

POL 40995: Study Abroad
Modern Germany: Politics, History, Culture
Kent State University
May Intersession 2019

Dr. Mark K. Cassell
302 Bowman Hall
mcassell@kent.edu
330-672-8945

Professor Anthony Molina
302 Bowman Hall
amolina4@kent.edu

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 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 Objectives

1. An understanding of German society including a basic knowledge of the political, economic, historical, and social issues in Germany
2. Develop an awareness of American cultural values and biases and how these impact their ability to work with others.
3. Develop an ability to interact constructively with people of different cultures.
4. Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.
5. Develop a first-hand understanding of several issues including: a) the refugee crisis; b) cities and the role of public transportation; and 3) Europe's financial system.

Reading:

Mary Fulbrook, 2004. *A Concise History of Germany* Cambridge [England]; New York : Cambridge University Press. Available on Amazon.com for less than \$15.00.

Course Assignments and Grading

Journal. 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.

Oral Presentation and Participation. 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. Briefings are followed with a Q/A sessions.

Grades are based on the following:

Journal: 50 percent

Oral Presentation: 30 percent

Participation during briefings: 20 percent

Day	City	Meals*	Activities and Class Meetings
M 5/20	Kent		Overview of German history. Review of trip.
T 5/21	Kent		Overview of German politics and economics. Review of trip.
W 5/22	From Cleveland to Frankfurt		<u>Morning:</u> Arrive at airport with passport, course materials, and luggage
R 5/23	Arrival in Frankfurt	D	<p><u>Morning:</u> Shuttle from airport the Frankfurt Youth Hostel</p> <p>“Introduction to Frankfurt”</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> We will explore our neighborhood and take a walk through downtown historic area and die Zeil, Frankfurt’s shopping area. Lunch is provided at the hostel.</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> Early group dinner at the zum Gemalten Haus</p>
F 5/24	Frankfurt	B	<p>“German Democracy Today”</p> <p><u>Morning:</u> 10 am Briefing with Martina Feldmayer, a state parliamentary representing the Green Party in the state of Hesse. She’s also responsible for integrating immigrants/refugees into Frankfurt. Visit to housing for asylum seekers.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> 4pm. European Central Bank Briefing on the Europe’s Economic Crisis and German banking.</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> Boat ride on the Main River.</p>
Sat 5/25	Frankfurt	B	<p>“German Romanticism”</p> <p><u>Morning:</u> Tour of the city of Frankfurt.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> Take packed lunches. Train to Rüdesheim am Rhein and boat ride along the Rhein.</p> <p>Early evening: Dinner in Rüdesheim</p>
Sun 5/26	Travel from Frankfurt to Erfurt	B, D	<p><u>Afternoon:</u> Travel from Frankfurt to Erfurt, Germany by train. Check into Opera Hostel, in Erfurt.</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> 17:30-18:30 Tour of Petersberg Citadel and passageways beneath the ancient fortress.</p> <p><u>Dinner:</u> Group dinner in Erfurt (Roten Elephant)</p>

M 5/27	Weimar and Buchenwald	B	<p>“Erfurt: Crossroads of German History”</p> <p>Morning: Train from Erfurt to Weimar followed by a walk through the city of Weimar Goethe Museum</p> <p>Afternoon: 13:30-15:30 Buchenwald Concentration Camp</p> <p><u>Afternoon/Evening:</u> We’ll take the train from Weimar back to Erfurt and spend free time in Weimar and/or Erfurt</p>
T 5/28	Erfurt	B	<p><u>Morning:</u> Free time</p> <p><u>Late Morning:</u> 12-14:00 Tour of Jewish Life in the City of Erfurt</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> 16:30 Briefing with Alexander Thumfart, City Councilmember of the city of Erfurt</p>
W 5/29	Travel from Erfurt to Berlin	B	<p><u>Morning:</u> Travel to Berlin and check-in at the Circus Hostel.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> 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.</p> <p>Group Dinner: Bier Garten - Prenzlauerberg</p>
R 5/30	Berlin	B	<p>“Introduction to Germany’s Capital”</p> <p><u>Morning:</u> 8:30-9:30: Meeting with Anne-Marie Kortas, founder of <i>Angehört</i>, a non-profit that provides pro-bono legal help to refugees.</p> <p>11-13:00- Hohenschönhausen Prison used by East German Secret Police and German government during 3rd Reich.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> At 15:00. PASSPORTS Parliamentary Meeting – Nils Schmid, SPD Briefing followed by a tour of the German Reichstag</p> <p>Evening: Free time</p>
Fri 5/31	Berlin	B	<p>Morning: 10am. Federal Commission for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic.</p> <p>Afternoon: 14:00 Meeting with Rainer Erkens, Chief of Staff to the AfD party.</p> <p>Evening: Free time to explore Berlin</p>

Sat 6/1	Berlin/ Potsdam	B	<p>“The Age of Enlightenment”</p> <p><u>Morning:</u> 7:45 train to Sanssouci, summer palace of the Frederick the Great.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> Tour of Cecilienhof Palace, where Stalin, Truman, and Churchill divided up Europe at the Potsdam Conference</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> Group dinner in Potsdam</p>
Sun 6/2	Berlin	B	<p><u>Morning:</u> Street Art Tour Berlin.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> Mauerpark Flea Market</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> Free time to explore Berlin</p>
M 6/3	Berlin	B	<p>“Berlin’s History”</p> <p><u>Morning:</u> Tour of the Jewish Museum at 11:30am. Topography of Terror</p> <p><u>Afternoon</u> Boat or Bike Tour (Depending on interest and weather)</p>
T 6/4	Travel from Berlin to Dresden Dinner	B	<p>“Dresden: The Cultural Capital of Germany”</p> <p>After checking into our hostel we will visit the Frauenkirche, with a walking tour through the Neumarkt square and other areas of historical preservation and urban renewal.</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> Group dinner in Dresden.</p>
W 6/5	Dresden Dinner	B, D	<p>“Dresden: Destruction and Rebirth”</p> <p><u>Morning:</u> Zwinger and Altstadt Museums.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> Tour the city including the Dresden Museum of Art.</p> <p><u>Evening:</u> Group BBQ at the hostel.</p>
R 6/6	Leave Dresden for Frankfurt Lunch and Dinner	B, D	<p><u>Morning:</u> We will return to Frankfurt by train to the Motel One, Frankfurt.</p> <p><u>Afternoon:</u> Final Group dinner in Frankfurt</p>
F 6/7	From Frankfurt to Cleveland Departure	B	<p><u>Morning:</u> Return to Cleveland.</p>

* All breakfasts (B) are included and four dinners (D). Students are responsible for their own lunches and all other meals.