

**Modern Germany: From Division to Reunification  
(European Odyssey Study Abroad, Spring 2006)**

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As part of the Study Abroad Program *European Odyssey 2006*, this course will be held from March 6 to 17, 2006 in Berlin, Germany.

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**Course Description and Objectives**

16 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the inner-German borders, people outside Germany wonder why there are so many prejudices between East and West Germans after the unification of both German States. It seems to the outsider that these Germans on both sides of the former border cannot get along and will probably never become a truly united people. The celebrations following the opening of the borders are indeed long over. The Germans have to face problems originating from forty years of separation. The difficulties connected with this tremendous task could not have been imagined. Are the Germans creating a new wall in the heads of their own people? To understand the present, it is necessary to understand the past. This is a well known wisdom.

During this course, we will examine united Germany and the problems between people in the East and West by investigating selected periods of German history from the end of World War II to the unification in 1990. This will enable us to better understand the current difficulties in Germany. In our investigation, we will explore historical and political issues (including the analysis of historical portrayals in documentaries and mass media) as well as psychological and cultural topics (including biographical and literary reflections, popular culture in the form of cartoons, music as well as film).

Our goal throughout this course is to learn about German history between 1945 and 1990 and to understand contemporary united Germany, its people and society after 1990, especially the Eastern part of the new Germany. You will acquire a solid understanding of important political events after World War II leading to the foundation of two German states, events leading up to German unification, the unification process itself, and how this influenced German society to the present. The once divided city of Berlin will serve as the background of our investigation.

In Berlin, we will visit historical sites and museums that deal with issues related to post war German division and unification such as: Deutsch-Russisches Museum (German-Russian museum), Haus am Checkpoint Charlie (Checkpoint Charlie museum/ Wall museum), Dokumentationszentrum Berliner Mauer (Berlin Wall Documentation Center), Stasi-Gefängnis and Stasi Forschungsstätte (the former East German State Security Police prison and research center), Alliiertenmuseum (allied museum), Reichstag (German Parliament), and the Brandenburg Gate, to name a few. We will hear from people in Germany about their experiences during the Berlin Air Lift, the building of the wall, and the unification events. We will also travel to the city of Potsdam, where we will visit the historical site of the *Potsdam Conference* in 1945 which ultimately led to the division of the country into four occupational zones and to the later division into two states. Another day trip will take us to the city of Leipzig, a center of the protest movement of East Germans during 1989 which led to the collapse of the East German state in the fall of 1989.

The course will be divided into lecture/discussion sessions, and trips to historical relevant sites as described above.

**Course Requirements**

**Regular attendance and participation in class discussions** is absolutely necessary in order to successfully pass this course. Important material will be presented in lectures (including occasional film screenings, depending on facilities) and selected readings (**course packet**, which you purchase from me

before class, and which you receive in Berlin), and this material will be discussed in class. You will also learn about many historical and social issues by listening to tours in museums, and other sites.

***Except for medical reasons, you are expected to be present at every single class/trip. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F for this class. This is an intensive two week course. You will only succeed in this course by being present.***

**Assignments** are to be completed on time. Late assignments will not be accepted. Throughout the duration of this course, you are expected to write a class journal. In individual journal entries you are expected to

- reflect on the material you were presented with in lectures, tours, films
- reflect on the material you were assigned to read
- articulate on your understanding of the material
- express questions about issues that were not clear to you
- evaluate the assignments according to the usefulness of our class goal.

Your journal entries can be written on separate sheets of paper which you are turning in as specified throughout the course, and you are required to turn ALL entries in to me at the end of the course. For note taking in class and on tours, I suggest you use a notebook since you will be carrying it around with you all the time.

**Exams:** There will be at least two exams throughout the two weeks in which you are tested on class material.

**Grading:**

Attendance, participation, class discussion 40%  
 Class Journal & special assignments  
 Exams (2)

**A** 100-93%  
**B** 92-87%  
**C** 86-83  
**D** 82-77

**Grades:**

**C** 76-73  
**CD** 72-67  
**D** 66-60  
**F** 59-0

**Schedule (tentative)**

**Note: You will be receiving a detailed class schedule in March. This is only an overview of course topics and on site visits.**

1. Germany at the end of World War II, 1945-1949: Potsdam conference, Occupation by the Allied Powers, Berlin Air Lift

Trips:

Berlin: Deutsch-Russisches Museum, Museum Europäischer Kulturen: Die Stunde Null, Alliiertenmuseum  
 Potsdam: Schloss Cecilienhof

2. The foundation of two separate German States in 1949

3. Events leading to the building of the Berlin Wall

4. The Berlin Wall

Trips:

Berlin: Haus am Checkpoint Charlie, Dokumentationszentrum Berliner Mauer

5. Living in East Germany and the East German State Security Police (Stasi)

Trips:

Berlin: Stasi-Museum, Stasi-Gefängnis, Leipzig: Zeitgeschichtliches Forum

6. The Peaceful Revolution of 1989

Trips:

Leipzig: Nikolaikirche, Zeitgeschichtliches Forum

7. The unification of Germany

8. Germany today

Trips:

Berlin: Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate, Holocaust Memorial