

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

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

Course Times: Thursdays, 2-3:30 pm

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## 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

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, one absence over the course of the entire Internship Seminar will not affect your participation grade or require documentation. Students should not attend class when they test positive for COVID-19.

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. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

### **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 (15%); 2) a take-home midterm exam (25%); and 4) a 1500–2000-word final paper (30%). 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 a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. 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  
Midterm: 25% // 16–17 March  
Final paper: 30% // 15 May

### **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

#### **2 February 2023:** 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

#### **9 February 2023:** 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

#### **16 February 2023:** The Problem with Work

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

### Class 4

#### **23 February 2023:** Do What You Love?

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

### Class 5

#### **2 March 2023:** Precarization of Work

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

### Class 6

#### **9 March October 2023:** The Forms of Capital and the Creative Class

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

### Class 7

#### **16 March 2023:** 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/suzannerowankelleher/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>

### **ASSIGNMENT 2** (25% final grade)

For this take-home midterm, you'll be sent the questions at 3:30pm on 16 March. 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, 17 March at the latest**.

#### Class 8

##### **23 March 2023:** Space Invaders

- Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017). Chapter 5.
- Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders* (2004). Highlighted passages from Introduction.
- ★ *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

##### **30 March 2023:** 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>

## **SPRING BREAK**

#### Class 10

##### **13 April 2023:** Making a Living in Creative Industries – GUEST LECTURE (Angela McRobbie)

- Angela McRobbie, Daniel Strutt & Carolina Bandinelli, *Fashion as Creative Economy: Microenterprises in London, Berlin and Milan* (2023). Excerpt from Ch. 1 + Ch. 3.

#### Class 11

##### **20 April 2023:** Le Future de Travail? (Florian will lead both groups.)

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

Class 12

**27 April 2023:** The grind (Aslı will lead both groups.)

- 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

**4 May 2023:** Visit to betahaus Berlin (Rudi-Dutschke-Str 23, 10969)

- Read through the website of the host: <https://www.betahaus.com/>
- Nikil Saval, “New Trends in Office Design,” *n+1* (2014).

Class 14

**11 May 2023:** 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 non-starred 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 April and make sure to include a 500-word statement in which you explain how the project relates to the readings. Group creative projects are only allowed up to two people, and subject to prior approval.

Deadline for submission of the final essay is **midnight of 15 May 2023**. Please be in touch by 5 May if you wish to apply for an extension.