

Jewish Narratives in Germany – Exploring Memory Past and Present

14 June – 9 July 2021

CATEGORY Cultural Studies & Religion

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course content is equivalent to an on-site course offering 45 contact hours. The study time includes:

- virtual classroom lessons with the lecturer and the fellow students (50%)
- group exercises (25%)
- assignments and self-study (25%)

TRACK C – WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOM LESSONS

- Course days: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- Time: 4.15 pm – 6.30 pm (Berlin time, UTC+2)
10.15 pm – 0.30 am (Beijing time, UTC+8)
0.15 am – 2.30 am (Sydney time, UTC+10)
9.15 am – 11.30 am (Chicago time, UTC-5)

COURSE LANGUAGE

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

TARGET GROUP

Undergraduate students of all subjects with an interest in interreligious and intercultural issues.

CREDITS = 5 ECTS

All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC)
- Stable internet connection
- Software: Zoom (video/audio)

- Registration on Moodle (HU's e-learning platform)
- Recommended hardware: external headset for better sound quality

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Learning extends beyond your virtual course! As a participant in HUWISU, you are invited to join cultural, social, and academic programs. Cultural activities are designed to help students meet fellow international students, learn more about Berlin, and practice German language abilities. Apply what you learn in class, share your extracurricular interests, and expand your social network beyond your course through these programs!



VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

With the support of the online format, HUWISU introduces new cultural and social activities. The cultural activities will be both synchronous and asynchronous.

Our scheduled live meetings might include games, cooking/baking together, or a trivia night. You still have the unique opportunity to build community across time zones and meet your fellow international students through synchronous programming. More information about the specifics is TBA.

Learn and read about Berlin history or German culture in between classes! No matter your field of study or interests, Berlin has artistic, political, and cultural significance. Take a look at the eBook "Perspectives on Berlin". It will include an extensive collection of digital resources about Berlin. Although you may be oceans away from Germany, connecting ourselves to Humboldt-Universität's culturally and historically rich location is still incredibly valuable.

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.

Assignments: complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them 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 honor code and the student code of conduct.

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Jewish life in Germany has had a tragic history in the 20th century, but it is still here and shaping Berlin and Germany. How is the history memorialized and how is Jewish life lived in the multi-cultural urban landscape today? Online lectures, videos, virtual tours, discussions and workshops will help us to find some answers.

In this online course the students will explore Jewish history in Germany – and its memorialization – from 1933 to the present. This will be accomplished through online lectures, readings, virtual tours of key sites, and workshops. In addition to the tragic history that has defined the 20th century experience, students will have an opportunity to explore aspects of contemporary Jewish life and topics that continue to shape Berlin and Germany more widely.

This online course is anthropologically inflected and treats the materials about the museums, memorials, and other urban spaces as field sites to be explored and analyzed critically. It is well-suited to students who are interested in religious studies, history, the social sciences, and/or more specific fields such as urban studies, ethics or museum studies.

It can stand alone as a course, be combined with another online course but particularly, it can be combined with the course offered in Summer Session 2: Interreligious and Intercultural Tensions in Germany.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Have first-hand experience of several key sites relating to Jewish history and contemporary life in Germany. Moreover, they will have developed some anthropological skills, such as, the conversation walk method and reflective participant observation with which they can explore and analyze the sites and surrounding discourses critically.
- They will have gained knowledge of and practice in key empirical field methods, which they will have used to approach a number of sites.
- They will be in a position to compare and contrast larger dominant narratives of memory about Jews with, the lived experience of Jews in Germany today. Such comparisons are essential to gaining a grounded and nuanced understanding of the complex topic at hand.

READINGS

1. Ostow, Robin. (2007). "From Displaying 'Jewish Art' to (Re)Building German-Jewish History: The Jewish Museum Berlin." In Vijay Agnew (ed.). *Interrogating Race and Racism*. University of Toronto Press. 289-319.
2. Feldman, Jackie and Anja Peleikis. (2014). "Performing the Hyphen. Engaging German-Jewishness at the Jewish Museum Berlin. „*Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23(2): 43-59.
3. Purin, Bernhard. (2008). "Building a Jewish Museum in Germany in the Twenty-First Century." In Robin Ostow (ed.). *Revisualizing National History. Museums and National Identities in Europe in the New Millennium*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 136-159.

4. Oppenheim, Jay. (2014). "Jewish Space and the Beschneidungsdebatte in Germany. Multiculturalism, Ritual and Cultural Reproduction." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23(2): 85-97.

5. Gromova, Alina. (2014). "Jewish Dating or Niche-making? A Topographical Representation of Youth Culture." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23(2): 11-25.

Suggested:

Fabian, Johannes. (2006) The other revisited: Critical afterthoughts. In *Anthropological Theory*. Vol. 6 (2): 139-152.

ASSIGNMENT INFO

1. Active attendance during the Zoom meetings.
2. Preparing the readings in advance, as assigned, and submitting discussion questions in advance of the class in question. Submitting the weekly virtual assignments on specific sites.
3. A individual or group presentation during the Zoom meetings in the final week of the course. It can be about an actual site or a more abstract topic. Do clear this in advance with the instructor. You are to introduce the site/topic and using the ideas we have explored in class, present your assessment of the site/topic and the potential further research interests and discussion questions that arise from your exploration of the topic. The presentation should be ca. 15 minutes in length.
4. Each student must hand in an individually-written research report (6-8 pages, double-spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman), which can be based on the presentation. Due date will be set closer to the time, but is usually fourteen days after the end of the course. The content should reflect the interests of the students as well as what will be explored together throughout the course. Specific guidelines for the report will be uploaded to the Moodle course.

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

YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Victoria Bishop Kendzia's teaching method, although anthropologically inflected, is interdisciplinary in nature and is, therefore, not limited to the social sciences.

It appeals to students from a wide variety of academic backgrounds from history to art, through to geography, theology, and politics.

The focus of her work is on the urban landscape, especially, but not only, museums and memorials in and around Berlin. In this context, locations are approached as field sites that can be read, explored, and critically analyzed as dynamic sites that project and reframe key aspects of history and culture. The urban laboratory that is Berlin is particularly well-suited to this endeavor, given the historical and cultural upheavals it has witnessed during the 20th century.

She defended her dissertation entitled: *The Jewish Museum Berlin: Visitor Experience in the Context of Political Education* in 2013 at the Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt University Berlin under the supervision of Prof. Wolfgang Kaschuba and Prof. Sharon Macdonald. Her doctoral work was based on ethnography of young Berlin-based high school students in and around the Jewish Museum Berlin. She has a background in Museum Studies,

having completed her master's degree in this field from the University of Toronto, Canada in 2001 and her Bachelor of Arts Honours at the same university in 1999. She has been publishing scholarly articles in her field since 2009 and teaching at the university level since 2008. Her most recent publication is the monograph, (December) 2017 *Visitors to the House of Memory. Political Education and Identity at the Jewish Museum Berlin*. London and New York: Berghahn Books.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The assignments will be explained in more detail on the Moodle course page. All reading and viewing material will be made available via Moodle.

Week 1: Introduction to the course and the Jewish Narrative in Germany. The larger culture of memory undertaken predominantly by non-Jewish agents will be explored here. **Zoom** meetings will take place on **Monday 14 June** and **Friday 18 June**. A virtual assignment based on the Jewish Museum Berlin and on readings 1-2 will be due on Wednesday 16 June.

Week 2: Exploration of further authentic sites (both "Jewish" and "non-Jewish"). **Zoom** meetings will take place on **Monday 21 June** and **Friday 25 June**. A virtual assignment based on other key sites tba (I will base this in the quality of online resources) and on the readings 3-4 will be due on Wednesday 23 June.

Week 3: Guest lecture and/or workshop on contemporary Jewish life. Details to be announced. **Zoom meetings** will take place on **Monday 28 June and Friday 2 July** of this week. A virtual assignment based on news media material (tba) and reading 5 will be due on Wednesday 30 June.

Current events will be discussed and analyzed during this week.

Week 4: Student presentations of individual/group projects and summary of the course. **Zoom** meetings will take place on **Monday 05 July** and **Wednesday 07 July** for the student presentations. A final **Zoom** meeting for feedback and summary discussion will take place on **Friday 9 July**.

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 03 May 2021