in literature, memory, and urban geography. Berlin is a palimpsest of the discarded ideologies of the twentieth century, both political and aesthetic; it is also one of the premier stages of Europe's transnational future. Reading its literature and traversing its spaces provides an object lesson in the history of modernism, modernity, and globalization.

Part of the course will involve developing strategies for reading and walking through this multi-layered and contradictory landscape. Thus in addition to discussing the regular reading assignments, we will devote some time to discussing the complex relations between space, text, history, and memory.

Schedule permitting, we will watch relevant films and organize city excursions outside of regular class times. Possible dates for these activities are listed on the syllabus.

### **Course requirements:**

Reading assignments should be completed by the date listed on the syllabus. Active participation in class discussions is absolutely crucial. To receive credit for the course, students will be required to give a short (10 minute) oral presentation on a topic of interest, and to pass a midterm and a final exam. A term paper (10 pages, double-spaced) will be due at the end of the semester. I will ask you to turn in an outline of your final paper so we can discuss your research one-on-one.

**Texts/Readings:**

Isherwood, Christopher (1939). *Berlin Stories*.  
Ladd, Brian (1998). *The Ghosts of Berlin*.  
Large, David Clay (2001). *Berlin*.  
Le Carré, John (1963). *The Spy who Came in from the Cold*.  
Schneider, Peter (1984). *The Wall Jumper*.

Course Reader with selections from:

Döblin, Alfred (1929). *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.  
Fontane, Theodor (1887). *Delusions and Confusions*.  
Mann, Heinrich (1914). *The Loyal Subject*.  
Özdamar, Emine Sevgi (2001). *The New Cemeteries in Germany*.  
Plenzdorf, Ulrich (). *The New Sufferings of Young W*.  
Simmel, Georg (1903). *The Metropolis and Mental Life*.  
Speer, Albert (1995). *Inside the Third Reich*.  
Wolf, Christa (1998). *Parting from Phantoms*.  
Young, James (2000). *At Memory's Edge*.

**Grading:**

Class participation (including written summaries of readings; discussions)	20%
Oral presentation (10 minutes)	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Term paper (10 pages double-spaced; draft to be handed in prior to due-date)	20%

## Course Schedule:

Week	Literature	History	Film/Excursion
1	<b>Introduction</b> <b>Georg Simmel (1903):</b> <i>The Metropolis and Mental Life</i>	<b>David C. Large (2000):</b> <i>Berlin</i>	-
2	<b>Theodor Fontane (1887):</b> <i>Delusions, Confusions</i>	<i>Berlin under Bismarck</i>	Märkisches Museum
3	<b>Heinrich Mann (1914):</b> <i>The Loyal Subject</i>	<i>World City?</i> <i>Discord in the Castle</i>	<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>
4	<b>Alfred Döblin (1929):</b> <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i>	<i>The Great Disorder</i>	<i>Symphony of a City</i> Alexanderplatz
5	<b>Christopher Isherwood (1939):</b> <i>Berlin Stories</i>	<i>The World City of Order and Beauty</i>	<i>Cabaret</i>
6	<b>Midterm Exam</b> <b>Outline of Paper</b>		
7	<b>Midterm Break</b>		
8	<b>Albert Speer (1969):</b> <i>Inside the Third Reich</i>	<i>Hitler's Berlin</i> <i>Now People, Arise, and Storm, Break Loose!</i>	<i>Olympia</i> Olympic Stadium
9	<b>John Le Carré (1963):</b> The Spy who Came in from the Cold	<i>Coming into the Cold</i>	<i>One, Two, Three</i>
10	<b>Ulrich Plenzdorf (1973):</b> <i>The New Sufferings of Young W.</i>	<i>The Divided City - East</i>	<i>The Legend of Paul and Paula</i>
11	<b>Peter Schneider (1984):</b> <i>The Wall Jumper</i>	<i>The Divided City - West</i>	-
12	<b>Christa Wolf (1998):</b> <i>Parting from Phantoms</i>	<i>From Bonn to Berlin</i>	-
13	<b>Term Paper.</b> <b>Brian Ladd (1998):</b> <i>The Ghosts of Berlin</i> <b>James Young (2000):</b> <i>At Memory's Edge</i> <b>Emine Sevgi Özdamar (2001):</b> <i>The New Cemeteries in Germany</i>	<i>The Berlin Republic</i>	Reading of Emine Sevgi Özdamar
14	<b>Final Exam</b>		