Northeastern University School of Architecture
BERLIN PROGRAM

Berlin Architecture and Urbanism: Inventing the Modern City
Spring 2011
Instructor: Jan Otakar Fischer - architect and critic, Berlin

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of the buildings, architects, and theories that have shaped Berlin’s identity. The classes are organized with coordinated site visits that familiarize students with the historical background of the city and help them develop a critical and personal approach to looking at architecture. The buildings we visit have been selected for their architectural significance as well as their reflection of the different periods of Berlin’s complex history.

The survey is divided into two roughly chronological sections that cover the essential themes of Berlin’s architectural evolution over the last two centuries. In Part I we start with the emergence of Berlin as a modern European city at the beginning of the 19th century and conclude with the destruction of the Second World War. In Part II we compare the efforts on both sides of the Wall to rebuild according to ideological principles determined by the Cold War, and show how reunification offered Berlin a chance to reinvent itself as a contemporary capital. We close by asking what lessons have been learned during the boom and bust of the post-1989 era.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation/Attendance 20%. Students must complete the assigned readings and attend all lectures and site visits.

Midterm Exam 20%. Based on the readings and lectures for the first half of the course.

Short Papers/Projects 30%. Students will create two short written and/or visual projects—potentially linked thematically—about a specific work of Berlin architecture or urbanism. Students will choose a building or site, research and investigate the work, and present the findings. The first assignment will be based on the book, The Ghosts of Berlin (see below).

Final exam 30%. Based on the readings and lectures for the second half of the course.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Architekturführer Berlin (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2001).

PART I: CONSOLIDATION AND CONVULSION (1815-1945)
Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841), surely the greatest architect and designer of Germany’s 19th century, left an indelible stamp on Berlin and helped create the image of an increasingly powerful Prussian state during the Biedermeier era. Schinkel’s buildings, which still dominate the city, reveal a subtle but revolutionary transformation in the classical language that influenced all of his German successors.

As the Industrial Revolution took hold in Prussia in the mid-1800s, Berlin experienced intense economic and demographic growth, further enhanced after the city became capital of a unified Germany in 1871. New housing forms known as Mietkasernen, or “rental barracks,” came to define the urban context, but it was the appearance of a new industrial architecture inaugurated by Peter Behrens’s AEG Turbine Hall (1909) that was to open the door for modernism.

During the unstable Weimar Republic Berlin experienced an architectural renaissance fueled by the collective talent of such vanguard architects as Eric Mendelsohn, Mies van der Rohe, Hans Poelzig, and Bruno and Max Taut, who gradually steered design away from Expressionism and towards a “new objectivity,” or Neue Sachlichkeit. The Bauhaus, founded in 1919 and given an iconic home in Dessau by Walter Gropius in 1926, spawned a generation of architects and designers eager to advance new forms, materials, and methods.

Hitler’s ascent to power in 1933 forced the avant-garde underground or into exile, and the Nazis established their own reactionary design agenda. Albert Speer’s plans for a new capital called “Germania” built within Berlin were only partially realized before WWII began. The allied bombing raids and Soviet invasion left Berlin in ruins, and capitulation suggested a Stunde Null, a “year zero,” in the city’s—and the nation’s—political and cultural life.

**Schinkel and the Biedermeier era (1815-1871) – 4.5 hours**

**Session 1 (in class- 2 hours):** Lecture: K. F. Schinkel and the Prussian Parvenu  
Readings:  

**Session 2 (field trip- 2.5 hours):** The city as a stage: Schinkel’s buildings in the Mitte  
Site-visits: Neue Wache (1816-18), Schauspielhaus (1818-21), Altes Museum (1822-30), Friedrich-Werder Kirche (1824-30), Bauakademie (mock-up, 1831-36)  
Reading:  

**Industrial Revolution and the Gründerzeit (1871-1918) – 4.5 hours**

**Session 3 (in class- 2 hours):** Lecture: Urban Expansion and the Mietskaserne
Readings:

**Session 4 (field trip- 2,5 hours):** Industrial architecture and early modernism

Site-visits:
Peter Behrens, AEG Turbine Hall (1909) or High Voltage Plant (1909-13) and Small Engine Factory (1910-13)

Reading:

**Weimar Republic and Neues Bauen (1918-1933) – 11 hours**

**Session 5 (in class- 2 hours):** Lecture: The Berlin Interwar Avant-Garde

Reading:

**Session 6 (field trip- 2,5 hours):** The Siedlung and the Suburb

Site-visit:
Bruno Taut w/ M. Wagner, Hufeisensiedlung Britz (1925-30) or Onkel Toms Hütte (1926-31)

Reading:

**Session 7 (field trip- 2,5 hours):** Neue Sachlichkeit (the New Objectivity)

Site-visit:
Mies van der Rohe, Haus Lemke (1932) or Hans and Wassili Luckhardt and Alfons Anker, Haus am Rupenhorn 25 (1930) or Bernau: Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer, Trade Union School (1930).

Readings:

**Session 8 (field trip- 4 hours):** The Bauhaus

Site-visits:
Dessau: Walter Gropius, Bauhaus and Masters’ Houses Estate (1926-29)

Readings:

**Nazism and World War II (1933-1945) – 5 hours**

**Session 9 (in class – 2 hours):** Lecture: Hitler, Speer, and the Vision of “Germania”
Readings:

Session 10 (field trip- 2 hours): Olympia
Site-visit:
Werner March, Olympic stadium complex (1934-36)
Readings:

Session 11 (in class-1 hour): Midterm Exam

PART II: DIVISION AND REVISION (1945-2005)

With the establishment of two German states after WWII, reconstruction assumed different guises on either side of the Wall. In Communist East Berlin Soviet-sanctioned historicism was eventually replaced by the functional modernism of the prefabricated Plattenbau, while in West Berlin international building exhibitions (IBAs) attempted to address the physical and infrastructural deficiencies facing a city made an island by the Cold War.

After reunification and the German Parliament’s vote, in 1991, to move the capital from Bonn to Berlin, the world watched with fascination as the city began forging yet another identity. The (re)installation of government institutions in the heart of Berlin, along with the huge commercial complex grouped mainly around the Potsdamerplatz have given the city a new image. Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum, Norman Foster’s renovated Reichstag, and Frank Gehry’s DG Bank are among the most high-profile projects, but many other less publicized works have emerged by talented local designers.

The last few years have witnessed the completion of the Holocaust Memorial by Peter Eisenman, the Soccer World Cup in 2006, and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, capping two decades of profound change in the city. For the time being construction has slowed in the once booming capital, and this gives us a chance to reflect on how the many changes have affected the character of Berlin, and to what extent the city is a model for urban development in other 21st century cities.

Cold War and reconstruction (1945-1989) – 11,5 hours

Session 12 (in class– 2 hours): Lecture: Parallel Worlds—Postwar Responses to Modernism (Part I)
Reading:

Session 13 (field trip- 2,5 hours): East Berlin – Stalinallee and Alexanderplatz
Site-visits:
housing and commercial buildings on the Karl-Marx-Allee and Alexanderplatz
Reading:

Session 14 (field trip- 2,5 hours): West Berlin - Interbau Hansaviertel
Site-visits:
Apartment buildings by Alvar Aalto, Paul Baumgarten, Egon Eiermann, Walter Gropius, Arne
Jacobsen, Le Corbusier (Westend), Oscar Niemeyer, and others (1957); Werner Düttmann,
Akademie der Künste (1960)
Reading:
- Francesca Rogier, “The Monumentality of Rhetoric: The Will to Rebuild in Postwar Berlin,” in
  Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture, Sarah Williams

Session 15 (in class– 2 hours): Lecture: Parallel Worlds—Postwar Responses to Modernism (Part
II)
Reading:
- Julius Posener, “Häring, Scharoun, Mies, and Le Corbusier,” in From Schinkel to the Bauhaus,
- Kenneth Frampton, “Genesis of the Philharmonie,” in Labor, Work and Architecture: Collected

Session 16 (field trip- 2,5 hours): From Center to Edge to Center – Scharoun’s Kulturforum
Site-visits:
Mies van der Rohe, Neue Nationalgalerie (1965-68); Hans Scharoun, Philharmonie (1960-63) and
Staatsbibliothek (1967)
Readings:
- Peter Blundell Jones, “Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin 1968,” in Modern
- Peter Blundell Jones, “Hugo Häring and the theory of organ-like building,” in Hans Scharoun

The fall of the Wall and reunification (1989 to the present) – 11,5 hours

Session 17 (in class– 2 hours): Lecture: Building the Berlin Republic
Reading:
- Hans Stimmann, introduction to The City in Black: The Physionomy of Central Berlin 1940-2010
  (Berlin: Nicolai, 2002).

Session 18 (field trips- 3 hours): The “Spreebogen” Government District
Site-visits:
Schultes & Frank, Federal Chancellery; Stephan Braunfels, Paul-Löbe-Haus; Paul Wallot,
Reichstag (1884) – renovation by Norman Foster (1999); Diener & Diener, Swiss Embassy and
others
Reading:
-Michael Z. Wise, “Designing New Images of Power,” in Capital Dilemma: Germany’s Search for a

Session 19 (field trip- 2 hours): Trace and Absence
Site-visits:
Daniel Libeskind, Jewish Museum (2001) and/or Peter Eisenman (with Richard Serra), Memorial to
the Murdered European Jews (2005)
Readings:

*Session 20 (field trips- 3 hours)*: New Directions in the 21st Century

**Site-visits:**

**Reading:**

**Session 21 (in class-1.5 hours):** Final Exam

(*) indicates a site visit scheduled outside of the normal class time.

**Instructor**
Raised in New York City, **Jan Otakar Fischer** graduated from Williams College in 1985 with Honors in the History of Ideas and later went to the Harvard University Graduate School of Design to receive his Masters in Architecture in 1990. He is a regular contributor to a wide range of publications, including *The New York Times*, *the Harvard Design Magazine*, *the International Herald Tribune*, and *the Architectural Record*, writing chiefly about European architecture and urbanism. Since 2009 he has been a contributing editor at *Places* magazine (http://places.designobserver.com/). He teaches urban studies and history at the IES Berlin Metropolitan Studies Program, and has served as an invited guest critic or lecturer at the Technische Universität in Berlin, the University of Warsaw Architecture School, and the Architectural Association in London. He has worked as an architect in Berlin since 1994, and was co-founder of the Lexia Berlin Architecture Program.

**Prerequisites**
This course requires that the following prerequisites be completed satisfactorily before you will be allowed to take this course. If it is discovered that you have not completed these prerequisites, you may be dropped from the course at any time during the semester:

ARCH 2340 Twentieth Century Architecture and Urbanism

**GRADING**
The Architecture Department guidelines for studio course grading can be found at the following web site:
http://www.architecture.neu.edu/student_resources/grading_policy/lecture_course

**Academic Honesty**
Northeastern University is committed to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity. All members of the Northeastern community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work in tests and assignments. If you have any questions regarding proper attribution of the work of others, contact your professor prior to submitting work for evaluation. For more detail refer to:
http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academicichonesty.html
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Key terms/names:  

Schinkel era:  
Biedermeier, Cölln, The Great Elector, Enlightenment (Aufklärung), Frederick the Great, Caspar David Friedrich, Eduard Gärtner, Friedrich Gilly, Carl Gotthard Langhans, Peter Joseph Lenné, Ludwig Persius, Romanticism, Andreas Schlüter  

Gründerzeit/Industrial era:  
AEG, Peter Behrens, Otto von Bismarck, Borsig, Georges-Eugène Haussmann, historicism, James Hobrecht, Marxism, Adolf Menzel, Alfred Messel, Mietskaserne, Emil and Walter Rathenau, Siemens, Friedrich August Stüler, Kaiser Wilhelm I and II  

Weimar era:  
Dada, Expressionism, Neue Sachlichkeit, Bauhaus, Siedlung, Bruno Taut, Max Taut, Eric Mendelsohn, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Hans Scharoun, Hans and Wassili Luckhardt with Alfons Anker, Martin Wagner, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Heinrich Tessenow, Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer, Hans Poelzig  

Nazi era:  

Postwar era:  

Post-Wall era:  
Hans Stimmann, Axel Schultes w/ Charlotte Frank, Norman Foster, Stephan Braunfels, Helmut Jahn, Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Günter Behnisch, Sauerbruch and Hutton, Josef Paul Kleihues, Renzo Piano, Davis Chipperfield, Peter Eisenman, Peter Zumthor, “Planwerk Innenstadt”
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Paper/Project Assignment I:
The book, The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape by Brian Ladd remains one of the best critical analyses of the post-Wall topography of Berlin. When the Wall was breached in 1989, and shortly thereafter the historic steps were taken to reunify Germany and make Berlin the nation’s capital once again, the consequences for the formerly divided city were profound. Controversies concerning reconnection, reconstruction, restitution, and memorialization seemed to arise everywhere planning decisions needed to be made. How should Berlin be made whole? Which urban model should be employed, that of the 19th or 20th century city? How should one to deal with reminders of the Nazi and communist past? How best to commemorate the crimes of those regimes? Two decades later, these questions are far from settled.

Ladd’s book served as an excellent primer for those wishing to understand Berlin’s complicated urban landscape, but it was published in 1997—fourteen years ago, a long time in the scheme of the city’s rapid, recent development. Your assignment is to report on how individual sites around the city discussed by Ladd have changed since the publication of the book, and to speculate about how they are likely to change during the next decade.

You will divide yourselves into groups of two and each pair of students will select a building or urban area treated in Ghosts of Berlin, drawn from a list provided below. Each pair should choose a different site. You will then, as a collaborative unit, visit the site, research its history, compare its current status to that described fourteen years ago, and try to determine what further changes are in store. You will hand in a short text (no more than five pages) accompanied by relevant, supporting visual material (photographs, drawings, film, collage, models, etc.). Although you are expected to produce an accurate analysis of your site, creative responses are encouraged. Your paper/project should reflect a clear understanding of your site’s sensitivities and of the broader historic context within which your site has evolved.

Due date: Thursday, February 10th in class

Site List:
- Stadtschloss (Royal Palace)/Schloss Platz
- Leipziger Platz
- Potsdamer Platz
- Pariser Platz
- Topography of Terror
- Bernauer Strasse
- East Side Gallery area
- Mietskasernen in Kreuzberg
- Alexanderplatz
- Tempelhof Airport
- Voss-Strasse
- Stalinalle (Karl-Marx-Allee)
- Marx-Engels-Forum
- Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof/“Palace of Tears”
- Zoo Station/Europa Center
- Government Center/Hauptbahnhof
Paper/Project Assignment II:
Whereas the first assignment asked you to examine a Berlin site with reference to Brian Ladd’s book *Ghosts of Berlin* and consider the changes that have occurred since 1989 at the urban scale, this time you are asked to examine specific works of architecture within the city and analyze them in the light of selected texts drawn from your reader.

The works represent the periods covered during the seminar (1815-present), and are all considered important to the history of modern architecture in Berlin, but because of time constraints they will not be visited by the group or discussed in detail—or at all—in the lectures.

You will divide yourselves into groups of two (plus one group of three) and each group of students will select a building or building complex drawn from a list provided below. Each pair will choose a different building, and the groupings must be different than they were for Assignment I.

A total of twelve (12) buildings should be chosen and analyzed from six time periods as follows:

- Schinkel: 1 case study
- Gründerzeit: 1 case study
- Weimar: 4 case studies
- Nazi Era: 1 case study
- Cold War: 3 case studies
- Post-Wall: 2 case studies

You will then, as a collaborative unit, visit the building or complex (to the degree possible), assess its current condition, research its history, document it thoroughly, and discuss it critically. You will hand in a short text (no more than five pages) accompanied by relevant, supporting visual material (photographs, drawings, film, collage, models, etc.). Although you are expected to produce an accurate analysis of your site, creative responses are encouraged.

Your main task will be to use a specific reading as a critical lens through which to understand the architectural work. Each reading highlights important themes related to the suggested works, be they architectural, political, sociological, technical, aesthetic, or some combination thereof. How does the work reflect the central ideas of the text, and vice versa? To what extent does the work resist or provide an alternative to the arguments made in the text, if at all? Please include citations from the essays in your own papers, with substantive footnotes. The essays to be used are:

1. Schinkel Period: Alex Potts, “Schinkel’s Architectural Theory”
2. Gründerzeit: Lothar Müller, “The Beauty of the Metropolis”

Due date: Wednesday, April 6th

1. Schinkel and the Biedermeier era (1815-1871)
Karl Friedrich Schinkel:
   *Neue Pavilion, Schloß Charlottenburg* (1824-30)
Römische Bäder, Sanssouci, Potsdam (1829-40)
Schloss Charlottenhof, Sanssouci, Potsdam (1829)

2. Industrial Revolution and the Gründerzeit (1871-1918)
Peter Behrens:
Haus Wiegand, Dahlem (1911-12)
NAG-Factory Complex, Oberschöneweide (1914-17)

Karl Janisch; Hans Hertlein:
Siemenswerke (1906–)

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe:
Haus Perls, Zehlendorf (1911-12)

3. Weimar Republic and Neues Bauen (1918-1933)
Emil Fahrenkamp:
Shellhaus (1930-31)

Hans and Wassili Luckhardt and Alfons Anker:
Haus am Rupenhorn 24 und 25 (1930)

Erich Mendelsohn:
Doppelvilla, Charlottenburg (1921-22)
Haus des Deutschen Metallarbeiter-Verbandes (w/R. Reichel, 1929-30)
Haus Dr. Sternfeld, Charlottenburg (1923-24)
Mosse-Haus extension (w/R. Neutra, 1921)
WOGA Complex with Schaubühne, Wilmersdorf (1926-28)

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe:
Apartments in the Afrikanische Strasse (1926-7)

Heinrich Müller:
Abspännwerke “Leibniz” and “Scharnhorst” (1927)

Richard Neutra:
Four single-family houses, Zehlendorf (1923)

Bruno Paul:
Kathreiner-Hochhaus am Kleistpark (1929-30)

Ernst Rentsch:
House and Atelier of Georg Kolbe (1928)

Hans Scharoun:
Appartmenthaus am Kaiserdamm (1928)

Bruno Taut:
Wohnstadt Carl Legien (GEHAG), Prenzlauer Berg (1928)
Siedlung Schillerpark (1924-30)
Verbandshaus des Deutschen Verkehrsbundes, Mitte (w/Max Taut, 1927-30)

Max Taut:
Dorotheen-Lyzeum, Köpenick (1928-29)
Reichsknappschaftshaus, Wilmersdorf (1929-30)
Schulkomplex am Nöldnerplatz (1929-32)
Verbandshaus der Buchdrucker, Kreuzberg (1924-6)
Verwaltungsgebäude des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (1922-23)
Warenhaus der Konsumgenossenschaft, Kreuzberg (1930)

Heinrich Tessenow:
Stadtbad Mitte (1929-30)

H. Scharoun, O. Bartning, H. Häring, W. Gropius, et al:
“Ringsiedlung” Siemensstadt (1929-32)

4. Nazism and World War II (1933-1945)
Egon Eiermann:
Fabrikgebäude der Auergesellschaft (1937-38)
Haus Vollberg (1939-40)

Hans Scharoun:
Haus Baensch (1934)

Adlershof Research Complex (1933-39)

Fehrbelliner Platz (1936)

5. Cold War and reconstruction (1945-1989)
Paul Baumgarten:
Evangelische Kirche am Lietzensee (1957)

Curtis & Davis, Franz Mocken:
Benjamin-Franklin Clinic (Klinikum Steglitz, 1959)

Egon Eiermann:
Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche additions (1956-61)

Peter Eisenman:

Fehling, Gogel, Pfankuch:
Studentendorf Schlachtensee (1959)

Fehling, Gogel, Pfankuch:
Max-Planck-Institut für Bilderforschung (1972)

Bernhard Hermkes and Hans Scharoun:
Architekturfakultät der TU Berlin (1966)

Hugh Stubbins:
Kongresshalle (1956-7)

Gropiusstadt, Britz-Buckow-Rudow (1962)

OMA/Sauerbruch, John Hejduk, Aldo Rossi, Raimund Abraham, et al:
Apartment or office buildings, IBA, Kreuzberg (1980s)

6. The fall of the Wall and reunification (1989 to the present)
Barkow Leibinger:
Biosphere, Potsdam (2001)

Peter Behnisch, Werner Durth:


Nicholas Grimshaw:  

Dominique Perrault:  
*Velodrom and Swimming Hall, Prenzlauer Berg* (1992; 1999)

Sauerbruch and Hutton:  

Jean Nouvel, Harry Cobb, O.M. Ungers:  
*Friedrichstadt-Passagen* (1993)