

Course title:	Berlin Architecture, Culture and City Marketing, 1750 - present
Instructor:	Dr. Christian Welzbacher
Email address:	welzmail@gmx.net
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS credits:	6
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher.

Course description

This course seeks to examine the meaning and significance of “architecture” in one of the most historically marked cities of Europe. Berlin has been subject to many waves of renewal, some gradual, some democratic and some totalitarian. All of these have left their traces on the city’s buildings.

Although we may notice or like the appearance of particular buildings we see everyday or as tourists, their size often makes it seem as though “they have always been there.” Still, these buildings are the result of many individual, social and communal decisions. A building says a lot about the ideas held during the time it was built in. Therefore, the course will include formal and stylistic analysis of the architecture as well as focus on the historical, ideological and individual context of the works through the prism of the following question: what kind of message was this building meant to convey? In this perspective, the course gives a wide overview of the development of public and private architecture in Berlin during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Following an introduction to the urban, political and cultural development and architectural history of Berlin since the middle ages, the Neo-Classical period will be surveyed with special reference to the works of Karl Friedrich Schinkel. This will be followed by classes on the developments of the German Reich after 1871, which was characterized by both modern and conservative tendencies and the manifold activities during the time of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s such as the Housing Revolution. The architecture of the Nazi period will be examined, followed by the developments in East and West Berlin after the Second World War and the traces of the Berlin wall, which are partly re-enacted. The course concludes with a detailed review of the city’s more recent and current architectural profiles, including an analysis of the conflicts concerning the re-design of Berlin after the Cold War and the German reunification.

Several walking tours to historically significant buildings and sites are included (Unter den Linden, Gendarmenmarkt, Potsdamer Platz, Holocaust Memorial, Humboldt-Forum etc.). The course aims to offer a deeper understanding of the interdependence of Berlin’s architecture

and the city's social and political structures in its historical development. It considers Berlin as a model for the highways and by-ways of a European capital in modern times.

Student profile

The course is open to students from any subject. An elementary knowledge of architecture and architectural history is welcome but not necessary.

Course requirements

Regular and active participation, Midterm exam, Final exam

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced intermediate level (B2) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>)

Grading

Attendance and participation: 40%

Midterm essay: 30%

Final presentation: 30%

Readings

A digital reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Tuesday, July 29, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM Introduction History of Berlin (urban, cultural, political and historical)
Friday, August 1, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM 1 st Study Trip: Berlin-Mitte, “Old center” of Berlin, Unter den Linden, Museum Island and Humboldt-Forum
Tuesday, August 5, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM Intro: From Classicism to Modernism right up to the “Third Reich” and postwar era 1800-1960

	2 nd Study Trip: Residential Architecture and Modernism, Berlin-Horseshoe Settlement, Neukölln-Britz.
Friday, August 8, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM 3 rd Study Trip – all day: Kreuzbergs Tenement Blocks, Architecture of the Third Reich, Tempelhof Airport, “Großbelastungskörper”
Tuesday, August 12, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM Midterm Essay 4 th Study Trip: East – West: Former Stalinallee/East Berlin, Hansa district (International Building Exhibition 1957 in West-Berlin)
Friday, August 15, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM Intro: City development, Architecture and Tourism from 1980 to to-day 5 th Study Trip: The wall – Checkpoint Charlie and Bernauer Straße
Tuesday, August 19, 2025	6 th Study Trip (all day): Architecture after the reunification From Postmodernism to new Simplicity – a new capital: Pariser Platz, US Embassy, Holocaust-Memorial, Kulturforum, Philharmonic hall, Potsdamer Platz.
Friday, August 22, 2025	09:00 AM – 3:30 PM Final Presentations Course Wrap-up FUBiS Farewell Ceremony

*Field trips are subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, class hours may be adjusted.