

# Planning Urban Neighborhoods in Transition - The Case of Berlin

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15 June – 10 July 2026

**CATEGORY** Metropolitan Studies & Urban Development

## COURSE STRUCTURE

You will receive a total of **45 hours of academic lessons** (one lesson equals 45 minutes; 15 hours per week). Lessons will comprise lectures, group work, discussion sessions, and excursions.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

HUWISU courses are grouped into different time tracks. Your course will take place in **Track C**

Tuesday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm  
Wednesday: 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm & 3.30 pm – 5.00 pm  
Friday: 9.00 am – 10.30 am & 11.00 am – 11.45 am

## COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in **English**, including the readings. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class, a language-level of B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required.

## TARGET GROUP

**Undergraduate students** with an interest in geography, economics, cultural studies, social sciences, European studies.

## CREDITS & CERTIFICATES

Participants will receive **6 ECTS** credit points and a certificate if they attend regularly (at least 80% attendance), participate actively and fulfil all course assignments. Additionally, six weeks after the end of the course a Transcript of Records is issued by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the academic program, you are invited to **join our cultural and social program**. We offer a fine selection of interesting activities that aim to give you an unforgettable stay in Berlin. Through excursions, social gatherings, and sport activities, you have the opportunity to get to know the city, the university, and to meet students from all parts of the world. **Costs for these offers are included in the program fee.** Below, you find examples of previously offered cultural activities. You will be informed about the respective cultural program shortly before the start of the program via email as well as during the course period.



### POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL GUIDED TOURS

- Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt*)
- German Parliament (*Bundestag*)
- House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*)
- Topography of Terror exhibition
- Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office

### CULTURAL GUIDED TOURS

- Kreuzberg Tour
- Museum Island (*Museumsinsel*)
- Berlin Cathedral (*Berliner Dom*)
- Daytrip to Potsdam
- Exhibitions

### SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- Welcome Session
- Beach Volleyball
- Farewell Get2gether

## EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

**Preparation for lively discussions in the classroom:** Be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

**Assignments:** Complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

**Commitment in class:** Pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers').

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

**Attendance policy:** No unexcused absences are permitted. Students must follow teachers' instructions to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the HUWISU office.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The aim of this course is to understand and learn about the different challenges urban neighborhoods are facing, e.g. integration and migration, social exclusion, demographic change, creative milieus, housing shortage, shrinking cities and ecological renewal.

How is the ageing society affecting urban areas? How are migrants integrated? Does Berlin have a creative class and if so, how does it affect the city? These are only some of the questions that will be discussed in the course. The city of Berlin is a hot spot for various regional developments. As a result, several of these aspects will be explored and explained during short excursions and day trips in Berlin (e.g. ethnic businesses and the migration situation in Neukölln, the newly developing zone Tempelhofer Feld).

Students of all relevant disciplines who are interested in different aspects of European regional development, including e.g. city and regional planning, geography, politics, social sciences and economics, are most welcome to join this course.

Participants will be invited to draft a presentation on a specific topic discussed in the course (including e.g. the home regions of the participants).

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The seminar provides students with a

- critical understanding of different neighborhood development related issues
- discussion of possible solutions of these issues
- imparting of theoretical and technical knowledge that is required to identify problems, values and attitudes of planning
- providing theoretical as well as practical insights in neighborhood planning

## READINGS

**Required reading for everybody:**

**Berlin – in general:**

**Arandjelovic, B. / Bogunovich, D.** (2014): City profile: Berlin Cities, Volume 37, April 2014, Pages 1–26.

**Gornig, M. / Häussermann, H.** (2002): Berlin: Economic and Spatial Change. European Urban and Regional Studies 9:4 331-341.

**Everybody is required to read one text (marked with \*) for each topic, which you find in this reader, to prepare for the discussion. The presenters are required to read all texts of their topic (all texts are available in the Moodle-Course).**

## ASSIGNMENT INFO

The final grade and the grant of 6 ECTS will be composed of the following aspects. A percentage weighting is established for each component:

- Active participation in all classes and discussion during seminars and excursions (33%)
- A presentation on a specific topic discussed during the seminar sessions (66%)
- Regular reading notes

**A minimum of 80% class attendance is required.-Regular readings & reading notes based on the given scientific texts are mandatory. Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.**

## YOUR INSTRUCTORS

**Dr. Robert Kitzmann** is currently research associate in Economic Geography at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Besides his teaching obligation in the division of Economic Geography he is actively engaged in research on real estate and urban development, for which he was inspired during his graduate research on the consequences of the housing bubble and crisis for the urban development in Phoenix, Arizona. Following his passion for topics related to urban development his doctoral research is dealing with the transformation of Berlin's housing market and the consequences for neighborhood development. This research and the enthusiasm for his hometown Berlin has led to the elaboration of several seminars and a broad variety of field trips. Since 2013, he is regularly giving insights to international students on how the urban landscape of the growing metropolis of Berlin is transforming.

**Prof. Dr. Lech Suwala** is currently a Full Professor (Guest) for Urban and Regional Economics at Technische Universität Berlin. Apart from that, he worked as a Visiting Associate Professor for Innovation Management at Ritsumeikan University, Japan, Osaka and Senior Lecturer in Economic Geography at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He is a geographer and economist with working experience in both science and industry. He has held positions as Research Fellow at Simon-Fraser-University, Vancouver, Canada; Lecturer at the University of Namibia, Windhoek and University of Applied Sciences on Technology and Economics, Berlin. His expertise includes spatial creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship research, European and regional planning, as well as smart und green approaches towards urban development. His research has been published in both peer-reviewed journals (e.g. Regional Studies, Cambridge Journal of Regions, Society and Economy) and internationally edited volumes (Ashgate, Routledge, Springer).

## **WEEK 1**

### **Introduction and general ideas of neighbourhoods in Berlin**

#### ***Tue, 16 Jun***

Lecture: Introduction to Berlin and its recent urban trends + Presentations (Robert)

*Classroom: tba*

#### ***Wed, 17 Jun***

Bike-Excursion\*: (Clogged) Lifelines of Berlin I – The Landwehrkanal – green lung or dusty waterway? (Lech)

*Meeting point: tba*

#### ***Fri, 19 Jun***

Seminar: The neighbourhood as scale of urban development + Presentations (Robert)

*Classroom: tba*

## **WEEK 2**

### **Housing**

#### ***Tue, 23 Jun***

Lecture and Seminar: Housing in Berlin + Presentations (Robert)

*Classroom: tba*

#### ***Wed, 24 Jun***

Excursion: Hansa-Viertel und Karl-Marx-Allee (Jonas)

*Meeting point: tba*

#### ***Fri, 26 Jun***

Excursion: Marzahn (Robert)

*Meeting point: tba*

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*\*Bike-Excursion*

*The bike excursions are easily manageable even for infrequent cyclists. If you are not comfortable with riding a bike you can alternatively participate with an E-Scooter. Shortly before the beginning of the course you will be informed about the rental conditions.*

## **WEEK 3**

### **Creatives, Artists and economic development**

#### ***Tue, 30 Jun***

Bike-Excursion\*: (Clogged) Lifelines of Berlin II – Along the River of Panke – creatives and Artist in Pankow, Wedding and Mitte? (Lech)

*Meeting point: 1.30pm at S-Bahn station "Pankow-Heinersdorf" (S2, S8).*

#### ***Wed, 01 July***

Excursion: Neukölln (Jonas)

*Meeting point: 1.30pm at U-Bahn station "Boddinstr." (U8). At the rail track platform.*

#### ***Fri, 03 July***

Excursion: Tempelhofer Feld (Robert)

*Meeting point: tba*

## **WEEK 4 – Economic Development**

#### ***Tue, 07 July***

Bike-Excursion\*: Schöneweide and Adlershof – two Zukunftsorte with different profiles? (Lech)

*Meeting point: 1.30pm at S-Bahn station "Schöneweide" (S8, S86, S86, S9, S46, S47). At the rail track platform*

#### ***Wed, 09 July***

Bike-Excursion\*: (Clogged) Lifelines of Berlin III – Along the River of Wuhle – Zukunftsorte in the making, between socialist housing, International Garden Exhibition and the city's sewage system (Lech)

*Meeting point: at 3.30pm at S-Bahn station "Gehrenseestraße". At the rail track platform*

#### ***Fri, 10 July***

Seminar: Presentations (Robert)

*Classroom: tba*

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*\*Bike-Excursion*

*The bike excursions are easily manageable even for infrequent cyclists. If you are not comfortable with riding a bike you can alternatively participate with an E-Scooter. Shortly before the beginning of the course you will be informed about the rental conditions.*

## READINGS

### **Required reading for everybody:**

#### **Berlin – in general:**

**Arandjelovic, B. / Bogunovich, D.** (2014): City profile: Berlin Cities, Volume 37, April 2014, Pages 1–26.

**Gornig, M. / Häussermann, H.** (2002): Berlin: Economic and Spatial Change. European Urban and Regional Studies 9:4 331-341.

**Everybody is required to read the text marked with \* for each topic (see below) to prepare for the discussion. The presenters are required to read all texts of their topic (all texts will be available on Moodle).**

#### **Berlin - Towards a global city?**

\***Kulke, E.** (2003): Berlin – German capital and global city? In: Die Erde, Vol. 134, pp. 219–233.

**Krätke, S.** (2001): Berlin: Towards a Global City? In: Urban Studies, Vol. 38, No. 10, pp. 1777–1799.

**Lehrer, U.** (2010): Willing the Global City. Berlin's Cultural Strategies of Inter-urban competition after 1989. In: Brenner, N. (ed.): The global cities reader, pp. 332-338.

#### **What is a neighborhood?**

\***Campbell, E., Henly, J. R., Elliott, D. S., Irwin, K.** (2009): Subjective constructions of neighborhood boundaries: lessons from a qualitative study of four neighborhoods. In: Journal of Urban Affairs, Vol. 31, I. 4, pp. 461-490.

**Chaskin, R. J.** (1998): Defining neighborhoods. Growing smart working papers. American Planning Association, Chicago.

**Schwirian, K. P.** (1983): Models of neighborhood change. In: Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 9, I. 1, pp. 83-102.

#### **The sustainable and compact city**

\***Gebhardt, D., Joos, M., Martin, N.** (2005): Living the Compact City? - Planning Paradigm and Real-Life Mobility. In: Die Erde, Vol. 136, I. 3, pp. 267– 290.

**Kenworthy, J. R.** (2006): The eco-city: ten key transport and planning dimensions for sustainable city development. In: Environment and Urbanization, Vol. 18, I. 1, pp. 67-85.

**Tosics, I.** (2004): European urban development: Sustainability and the role of housing. In: Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, Vol. 19, pp. 67–90.

## **Transformation of housing markets**

- Rolink, R.** (2013): Late Neoliberalism: The Financialization of Homeownership and Housing Rights. In: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 37, I. 3, p. 1058–1066.
- \***Aalbers, M. B., Holm, A.** (2008): Privatising social housing in Europe: the case of Amsterdam and Berlin. In: Adelhof, K., Glock, B., Lossau, J. & M. Schulz (Hrsg.): *Urban Trends in Berlin and Amsterdam. Berliner Geographische Arbeiten 110*, Berlin, pp. 12-23.
- Kitzmann, R.** (2017): Private versus state-owned housing in Berlin: changing provision of low-income households. In: *Cities*, Vol. 61 (2017), pp. 1-8.

## **The neoliberal city**

- \***Brenner, N., Theodore, N.** (2005): Neoliberalism and the urban condition. In: *City*, Vol. 9, I.1, pp. 101-107.
- Swyngedouw, E., Moulaert, F., Rodriguez, A.** (2002): Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy. In: *Antipode*, Vol. 34, I. 3, pp. 542-577.
- Weber, R.** (2002): Extracting Value from the City: Neoliberalism and Urban Redevelopment. In: *Antipode*, Vol. 34, I. 3, pp. 519-540.

## **Understanding relational space**

- \***Jones, M.** (2009): Phase space: geography, relational thinking, and beyond. In: *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 33, I. 4, pp. 487–506
- Healey, P.** (2003): Planning in relational space and time: responding to new urban realities. In: Bridge, G, Watson S. (eds.): *A Companion to the City*. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, pp. 517-530.
- Graham, S., Healey, P.** (1999): Relational concepts of space and place: Issues for planning theory and practice. In: *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 7, I. 5, pp. 623-646.

## **Dealing with shrinkage in East German Cities**

- \***Haase, A., Bernt, M., Großmann, K., Mykhnenko, V., Rink, D.** (2016): Varieties of shrinkage in European cities. In: *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 23, I. 1, pp. 86-102.
- Bontje, M.** (2004): Facing the challenge of shrinking cities in East Germany: The case of Leipzig. *GeoJournal*, Vol. 61, pp. 13–21.
- Haase, D.** (2008): Urban Ecology of Shrinking Cities: An Unrecognized Opportunity. In: *Nature and Culture*, Vol. 3, I. 1, pp. 1–8.
- Hollander, J. B., Pallagst, K., Schwarz, T., Popper, F. J.** (2009). *Planning Shrinking Cities*. Working paper.



### Gentrification in Berlin

- Papen, U. (2012):** Commercial discourses, gentrification and citizens' protest: The linguistic landscape of Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin 1. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 16(1), 56-80.
- Levine, Myron A. (2004):** Government policy, the local state, and gentrification: The case of Prenzlauer Berg (Berlin), Germany. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26, No. 1: 89-108.
- Holm, A. (2013).** Berlin's gentrification mainstream. *The Berlin reader. A compendium of urban change and activism*, 171-188.
- Bernt, M., & Holm, A. (2009).** Is it, or is not? The conceptualisation of gentrification and displacement and its political implications in the case of Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg. *City*, 13(2-3), 312-324.

### New Forms of Tourism

- Füller, H.; Michel, B. (2014):** 'Stop Being a Tourist!' New Dynamics of Urban Tourism in Berlin-Kreuzberg: New dynamics of urban tourism in Berlin. *IJURR* 38, 1304-1318.
- Novy, J. (2013)** "Berlin does not love you". Notes on Berlin's "tourism controversy" and its discontents. In: Bernt, M., Grell, B., Holm, A. (Eds.), *The Berlin Reader: A Compendium on Urban Change and Activism*. Transcript, Bielefeld. 223-237.
- Stors, N.; Kagermeier, A. (2017):** The sharing economy and its role in metropolitan tourism. In: Gravari-Barbas, M., Guinand, S. (Eds.), *Tourism and Gentrification in Contemporary Metropolises: International Perspectives*. Routledge, 181-206

### Zukunftsorte

- Suwala, L., Kitzmann, R., Kulke, E. (2021):** Berlin's Manifold Strategies towards Commercial and Industrial Spaces: The Different Cases of Zukunftsorte. In: *Urban Planning*, Vol. 6, I. 3, S. 415-430
- Geschäftsstelle Zukunftsorte (2022):** Zukunftsorte Berlin. <https://zukunftsorte.berlin/en/> (last accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022)

### Territorial Innovation Models

- Moulaert, F. and Sekia, F. (2003):** 'Territorial innovation models: a critical survey'. *Regional Studies*, 37, 289-302.
- Markusen, A. (1996):** Sticky places in slippery space: a typology of industrial districts. *Economic Geography* 72, 293-313
- Bathelt, H., Malmberg, A. and Maskell, P. (2004)** Clusters and knowledge: local buzz, global pipelines and the process of knowledge creation, *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(1), pp. 31-56

### Berlin Urban Development Concept 2030

- Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment (2015):** Berlin Urban Development Concept 2030  
[https://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/stadtentwicklungskonzept/download/strategie/BerlinStrategie\\_Broschuere\\_en.pdf](https://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/stadtentwicklungskonzept/download/strategie/BerlinStrategie_Broschuere_en.pdf) (last accessed: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022)

## Smart City Berlin

**Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment (2015):** Smart City Strategy Berlin

[https://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/foren\\_initiativen/smart-city/download/Strategie\\_Smart\\_City\\_Berlin\\_en.pdf](https://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/foren_initiativen/smart-city/download/Strategie_Smart_City_Berlin_en.pdf) (last accessed: 4<sup>th</sup> Mai 2022)

## Participation and Revitalisation of old industrial estates

**Oevermann, H., Degenkolb, J., Dießler, A., Karge, S. & U. Peltz (2016)** Participation in the reuse of industrial heritage sites: the case of Oberschöneweide, Berlin, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22:1, 43-58

**Lorber, L. (2014)** Holistic approach to revitalised old industrial areas. 3rd International Geography Symposium, Geomed 2013, 120, 326-334.

**Rall, E. L., & Haase, D. (2011)** Creative intervention in a dynamic city: A sustainability assessment of an interim use strategy for brownfields in Leipzig, Germany. *landscape and urban Planning*, 100(3), 189-201.

## Technology Park Berlin-Adlershof

**Kulke, E. (2008)** The technology park Berlin-Adlershof as an example of spatial proximity in regional economic policy In: *Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie* B 52 H: 4 193-208.

**Brinkhoff, S.; Suwala, L.; Kulke, E. (2012)**: 'What do you offer?': interlinkages of universities and high-technology companies in science and technology parks in Berlin and Seville. In: Capello, R., Olechnicka, A. and Gorzelak, G. (ed.): *Universities, Cities and Regions. Loci for Knowledge and Innovation Creation*. Routledge, London: 121-146

**Brinkhoff, S.; Suwala, L.; Kulke, E. (2015)**: Managing innovation in 'localities of learning' in Berlin and Seville. In: Micek, G. (ed.): *Understanding innovation in emerging economic spaces*. Ashgate, Farnham: 11-31

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*The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: January 2026*