



2009 Berlin Study Abroad Program

Student Handbook

Welcome to the 2009 Berlin Study Abroad Program Guide! This handbook contains essential information to help you plan your participation in the program and to be happy, comfortable and safe while you are in Berlin. Please read this handbook thoroughly and ask the Program staff if you have any questions. You should bring this Handbook with you to Berlin.

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1 Program Overview

1.1 Introduction

Our Program will take place in Berlin, starting Wednesday, September 30, ending Friday, December 11, 2009. You will be in class at Humboldt University four days a week (either mornings or afternoons) and beyond that engage in research for your independent study and explore the city. We will organize a couple of field trips to Leipzig and to a Western Hanse city. On weekends, you will have time to explore Berlin and its surroundings on your own. The co-instructor for this program, Thorsten Wagner, is a lecturer of History at the Humboldt University. He will be your primary guide to local sites of historical memory in Berlin. You'll live in student housing in Berlin-Mitte (Center) and can commute via subway, bus, or walk to our classrooms at Humboldt University. At HUB, you will have access to cheap meals at the student cafeterias. Take the Humboldt environment as a chance to meet German students, practice your language skills and learn how to navigate German culture.

Humboldt University is not a campus university. Students live all over town and it might take time for you to get accustomed to the urban feel of the campus. We will help you explore the campus during the first week of classes and in turn ask that you familiarize yourself with its resources such as libraries, computer pools, and the "Mensa" (dining hall).

Make sure you arrive in Berlin by Tuesday, September 29, the latest. Student housing will be available to you starting Monday, September 28. For those of you who decide to study German and arrive early in Berlin, you will be responsible for your own housing and for all other aspects of your stay before the program starts. TANDEM language school will assist with housing for language program participants.

In Berlin, you will explore a range of sites that relate to German history, the unification process and social change. Some of these explorations will be guided, others you will be asked to do on your own. The reading that we will assign for classes is essential in connecting what you experiences with the academic purpose of the program. We therefore ask that you be prepared for classes, attend the sessions, and let us know in advance if for some reason you cannot be present.

1.2 Academic Credit and Grades

You will register for a 2 credit pre-departure seminar for Spring Quarter 2009. During the Study Abroad, you are eligible to get 15 University of Washington credits for this Program, 5 credits for “Politics, Society, and Culture from Bonn to Berlin” (EURO 494/CHID471a); 5 credits for “Memorializing the Past and Present in Berlin (CHID 471b); and five credits for your Independent study (EURO 499/CHID 498). When you return, these credits will be transferred to your transcript, along with your grade. You have to turn in your health screening/concurrent enrollment to IPE (see <http://ipe.washington.edu/domestic/enrollment.html> for details and procedures).

1.3 Program Staff and Student List

Note: this will be updated as we finalize the staff and student list in the spring

Program Director:

Dr. Sabine Lang, Assistant Professor, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, USA (salang@u.washington.edu)

Co-Instructor:

Thorsten Wagner, Lecturer, Humboldt University, thorsten_wagner@hotmail.com)

Student Assistants:

Jason Immertreu, predeparture assistant, USA (jason.immertreu@gmail.com)

Timo Lochoki, on site assistant Humboldt University, Berlin (Timo.Lochocki@gmx.de)

Other Program Staff:

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Theron Stevenson, CHID Executive Program Director, University of Washington
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2 Travel Arrangements

2.1 Program Itinerary

Note: *Although the beginning and end dates of the program are set (so that you can reserve your international flights), other dates are subject to change depending on travel options and schedules.*

September 27/28: Flight from home to Berlin. Because you will fly overnight from the US, you will arrive in Germany one calendar day after you depart the USA. The time difference between Seattle and Berlin is 9 hours, i.e. if it is 9am in Seattle, it is 6pm in Berlin.

Program start: Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Program end: Friday, December 11, 2009

October 9/10 – date to be finalized – trip to Leipzig.

Mid-November – date to be finalized – trip to West German Hanse city.

2.2 Flights

You are responsible for getting yourself from your home to Berlin by Tuesday, September 29, 2009, and for getting yourself home from Berlin after December 11. I recommend that you make your travel booking as soon as possible in order to get the best prices and choice of flights. It will probably be easiest to book a round trip flight from your home to Berlin. Please e-mail a copy of your complete itinerary to Jason by July 15.

2.3 Booking flights

You should shop around for flights and get prices from **at least two** different travel agents or websites. I have found that experienced travel agents can often find better prices for travel arrangements compared to websites (like Travelocity), and are much more helpful if you have to change your tickets later. CHID has successfully worked with STA travel on the Ave. before. Make sure to check the policies for changing and canceling your tickets, as these can have hefty fees, or in some cases tickets cannot be changed at all. Travel insurance may be a good investment (e.g. www.insuremytrip.com)

2.4 Passport and German Visa

If you do not have a passport, apply for one right away as it can take several weeks to get one. If you are not a US citizen, please check visa requirement with the German embassy. Also, please make sure your passport does not expire before June 15, 2010 (6 months *past* December

15, 2009). **You might not be allowed to get a German visa if your passport expires before that time (even if it is valid for the entire period of your planned stay).** Non residents will be obtaining a student visa for your stay in Germany, which will be issued by your nearest German embassy or consulate before you leave home. There is a visa fee charged by the Consulate or Embassy to issue a visa. For Washington state residents, our nearest German Consulate is in San Francisco. You might have to appear in person to apply for/receive your visa.

For additional information and updates, check the German Embassy website at:
http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/03__Consulates/00/___Consulates.html.

You may also find the “Students Abroad” website maintained by the US State Dept. useful:
<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>

3 Health Care Arrangements

3.1 Health issues

A health check is required and part of the concurrent enrollment form <http://www.ipe.washington.edu/domestic/enrollment.html>. You should **make an appointment** with your doctor for a general check up and to get the various inoculations you’ll need. UW students may want to consider making this appointment at the Hall Health travel clinic (<http://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/index.php?ClinicID=11>) which offers country-specific consultation and immunizations.

What shots and pills you get are up to you and your doctor. Normal inoculations should be up-to-date (like tetanus, MMR, etc.). I also recommend that you see your dentist and take care of any potential problems before departure. Any prescriptions you take regularly? It might be a good idea to get an adequate supply for the duration of the program. Remember to check with your airline about fluid medication sizes in your carry on luggage.

3.2 Health Insurance

Humboldt University requires proof of health insurance for registration. We highly encourage you to purchase the “UW Study Abroad Insurance Plan” which will cover medical and emergence medical evacuation expenses for the duration of the Study Abroad program. Information for UW students is available at <http://www.ipe.washington.edu/domestic/insurance.html>.

In general, you should take just a little bit more care of yourself than you might at home.

4 What to Bring

4.1 General

Berlin is not too different from Seattle in its climate. When you arrive, it will still be pleasantly warm; in November and December, there can be snow. The fewer things you have to keep track of and worry about, the happier you'll be. Check the airline weight limits for your flights. If your bags are overweight you will have to pay a fee in cash.

Checked luggage on flights regularly gets delayed and sometimes is lost. Put your valuables in your carry-on bag, plus a change of clothes and anything else you absolutely need for the first 2-3 days after you arrive, just in case. Make sure you check airline safety regulations about what can go in your carry on luggage. Don't lock your luggage, it might need to be inspected. And remember that in all likelihood you will want to bring souvenirs back – so don't arrive with two heavily packed suitcases already! Towels and bedding are provided in your student housing facility.

4.2 Money

The Program will cover your housing, Berlin public transportation pass, student fees, police registration, and field trip transportation and accommodation from your arrival in Berlin on September 30 to your departure on December 12, but you will need your own money for your international travel and (possibly) visa, including overlays (taxi, hotel, food), for your daily living expenses (i.e. meals, entry fees) in Berlin, buying gifts, drinks and snacks on your own, as well as emergency money. We can't know how the US dollar will fare in the fall, so I recommend that you calculate a minimum of \$350-500 per month in Berlin to cover these expenses, depending on your lifestyle.

Germans use the Euro and the exchange rate is impossible to predict. It might be around 1.50\$ to the Euro in the summer – it might be more or less than that. Check the exchange rate before you travel and plan accordingly. Food and many items are cheaper than they are in the US at current exchange rates. ATMs are widely available in Berlin. Credit cards are not as widely used as in the US, so don't count on paying your coffee or entry to a club with a credit card.

Nevertheless, having a credit card is useful. If you have an ATM card, you will be able to get German cash from your home bank account in Germany, though there are fees for transactions. You must notify your bank or credit card company that you will be traveling to Germany before departure, otherwise your account might be locked after your first transaction abroad. Check with your bank that your cards will work at a large variety of places and machines in Germany. Even if you have an ATM card that works in Germany, you should exchange some Euros before departure to tie you over.

4.3 Security and Theft

Berlin is a world city, so there is also crime. You should not walk around alone at night in a city you do not know well (true anywhere in the world), and be aware of where you are and who is with you. Pick-pocketing and petty theft can be a problem anywhere, especially on crowded buses, subways, or in busy airports, bus terminals and ports where people are crowded together as well as in hotel and guest rooms. The safest place for your money and passport while traveling is deep inside your carry-on bag or in a bag strapped inside your clothing—not in your pocket or in an outer compartment of your luggage. You should make copies of your passport, visa (if applies), plane tickets, credit cards/ATM and other important documents (e.g. traveler's check numbers) and carry them separately in your luggage. Please leave a copy of these documents with someone at home in case you lose everything.

If you are worried about your valuables, you may want to look into accident and theft insurance, for example for a laptop.

4.4 Attire & Customs

Students in Berlin dress just like you. Yet when we will visit memorial sites or talk to people in government and other public buildings, it is advisable to have an alternative to flip-flops and shorts. When you attend evening events, f.e. a concert in the Philharmonic, you will find people a bit more dressed up than in Seattle. Bring swimming trunks/bathing suit – Berlin has great outdoor pools and swimmable lakes.

Don't count on being able to shop 24/7. German labor legislation has loosened but shops are still closed on Sundays and many also close Saturday afternoons. Having said that, you can find groceries on Sunday for example at the Main Train Station.

The legal drinking age in Germany is 16, the purchasing age is 18. Be careful not to drink too much; even if you see Germans walking around with a beer bottles, this is not the image we want to convey as UW students. Serious abuse of alcohol or any drug will lead to your being sent home at your own cost and failing the courses. Most things that happen to US students while abroad happen because of a combination of drinking and motor vehicles. Use common sense and general safety guidelines as you would normally in the US.

4.5 Electricity

The US uses 100 volt 60 cycle current with a US plug. Germany uses 220 volt 50 cycle current with a European plug (two round prongs). In order to use your electronics in Berlin, you need to convert the current from 220 to 110 volts and you need to convert your plug with a European adapter. Some products such as laptops and some hairdryers can handle either voltage. Laptops usually adjust automatically; hairdryers have a switch. For most other products you will need a transformer that you can buy separately to change 220 to 110 volts. Even for the laptop and the

hairdryer, you will need to adapt your US plug to a European plug so that you can plug your device into the wall. You can usually find these at luggage stores, Brookstone's, hardware stores, or Target. Do not wait to buy the plugs in Germany. If you arrive on a Sunday, shops will be closed. Generally, plugs and adapters can be bought in Berlin.

4.6 What Not to Bring

Do not bring anything illegal, **especially illegal drugs** (and don't buy them while you're in the country) and weapons. Germany has strict drug and weapons laws, and if you get caught, there is little anyone can do to help you avoid criminal charges. In that event, you would be tried by German law as opposed to US law. If you are caught with illegal items in your possession, you'll have to leave the Program immediately.

4.7 Mental Preparation

A major requirement for happiness in Berlin is cultural curiosity and flexibility. Berliners are rumored to be a bit impolite and harsh – for the most part that is hear-say. But you will notice differences in behavior and some will feel very alien to you. A good sense of humor is always handy when the unexpected happens. Grumpiness has a way of infecting the larger group.

Having experienced the “alien” feeling myself during travels, I have found that a humble attitude serves well, as well as categorizing some things in your mind as “anthropologically interesting”, i.e. not taking them too personal. Even if you don't speak German, learn a few phrases to get by. Even totally mangled German will earn you smiles and praise. Many people in Berlin will be happy to speak English with you. Try to talk to people, don't be shy. Remember always that we are guests. On the other hand, be true to yourself, let your own personality come through, seek out people who you'd like to befriend, avoid people who rub you the wrong way.

5 Other Practical Considerations

5.1 Housing

You will be staying in an apartment building run by Arwobau, as public housing cooperation. We will have two bedroom apartments that are fully furnished and have a full kitchen. Three people will stay in one apartment, one bedroom will be a single, the other one a double bedroom. Please let me know during spring quarter if you need your privacy. The apartment building is located very centrally, but you might notice that its surroundings are a bit worn or unusual to your eyes. Graffiti, for example, is no indicator of gang violence in Berlin, but a very common and often aesthetically interesting phenomenon all over town.

5.2 Cleaning and Laundry

Washing machines are available in the basement of your building. You are responsible for keeping the apartment tidy and for doing your own laundry.

5.3 Stores and Shopping

Berlin offers plenty of shopping opportunities. Just make sure that you buy your Sunday breakfast items on Saturday. As I mentioned earlier, shops tend to be closed Sundays and on Holidays. Many stores don't take credit cards, so make sure you carry cash. Also: Don't be surprised if you pay for the plastic bags you are handed to pack yourself at checkout of grocery stores and department stores, that's the custom.

5.4 Long Distance Communication

Long distance communication can be challenging. Be prepared to adapt to local customs, which include not having 24/7 access to the internet or a phone.

Cell phones: If you have a cell phone in the US, talk to your provider about options to make it work in Europe. You can buy a SIM card plus airtime to work in your own cell phone if you have an unlocked quad band GSM phone (in the US, T-Mobile and AT&T operate GSM networks, Verizon does not). You have to get your phone unlocked by your service provider several weeks before you go or it will not work with a different SIM card. Obtaining a cell phone in Berlin might be another option, but plans vary. I will have a cell phone, and you will get my number in Berlin.

Email: Even though you won't have internet access in your housing you will find that Berlin has tons of internet cafes as well as regular coffeeshops with Wifi (called WLAN in Germany). Bringing your own laptop therefore is a great idea. You will also have wireless access at Humboldt University and will be able to use the computer facilities there.

Mail: is a good old-fashioned communication option, and takes about five days to Seattle.

5.5 Food and Water

Berlin is a cosmopolitan city and therefore most of the world's foods are available, from local to ethnic varieties. Vegetarians are well-off, tofu is widely available and most restaurants have vegetarian options – even though I admit that we are a meat-loving people.

Tap water in Berlin is safe and drinkable.

6 Safety

6.1 General Safety Issues

Berlin is quite safe for foreign visitors. Using public transportation at night is generally not a problem, I have done that for twenty years. However, as in any world city, there is crime. Keep bag zippers closed when in public. At night, try to use the subway car closest to the driver and keep your internal antenna out for strange behavior around you. Move away, if necessary. If at all possible, match up with someone else from the program to go home together at night.

German cars and their drivers are known for SPEED. Moreover, they are by far less accommodating to people on foot than here in Seattle. So adapt to this by looking closely around you, even if you have a green light or a marked crossway.

Berlin is a great city for biking, and there are used bike shops or bike rentals. If you decide to bicycle in Berlin, you should wear a helmet and familiarize yourself with the traffic rules.

In case of a safety issue, contact the Program Director or Assistant immediately.

If you decide to travel outside of Berlin during your course-free days, inform the Program Director or TA where you will be going, for how long, and how you can be reached in case of an emergency.

6.2 Emergency Contact Information

This section will be updated in the spring

Notes: “+” is the international access code, hold down the “+” key on most cell and satellite phones to dial this code, then dial the country code and phone number

Country code for Germany is 49

Country code for USA is 1

Our PRIMARY Alarm Center is

US Embassy in Berlin

Home Page:

<http://germany.usembassy.gov/>

Address:

Neustädtische Kirchstr. 4-5
10117 Berlin

Federal Republic of Germany
Tel: (030) 2385 174
Closed on American and German holidays

Sabine Lang's Berlin land line

Calling from inside Germany: 49-30-2166693

Calling from outside Germany: 011-49-30-2166693

Timo Lochoki's Berlin cell

Calling from inside Germany: 0170/301 80 94

Calling from outside Germany: 011-49-170/301 80 94

University of Washington International Programs and Exchanges (IPE)

During business hours (Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm Pacific Time):

+1-206-221-4404

After business hours:

+1-206-543-9331

Note: To be used in emergency situations in which your personal health, safety or security (or that of another UW student) is at risk. The after hours emergency number connects to the UW Police Department which receives calls 24 hours per day, seven days a week. The UW Police will ask you to provide basic information about your situation, how/when you can be contacted, and relay these details to IPE staff. IPE staff will respond to your call as quickly as possible.

IPE will issue emergency contact cards before your departure.

6.3 Hospital information

7 Safety and Security – Principles and Precautions

Activity/Risk/Technical Standard/Expectation	Consent/Precautions/Requirements
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- 1 All participants must strictly adhere to the provided behavioral guidelines**
 - 2 Pack selectively and conscientiously.**
 - 3 Adjust one's personal interests, needs, expectations, and preferences for the larger good and well being of the group.**
 - 4 Mandatory Health requirements:**
 - 1) Pre-departure inoculations include all recommended inoculations via physician/health screening.**
 - 2) All physician recommended and prescribed travel-and standard-medications must be taken in careful and consistent manner.**
 - 3) Any participant with a prescribed medication must have a copy of the prescription with them.**
 - 5 Humboldt University enrollment requires that all participants have health insurance that covers the period after the program ends.**
 - 6 Have extra copies of important documents—both hardcopies and electronic copies—including passport, credit/debit cards, insurance information, and emergency contact information. Leave copies in the US with your parents or a friend.**
 - 7 Credit cards have limited use in Germany and each program participant must be able to use an ATM for cash retrieval.**
 - 8 Adjust to different, “non-wired” conditions.**
 - 9 Learn to negotiate the city public transportation culture and be aware of differences to the US.**
 - 10 Travel with responsibility and with care in urban areas with a special focus on theft.**
 - 11 When travelling outside of Berlin, inform the Program Director.**
 - 12 Be able and willing to learn in a range of new and different learning environments.**
 - 13 Be aware that illegal drugs are strictly prohibited on the program, and penalties, which apply to foreigners, for drug use and possession are severe.**

8 Maps

9 Readings