

IS 331: Berlin Internship Seminar: Working Cultures, Urban Cultures

Seminar Leader: Florian Duijsens (Group A) & Aslı Vatansever (Group B)

Course Times: Thursdays, 2-3:30 pm, Group A: P98-0-Seminar Room 1, Group B: W16-2-Reading Room

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Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

The Berlin Internship Seminar accompanies third-year students' undertaking of an internship. The seminar offers a range of theoretical and analytical tools for thinking critically about how and why we work, how work is changing, and how it affects our daily lives and the places where we live. Over the course of the seminar, we will talk about contemporary ways of working and living in Berlin and beyond, asking: What do we mean when we talk about work? Do we need to *love* what we do? What renders work (in)visible? How is work gendered and classed? What does it mean to inhabit the somatic norm of the workplace? How is work organized temporally and spatially, and how does that, in turn, affect a city and its residents? Which new forms of work have emerged in Berlin recently? What is the future of work?

One of the major issues we will tackle in class is the very phenomenon of unpaid internships. We will address this question by discussing privilege, the precariat, and affective labor. Drawing on Kathi Weeks' writing, we will consider what the problem with work actually is, and why we tend to define and value ourselves through what we do professionally. We will dissect Steve Jobs' "do what you love" mantra and discuss how work and love are interwoven. Of course, we will discuss how the pandemic has changed the way we work, and what the effects might be of the current renewed unionization efforts. Throughout, we will approach contemporary working cultures from an intersectional perspective, remaining sensitive to the workings of inequalities in structural, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains.

Besides in-class discussions and invited lectures, the seminar offers a platform for the regular exchange of observations, reflections, and comments on students' internships. The assigned readings, too, will be discussed in class in the context of students' internships. Students are required to keep an internship journal and provide regular updates on the progress of their internship.

Requirements

Attendance and participation

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. Regular attendance is essential to the collaborative work of learning in seminar format and forms part of the participation grade. Please complete the required readings, be on time for each class, and contribute energetically and meaningfully to the discussions. A class participation mark will be awarded on the basis of your preparedness and engagement in class discussions. Attendance and participation make up 30% of the final grade. To account for minor circumstances, one absence from this once-per-week course should not affect the participation grade or require documentation, but missing more than one session may certainly affect your participation grade. If more than one absence is unavoidable, please be in touch with the instructor before the class to determine whether you need to provide documentation to excuse the absence. Every unexcused absence lowers the participation grade by one step (i.e., from B+ to B). Please consult the Student Handbook for more details on BCB's attendance policy.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2022: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Readings

On a weekly basis, you will be expected to devote 2-3 hours to complete the readings and 15-20 minutes to update your internship journal. It may be possible for you to get both done during your commute to the internship. Though most of the texts you will be required to read are included in the syllabus, the highly topical nature of this course means that I will also be sending around up-to-date articles, essays, and videos to enrich our discussions. Students are encouraged to do the same.

Assignments

This class will include several graded assignments that will add up to your final grade for this class alongside your participation grade: 1) regular entries in your internship journal (10%); 2) a take-home midterm exam (25%); 3) an 800-word interview with your internship mentor (10%); and 4) a 1500–2000-word final paper (25%). See below for deadlines and grading criteria. All assignments and papers are to be submitted to your instructor by email.

Internship Journal

All students are required to keep an internship journal in which they regularly (at least once a week) reflect on their work experiences and respond to prompts related to that week's readings. The journal should be kept in electronic form on Google docs and shared with the seminar instructor. The goal of this journal is twofold: not only does it provide students with important material with which to reflect on their internship experience when they are writing their final papers, but it also provides the instructor with a discreet way to make sure the internships are going well (or step in should issues arise). Each week's entry should be completed at the latest the night before the class in question. Failing to update the journal regularly will negatively affect your grade. For more details (and examples) see the Internship Journal Handout.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown and Deadlines

Class participation: 30%
Regular entries in your journal: 15% // all semester
Assignment 2 (midterm): 25% // 13–14 October
Assignment 4 (final paper): 30% // 19 December

Grading criteria for the midterm

A = Extraordinary. The exam demonstrates student's full command of the material and reflects in-depth engagement with the readings.

B = Good to very good. The exam demonstrates student's general familiarity with the material and some engagement with the readings, but lacks critical engagement and close reading of the texts.

C = Acceptable. The exam demonstrates student's selective familiarity with the material; it contains misreadings or gaps in understanding of the texts that have been discussed in class.

D = Very poor. The exam demonstrates student's lack of engagement with the readings and lack of familiarity with the key concepts discussed in class.

F = Unacceptable. The exam demonstrates student's unfamiliarity with basic concepts discussed in class and/or fails to adhere to the academic standards as set out in the Student Handbook.

Grading criteria for the final

A = Extraordinary. The paper demonstrates a full command of the material, reflects the author's in-depth engagement with the selected readings, clear and compelling thinking, and skillful writing.

B = Good to very good. The paper has a solid, consistent focus and demonstrates clear argumentation, but some paragraphs are not fully developed and at times the paper doesn't quite know why it does what it does. The paper contains occasional stylistic, grammatical, and spelling mistakes.

C = Acceptable. The paper fulfills the minimum required by the assignment. It might lack skillful argumentation, offer irrelevant evidence, and rely on generalities (and generalizations), but shows basic understanding of the material. The paper contains multiple stylistic, grammatical, and spelling mistakes.

D = Major deficiencies in writing and argumentation, the paragraphs are not logically organized, and the paper lacks overall cohesion.

F = Unacceptable, fails to follow the basic points of the assignment and/or fails to adhere to the academic standards as set out in the Student Handbook.

Note: Students are advised to visit BCB's Learning Commons before turning in their final papers.

Schedule

Class 1

30 August (Tuesdays, Florian) / 1 September (Thursdays, Ash) 2022: Practicalities & Expectations

We will go over the internship documents for the semester: your Internship Agreement and the Internship Time Sheet. We will discuss the course content, pedagogical goals, and grading requirements. You will also be introduced to the internship journal. No readings are required.

Class 2

6 / 8 September 2022: Work: A (Recent) History

- Andrea Komlosy, *Work: The Last 1000 Years* (2018). Excerpts.
- Jennifer Moss, “The Pandemic Changed Us. Now Companies Have to Change Too,” *Harvard Business Review* (2022). <https://hbr.org/2022/07/the-pandemic-changed-us-now-companies-have-to-change-too>

Class 3

20 / 22 September 2022: The Problem with Work

- Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (2011). Excerpts.

Class 4

27 / 29 September 2022: Do What You Love?

- Madeline Schwartz, “Opportunity Costs: The True Price of Internships,” *Dissent* (2013).
- Miya Tokumitsu, “In the Name of Love,” *The Jacobin* (2014).

Class 5

4 / 6 October 2022: Precarization of Work

- Guy Standing, “Defining the precariat: A class in the making” *Eurozine* (2012).

Class 6

11 / 13 October 2022: The Forms of Capital and the Creative Class

- Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital” (1986).
- Sarah Kendzior, *The View from Flyover Country: Dispatches from the Forgotten America* (2018). Excerpts.

ASSIGNMENT 2 (25% final grade)

For this take-home midterm, you’ll be sent the questions at 3:30pm on 13 October. The mid-term will be made up of three shorter questions about the readings so far, plus one longer critical response to one of three quoted statements. The midterm is due **3:30 pm, 14 October at the latest**.

Class 7

18 / 20 October 2022: Emotional Labor

- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* (1983). Chapter 1.
- ★ Katie Deighton, “Some Flight Attendants Can Bring Their Full Selves to Work,” *Wall Street Journal* (2022). <https://www.wsj.com/articles/some-flight-attendants-can-bring-their-full-selves-to-worktattoos-sneakers-nose-studs-and-all-11654768800>
- ★ Suzanne Rowan Kelleher, “Delta Flight Attendants Will Be Paid During Boarding—A First For U.S. Airlines,” *Forbes* (2022). <https://www.forbes.com/sites/suzannerowan-kelleher/2022/04/26/delta-flight-attendants-union/?sh=4ca15f5a25b2>
- ★ *The New Yorker: Politics and More Podcast*, “Sara Nelson on the Drive to Unionize Delta Flight Attendants” (2022) <https://podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/sara-nelson-on-the-drive-to-unionize-delta-flight/id268213039?i=1000565420954>

FALL BREAK

Class 8

1 / 3 November 2022: Space Invaders

- Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017). Chapter 5.
- Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders* (2004). Intro + Chapter 5 (till page 97).
- ★ *Read and listen: 4 Ways To Make Your Workplace Equitable For Trans People:* <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/02/867780063/4-ways-to-make-your-workplace-equitable-for-trans-people>; Out at Work: <https://project.wnyc.org/nancy/out-at-work/>.

Class 9

8 / 10 November 2022: Making a Living in Creative Industries – GUEST LECTURE (TBA)

Class 10

15 / 17 November 2022: Gentrification: Who owns Berlin?

- Henrik Lebuhn, “Neoliberalization in Post-Wall Berlin: Understanding the City through Crisis”, *Critical Planning* 22 (2015): 99-118.
- Andrej Holm, “You Have To Do Everything Yourself...”: Tenants in Berlin protest against gentrification and displacement. *The Fine Art of Living*, ed. Ina Wudtke (2018).
- Andrej Holm, “We Want a Society Without Landlords,” *Jacobin* (2021): <https://jacobinmag.com/2021/05/deutsche-wohnen-co-enteignen-berlin-landlord-expropriation-rent-cap-real-estate/>
- ★ Breezy - "The Berlin Poem ft. Arielle Cottingham" (2021) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KndFG92KQg>

Class 11

22 / 24 November 2022: Le Future de Travail?

- Nick Srnicek & Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future. Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* (2016). Excerpts.
- Juan Sebastian Carbonell (interview), “No, Automation Isn’t Going to Make Work Disappear” (2022). <https://jacobin.com/2022/03/automation-technology-precarity-employment-working-class-logistics>

Class 12

29 November / 1 December 2022: The grind

- Heike Geißler, *Seasonal Associate* (2018). Excerpts.
- Manuela Boatcă, “[Thou shalt] Honour the asparagus!: Romanian Agricultural Labour in Germany during the COVID-19 Season,” *Left East* (2020). <https://lefteast.org/thou-shalt-honour-the-asparagus%E2%BB%BF-romanian-agricultural-labour-in-germany-during-the-covid-19-season/>
- Albert Samaha, “How Amazon Exported American Working Conditions To Europe,” *Buzzfeed News* (2022). <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/albertsamaha/amazon-poland-slovakia-czechia-germany-labor-laws>

Class 13

6 and/or 8 December 2022: SITE VISIT (TBA)

- Read through the website of the host.
- Nikil Saval, “New Trends in Office Design”, *n+1* (2014).

Class 14

13 / 15 December 2022: The Future of Work: Utopia/Manifesto

- Sarah Jaffe, “What is Love?”, *Work Won't Love You Back: How Devotion to Our Jobs Keeps Us Exploited, Exhausted, and Alone* (2021).
- Rithika Ramamurthy, “It’s Not Going to Work Out: A Review of Post-Work Writing,” *Lux* (2021).

ASSIGNMENT 4 (30% of final grade)

Your final paper will be a 1,500-2000-word essay or a creative project (a video, a visual essay, a game, etc.) reflecting critically on (a particular aspect of) your internship experience that is anchored in, and informed by, at least two readings we have covered during the semester (at least one from after Class 6!). It should investigate a concept, paradox, or question from the readings through your own internship experience. In other words, the readings should provide the lens, the internship the material. Go through your journal and your reader, asking yourself: Which texts did you annotate most extensively? Which seem to resonate most with your internship? Which questions would you like to explore?

If you choose to submit a creative response rather than a standard academic essay, please pitch your idea latest by the end of November and make sure to include a 500-word statement in which you explain how the project relates to the readings.

Deadline for submission of the final essay is **midnight of 19 December 2022**. Please be in touch by 5 December if you wish to apply for an extension.