

Berlin: Cultures and Countercultures will be arranged around a series of topical modules, which will be explored during daily classroom time as well as through excursions throughout Berlin. Each topic will offer insight into the interplay between mainstream and deviant cultures within particular spaces, historico-political moments, and/or artistic movements.

Assignments will be project-based and collaborative, requiring students to interact intimately with the physical, historical, and memorial spaces they traverse. Instead of revolving around passive participation in guided tours and lectures, time outside of the classroom will require students to seek out, collect, and process information while exploring the city in small groups on their own terms, or with interaction-focused experts. Classroom time will center on discussion and collaborative research, as students construct the frameworks through which to make sense of the spaces they encounter, as well as on extensive analysis/discussion of the information and experiences they have collected.

Modules:

- **Politics** examines Germany's contemporary political climate, focusing on the function of political extremism within the current centrist-led government.
- **Party culture** explores Berlin's groundbreaking party spaces as a means of challenging socio-political norms, from the roaring 20's to the underground music scene of the 1990s.
- **Architecture** analyzes Berlin's architectural past and present, including Nazi architect Albert Speer's plans for a neo-classical Berlin, and the always-provocative graffiti culture in the city today.
- **Memory** asks questions like: What are the stakes of building a sprawling, confrontational Holocaust memorial in the heart of one of the most "forward-looking" cities in Europe? And why did the work of Afro-German activists lead to the renaming of multiple Berlin streets?
- **Art** explores Berlin's theater scene, particularly the productive tensions between the avant-garde *Freie Szene* ("free scene") and the establishment *Staatstheater* (state theater), and their contribution to debates around national and personal identity.
- **Identities** examines Berlin as refuge for non-heteronormative culture(s), lifestyles, and practices, from gay cruising in former East Berlin to the contributions of contemporary queer and trans activists.

Site visits and collaborations will include, but are not limited to:

- A guided tour of the Parliament building, with the opportunity to visit a party's private chamber and interact with party members.
- A project-based assignment requiring students to analyze the socio-political hot spots of a particular neighborhood based on street graffiti and flyering.
- An interactive walk through Berlin's Holocaust memorials with historian Dr. Josh Armstrong, focused on exploring the politics of the city's memory culture.
- A performance at the Maxim Gorki Theater, followed by a Q&A with the performers and director.