

ANTH 3440  
Summer 2024  
Pre-Trip Seminar: 16 – 23 May  
Field Trip: 29 May – 6 June  
After-Trip Session: June 13 (online)

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## **Anthropological Field Trip: Berlin – City in Transition**

“Berlin, a city condemned to perpetually becoming and never being”  
Karl Scheffler 1910

Berlin - the German capital, a city of 3.9 million people – has been the center of German, European, and global imagination for centuries: A cosmopolitan metropolis of the Golden 1920s, the Nazi’s model city, the home of evil, a rubble city after WW2, a divided city as center of the Cold War, the reunified symbol of freedom and change, a global center of creativity and possibility, the dream of investors and speculation. Yet, Berlin is always in transition, a place where history becomes future and dreams become history, where political regimes gain power and fall, where walls were erected, torn down and crumble. Berlin is for its citizens, the tourists, the runaways, the rich, the fallen and the hopeful from here and there.

Our field trip will take us into the center of Berlin as our fieldsite. We will use the possibilities of ethnographic research and imagination to discover a foreign society that is never stable and always in transition. You will discover it from your position as foreigners, strangers, tourists and students. The course will put you into different situations, explore different themes, and connect you to different people. But it will also give you the freedom to explore your own anthropological interests and follow them through the city.

### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) have developed practical fieldwork skills in a real-world environment
- 2) be able to understand more fully the complexities of fieldwork
- 3) be able to understand more fully how to collect real-world ethnographic data and how these should be anthropologically presented and written up
- 4) have a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication and an in-depth experience with a particular culture.

### **Course Format:**

This course is conducted as an anthropological field seminar. That means it is based on active participation and independent initiative of the students. Our field-trip will be semi-structured through specific site visits (communities, neighbourhoods, museums – 4 to 5 hours per day) and ethnographic tasks (participant observation, field journals, photo-diaries) and your own explorations.

We will hold 2-3 pre-trip seminars (3 hours each) in Hong Kong to explore certain themes and literature about Berlin, discuss the tools and ethics of ethnographic field research, explore and develop your individual research interests. After the field trip we will hold one final seminar to discuss our experiences back in Hong Kong.

### **Requirements and Assessment:**

The following are the required assignments that will be graded.

1. **Pre- and Post-Trip Seminar Participation (20 %):** I will provide a curated reading list. You are expected to come to all pre-trip seminars, actively participate in assignments and discussion.
2. **Field Journal + Field-specific tasks (40 %):** You have keep an active field journal during the trip and share daily updates with the group (on blackboard). We will also do ethnographic exercises and tasks during our field visit that will be shared and discussed during our stay in Berlin.
3. **Research- and Experience-based Final Essay/Report (40 %):** After our field trip you will have to write a essay/report about your personal experiences, ethnographic explorations, and insights in Berlin. The topic of your essay/report is open and based on your interests, but they have to address a question or central theme. Format: 20 -30 pages (including field notes), Times New Roman 12, double spaced. Due: July 5<sup>th</sup> by midnight.

### **Grade Descriptors:**

- A:** Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A-:** Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B:** Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C:** Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D:** Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.

**F:** Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

## **Course Schedule:**

### **Pre-Trip Seminar: 16 – 23 May**

- 2-3 sessions (3 hours each)

### **Field Trip: 29 May – 6 June (8 nights in Berlin)**

Preliminary Ideas for organized field visits, themes, and assignments:

- Parks & Recreation: Contested Public Spaces
- Far East meets West: Chinese School and Community
- Ghosts, Memory, and Disappearing: Tracing the Wall
- Museums: Past, Present, Future – Imaginations and Ownership
- Who Owns the City? Real Estate and Repossession (Enteignet Deutsche Wohnen)
- Jewish Life
- The Tourist Gaze: Branding and commodification
- Digitalizing the City

### **After-Trip Session: June 13**

- 1 seminar session (3 hours)

**Final Essay/Report due by July 5th**