

## Underground Berlin: Art, Performance, and Film, 1980s to Present

VIS 154 GS

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Course Syllabus, Summer 2024

### Course Description

Subsequent to the National Socialist suppression of sexual expression, the intersections of politics and art in the post-World War II era reflected an organic embeddedness within the context of the city of Berlin. This media history course reflects upon this history to understand Berlin's present, its contradictory mix of new and old, "deep history" and nostalgia. Often described as an island moored within the communist territory of East Germany during the years of the Berlin Wall, West-Berlin became the city towards which many queer artists, musicians, and activists gravitated to avoid the involuntary conscription in the Bundeswehr, as an unexpected outcome of the government's plan to boost population in the former capital. We will focus on the excavation and recognition of inter/cultural positions that challenge German nationalism, while the country reestablished itself as a world power. We will rethink Berlin with respect to the once nascent geopolitics of the European Union, and the city's social fluctuations and periods of migration as registered through audiovisual and performative forms in advance of and in the decades following the fall of the wall in 1989. Focusing on art, performance, and film, we will examine the architectural, discursive, and cultural spaces in which these forms of creative and political expression take shape—from art museums and theater houses to occupied buildings, from independent publishing imprints and collaborative nonprofit organizations to night clubs. This course will examine the changing city with respect to activism, collectivity, alienation, solidarity, and belonging.

### Course Modality

Our seminar will be driven by reading discussions, screenings of film, media, and performance documentation, student presentations, research workshops, guest visitors, and one outside lecture. Focus will be directed to the cultural geographies of Berlin with respect to cultural and aesthetic politics. Please note: Much of the visual material takes form as photographic and cinematic documentation.

### Course Objectives

- *Examination of the aesthetic and political dimension of urban space with respect to architectural form, cultural practices, and historical events.*
- *Engagement with critical theory from the interdisciplinary fields of art history, German Studies, and Critical Gender Studies with respect to historical and contemporary forms of artistic production.*
- *Application of the research methods in the field of art history—foregrounding library and archival research—to the visual analysis of different forms of media—including sculpture, painting, photography, performance, theater, music, and film.*

### Course Requirements

Participation: <i>discussions, visiting lectures, site visits, screenings, online forums</i>	30%
Weekly Reading/Media Responses (250 words)	30%
Visit Leader – Groups of 2-4 (15 minutes introduction, discussion leaders)	10%
Final Project ( <i>media work and conceptual statement</i> ) or Final Paper (5 pages, max 7)	30%

*Please note—These above requirements will not be altered over the duration of the course; however, specific topics, readings, media, and time frames may fluctuate due to limitations of availability of materials or travel during the pandemic.*

### **Assigned readings and audiovisual material**

As many audiovisual materials as possible will be held on electronic reserve via the UC San Diego Library and under the Course Media Gallery in Canvas. Readings will be available in a course pack in the Department of Art and in PDF format in Canvas. If you have trouble accessing any of this material, please let me know. The following required books are available for purchase via the UC San Diego Bookstore; and will be held on reserve at the library:

### **Pandemic Provisions**

Per UC San Diego policy, this course will be taught in person. All students must wear masks indoors and our assigned classroom(s). These policies may fluctuate as pandemic conditions develop over the course of the summer session.

### **Copyright notice**

*All lectures and provided course materials—including syllabi, slide presentations, exams, outlines, and similar materials—are protected by U.S. copyright law and by University policy. The copyright of all recordings—a/synchronous lectures and Powerpoint presentations/videos—remains with the instructor. Students are not permitted create their own recordings of lectures or sections, nor share the instructors' recordings, viewing materials, links, or written materials and readings with anyone not enrolled in the course. The reproduction, distribution, or display (post/upload) of lecture notes, recordings, or course materials (not authored by the student) in any other way—whether or not a fee is charged—without express prior written consent of the instructor violates U.S. copyright law and by University policy, and may be subject to student conduct proceedings under the UC San Diego Student Code of Conduct.*

### **Plagiarism and AI Notice on Written Assignments and Exams**

Please apply a standard system of citation, either MLA or Chicago, for all take-home assignments as necessary. If you are having trouble adopting either of these systems, please feel free to consult with me directly. Canvas (and Turnitin.com) will be used to manage your assignments and exams. Thus, as per UCSD policy, I am providing you with following disclosures regarding plagiarism and the misuse of sources:

*“Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind.”*

*“Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.”*

Special note on Artificial Intelligence is forthcoming.

To learn more about the Policy, please visit: <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>

## Accommodations

If you would like to request an Authorization for Accommodation (AFA), please contact me privately via email with a letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), as well as the OSD Liaison in the Visual Arts department (858-534-2860 or vis-ug@ucsd.edu). For more information, please visit: University Center 202 (behind Center Hall) or <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu> (website). If you have any questions, please contact the OSD (858-534-4382 or osd@ucsd.edu).

**Important Notice:** *The range of content in this course—theory, art, visual media, cultural practices, and urban/public spaces—engages with sexually explicit themes/imagery and may include violence, drug use, and politically and socially offensive language/imagery emerging from Germany's fascist legacy. This material constitutes a fundamental basis of this course because it is endemic to Berlin's urban life and its cultural/political production and is not necessarily a reflection of the instructor's views. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, you have a range of options: You may elect to not participate in the class discussion or you may step away from the seminar session. Please feel free to speak with me about any concerns you might have—not only in advance of continuing to stay enrolled in the course, but also with respect to any particular week's content or assignment.*

## Canvas—The New Learning Management System

Please access Canvas at <https://coursefinder.ucsd.edu> for all course content and submissions.

## Correspondence

Please reach out to me for any questions you might have about the course organization, content, and logistics. During the weekdays, you should hear back from me within 24 hours. Over the weekends and holidays, you should hear back from me within 36 hours or by the following weekday, whichever comes first. If you have not heard back from me within 48-36 hours, please do reach out to me again! To ensure that I can easily locate your message in my inbox, please place VIS 154 GS in the subject header for messages sent outside of Canvas. Looking forward to hearing from you!

## Assignments – General Guidelines

### *Reading/Media responses (250 words each)*

Please submit a weekly response to the assigned readings in advance of seminar—In addition to focusing on any aspect of the reading that most interests you or you find particularly relevant for the course themes, **please include one question for discussion**. This question might relate to **concepts or themes you would like to discuss for clarification** or **open questions that the readings introduce**. *These will be self-directed responses; however, prompts may be provided for some of these assignments.* These responses will be due the Monday before the seminar meeting at 12 p.m. via Canvas. Any change of deadline will be announced.

When making citations of assigned course readings in these short responses, a simple bibliographic notation is needed in parenthesis after the paraphrased sentence or quote—for example: “This is not an unusual sight in what geographers call the ‘gray zones’ of a city, those tracts of land somehow disqualified from more valued uses.” (Ladd 2018, 7)

### *Visit Leader (collaborative preparation)*

These very brief introductions and opportunities to lead discussion around a site visit, studio visit, or talk are intended to provoke discussion on the historical or theoretical concepts of the week. Please coordinate with the other assigned student(s) as to how you plan to relate this material to the assigned week's themes and readings. You will not be responsible for *Participation in Online Forums* the week of being a visit leader.

### *Participation & Attendance*

Discussion participation is integral to this seminar course. **In addition to engaging with the weekly themes and readings, you will be asked to collaborate in bringing in artworks into the discussion and leading portions of seminar discussions.** These assignments will be made as best possible according to student interests and will be finalized in the first week.

*Final Paper* (5 pages, max 7)

*Proposal for Final Paper* due start of Third Week (500-words)

*Individual Meetings on Final Paper* during Second Week (sign-ups will be circulated)

*Final Paper* due Saturday, August 3 at midnight

Assignment prompt will be shared before mid-session.

### **UC San Diego Principles of Community**

The University of California, San Diego is dedicated to learning, teaching, and serving society through education, research, and public service. Our international reputation for excellence is due in large part to the cooperative and entrepreneurial nature of the UC San Diego community. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be creative and are rewarded for individual as well as collaborative achievements.

To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UC San Diego strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism. These principles of community are vital to the success of the University and the wellbeing of its constituents. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice these basic principles as individuals and in groups.

*-We value each member of the UC San Diego community for his or her individual and unique talents, and applaud all efforts to enhance the quality of campus life. We recognize that each individual's effort is vital to achieving the goals of the University.*

*-We affirm each individual's right to dignity and strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by mutual respect for each other.*

*-We value the cultural diversity of UC San Diego because it enriches our lives and the University. We celebrate this diversity and support respect for all cultures, by both individuals and the University as a whole.*

*-We are a university that adapts responsibly to cultural differences among the faculty, staff, students, and community.*

*-We acknowledge that our society carries historical and divisive biases based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs. Therefore, we seek to foster understanding and tolerance among individuals and groups, and we promote awareness through education and constructive strategies for resolving conflict.*

*-We reject acts of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs, and, we will confront and appropriately respond to such acts.*

*-We affirm the right to freedom of expression at UC San Diego. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity, confidentiality, and respect.*

*-We are committed to the highest standards of civility and decency toward all. We are committed to promoting and supporting a community where all people can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of abusive or demeaning treatment.*

*-We are committed to the enforcement of policies that promote the fulfillment of these principles.*

### **UC San Diego Land Acknowledgement**

The UC San Diego community holds great respect for the land and the original people of the area where our home campus is located. The university is built on the un-ceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today, the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego community. We acknowledge their tremendous contributions to our region and thank them for their stewardship.

**Please note:**

**List of weekly readings and guest lecturers will be circulated with registered course participants**

### **WEEK ONE**

- 1.1 - Ghosts of Berlin - Geographies of Urban Space
- 1.2 - Berlin Wall as Site of Projection

### **WEEK TWO**

*Individual Meetings on Final Project/Paper (sign-ups will be circulated)*

- 2.1 - (Post) Punk: Music, Media, and Performance
- 2.2 - Queer Camp Aesthetics, Material, and Affect

### **WEEK THREE**

*Proposal for Final Project or Final Paper due (500-words)*

- 3.1 - Erasures & Memorialization
- 3.2 - Radical Theater & Performance

### **WEEK FOUR**

- 4.1 - Audre Lorde and Afro-German Movement
- 4.2 - Migration Politics and Diasporic Identities

**Saturday, August 3**

**Final Project/Paper Due at midnight**