SO/US 366 – THE POLITICS OF URBAN SPACE
IES Abroad Berlin

DESCRIPTION:
Urban space is constantly structured and given meaning by different actors and changing constellations. In Berlin, the collapse of communism, the reunification of the formerly divided city, and the subsequent transformations created a new framework for its economic, social, cultural, political, and spatial development. This interdisciplinary course explores the politics of urban restructuring in contemporary Berlin -- keeping in mind the presences and absences of the German monarchy, the Weimar Republic, the National Socialist dictatorship, and the so-called Cold War division (capitalist West versus socialist East). The aim of the seminar is to figure out who the winners and losers of contemporary developments are and how this is manifested in and reproduced through urban space. If and how people can 'reclaim' urban space(s) will finally also be addressed in this course. Central points of interest will include the conflicts around the 'New Berlin' (renewal of brownfields, memories, and public space), gentrification, the potential and threats of Berlin as a 'Creative City', the spatial dimension of social exclusion, as well as the integration of migrants and the perspectives of the 'right-to-the-city-movement'. For highlighting the features of Berlin in a global context, its changing urban landscape will be compared to other metropolises in Europe and the U.S. such as Paris, Warsaw, Istanbul, New York City or Detroit. Together with the comparative insights from these cities, the course will contribute to students’ understanding of the complexity of urban development at the beginning of the 21st century.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Barış Ülker

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
Lectures, discussions, student presentations, field trips, and film screenings. Moodle will be used to enhance students’ learning experiences.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Course participation - 10%
- Midterm Exam - 30%
- Final Exam - 30%
- Research Paper - 15%
- Case Study - 15%

Course Participation (10%):
Students must complete the assigned readings, participate in class discussions, and attend all field trips. Students are encouraged to present one of readings in class. To prepare in advance for the seminars, the students should keep in mind the following:
- What is the principal theme of the text?
- What theories/methods does the author use in making their argument?
- What are their arguments? How convincing are they? What insights do they provide? What are the limitations (contradictions, prejudices, lacking points)?
- What do their arguments convey about the intellectual position of the author? Why is the author writing in this way or about this topic?
The grading rubric for participation is available in the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle.

Midterm Exam (30%)
A midterm exam will be based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions for the first half of the course. The students will answer three questions in short essay format (an introduction, a body text, and a conclusion). This will be a closed book examination. Duration: 90 minutes (session 12).

Final Exam (30%)
Based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions for the second half of the course, the students will write a final exam. The students will answer three questions in short essay format (an introduction, a body text, and a conclusion). This will be a closed book examination. Duration: 90 minutes (session 24).

Reaction Paper (15%)
The reaction paper is a critical analysis of an urban space, deriving from the film screening and readings related to it. The aim of this paper is to reflect on the power relationships between urban center and periphery. The paper should be in the format of an essay (max. 1500 words, 1.5 space, Times New Roman, font size 12) that consists of an introduction, a body text, and a conclusion. Chicago style should be used for references. Due: end of week 6.

Case Study (15%)
The goal of this assignment is to explore an urban neighborhood considering its socio-economic and cultural context. Readings, lectures, and class discussions will be taken as points of departure in making the “thick description” of these neighborhoods. The students will be able to do this assignment either in Berlin or on the destination of the academic field trip. The paper should be in the format of an essay (max. 1500 words, 1.5 space, Times New Roman, font size 12) that consists of an introduction, a body text, and a conclusion. Chicago style should be used for references. The students are expected to provide visual material. Images and photography should be identified and credited. The case study can be used as travel assignment.

Berlin Case Study due: end of week 11.
Travel related Case Study due: end of week 13.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Articulate the context of urban conflicts keeping in mind the historical ruptures and continuities of Berlin
- Analyze the theoretical discussions related to the economic, social, cultural, and political framework of the urban space
- Compare the convergences and divergences between Berlin, Istanbul, Warsaw, Paris, St. Petersburg, Chicago, Detroit, and New York within a global setting.
- Interpret urban transformations through an interdisciplinary perspective.

ATTENDANCE AND DEADLINES:
Attendance and punctuality in all courses and field studies are mandatory. Absences can only be excused for valid reasons. Unexcused absences can affect students’ grades. Students who miss 25% or more of all class sessions will fail the course. Missed exams cannot be taken at another time except in case of documented illness. Late submission of term papers and other work will result in grade reduction unless an extension due to illness or an emergency is approved. Please consult the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle for additional details.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Academic Integrity Code. Assigned papers need to be properly and amply footnoted where appropriate, with all sources attributed, including images. Suspicious papers may be checked with plagiarism-detecting software.

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<td>Session 1: Introducing the Urban Space for the Nation</td>
<td>• Daum, <em>Capitals in Modern History</em>, pp. 3-28.</td>
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<td>Week 2: Transforming and Reinventing Berlin</td>
<td>Session 3: Transforming Berlin from Socialism to Capitalism</td>
<td>• Häußermann, <em>From the Socialist to the Capitalist City</em>, pp. 214-231.</td>
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<td>Session 6: Marketing Berlin</td>
<td>• Colomb, <em>Pushing the Urban Frontier</em>, pp. 131-152.</td>
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<td>Week 4: Urban Presentation</td>
<td>Session 7: Representing the Urban</td>
<td>• La Haine, directed by Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995. (Film screening)</td>
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<td>Session 8: Urban Periphery</td>
<td>• Wacquant, <em>Red Belt, Black Belt</em>, pp. 234-274.</td>
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<td>Week 6:</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<td>• Scharenberg and Bader, <em>Berlin’s waterfront site struggle</em>, pp. 325-335.</td>
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<td>Detroit: <em>Ruin of a City</em>, directed by Michael Chanan and George Steinmetz, 2005. (Film screening)</td>
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<td>Session 22: Field Trip: Reclaiming the City: Kotti &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Inside Job, directed by Charles Ferguson, 2010. (Film screening)</td>
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<td>The exam will be based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions for the second half of the course.</td>
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COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:
• Media-Spree (Berlin’s Waterfront Development).
• Reclaiming the City: Kotti & Co (Tenant Protest Movement).

REQUIRED READINGS:
• Ferguson, Charles. 2010. Inside Job (film).
• Kassovitz, Mathieu. 1995. La Haine (film).


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


