

Berlin, City of the Future: Cultural and Energy Transitions

ARCH 782_004 Summer Abroad PennDesign

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May 20-June 17, 2018



Course Summary Berlin is the city of the future. Or one of them. This course will explore Berlin in its past and present, from a perspective of architecture and energy, looking at the cultural and material transformations elicited by the Anthropocene.

Our focus will be three-fold: first, we will reconsider the HISTORY of German modernism from the perspective of energy. How was it symptomatic of a changed energy metabolism, what other architectures were possible – how can we understand, in short, the Bauhaus Moment as one of an energy transition to oil. Architectural ideas and buildings have participated in these broader cultural and socio-economic TRANSFORMATIONS. We will also look closely at the Ulm School and the placement of systems and social theory simultaneously at the heart of design pedagogy. This transformation continued into cold war buildings and the consumption of endless fossil fuels.

We will tour Bauhaus buildings and archives with an interest in this sense of transformation also on the level of subjectivity, of ecological economy, of habit and behavior. Johannes Itten, who taught color theory at the Bauhaus, also started class with yoga. This sense of defamiliarization, of transformation, of seeing the world differently was essential to the design process.

Our second focus will be on recent design ideas that have emerged from the 'energiewenden' - the contested ENERGY TRANSITION that has been a core of German economic policy and design innovation for the past few decades. We will visit relevant buildings and meet with architects. We will discuss the transition with policy makers and technology firms. We will look carefully at the social changes that are being elicited through these design and technology programs.

We will work closely with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) and the Max Planck Institute on the production of the archive of the Anthropocene Project. We will also contribute to the Environment and Society Portal at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich. Our first deliverable

will be information on the first and second energy transitions as seen through architecture.

The third aspect will have to do with the EXPERIENCE of Berlin as a city of the future. We will live in co-housing. We will ride bikes and take trains. In readings and seminar discussions we will examine the economic and ecological theories, points of intensification, broader political theories of the role of habit in the encounter with climate instability.

A design workshop will focus on the dynamics of distributed knowledge as a means towards emissions-reduction concepts for the city. How can we live with less carbon? What sort of knowledge do we need? What sort of design products are necessary? Projects may range from large scale analyses of housing access to reconsidering details. that can reconfigure our causal implication in

Berlin, a city so rich in history, becomes an ideal place to study the urban and environmental FUTURE.

Schematic Schedule

We are in Berlin for four weeks. Most days will involve work and exploration time in the morning, class/meeting/tour in the afternoon, often into dinner and the evening. We have a space for design work and seminar meetings, though much of the course, including seminars, will take place in the city.

Week 1

May 20. Arrival

May 21. Tour buildings and sites while getting our bearings in the city. There are a number of walking tours and bike tours that explore the history of the city.

Possible buildings to visit:

AEG Turbine Factory, Berlin (Peter Behrens, 1909)

Haus der Kulteren der Welt, Berlin (Hugh Stubbins, 1957)

Staatsbibliothek Zu Berlin (Sharoun and Wisniewski, 1968)

GSW Headquarters (Sauerbruch Hutton, 1999)

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Peter Eisenman, 2005)

May 22. Seminar. Distributed knowledge and the City.

May 23. History Seminar. The Bauhaus, German Modernism, Energy Transitions.

May 24-26. [Optional trip to Venice biennial opening – funding has been requested from HUD so everyone can go]

May 27. Sunday. Off. recreational group outings (Tempelhof, lakes, etc).

Week 2

May 28. Visits to contemporary buildings/projects.

May 29. History Seminar guest lecture – Robin Shuldenfrie. Dinner

May 30. Train to Bauhaus Dessau. Bauhaus School and Housing, Dessau (Walter Gropius, et. al., 1926)

May 31. History Seminar. Ulm. Systems knowledge and Graphic Knowledge. Cold war architecture and energy.

June 1 – June 2. Join the HKW Global Workshop on the Anthropocene Project. This is a sort of 'culminating meeting' of their first round of 'Anthropocene Curricula' – a gathering to discuss next steps. We are invited.

June 3. Visit/ discussion energy transition policy. Guest TBA.

Week 3

June 4. Visit to IBA/International Building Exhibition, Berlin 1957, 1977, 2020

June 5. Collective housing visit/discussion with Carson Chan

June 6. Collective exchange/economy visit discussion

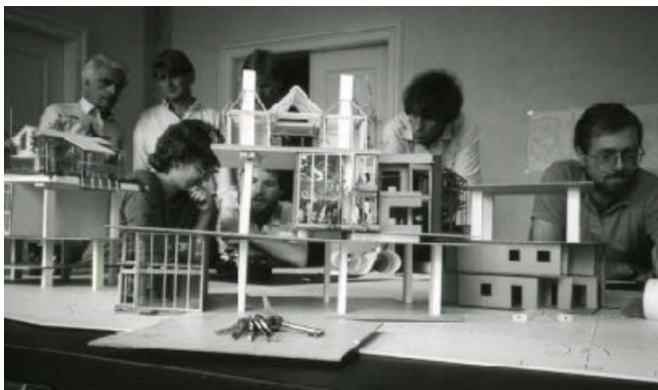
June 7. Workshop on history deliverable.

June 8. Workshop on history deliverable. Finish

June 9. Saturday. Off.

Week 4

June 10 -17. Design Workshop with A. Thiermann. Final review Sunday June 17



Workshop: Land in the Sky/ House within a House. Rethinking IBA with Daniel A. Barber and Alfredo Thiermann

We normally hear that we live in the so-called post-industrial city, but we should rather think that we live in a neo-industrial city. The administration, production, and reproduction of urban land has become the most sophisticated commodity. The city itself turns into industry, producing wealth and conditions of labor.



From that contemporary condition, the project developed by Frei Otto, Ökohäuser, in the context of IBA 1987 provides interesting lessons from which to rethink what would it mean to live in cities today. Having examined Otto's project among other aspects of the energy transition, how can his interest in land, and reproducing the conditions of urban land, allow for a critical and contemporary adaptation of typological, ecological, and social ideas.

Top image: Frie Otto, Ökohäuser, IBA Berlin, 1987

Bottom image: Zaha Hadid, Block House B, IBA Berlin, 1987