
Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 **Introduction to the course and contemporary German Topic**

After a short introduction to the course we will be 'setting the scene' for the weekend's work on **Berlin in the twentieth century**, as well as distributing a portfolio of texts which we will be reading together over the course of the weekend. This will be followed by a sharing and discussing of newspaper or magazine articles or other stories which have caught your eye and which deal with any aspect of German speaking culture.

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Historical and philosophical background to Berlin**

We will begin with a historical overview of how Berlin developed into the city it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. We will then examine how 'the city' (die Großstadt) as a phenomenon was perceived by the German romantics and how this informed consecutive generations of writers and thinkers in Germany up to the First World War. Through texts by authors such as Rainer Maria Rilke and Georg Simmel we will see how attitudes towards the urban space changed over time.

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Berlin Expressionism and the 'Flaneur'**

In this session we will concentrate on the period of the Weimar Republic and explore the visual art of the period, including the new cinematic techniques. We will also follow in Walter Benjamin's footsteps, as he explores the city of his childhood in modernist terms. We will read extracts from poems and prose of his contemporaries, which illustrate both the cultural flowering of the 'golden twenties' with their decadent overtones and the sense of foreboding of dark things to come that is encapsulated in them.

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00

Trümmerliteratur and post-war Berlin

In this session we will examine what effect the Nazi Regime and the destruction of Berlin had on its inhabitants and how it managed to move on in spite of the city's annihilation. Through texts we will see how fascism has permanently affected the German identity in terms of guilt. We will look at what forms this guilt takes in the thought and literature of the post-war period and compare it to the divisive effect of the Berlin wall on the German mind and the literary output that was triggered by it.

18:00 – 18:30

Free

18:30

Dinner

20:00 – 21:30

Viewing of Wim Wenders' film *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987)

The duration of the film is 125 mins. If everybody agrees we might start the viewing a little earlier than 8pm. We will, however, postpone the discussion of the film to the first session on Sunday morning.

21:30

Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30

Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30

Discussion of *Der Himmel über Berlin* and the texts by Peter Handke upon which it is based

In this session we will be sharing our impressions of the film and revisiting some scenes in detail to tease out Wenders' intentions. We will watch part of an interview with him in which he discusses the challenges of making *Der Himmel über Berlin* and we will examine some of the texts supplied by Peter Handke for the film and debate the success of their collaboration and how much the timing of the film's creation (two years before the wall came down) contributed to its long-lasting success.

10:30

Coffee

11:00 – 12:30

Berlin – quo vadis?

In this our final session we will be exploring the final decade of the twentieth century and how Berlin became – in term of its music scene – one of the trendiest cities in the world, outranking London, Paris and New York. It was a Berlin very much informed by the disappearance of the wall, a city as yet somewhat directionless in its aftermath, in which raves and techno warehouse parties took place in famous clubs such as the *Berghain*, which existed as virtually lawless spaces. In this 'post-traumatic moment of upheaval' (T. Rapp) pop culture and pop literature flourished and we will be examining poems and extracts from works of that genre, while reflecting on the direction Berlin is taking at present.

12:45

Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- To further the students' knowledge about Berlin's History during the twentieth century and how the dramatic events of that period have shaped not only the city in its current form but also the identity of its people.
- To develop the students' understanding of the cultural identity of Berlin as an interplay between imagined city and real urban environment.
- To extend students' vocabulary and grammar of the target language.
- To increase students' confidence when expressing themselves in the target language.

Content:

This course is designed to provide an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in German language, history and culture. The language spoken is German throughout, though some exchanges on issues of grammar and vocabulary might be dealt with in English. Newspaper articles on subjects of current interest as well as audio-visual materials will be provided to practise comprehension and speaking skills. For the first session on Friday students are encouraged to bring along and to present a short news item relating to any German topic of their choice. Saturday and Sunday will be devoted to exploring the cultural identity of Berlin in the twentieth century. The students will at first be given an overview of the History of Berlin after which important trends and events will be illustrated by means of short extracts from theoretical, literary and filmic works which best reflect these.

Presentation of the course:

The main objective of this course is to give students ample opportunity to practise their speaking and reading skills, so the emphasis will be on discussing a range of short written texts and audio-visual material presented during the course. Some work will be done in pairs or small groups to make the best use of the time available

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- develop a deeper understanding of the History of Berlin and of its Culture, both visual and literary, and of some of the philosophical concepts to do with 'Großstadt' through the exploration of theoretical texts by authors such as Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel; as well as fictional texts by Rainer Maria Rilke, Erich Kästner, Alfred Döblin, Wolfgang Borchert etc.
- formulate questions and express opinions in German about any of the issues treated during the course.
- contribute to the discussion of other course material in the target language.
- broaden the participants' range of vocabulary and of grammatical structures in the target language.
- increase fluency in the target language.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Benjamin, Walter:	<i>Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert</i> ;	Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt a.M. 1992.
Benjamin, Walter;	<i>Einbahnstraße</i> ;	Rowohlt Verlag, Berlin 1929
Simmel, Georg:	<i>Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben</i> ;	Th. Petermann Verlag, Dresden 1903.
Fähnders, Walter:	<i>Avantgarde und Moderne</i> ;	J.B. Metzler Verlag, Stuttgart 2010.
Hecken, Thomas u.a.;	<i>Popliteratur. Eine Einführung</i> ;	J.B. Metzler, Stuttgart 2015.
Rilke, Rainer Maria:	<i>Gesammelte Werke</i> ;	Insel Verlag, Frankfurt a. M. 1996.
Kästner, Erich:	<i>Sonderbares vom Kurfürstendamm</i> ;	Atrium Verlag, Zürich 2016
Hotz, Karl:	<i>Im Meer der Stadt. Großstadtgedichte</i> ;	C.C. Buchner-Verlag, Bamberg 2010

Website addresses

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

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