**HIST 49195 and POL 40995: Study Abroad**

**Modern Germany: Politics, History, Culture**

**Kent State University**

May Intersession 2015

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**Course Description**

Few countries are as important and controversial as the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a country that gave birth to the first system of social security and national health care. Between the First and Second World War, Germany’s Weimar Republic was arguably the most democratic regime in the history of Europe. Yet, after the fall of the short-lived republic, Germany developed one of the most brutal and dictatorial regimes in the history of the world. After the Second World War, West Germany became a model of a capitalist democracy while its eastern counterpart suffered under communist rule for nearly fifty years. Following unification in 1989, Germany became an economic success story and a leader among countries promoting greater European unification. At the same time Germany has come under attack for the country’s heavy-handedness and arrogance in handling the current economic and currency crisis. So is Germany an exemplar of democratic stability or a country on the cusp of another crisis? How could a country that gave the world Weimar and Goethe also give us Auschwitz? Where is Germany today and where will it be in the future?

Students will have an opportunity to examine these questions up close and personal by traveling to Germany and visiting the three locations that are the center of Germany’s past, present and future: Frankfurt (headquarters of the European Central Bank); Erfurt/Weimar (birthplace of German democracy); Berlin (capital of the united Germany); and Dresden (cultural capital of Germany). We will use history and political science to examine the volatile political transformations in Germany from the founding of the first united Germany in 1871 to the Second World War to the Cold War to the present.

**Course Assignments and Grading**

Students are required to keep a daily journal throughout the trip. The journal should include a description of daily experiences, impressions and responses to briefings and tours, and an explanation of what was learned that day. In addition, each student is required to prepare and give an oral presentation on any of the topics covered during the trip. For example, in the past students presented information on the history of European Central Bank. Others presented information on Jewish life in Erfurt. Finally, briefings are followed with a Q/A sessions. Students are expected to participate in the sessions by posing questions and participating the conversation following the briefing.

Grades are based on the following:

Journal: 40 percent

Oral Presentation: 20 percent

Participation during briefings: 20 percent

Overall participation in the class: 20 percent

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| **Day** | **City** | **Activities and Class Meetings** |
| M 5/18 | Kent | Overview of German history. Review of trip. |
| T 5/19 | Kent | Overview of German politics and economics. Review of trip. |
| W 5/20 | From Cleveland  to Frankfurt | Morning: Arrive at airport with passport, course materials, and luggage |
| R 5/21 | Arrival in Frankfurt | Morning: Shuttle from airport the [Frankfurt Youth Hostel](http://www.jugendherberge-frankfurt.de/en/home/)  **“Introduction to Frankfurt”**  Afternoon: We will explore our neighborhood and take a walk through downtown historic area and [die Zeil](http://www.aviewoncities.com/frankfurt/zeil.htm), Frankfurt’s shopping area.  Dinner: Group dinner at the [Gemälde Haus](http://www.zumgemaltenhaus.de/) |
| F 5/22 | Frankfurt | **“German Democracy Today”**  Morning: 9:30am Briefing with Martina Feldmayer, a state parliamentary representing the Green Party in the state of Hesse.  Afternoon: [European Central Bank](http://www.ecb.int/home/html/index.en.html). Briefing on “Role of the Central Bank” followed by a tour of the DAX, Europe’s largest stock exchange.  Evening: Boat ride on the Main River |
| Sat 5/23 | Frankfurt | **“Birthplace of German Liberalism”**  Morning: Tour of Jewish Life in Frankfurt. Afternoon: Take packed lunches. Train to [Rüdesheim am Rhein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%BCdesheim_am_Rhein) and boat ride along the Rhein. |
| Sun 5/24 | Travel from Frankfurt to Erfurt | Afternoon: Travel from Frankfurt to Erfurt, Germany by train. Check into [Erfurt hostel](http://www.jugendherberge.de/de/jugendherbergen/visitenkarte/jh.jsp?IDJH=141). Briefing with the mayor of Erfurt. Dinner: Group Dinner in Erfurt at the “Roter Elephant” |
| M 5/25 | Erfurt | **“Erfurt: Crossroads of German History”**  Morning: [Jewish Life in Erfurt Tour](http://www.alte-synagoge.erfurt.de/jle/en/) Afternoon: Tour of [Petersberg Citadel](http://www.live-like-a-german.com/points_of_interest/show/593/erfurt/zitadelle-petersberg-/-citadel-petersberg-) and passageways beneath the ancient fortress. Evening: Free time |
| T 5/26 | Erfurt | Morning: Free time  Afternoon: Buchenwald Concentration Camp |
| W 5/27 | Travel from Erfurt to Berlin | Morning: Travel to Berlin and check-in at the Three Little Pigs Hostel.  Afternoon: Briefing by Professor Sig Vitols on Germany’s economic model. Social Science Center Berlin. |
| R 5/28 | Berlin | **“Introduction to Germany’s Capital”**  Morning: 9:30 am. Briefing with member of the German Bundestag, representing the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Followed by a tour of the [German Reichstag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichstag_%28building%29).  Afternoon: Orientation of the U-Bahn/S-Bahn system, walking tour of the Brandenburg Gate, Holocaust Memorial; Reichstag/Unter den Linden; Sony Center at Potsdamer Platz. |
| F 5/29 | Berlin | **“Berlin’s History”**  Morning: [Tour of the Jewish Museum](http://www.jmberlin.de/main/EN/homepage-EN.php) at 11:30am. [Topography of Terror](http://www.topographie.de/en/topography-of-terror/nc/1/)  Afternoon: [Museum Island](http://www.aviewoncities.com/berlin/museumisland.htm) |
| Sat 5/30 | Berlin | Morning: Tour of Tempelhof Airport (where Berlin airlift occurred)  Afternoon: Boat trip on the river Spree |
| Sun 5/31 | Potsdam | **“The Age of Enlightenment”**  Morning: Train to [Sanssouci](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanssouci), summer palace of the Frederick the Great.  Evening: Group dinner at the restaurant, *Die Schleusse* |
| M 6/1 | Potsdam | **“Politics and Economics in the ‘East’ ”**  Morning: “Economic development in the East”: briefing with the chairman of the state of Brandendburg parliamentary finance committee.  Afternoon: Tour of city of Potsdam  Dinner: Potsdam |
| T 6/2 | Berlin | Morning: Street Art Tour  Afternoon: Bike Tour of Berlin |
| W 6/3 | Travel to Dresden | **“Dresden: The Cultural Capital of Germany”**  After checking into our [hostel](http://www.jugendherberge-sachsen.de/index.php?id=237) we will visit the Frauenkirche, with a walking tour through the Neumarkt square and other areas of historical preservation and urban renewal. |
| R 6/4 | Dresden | **“Dresden: Destruction and Rebirth”**  Morning: [Zwinger](http://www.skd.museum/en/museums-institutions/zwinger-with-semperbau/) and Altstadt Museums.  Afternoon: Tour the city including the Dresden Museum of Art. |
| F 6/5 | Leave  Dresden for Frankfurt | Morning: We will return to **Frankfurt** by train to the [Frankfurt Youth Hostel](http://www.jugendherberge-frankfurt.de/en/home/)  Afternoon: Final Group dinner |
| Sat 6/6 | From Frankfurt to Cleveland Departure | Morning: Return to Cleveland**.** |