Course Outline

**U of T Berlin, GER354Y0, Summer 2025, Prof. S Gargova**

Berlin Roots: Exploring Entrepreneurship and Cultural Identity in Berlin's Creative Industries

Course Description

What nurtures creativity? How do innovation, entrepreneurship, and culture intersect, and how are these intersections further shaped by governmental policies and regulations? These questions will guide our exploration of Berlin's creative industries, examining the cultural, historical and socio-political factors that helped the city evolve into one of Europe's most influential entrepreneurial hubs.

Course participants will engage in an interdisciplinary study of Berlin's vibrant creative industries, with a focus on print media & publishing, film & television and digital gaming. Our exploratory journey will trace the evolution of the creative industries, beginning with Gutenberg's invention of the printing press and progressing through the emergence of mass publishing and newsrooms, the rise of cinematography and television, culminating in the modern digital era—all while examining the cultural, societal, and historical influences that shaped and nurtured human creativity as the driving force behind these developments.
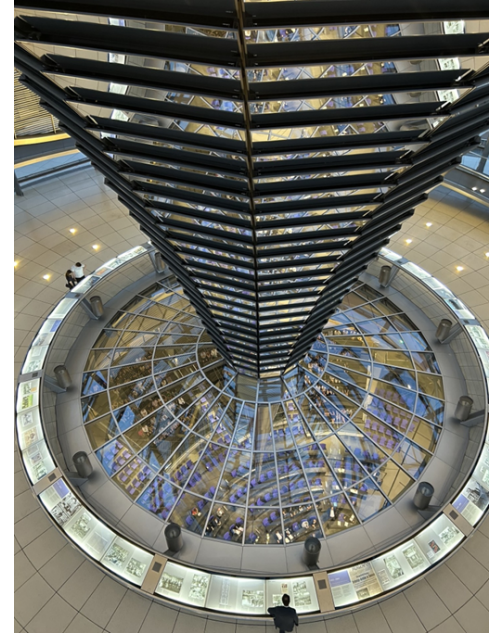
Through engaging lectures, group work & discussions, various site visits and guided tours, as well as workshops and critical analysis, students will gain valuable insights into the complexities of contemporary creative enterprises while developing a deeper

appreciation for the cultural dynamics that shape them.

STUDENT PROFILE

This course is open to students from all fields who are interested in expanding their knowledge of Berlin's entrepreneurial and creative scene and the cultural and socio-political factors that have and continue to shape it. No knowledge of German is required, however the strong willingness to engage in four weeks of intense academic and intellectual work is. This is an attendance-based course; hence no absences or make-up assignments will be allowed.

Field Trips, Site Visits and Guided Tours

The value of this course is significantly enhanced by the opportunity to merge theoretical knowledge from readings with hands-on experiences and direct interactions with key figures in Germany's creative industries.

Visits to the *Axel Springer AG* and *Die Zeit* headquarters will immerse participants in the operations of two of Europe's largest digital publishing houses, illustrating how traditional and digital media converge. Guided tours at the *Deutsches Technikmuseum* and *Museum für Kommunikation* will provide deeper insights into the evolution of communication, offering a historical perspective that complements the contemporary media landscape. A tour of *Deutsche Welle-TV* will offer a glimpse into the world of global broadcasting and its role in shaping cultural narratives. At the *Staatsbibliothek* and *Literaturhaus Berlin*, students can investigate the literary scene, gaining perspectives on the evolution of print media and its cultural impact. "Behind the scenes" tours at the *BUFA* and *Studio Berlin* film studios will expand participants' understanding of the creative and technical process involved in video and movie making. Finally, a visit to *Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur*, followed by a meet-and-greet at *Klang Games GmbH*, one of

Germany's top gaming startups, will immerse students in the burgeoning field of digital entertainment. You will gain insight into how interactive media shape contemporary

cultural identity and entrepreneurship in Berlin, as well as how the industry views its role and responsibilities in influencing the socio-political landscape. All these encounters will collectively showcase the diverse facets of Berlin's creative industries, highlighting their entrepreneurial and cultural dimensions, and demonstrating how innovation and creativity drive both local and global impact in media, technology, and the arts.

Course Objectives

- ➢ To understand the historical and cultural factors that have contributed to the emergence and growth of Berlin's creative industries.
- ➢ To explore the key players, trends, and innovations within Berlin's creative landscape, including the role of technology and digital media.
- ➢ To examine the relationship between creativity, entrepreneurship, and cultural identity in Berlin's creative sectors.
- ➢ To investigate the challenges and opportunities faced by creative professionals and businesses in Berlin, including issues of diversity, sustainability, social responsibility, as well as government policies and infrastructure.
- ➢ To foster critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspectives on creativity, innovation, and cultural production.

Course Modules

The course is divided into three thematic sections.

Module 1: Print Media & Publishing

This module will explore the evolution of print media and publishing, with a focus on both traditional and digital platforms. Students will analyze the role of iconic institutions such as *Axel Springer AG*, *die Zeit*, *der Spiegel*, *Welt*, and *Focus* among others, investigating how technological advancements and globalization have reshaped the industry. The module will also delve into the cultural significance of print media and its ongoing influence on public discourse.

Field Trips, Site Visits and Guided Tours:

Deutsches Technikmuseum Berlin, Druck- und Filmtechnik	guided tour
Museum für Kommunikation	guided tour
Museum für Kommunikation	workshop: Power Media!
Staatsbibliothek	guided tour
Axel Springer Verlag	site visit & tour
Die Zeit Editorial Office	site visit & tour

Module 2: Film & Television

In this module, students will be taking a closer look at the film production and television industries in Berlin, with an emphasis on how these sectors have contributed to the city's cultural identity. Through case studies of prominent media organizations like *Deutsche Welle-TV*, *RBB* and the international corporation *Viacom*, students will explore global broadcasting, film production, and the role of Berlin as a hub for storytelling that reflects both local and international narratives.

Field Trips, Site Visits and Guided Tours

Deutsche Welle TV	site visit & tour
Berlin Fernsehturm	guided tour
Filmmuseum **Potsdam**	guided tour
Deutsches Kinemathek-Museum für Film und Fernsehen	guided tour
BUFA Filmstudios	site visit & tour
Studio Berlin	site visit & tour
Boulevard der Stars	individual exploration

Module 3: Gaming Industry

This module will focus on the burgeoning gaming industry in Berlin, exploring the intersection of interactive media, entrepreneurship, and cultural production. Students will

engage with startups and creative enterprises, including visits to the *Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur* and Germany's top gaming startups, to investigate how the gaming industry is shaping contemporary cultural identity and driving innovation in digital entertainment.

Field Trips, Site Visits and Guided Tours:

Computerspielmuseum Berlin	guided tour
Stiftung Digitale Spielkultur	site visit & guest lecture
Klang Games GmbH	site visit & tour

Course Requirements, Assignments & Grade Breakdown

Requirements

All students are required to participate in all class sessions, field trips, site visits and guided tours. Participants are to display the professionalism and maturity expected of university students and to comply with the U of T policies on academic integrity and behavior. All exchanges are to remain polite and respectful. Class members should not engage in behavior disruptive to other students or the class as a whole.

Assignments & Grade Breakdown

Attendance, Participation & Engagement   **15%**

Pre-Departure Session: t.b.a.   **15%**

The Pre-Departure Session is comprised of three parts: attending an in-person meeting, reading the assigned materials and completing and submitting a short questionnaire for each reading.

Site Visit Reflections   **20%**

After each site visit, students write a short reflection on how the visit connects with course themes (innovation, entrepreneurship, and culture) in a diary-type document. They will describe their key takeaways and how the visit influenced their understanding of the creative industries in Berlin. Length: 200-400 words.

<u>Industry Case Study Presentation (groups of 3-4 students</u>).   25%

In groups, students will choose one of Berlin's key creative industries and select a specific enterprise as a case study. The presentation should include an analysis of the industry's historical development, contemporary status, and future potential. Additionally, participants should explore how cultural dynamics, technological advancements, and governmental policies have influenced the industry, using their chosen enterprise to exemplify them. The analysis should highlight the entrepreneurial strategies, innovation processes, and government policies that have shaped the company and its impact on Berlin's creative scene. Presentations will take place in the last week of instruction and be approx. 10–15 minutes long and include visual aids.

<u>Creative Industry Research Final Paper</u>   25%

Students will select one of the sectors (film, television, games, or print media) and write a research paper analyzing its development in the discussed context of Berlin/Germany. The paper should be grounded in reflections from the site visits and class readings, incorporating the historical, social, and cultural contexts that have shaped the industry. In addition, students must discuss the entrepreneurial challenges and opportunities the industry is faced with today. The paper should make explicit connections to the course readings, site visits, and personal experiences made throughout the course. Length: 1,200–1,500 words.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is defined as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course! Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, using Generative AI, or tampering with

the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Academic Integrity office for possible further disciplinary sanction. For more please visit [U of T Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#)

GER354Y and Generative AI

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments in this course, including tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and other AI writing or coding assistants, is **prohibited**.

The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of an assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Representing as one's own an idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative artificial intelligence applications, including ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the purpose of completing assignments in this course.

This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach the course learning outcomes.