Life in the Divided City: A History of Postwar Berlin, 1945 to 2009

History 27s, Mon/Wed, 9:00 – 10:30, Room 60-119
Fall 2009
Instructor: Katharina Matro
kmatro@stanford.edu
Office Hours: Room 200-215, Tue 12.30 to 2 p.m. and by appt.

Berlin was one of the most important stages for Cold War drama. In 1945, the Allies divided the German city into four different sectors of occupation. In 1961, the East German Communist government with Soviet approval, severed the Eastern Sector of the city from the Western parts of town for good by building the Berlin Wall. More than twenty years later, in November 1989, East Berliners brought the Wall down in a peaceful revolution that would officially mark the end of the Cold War. Twenty years after the fall of the Wall, many argue that Berlin and Germany itself are still divided and that the Wall persists in the minds of many Germans.

This course sheds light on the questions: What was it like to live in this divided city? How did East and West Berliners live with the constant threat of Soviet tanks in their midst? What were Berliners’ attitudes towards the Superpowers who controlled the fate of their city? How did the Superpowers in turn view Berlin?

Students will explore these questions with the help of a wide range of primary sources including official declarations by the Allies, speeches, Berliners’ diaries, novels, examples of East and West Berlin art, popular music and film. Topics include: the emergence of the Cold War, postwar reconstruction, the 1960s youth protests in the West, life under Stasi surveillance, the fall of the Wall, and remembering Berlin’s Nazi past. Throughout this course we will ask how Berlin’s fate was determined by outside forces, while never forgetting that Berliners themselves actively shaped their lives in a divided city. In the last few weeks of the course, we will study how Berliners have dealt with the disillusionment brought by German unification and how East and West Berliners tell the history of their city today – twenty years after the Iron Curtain fell.

A trip to the Hoover Archives will be an integral part of the course. Any students interested in postwar European history are welcome. No prior knowledge of European history is required. This course might be of special interest to those planning on attending the Stanford-in-Berlin program during their junior year.

Requirements:

1. Participation: I expect you to come to class having read all of the assigned readings and prepared to talk about them. I care not only about how much you participate but especially about the quality and thoughtfulness of your comments in class. To help you prepare for each discussion, I would like you to write a 150-200-word blog entry and submit this on the course
webpage by 10 p.m. the night before class. You may write an original entry or comment on someone else’s post. Your entries should pose at least one question that arises out of that day’s assigned readings. As part of class participation, you will also be asked to read and thoroughly comment on one of your peer’s research paper drafts.

2. Research Paper Topic Statement, due October 7. [I will give you a handout with detailed instructions for research and writing in Week 2.]

3. Midterm Paper (4 pages), due October 16 at midnight in your coursework dropbox. In your midterm papers, I would like you to discuss one primary source of your choosing that you may eventually use in your final research paper. This paper is meant to be a reflection on the nature and usefulness of the source you picked. I would like you to address the following questions: What kind of source is it? Where did you find it? Why did you pick this source? How will this source help you make an argument? What challenges might you encounter in interpreting this source and/or in integrating it into a historical narrative?


5. Rough Draft of Final Paper, due November 20 at midnight in your coursework dropbox.

6. Final Paper (8-10 pages), due December 10; drop off hard copies with Elva Garcia in the History Department office by 4 p.m..

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**Grading:**

1. Participation 30%
2. Midterm Paper 15%
3. Topic Statement and Outline 10%
4. Rough Draft 15%
5. Presentation 10%
6. Final Draft 20%

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**Readings:**

In this course we will be using the following books, which you may purchase at the Stanford Bookstore (or online). Copies of the books will also be put on reserve in Green Library.

The class course reader, which holds additional required readings, is available for purchase from Copy America (at 344 California Avenue). Assigned readings from this reader are marked (CR) below. I will also post readings on the class website. Those readings are marked (web) below. Please refer to the Schedule of Classes for each week’s assigned readings.

Absence Policy

Attendance in this class is mandatory. Absences will only be excused for illness or family emergencies with advance notice (unless this is absolutely impossible). To make up an excused absence, you must submit a 1-2 double-spaced page response to the day’s readings (due date to be decided with instructor) and attend office hours to discuss missed material. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. You should not miss more than two meetings.

A Note on Disabilities

I strongly encourage students with disabilities to notify me if it will help their learning experience in this course. Students who have a disability that may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class must initiate the request at the Disability Resource Center (723-1066).

Honor Code

Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the Honor Code. For more details please consult http://judicialaffairs.stanford.edu
Schedule of Classes

Part I: The Division of the City

Week 1

September 21  Introduction

September 23  The Allies in Berlin

Primary Sources:
Read the following documents posted on the class website:

Secondary Reading:
- Mary Fulbrook, History of Germany, “Occupation and Division,” pp. 113-142
- Norman Naimark, The Russians in Germany, pp. 69-140. (handout)

Week 2

September 28  Life in Berlin at ‘Zero Hour’

Primary Source:

September 30  The Berlin Airlift 1948-1949

Primary Sources:
- American film clips on the Airlift operations (shown in class)
- Ernst Reuter, “People of this World,” September 9, 1948. (handout in class)
- Times Magazine article from September 1950 on Ernst Reuter (web)

Week 3
October 5  

**Berlin Rising, 17 June 1953**

**Primary Sources:**
- Memorandum from Lavrentiy Beria to the CPSU CC Presidium regarding Mass Defections from the GDR, 6 May 1953. (web)
- Cable from the Czechoslovak Mission in Berlin to Foreign Minister Vaclav David, 4:30 p.m., 17 June 1953. (web)
- Situation Report from Andrei Grechko and Nikolai Tarasov to Nikolai Bulganin, received 6:30 p.m. Moscow Time (4:30 CET), 17 June 1953. (web)
- Report from A. Grechko and Tarasov in Berlin to N.A. Bulganin, 17 June 1953.
- The Report to the SED Central Committee, Analysis of the Preparation, the Outbreak, and the Suppression of the “Fascist Adventure” from 16. to 22. June, 1953. (web)

**Secondary Reading:**

October 7  

**Research Paper Writing Workshop, TOPIC STATEMENT DUE.** You should have started thinking about your research papers by now. Come to class with a 150-200 word topic statement and be prepared to share this with the class. Your topic statement should contain at least one question (with a question mark at the end of that sentence) that you hope to answer with your research paper.

Week 4  

[Midterm Paper due October 16, at midnight in your coursework dropbox]

October 12  

**Khrushchev and Ulbricht build the Wall**

**Primary Sources:**
- Read Documents 1-3, and Document 9 in the Chapter “Shadow of the Wall” on the GHI’s website: [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_doclist.cfm?sub_id=29&section_id=15](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_doclist.cfm?sub_id=29&section_id=15) or on the website. (web)
- Listen to President Kennedy’s Speech at the Schöneberger Rathaus in Berlin, on 26 June 1963 at the Kennedy Library website (“Remarks at Rudolf Wilde Platz”) (web)
Secondary Reading:
- Hope M. Harrison, Driving the Soviets Up the Wall, pp. 139-223. (CR)


Primary Sources:
- Map of Berlin divided by the Wall (web)
- Read Documents 4-8 in the Chapter “Shadow of the Wall” on the GHI’s website: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_doclist.cfm?sub_id=29&section_id=15 (web)
- Look at Images 1-6 in the Chapter “Shadow of the Wall on the GHI’s website: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_imglist.cfm?sub_id=106&section_id=15 (web)

Secondary Reading:
- Patrick Major, “Going west: the open border and the problem of Republikflucht,” in Major and Osmond, eds., pp. 190-208. (CR)

Part 2: The Divided City

Week 5

October 19  German Societies Diverge

Primary Sources:
- Short Stories by East German writers: Friedrich Wolf, “Anna and the Men’s Strike;” Irina Liebmann, “Sybille N.” (CR)
- Documents 2, 3, 5, and 13 in the Chapter “Transformations of Culture and Consumption,” and Documents 1 and 2 in the Chapter “Gender Roles and Relationships in Upheaval” on GHI’s website http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/section.cfm?section_id=15 (web)

Secondary Reading:

October 21  

**Visit to the Hoover Archives**: The European curator Brad Bauer will give us a tour of the postwar Germany/Berlin holdings of the Hoover Archives. This is to get you started thinking about your final paper and which sources you might want to use. I would strongly encourage you to use the Hoover Archives for your research. Their Cold War holdings are exhaustive. Plus, it is a lot of fun to work in a “real archive” when you are doing research for a history paper. You might want to think about a few questions you want to ask Brad. He is very knowledgeable and will show us a wide variety of documents.

Week 6  

[Outline for Final Paper due October 26 in class]

October 26  

**1968: Protests in the West and Dissent in the East**

**Primary Documents:**
- Photographs by “Kommune 1,” a Marxist group living in a “commune” arrangement in West Berlin (handout in class)
- Read Documents 2, 4-6, and 10 in the chapter entitled “Generational Rebellion” on the GHI website at [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_doclist.cfm?sub_id=34&section_id=15](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_doclist.cfm?sub_id=34&section_id=15)  
- Stephan Hermlin, “Open Letter to the GDR-leadership to protest the expatriation of Wolf Biermann,” November 17, 1976. (handout in class)

**Secondary Reading:**

October 28  

**Life with the Stasi**

**Primary Source:**

**Week 7**

**November 2  ** *Normalization? The 1980s in the Divided City*

**Primary Source:**
Peter Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*, read entire.

**Secondary Source** [recommended]:

**November 4  ** *The Fall of the Wall*

**Primary Sources:**
- “Dateline Berlin 1989,” ABC News, watch in class. (ca. 23 minutes)
- Helmut Kohl’s Ten-Point Plan for German Unity (November 28, 1989) (web)

**Secondary Source:**

**Week 8**

**November 9  ** *Unification*

**Primary Sources:**

Secondary Source:
- Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, Germany Unified and Europe Transformed, pp. 251-327. (CR)
- Robert L. Hutchings, “The United States, German Unification and European Integration,” in Frédéric Bozo et al., eds., The End of the Cold War in Europe. A Reappraisal, pp. 119-132. (CR)

Part III: Berlin United

November 11  A Unified City?

Primary Sources:
- Unemployment statistics, 1990-2009 from all local Berlin unemployment offices. (web)

Secondary Source:

Week 9 [Rough Drafts due on November 20 at midnight in your coursework dropbox]

November 16 Little Istanbul -- Berlin’s Foreigners

Primary Sources:
- Turkish-German Hip-Hop Songs, play in class, translations handed out in class.
- Film clips of “Knallhart -- Tough Enough” (Detlev Buck, 2006) about a school in Berlin’s Neukölln district, shown in class (ca. 30 minutes)
- “Giving Turkish-German Kids a Chance,” Der Spiegel International Edition at http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,394303,00.html (web)
Secondary Source: 

November 18 **Remembering Berlin’s Past**

**Primary Sources:** Browse the following websites and think about the ways in which the institutions represented here preserve Berlin’s past. From what you can glean from these websites, do you think the institutions are successful in their missions? (Can you figure out where these places are on a map of Berlin?)

- Berlin Wall Memorial, Bernauer Straße [http://www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de/index_e.html](http://www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de/index_e.html)

Secondary Source: 

Thanksgiving Break, November 24 to 28

Week 10 Mini History Conference on Postwar Berlin [Final Drafts due December 10 at 4 p.m. in the History Department office]

November 29 **Student Presentations**
December 2 **Student Presentations**
Sample Reading Questions

Before each class discussion, I posted reading questions for the relevant readings on our “class blog” at http://history27s.wordpress.com/. Students were supposed to post short responses to the readings on this blog before the relevant class discussion. I also encouraged them to use the blog to share relevant links and newspaper and magazine articles and to comment on each others’ posts. The following are samples of reading questions posted on the website:

Week 1

The Allies in Berlin
On Wednesday, we’ll be talking about the Allied occupation of Berlin and Allied plans for all of Germany. You’re reading two documents. One on how Berlin was to be governed by the Allied Governments; the other is the Potsdam Agreement that finalized Allied plans for postwar Germany (from August 1945).

1. What are the Allies’ plans for Germany in the summer of 1945? What is the tone of voice in these documents? (Other than that it’s official sounding, of course.)
3. How do you imagine Berlin looks like under the Allies in the summer of 1945?
4. What do you think are the advantages to governing this city with separate Allied forces? And disadvantages?

You’re also reading a chapter in Norman Naimark’s book on the Soviet Occupation of East Germany. He writes a lot about the Soviet Soldiers’ attitude towards defeated Germany and the Germans and you should keep his findings in mind as you read the official documents.

Naimark was also one of the first historians to openly write about and discuss the issue of rape.

1. Do you agree that rape is a method of warfare? Why or why not?
2. Does Naimark’s text help us understand why Red Army soldiers committed rape so frequently? Are you convinced by his arguments?
3. Naimark’s book was written in 1995. Why do you think this issue of rape had not really been systematically discussed before? — Even though it was the experience of so many German women? Would you say that it took an American historian to write about it? Do you think it matters whether a male or a female historian writes about this issue?

Week 2

Life in the Occupied City
For Monday, you’re reading the diary of a ca. 30 year-old Berlin woman who describes life in Berlin in the two months following the Russian conquest of Berlin. I’d like you to read this diary with Wednesday’s discussion (and especially the Naimark chapter) in mind.

1. First, I’d like you to note down or highlight things that surprise or strike you. Is there anything in here that you didn’t expect? That you find worth mentioning?
2. What are the themes that the diarist raises repeatedly? Where do you find allusions to the themes we discussed on Wednesday?
3. In the context of war and occupation, which things become important to the civilian population of a large city? How is civilian life different from the lives of the soldiers? Is it very different at all?
4. What kinds of choices are people forced to make in the context of occupation and war? Do we have to excuse certain choices (plunder, prostitution, etc.), which we would otherwise condemn? Do we get to “judge” the past? Or is everything relative — dependent on historical context and circumstance?
5. How — in the view of the diarist — have gender roles changed throughout the war? Can you imagine what consequences this shift might have had for the following postwar period?
6. How does the author deal with the difficult issue of rape in her entries? Are there parallels to the Naimark chapter here? In other words, does her experience corroborate his findings?
7. Pay attention to the style and tone of the diarist. This is not really a “diary,” is it? It’s a heavily edited version of a diary. Does recognizing that fact matter for how we interpret the text?
8. Does it matter that we don’t know who the author is? As historians, are we still allowed to draw conclusions from this text about live in occupied Berlin?
9. Why do you think the author insisted on remaining anonymous?
10. Can you speculate on the relative — especially recently — commercial success of this text (translations into several languages, several editions since the first publication in the 1950s, a movie….)?

Week 6

Rebellion
On Monday, we will be talking about forms of protest against the establishment in both East and West Berlin. I’d ask you, as I did last week, to consider all readings together.

1. What are the main demands of the West Berlin student groups? What motivates their protests? What is the historical context that helps us explain their dissatisfaction (you might have to look back to the Fulbrook reading from Monday as well)?
2. Why do you think the shot that killed Benno Ohnesorg was the “shot that changed the Republic”? Can one single incident do that?
3. Why do you think Communism was such an attractive ideology to the students of West Berlin’s Free University?
4. What do you think East German dissident intellectuals would have said about the West Berlin students’ protests and demands?
5. What are the main points of criticism Hermlin, Krug and Bahro level against the system of the GDR? Do they want to replace Communism with Capitalism?
6. What do these different kinds of protests mean for German unity or German division?

Week 9

Turks in the Berlin Republic
Here are some questions for you to think about before coming to class on Monday:

1. Why did “integration” become such a hot topic in Germany during the last decade?
2. How, according to the Spiegel journalists, has Germany failed in its efforts to integrate foreigners? What are the proposed solutions for better integration? What would “better integration” even mean?
3. We haven’t talked much about the “immigrant”-issue in the past two months. But can you think of anything in Germany’s postwar history that would explain the “integration problem”? Or, in your opinion, is the problem very similar to immigration-related problems in, say, France or the United States?
4. According to White, how did 1989 and unification change the situation of the Turkish community in Berlin (and in Germany)?
5. White is an anthropologist. How do her methods of investigation and argumentation differ from the methods of a historian? Do you think a historian could write about this (very contemporary) topic? What evidence would the historian use?

Week 10

Historical Memory in Berlin
On Wednesday, we’ll talk about how history is remembered in today’s Berlin. Where do we see the past in Berlin’s cityscape? And what do reminders of the past evoke for different people (American tourists, West Germans, East Germans, immigrants, etc.)?

I asked you to read two chapters in Karen Till’s book on the “New Berlin.” Karen Till is a geographer at the University of Minnesota. So, again, you’ll find that her way of arguing differs from a historian’s way of arguing.

1. Till argues that people “make” places in order to make sense of who they are and tell stories about themselves that are meaningful to them. Do you agree with her? Can you think of other instances of “place making” (in other cities around the world)?
2. Do you think Berlin’s (and Germany’s) history should be remembered by dedicating memorials to past events?
3. Why do so many different people participate in the decisions on how to officially remember Germany’s past in Berlin’s cityscape?
4. Why are different interpretations of Germany’s past so controversial? Why are they so political? Why does the past matter so much and to whom? Which of the different possible interpretations of German history do the different Memorial proposals represent?
5. What, do you think, should be the function of a German Holocaust Memorial? Given this function, which of the proposals Till discusses do you find most useful and most effective? (The Bus Stop? The Memorial that was eventually built?) Why was the current Memorial’s design chosen? Why were others discarded?

6. Memorials are usually constructed to remember something. Can they also serve to forget?

7. I realize that it’s hard to get a sense of what these memorials look like without physically traveling to Berlin, but browse through the links that I posted under “Readings” to get a sense of the different institutions mentioned in the Till reading (plus some other places that commemorate the GDR-past). From what you can gather through the web, which one of these places fulfills the functions of a memorial most successfully?