

**Berlin: City of Music (MU171)**  
**Fall 2025 – Syllabus**

**Seminar Leader:** Benjamin Hochman

**Email:** [b.hochman@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:b.hochman@berlin.bard.edu)

**Class Location:** Lecture Hall, Platanenstraße 98a

**Regular Class Time:** Monday, 15:45–19:00 (unless otherwise noted)

**Additional Class Times:** As listed below and TBA

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Course Description**

Berlin's musical life presents an embarrassment of riches — where to begin? This course helps students chart a path through the city's endlessly fascinating musical offerings, from chamber music to opera, spanning a wide range of musical styles across the last four centuries.

We will attend concerts throughout Berlin as well as experience musical performances in digital format. The choice of events will depend on scheduling and the availability of low-cost tickets. Venues will include, among others, the Philharmonie Berlin, Radialsystem, Zigzag Jazz Club, Komische Oper, and Piano Salon Christophori.

Each event will be prepared for through assigned readings (musicological, historical, critical), listening to recordings, or viewing films. Several guest speakers will join us, representing the diversity of Berlin's musical life.

Course requirements include weekly short assignments and two longer projects: a midterm and a final. No prior musical training is required: music-lovers and musicians of all levels are equally welcome.

The course will be organized through Google Classroom, where all materials will be provided.

**Requirements**

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class.
- Read and respond to emails in a timely manner.
- Attend all classes and off-campus events punctually and in full.
- Complete assigned work on time.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Remain open, curious, and engaged throughout the semester.

## 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.

## Use of ChatGPT and Other Generative AI Tools

We may incorporate ChatGPT and other generative AI software during this course. Students will be informed about when, where, and how such tools are permitted to be used for class work and assignments, along with specific instructions for attribution. Outside of these approved uses, ChatGPT and other generative AI software are not permitted and must be specifically approved by the instructor. Any and all use of ChatGPT and other AI software at any stage of completing assignments for this course must be properly acknowledged in your work. Neglecting to do so may constitute a violation of the Bard College Berlin Code of Student Conduct. Here is an example of how to describe your AI use:

Tool	Use	Prompts	Section	Date
<b>ChatGPT 4o</b>	Initial idea generation that I adapted	Brainstorm ideas around how sustainable development goals can be applied locally	Framework on p 18	6 January 2025
<b>Claude 3.5</b>	Generating a draft conclusion that I adapted	Provide a summary of Chapters 3, 4, and 5	Conclusions (p 30, 31)	10 January 2025
<b>Grammarly EDU</b>	Used to check spelling and grammar and edit my final document	Enhance my text to improve clarity and expression	Entire work	14 January 2025
<b>Microsoft Copilot</b>	Used to modify the written tone/style of the introduction	Rewrite this paragraph so that the tone is appropriate for a university assignment	Introduction (p 2)	14 January 2025
<b>Microsoft Copilot</b>	Generating images for analysis	Create an image of a highly effective suburban park	Introduction (p 1)	28 March 2025

I do not require a specific referencing style e.g. APA (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) nor do I require you to include your AI use as in-text references or footnotes and in a reference list in your work.

However, I reserve the right to update this policy in real time during our course, if I find the above methods insufficient.

If you have questions about what is permissible at any point in the semester, please reach out to me. Please also note that this policy applies only to my class, and it is your responsibility to check with each instructor if ever you are unsure about what constitutes academic honesty in their class.

Although I have consulted a wide number of sources to educate myself on this topic, it is an ongoing learning process for me. The above policy relies most heavily upon and derives specific wording from:

<https://cep.barnard.edu/student-guide-generative-ai>

<https://guides.library.uq.edu.au/tools-and-techniques/ai-student-hub/acknowledge-and-reference-AI-use>

### **Accommodations**

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, ([accommodations@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:accommodations@berlin.bard.edu)) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker ([j.harker@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.harker@berlin.bard.edu)) or Maria Anderson-Long ([m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu)).

### **Attendance**

- Attendance at [all classes and off-campus excursions](#) is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, [one absence](#) (that is, one absence from one three-hour session) will not affect the grade nor require documentation.
- You may encounter circumstances that prevent you from attending classes for which you may be excused, meaning that the absence will not impact your grade. These circumstances include illness, religious observance, military obligation, attendance at a conference, a Bard Network event, a civic engagement initiative, a research trip or other

compelling circumstance outside of your control (i.e. court appearance, visa appointment, death of a family member). Optional non-academic travel, hosting visiting family and friends, or work schedules are not ground for excused absences. You will be allowed to self-report your absence one time, meaning that a notification informing your instructor about the reason for your absence 24 hours before the class is sufficient. If you miss class more than once you will need to provide your instructor with appropriate documentation in order to be excused (i.e. a doctor's note).

- All further unexcused absences will lower the final grade by one step (i.e. if your final grade is a B, you will be downgraded to a B-).
- Tardiness after fifteen minutes will be considered an absence.
- If you have any general medical issues or other concerns that could impact your compliance with these regulations, you need to inform your instructor during the first week of the semester. For information on disability accommodation, you should consult with Maria Anderson Long, Head of Student Life: [m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).
- Bard College Berlin may 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.

### **Assignments and Deadlines**

- Most weeks will include a short in-class writing assignment or quiz.
- There will be two major written assignments: a midterm and a final essay.

### **Deadlines**

- **Midterm** – due **Friday, Oct. 17 at 23:59**  
*Instructions will be provided by Sept. 29*
- **Final Essay** – due **Friday, Dec. 12 at 23:59**  
*Instructions will be provided by Nov. 3*

### **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 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**

- Seminar preparation, participation, and short weekly in-class writing assignments – 50%
  - 25% for Weeks 1–7
  - 25% for Weeks 8–14
- Midterm – 25%
- Final Essay – 25%

### **Schedule**

Please note that the schedule is subject to updates throughout the semester. Students are responsible for following all communications via email and Google Classroom.

#### **Week 1**

**Mon, Sept 1, 15:45–19:00**

*Subject:* Introductions and the Fall of the Wall

#### **Week 2**

**Mon, Sept 8, 15:45–19:00**

*Guest:* Dr. Yezu Woo, violinist <https://www.yezuwoo.com/>

*Subject:* *Isang Yun: Music, Exile, and Identity*

**Thu, Sept 11, 19:30–22:30**

*Concert Visit:* [RIAS Kammerchor Berlin, Pärt / Palestrina](#)

Meet at 19:30 at Philharmonie Berlin, Herbert-von-Karajan-Straße 1, 10785, Berlin

#### **Week 3**

**Mon, Sept 15, 15:45–19:00**

*Subject:* The Mendelssohns in Berlin

#### **Week 4**

**Mon, Sept 22, 15:45–19:00**

*Subject:* The German Lied: From Marian Anderson to Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau

**Week 5**

**Mon, Sept 29, 15:45–19:00**

*Location:* Hochschule für Musik „Hanns Eisler“ Berlin, Schloßplatz 7, 10178 Berlin

*Guest:* Sivan Magen, harpist

<https://www.hfm-berlin.de/hochschule/personen/details/sivan-magen/>

*Subject:* The Harp

*Midterm instructions provided*

**Week 6**

**Mon, Oct 6, 15:45–19:00**

*Subject:* Signs, Games, and Messages: The World of György Kurtág

**Week 7**

**Sun, Oct 12, 19:00–23:00**

*Concert Visit:* The Hot Club Orchestra

<https://www.zigzag-jazzclub.berlin/program-mai/hotcluborchestraoc>

Zig Zag Jazz Club, Hauptstr. 89, 12159 Berlin

Meeting time/location TBC

**Fri, Oct 17, 23:59** – Midterm essay due

**Week 8**

**Oct 20–26** – Fall Break

**Week 9**

**Mon, Oct 27, 15:45–19:00**

*Guest Leader:* TBA

**Week 10**

**Mon, Nov 3, 15:45–19:00**

*Guest Leader:* Julia Hamos, pianist <https://www.juliahamos.com/bio>

*Subject:* Women in Classical Music

*Final essay instructions provided*

**Week 11**

**Mon, Nov 10, 15:45–19:00**

*Guest Leader:* Stephen Mulligan, conductor and composer <https://www.stephenmulligan.com/>

*Subject:* Contemporary Music – What does it mean?

**Sun, Nov 16, 13:30–17:00**

*Concert Visit:* *Composer in the Loop: Exploring AI in Music*

<https://www.radialsystem.de/en/veranstaltungen/composer-in-the-loop/>

Meet at 13:30 at Radialsystem, Holzmarktstr. 33, 10243 Berlin

**Week 12**

**Mon, Nov 17, 15:45–19:00**

*Guest:* Lynn Sophie Guldin

[https://expneuro.charite.de/en/metast/person/person/address\\_detail/lynn\\_sophie\\_guldin](https://expneuro.charite.de/en/metast/person/person/address_detail/lynn_sophie_guldin)

<https://opernmagazin.de/author/lynn-sophie-guldin/>

*Subject:* *Growing Pains (For Demigods and Other Supernatural Children): Richard Wagner's The Valkyrie, Explained*

**Thu, Nov 20, 19:30–22:30**

*Concert Visit:* Benjamin Hochman at Piano Salon Christophori.

<https://www.benjaminhochman.com/>

[https://www.konzertfluegel.com/N\\_konzerte.html](https://www.konzertfluegel.com/N_konzerte.html)

Meet at 19:30 at Uferhallen, Uferstr. 8, 13357 Berlin

**Week 13**

**Mon, Nov 24, 15:45–19:00**

*Subject:* Working on the Finals

**Week 14**

**Mon, Dec 1, 15:45–19:00**

*Subject:* Final Presentations

**Sat, Dec 6, 19:00–23:00**

*Concert Visit:* Kurt Weill: Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny

<https://www.komische-oper-berlin.de/en/what/a-z/rise-and-fall-of-the-city-of-mahagonny/>

Komische Oper (Schillertheater – Großer Saal), Bismarckstraße 110, 10625 Berlin

**Fri, Dec 12, 23:59** – Final essay due

**Library and Book Purchase Policies, Assigned Materials, and Course Cost**

All reading, listening, and viewing materials will be provided on Google Classroom. No purchase of texts or course readers is required. Instead, students may incur a modest expense of up to **30 Euros** over the course of the semester for concert tickets. Every effort will be made to arrange attendance at the lowest possible cost, and most (if not all) costs will be covered by the college. Most tickets for concert visits will be purchased through the college; however, in some cases students may need to purchase tickets directly. Updates and instructions will be communicated throughout the semester as needed.