

PLANNING MODERN GERMANY: FROM HITLER TO HIGH-RISE

Level 3 Module

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Top: Party members examine construction work at East Berlin's Stalin Avenue, 1960.

Bottom Left: Nazi plans for the remodelling of Berlin, 1938.

Bottom Right: West German living room design, 1970.

Module Overview

This course examines the political and social transformations of Germany's twentieth century through the perspective of urban planning. In recent years, a growing body of scholarship has revealed how the spaces of the city were a key tool for different German governments to shape the lives and identities of their citizens. This course offers students a chance to engage with this recent scholarship and gain an understanding of space as a category of historical analysis. Students will explore the urban spaces of German cities, in particular Berlin, as windows into the extraordinary history of the country's twentieth century. They will study primary material produced by planners and urban residents, including planning documents, newspaper reports, photographs and transcripts of oral history interviews. Through this in-depth engagement with the transformation of German cities in the twentieth century, the course will offer broader insights into how power, identity and culture are negotiated in the everyday spaces of the modern city.

Weekly Topics May Include (Exact Schedule TBC):

- Interwar Berlin and the Making of the Modern Metropolis
- Building for a Thousand Years: Nazi Visions of Berlin
- Life among the Ruins: Germany, 1945
- Building Postwar Societies: Mass Housing and Social Reform
- The Cold War in the Street: Remodelling Divided Berlin
- Protest and Politics in the City: Urban Counter-Cultures
- Gender and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin
- Race and the Multicultural German City
- Memory in the Cityscape: Germany Reunified?

Assessment

Briefing Paper (2,000 words) – 40%

Essay (2,500 words) – 60%

Examples of Dissertation Topics

This course serves as the ideal foundation for dissertation topics on urban history, the built environment and twentieth-century German history. Examples include:

- Nazi architecture in Nuremberg
- Comparison of Housing Policies in East and West Germany, 1949-1989
- Memories of Germany's Divided Past in the Cityscape of Berlin

Indicative Readings

Leif Jerram, *Streetlife: The Untold History of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2011).

Jennifer Evans, *Life Among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin* (London, 2011).

Eli Rubin, *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space and Memory in East Germany* (Oxford, 2016).

Jen Jack Giesecking et. al (eds.), *The People, Place and Space Reader* (London, 2014).

Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Re-Imagining the Urban* (London, 2002).

David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (eds.), *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford, 2002).

Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake (eds.), *Berlin: Divided City, 1945-1989* (Oxford, 2010).