

TX 202 Faculty-Led Travel Seminar to Berlin, Germany

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The city of Berlin and its region will be our classroom during a ten-day travel seminar to Germany January **4-15**, 2014. This seminar focuses on Berlin as the center of many of Europe's major political, social, artistic, and scientific developments. The objective is to examine Berlin's turbulent history over the last four hundred years, with special attention to those moments that exemplify the glitter and doom of the German cultural heritage. Students will explore famous buildings and sites in and around Berlin that bare witness to the various historical and cultural periods crucial for the process of building a modern German nation state. Students will visit King Frederick's royal summer palace Sanssouci, St. Hedwig's Cathedral, and the *Berliner Dom*; see the sites of grand architectural artifacts by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, like the *Neue Wache* (1816–1818), the *Schauspielhaus* (1819–1821) at the *Gendarmenmarkt*, the *Altes Museum* (Old Museum) on Museum Island (1823–1830), and the neo-gothic Friedrichswerder Church; examine paintings by one of the most prominent German artists of the 19th century, Adolph Menzel, in the world-renowned *Gemäldegalerie*; study the political significance of architectural milestones like the *Reichstag* building and the *Siegessäule* (Victory Column); review the “roaring twenties” of Weimar Berlin through cabaret, film, music, paintings and literature; visit memorial sites to the Holocaust like Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the Holocaust memorial and the Holocaust Museum; commemorate the division of Berlin and Germany by walking along stretches of the Berlin Wall Trail (*Berliner Mauerpfad*), by visiting the East Side Gallery and the Wall Museum next to Checkpoint Charlie, and by touring the infamous Stasi prison Hohenschönhausen; visit the Turkish market in the *Berlin-Kreuzberg* district, the New Jewish Synagogue, the Centrum Judaicum, and the *Haus der Kulturen*; enjoy Berlin's emblematic spaces like Brandenburg Gate, *Unter den Linden*, *Alexanderplatz*, *Potsdamerplatz*, *Kurfürstendamm*; get to know Berlin's innovative contemporary artistic scene, intellectual life, and world-class museums, and observe the post-wall development of this thriving metropolis as an international diplomatic center.

Course Overview

“Glitter and Doom: Art and Politics in Berlin History” is a two-course learning experience combining meetings and readings on campus during the Fall 2013 semester and a field trip with meetings and lectures in Berlin January **4-15**, 2014. Students must

take TX 201C to qualify for the travel portion (TX 202). TX 201C and TX 202 is a 4-credit experience and can count toward the German major and minor and the Cultural World requirement of the IA major and minor.

Preliminary Itinerary (Subject to Change)

January 4: Flight from NYC area to Berlin. Germany

January 5: Arrive in Berlin. Transfer to hotel. Welcome lunch in TV Tower on Alexanderplatz. Bus tour of the city.

January 6: Morning walking tour of historic Berlin with art historian to explore Brandenburg Gate, State Opera, St. Hedwig's Church, Humboldt University, and German Cathedral. Afternoon Pergamon Museum (Pergamon Altar and Gates of Babylon). Dinner in Prenzlauer Berg at a traditional beer garden.

January 7: Neo-classicism of Schinkel and Schadow: New Guard House, Theater on Gendarmenmarkt, Old Museum, and sculpture exhibition in Friedrichswerder Church. Afternoon lecture by a historian on Hitler's Germania. Evening visit to the opera at the State Opera House.

January 8: Following in the steps of the Berlin Wall. Lunch at Zur letzten Instanz, Berlin's oldest inn. Afternoon tour of the Stasi secret prison Hohenschönhausen by a former political prisoner.

January 9: Morning at the New National Gallery designed by Mies van der Rohe for the Modern art collection (Kirchner, Beckmann, Dix, Kandinsky, Klee). Afternoon tour of the Reichstag building and glass dome. Dancing in the evening at a traditional Berlin ballroom with telephones on each table.

January 10: Morning excursion to Frederick the Great's castle at Sanssouci in Potsdam. Afternoon boat trip on the Havel River. Evening musical performance at the Philharmonic.

January 11: Morning tour of the Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind. Excursion to Sachsenhausen concentration camp memorial site.

January 12: Free day in the city to explore. Evening at postmodern Potsdamer Platz and Sony Entertainment Center.

January 13: Morning at the Turkish market in Kreuzberg. Visit to a mosque. Lunch at a traditional Turkish restaurant. Meet a local artist or musician.

January 14: Farewell dinner at Restauration Tucholsky with Berlin cuisine and a musical-cabaret performance.

January 15: Return from Berlin to NYC area.



Course Expectations

Aims: The course aims to familiarise students with some of the key themes in central European history and culture through an intensive and interactive case study of the city of Berlin.

Grades will be based on:

- Attendance and participation at all planned activities in Germany (40%)
- Travel Journal (60%)

Students must participate fully in the course in order to receive a passing grade. This means attending pre-departure meetings, activities in Germany, and a scheduled meeting after returning from Germany. Students will be encouraged to give a presentation at Academic Festival or at a similar forum at the end of the Spring 2013.

Required Text: Malgorzata Omilanowska, *Berlin: DK Eyewitness Travel Guide*. (DK Travel, 2009). ISBN-10: 0756660939.

There are no other required texts for this learning experience. The instructors will rely on texts required for TX 2XX

Travel Journal

Keeping a travel journal is a unique opportunity to document your journey and judge its value in concrete and personal terms. Writing a journal allows you to preserve your memories and reflect upon your experience as it is happening and then later as you revisit the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes in your mind and refine your writing for the final version. Each entry you make in Berlin is part of a process that transforms lived experience into language and image. The final product will be a polished version of your best journal entries, so that your travel journal represents a coherent articulation of all the information, impressions, and memories you collected during your time in Berlin.

A travel journal should combine your immediate reaction to things, places, and people and an analysis of pertinent information learned from the pre-departure course and on-site. It will reflect your thoughts about what you are experiencing and helps you to integrate the field studies component (the "hands on" knowledge and experience gained from going to Berlin) with the material learned in the classroom and during the trip. You may include sketches, quotations from things you read, your own poetic compositions, photographs, and anything else that will help you remember your feelings and impressions of the trip. Please remember that a travel journey is not a diary, but a reflective writing assignment. Please do not write anything intimate. The final draft of your travel diary should consist of full paragraph entries; it requires you to polish your writing through revision and reflection.

1) Before departure. Have at least two entries, dealing with your preparations. What are you doing academically to prepare yourself? What are your expectations? What are your concerns? What places and objects are you most excited about seeing first-hand?

2) During the trip. You should write a couple of paragraphs daily. What are your first impressions? What do you like the best and the least about German/Berlin culture? What experiences do you find the most and the least engaging? How have your notions of Berlin changed over the course of the trip? Think about the constraints of traveling and plan to set aside some time every day to write down some impressions, make some sketches, describe some scene, incident, artifact, newly-learned fact, or reflect upon whatever has stimulated your interest.

3) After the trip. Use your notes, drawings, photographs to compose a coherent narrative that reflects upon your sojourn in Berlin. Your travel journal submitted for academic credit should be at least eight pages long, typed, and formatted according to guidelines outlined in the Skidmore Guide to Writing.

4) Evaluation. The travel journals are due two weeks after the completion of the seminar. Both professors will evaluate and grade the travel journals. Final grades will be based on an average of the grades submitted by both instructors.

In preparing your travel journal, you may want to consult the following resources:

1. Paul Fussell, ed. *The Norton Book of Travel*. NY: W.W. Norton, 1987.
2. <http://www.theglimpse.com/> The National Geographic program sponsoring young people writing about their experiences abroad.
3. <http://www.abroadview.org/webzine/index.htm> Abroad View Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering cross-cultural awareness. It publishes the magazine *Abroad View*, which highlights students' writing about study abroad.
4. http://cms.skidmore.edu/writing_guide/index.cfm Skidmore College Guide to Writing



Course Schedule The travel schedule is subject to change.

This course meets in New York City and Germany in January **DATES**, 2014. The instructors will schedule two separate meetings on Skidmore campus in Fall 2013 to discuss the logistics and the code of conduct for the travel experience and one follow-up meeting upon returning from Germany (dates to be determined). While Germany is a safe place to travel, travelers should proceed with the normal care and good judgment that traveling overseas or in any large city require. A set of guidelines and a college-endorsed code of conduct will be distributed to students before the trip. Students will be required to sign the code of conduct to assure that they are familiar with, and agree to follow, the rules.

Kleider machen Leute (clothes make the man). Dressing appropriately for the occasion is important to Germans. Formal or semiformal wear for the theater or a concert is common. For men, this often means a nice jacket, tie, and slacks. For women, a dress or skirt and heels, although in winter slacks, a sweater, or blouse and jacket would be fine. At such venues, jeans and a t-shirt are not appropriate. In general, you should expect more conservative and formal attire than in the U.S. COMFORTABLE and WATERPROOF shoes are essential, because we will be on our feet most of the day. Plan to wear layers and remember that you may be required to store your coat and pay a small charge.

Respekt zeigen (showing respect). Use your common sense and behave respectfully. No loud speaking, cell phones, or smoking during class functions.

Guten Tag (good day). It is common to greet sales people when entering a store. It is typical to shake hands upon greeting someone (including children). Academic titles are considered important and denote respect, so please use a person's title and their last name unless invited to use first names. Herr (for Mr.) and Frau (for Ms., Mrs. and nowadays also Miss, although one still hears Fräulein for Miss). It is not uncommon for one to have several titles: Frau Professor, Herr Dr., etc. If you speak German, always use the "Sie" form of address (unless you are in a student bar or talking to people your own age).

Guten Appetit, Mahlzeit (enjoy your meal). Proper table manners and clean and neat clothing are expected in nice restaurants.

Bitte, Danke, Entschuldigung (please, thank you, and excuse me) come in handy.

Gute Reise nach Berlin!