COURSE DETAIL

TWENTIETH CENTURY BERLIN: PEOPLE, PLACES, WORDS
Country Germany
Host Institution Free University of Berlin
Program(s) Berlin Summer
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) History German
UCEAP Course Number 106
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title TWENTIETH CENTURY BERLIN: PEOPLE, PLACES, WORDS
UCEAP Transcript Title 20C BERLIN
UCEAP Quarter Units 5.00
UCEAP Semester Units 3.30

Course Description

This course is about Berlin, and the story of its tumultuous and epoch defining twentieth century. This history is examined through various lenses: the biographies of individuals; the words of writers who bore witness to the vertiginous social, political, and physical changes the city underwent; and buildings and monuments whose physical construction, destruction and reconstruction reflected the ideological turmoil and conflict of twentieth century Berlin. Famous Berliners covered include the murdered Communist leader Rosa Luxemburg, the artist Käthe Kollwitz, the actress Marlene Dietrich, the Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, the adopted Berliner David Bowie, and the famous East German dissident musician Wolf Biermann. The contextualized stories of these individuals offer a unique perspectives politically, artistically, and socially into the tumult and struggle that marked their times in the city. These figures occupy a range of different positions as Berliners, as radicals, as artists of resistance to or collaboration with Nazism, and Communism, as drifters and exiles whose stories reflect Berlin's unique position in the twentieth century as no man's land, frontier, a city adrift in the sands of Central Europe. In a similar way, the course examines the words of writers who bore witness to the extremism and societal upheaval that marked twentieth century Berlin. From the witnessing of Roth and Isherwood to life in Weimar and Nazi Berlin, to the social and political commentary by Christa Wolf and Peter Schneider on the moral struggles of life lived on different sides of the Berlin Wall, the course assesses their writings in their historical contexts. Finally, the course covers the story of places in Berlin whose physical building, destruction, and rebuilding can be situated in the wider systems of ideology, power, and social relations that so cataclysmically defined the physical landscape of Berlin after 1933. In this, the focus is on the story of Potsdamer Platz, the Palace of the People and as an opposite postscript to Berlin's twentieth century, the Holocaust Memorial in Mitte. Structured largely chronologically, the course works with films and novels whilst building on a clear historiographical base provided in class seminars. The teaching is augmented by physical excursions into Berlin to trace the stories encountered and class discussions form the basis for a seminar paper that students are required to submit at the end of the course. This history course approaches the story of Berlin through the reflections

and refractions of individual humans' lives who struggled upon the immense stage of a city at the very symbolic and literal heart of the catastrophes of the twentieth century.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
3.03

Host Institution Course Title
TWENTIETH CENTURY BERLIN: PEOPLE, PLACES, WORDS

Host Institution Course Details
http://www.fubis.org/2_prog/term_3/term_3/syllabi/VAN_VUUREN_20th_Century_Berli…

Host Institution Campus
FUBiS- Track A

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

Course Last Reviewed
2022-2023

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