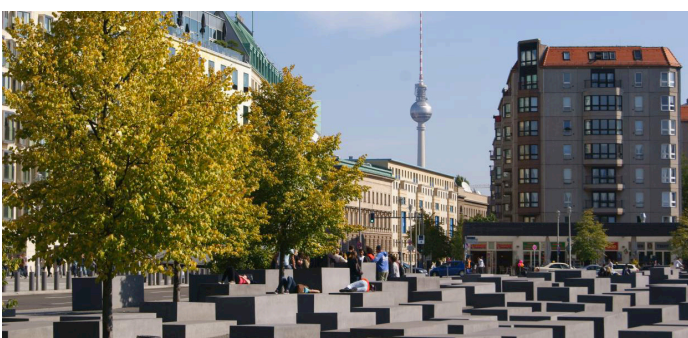


GEOG 3003 Advanced Human Geography (The Berlin Fieldcourse)

Introduction

GEOG 3003 is an optional module on urban geography centred around a fieldcourse to a European city. Currently, this city is Berlin. Each September, we take up to 30 students to Berlin for a week to study the production of urban space in twentieth-century Europe.

Berlin is a fascinating city to visit and study. It was Germany's first capital city, growing rapidly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and becoming known internationally for its neoclassical architecture ('Athens on the Spree'). During the first few decades of the twentieth century, it was an important birthplace of the modern movement in architecture and urbanism. Hitler hated Berlin for its left-of-centre politics and cosmopolitan culture, and changed the city in numerous ways – before it was all but flattened during the final years of the Second World War. The city was rebuilt during the post-war period, but by two separate nation-states (West Germany and East Germany), each oriented towards different Cold-War allies (capitalist USA and communist USSR). Both sides approached Berlin as a shop window in which to display their achievements. When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the city was once again united and became the capital of a unified Germany. Politicians, media organisations, and property developers poured into the city. Berlin became one of the largest building sites in the world. It remains a wonderful city in which to study urban life and development.



Structure and content

A typical fieldcourse covers the following themes:

- Modern architecture and urbanism – including visits to the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Bauhaus Archive.
- Nation-states and political ideologies – including visits to the Reichstag and the diplomatic/embassy quarter.
- Memory and memorials – including visits to the Jewish Museum and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.
- Global capital and public space – including visits to Alexanderplatz and Potsdamer Platz.

Student feedback

Student evaluations of GEOG 3003 have been very positive. The following elements have been particularly appreciated by students:

- Group working – which enables students to make friends, to voice and test out their own ideas, to gain confidence, and to learn other team-working skills (valued by potential employers).
- Intensive working – which results from a tight focus on interconnected topics over a period of six days, and the organisation of each day around a morning lecture, a group-based project, and an evening session of student presentations and discussion.
- Field research – which makes urban geography seem more “real” and “relevant”, and provides opportunities for “hands-on” learning.
- Urban geography content – which is important for students wishing to train as town planners, urban designers, or civil servants/consultants of various kinds.
- The city of Berlin – a fascinating and fun place to spend a week studying and socialising.