



<b>Online Course Title</b>	<b>Cultural Memory - Museums in Berlin</b>
<b>Category</b>	Cultural Studies & Religion
<b>Online Course Period</b>	<b>January 6<sup>th</sup> – January 26<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Course Structure</b>	<p>The course content is equivalent to an on-site course offering 45 contact hours.</p> <p>The study time includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• virtual class room lessons with the lecturer and the fellow students (30%)</li> <li>• group exercises (30%)</li> <li>• assignments and self-study (40%)</li> </ul> <p>Weekly schedule of virtual class room lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course days: Monday and Wednesday</li> <li>• 10.00 am – 12.00 pm (Berlin time, UTC+1)</li> <li>• 17.00 pm – 19.00 pm (Beijing time, UTC+8)</li> <li>• 20.00 pm – 22.00 pm (Sydney time, UTC+11)</li> <li>• 03.00 am – 05.00 am (Chicago time, UTC-6)</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC or smart phone)</li> <li>• Stable internet connection</li> <li>• Software: Zoom (video/audio), Moodle (e-learning platform)</li> </ul> <p>Recommended hardware: external headset for better sound quality</p>
<b>Course Level &amp; Target Group</b>	Undergraduate students of all subjects with a strong interest in cultural studies, history, memory culture, and museums.
<b>Course Language</b>	This course is taught in English, including readings in English. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class a language level B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required.
<b>ECTS</b>	5 ECTS
<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. des. Anna Katharina Neufeld

## Course Description

Museums are keepers of our cultural memory. Collecting, preserving and exhibiting are their main tasks. But today this idea of a museum is not restricted to a building anymore. Instead of being limited to a closed space, the idea of a museum is everywhere and can be found in different forms of spaces and media.

Due to covid-19 and its different forms of closures we are forced to look at countries, cities and museums from a distance. The course will explore Berlin as a musealized space of cultural memory with museums. Alexander von Humboldt, Christopher Isherwood, David Bowie, Judith Schalansky and Jessica J. Lee will take us around various places in Berlin. Serving as magnifiers for a closer look at the idea of collecting, preserving and exhibiting we will follow these protagonists through different periods of

time. We will translate our observations and knowledge in a *hands on!* project, a little digital 'exhibition' on Instagram, calling it *BERLIN FROM FAR*.

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## Course Schedule

### Wednesday, 06.01.2021 – Introduction

Zoom-meeting

#### Assignment & Reading for 11.01.2021:

- Walter Benjamin (1936): "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility". In Michael W. Jennings/Brigid Doherty/Thomas Y. Levin (eds.): *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and other Writings on Media*. Cambridge/London 2008, pp. 19–55.
- Andrea Wulf: *The Invention of Nature. The Adventures of Alexander von Humboldt – The Lost Hero of Sciences*. London 2015, (Excerpts).
- Optional: Christina Ines Steingraber: *The Museum Island: Impressions of the Island of the Arts. Staatliche Museen Berlin* 2007, (Excerpts).

### Monday, 11.01.2021 – From the Museums Island to the Humboldt-Forum

Zoom-meeting

#### Reading for 13.01.2021:

- Christopher Isherwood (1939): "Goodbye to Berlin". In: ---: *The Berlin Stories*. New York 2008, pp. 207–226.

### Wednesday, 13.01.2021 – Isherwood's Berlin impressions

Zoom-meeting

#### Assignment & Reading for 16.01.2021:

- Dylan Jones: *David Bowie. A Life*. London 2018, pp. 250–252/262–281.
- Judith Schalansky (2018): "Palace of the Republic". In: ---: *An Inventory of Losses*, translated by Jackie Smith. Berlin 2019, (Excerpts).

### Monday, 16.01.2021 – Bowie, the collector

Zoom-meeting

Screening: *Good Bye Lenin* (Wolfgang Becker, GER 2003)

#### Reading for 20.01.2021:

- Jessica J. Lee: "under water" and "the swimmer's view". In: ---: *Turning. Lessons from Swimming Berlin's Lakes*. London 2017, pp. 3–20.

### Wednesday, 20.01.2021 – Swimming through today's Berlin

Zoom-meeting

#### Assignment for 25.01.2021:

Finish posts

### Monday, 25.01.2021 – *BERLIN FROM FAR*

Zoom-meeting

Launching *BERLIN FROM FAR* and goodbye from Berlin

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## Course Objective & Learning Outcomes

Covid-19 forces us to social distancing and at the same time urges us to reflect this process. Distance as a phenomenon that negotiates questions of presence and absence, original and copy, will accompany us through the course as we visit Berlin and its cultural history. Through the named protagonists – Alexander von Humboldt to Jessica J. Lee – we are permitted access to places in the city, different time periods, historical events, objects and subjects they met. These narratives teach us, that not only museums collect, preserve and exhibit and form cultural memory. In fact literature, films or the internet are also spaces that collect and save. They are collections and archives we deal with every day and that

give us a profound insight into historical sceneries.

Following these narratives we will see, how their sceneries add to each other, expand the picture and connect objects and subjects we meet. Doing this we will build up our own small collection of Berlin narratives and transform them into a presentation on Instagram, reflecting the experience of getting to know a city and its cultural memory from a distance and by different media. We will call the presentation *BERLIN FROM FAR* which exposes the experience of visiting and presenting something that is absent but nonetheless 'real'.

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## Readings

Reading materials will be available via Moodle during the course.

- Walter Benjamin (1936): "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility". In Michael W. Jennings/Brigid Doherty/Thomas Y. Levin (eds.): *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and other Writings on Media*. Cambridge/London 2008, pp. 19–55.
  - Andrea Wulf: *The Invention of Nature. The Adventures of Alexander von Humboldt – The Lost Hero of Sciences*. London 2015.
  - Christopher Isherwood (1939): "Goodbye to Berlin". In: ---: *The Berlin Stories*. New York 2008, pp. 207–226.
  - Dylan Jones: *David Bowie. A Life*. London 2018, pp. 250–252/262–281.
  - Judith Schalansky (2018): "Palace of the Republic". In: ---: *An Inventory of Losses*, translated by Jackie Smith. Berlin 2019, (Excerpts).
  - Jessica J. Lee: "under water" and "the swimmer's view". In: ---: *Turning. Lessons from Swimming Berlin's Lakes*. London 2017, pp. 3–20.
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## Assignments

In order to be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to actively attend all sessions (you may not miss more than one synchronous session), read all texts as available in Moodle, hand in weekly assignments, participate in *hands on!* project *BERLIN FROM FAR* – research, reflection, pictures, videos, etc. The Instagram presentation is the equivalent to a written academic paper.

Submission deadline: last course day.

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## Assessment Components

The final grade will be composed of weekly assignments and active participation in class (50%) and the final academic paper (50%).

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## Expectations & Policies

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

Group exercises, assignments, and self-study: complete all tasks according to the specified requirements on schedule including handing over to the lecturer.

Commitment in online-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 honour code and the student code of conduct (see *FAQs* on [www.huwisu.de](http://www.huwisu.de)).

Attendance policy: No unexcused absences are permitted. Students must contact their class lecturer to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the HUWISU office.

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## Your Instructor

Anna Katharina Neufeld studied English und German at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. After working for the International Literature Festival Berlin, at the German Historical Museum Berlin, as well as in the Jewish Museum Berlin, she now works as a freelance curator, curating several smaller exhibitions.

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As scholar of the Evangelisches Studienwerk e.V. she is currently finishing her PhD at the department of German and cultural studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on Dying narratives. In this context she has published articles, organized conferences and has worked as lecturer for different universities concentrating on altering aspects of her academic field.

Her focus on the present debate on death and dying, as well as her experiences in museology open her lectures for interdisciplinary approaches, which have accompanied her throughout her educational work. These are enriched by her interest in alternative forms of teaching and presentation.

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Please note that the course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: September 2020