A Cultural History of Travel

Spring 2017
European Humanities 3-credit course
Instructor: Thorsten Wagner
Major Disciplines: Anthropology, History
Mondays and Thursdays, 13:15-14:35
Classroom: V10-B25

Course Format
The class will meet 23 times during the semester. It will predominantly consist of class discussion. The course also involves a field study.

Course Instructor
Thorsten Wagner. M.A. (Modern History, German Literature, Political Science (Technische Universität Berlin 1998); 1999-2000 postgraduate fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; 2001-2004 affiliated with the Danish Center for Holocaust- and Genocide Studies; since 2001, educator at the Jewish Museum Berlin; since 2007, research fellow and docent at the Humboldt University of Berlin. Full-time with DIS since 2010. Academic Director of FASPE (Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics).

DIS Contact
Matt Kelley, Program Assistant, European Humanities Department

Course Description
As the world’s largest single industry, tourism has become a most powerful economic and social factor at the turn of the 21st century. But by now, the practice of travel and tourism is also recognized as a highly influential cultural force. In the modern world, travel and tourism have become fundamental social and cultural practices by means of which people construct ideas about the self, society, nation, the past and others (Alan Confino). Studying the practice and discourse of travel means to deal with a symbolic representation of the world, with an experience of a fictional environment, just like art, ritual, and literature. This would imply that travel and tourism do not primarily constitute a flight from reality, but rather symbolic ways to understand and negotiate it.

The course is not about the experience and practice of travel as such, let alone focused on tourism studies, but has a strong concentration on social and cultural change in a historical perspective. It deals broadly with European, and partially even non-European history, but has a clear primary focus on German and European Jewish history.

The underlying argument of the course is that the enormous global impact of contemporary tourism is dependent on a century-long process of defining travel as a cultural experience, generating images, dreams and promises of alternatives to everyday life. This ‘historical cultural baggage’ (Hartmut Berghoff/Barbara Korte) - being constructed, molded, and remolded over a long process of time – is
what has turned the practice and discourse of travelling in its different forms into a crucial means of perception and self-perception.

In addition to this, travel and tourism seem to epitomize the notion of diasporic displacement, the dependence on ‘simulacra’/simulations and images, and the restlessness of contemporary culture. In the world of global tourism, not only the individual travels the world – also international brands, logos, and images are roaming the globe – many of whom are connected with travel and leisure lifestyles, be it Easyjet or Club Med. Consuming these transnational images of travel becomes part of ‘collective hallucinations’ (Naomi Klein). “The Global” is performed by hybrid phenomena such as the internet, finance, brands, exiles/refugees – and the traveller of the 21st century. In the framework of a “liquid modernity” (Zygmunt Bauman), the most unlikely of places have become destinations of global tourism, and often, becoming a tourist destination is the predominant mode by which societies, communities, and places come to enter the global order.

The course will consist of three parts: a first part outlining some general dimensions of travel and tourism, a second mapping the historical foundations of modern tourism, and a third focusing on recent developments in the field.

Course Objectives

- To explore crucial dimensions in Modern European History through the prism of the development of travelling modes and tourism.
- To combine an analysis of different dimensions of social, economic and technological change with more recent approaches of cultural studies.
- To create cross-references to issues of identity and space, definitions of self and others, processes of economic and cultural globalization, as well as memory and performance.
- To reflect on one’s own status, perceptions, and patterns of behaviour as a traveller

Readings:

Please consult the course binder and Canvas for the readings assigned for each class. Suggestions for further reading will be provided in class or through individual consultation.

In addition to the readings in the course binder, coursework will be increasingly individualized towards the second half of the semester as students work on own projects for the final paper.

Participation:

The course is not a lecture class, but relies heavily on class discussion, informed by an in-depth, critical reading of the assigned texts. Students will be expected to bring the text (in a paper version) and reading notes as well as questions to class. It is crucial to be able to analyze and criticize the argument put forth in the reading. Sharing a merely intuitive and personal opinion can be a useful starting-point, but is not sufficient. Students must be able to relate their points of view to an academic and research-based argument. Overall grades will depend on engaged, informed and highly active participation in class discussion.

A Cultural History of Travel | DIS | Related Disciplines: Anthropology, History
Course Requirements:

Each student will be assigned a time to give a max. 10-minute oral presentation to the class on the basis of a text listed as recommended reading. The presentation should be using a very concise PowerPoint slide show, with max. 5 slides.

The task is to present the essence of the additional reading to the fellow students, so the time limit will be enforced.

Students are required to hand in a 2-page travelogue (double-spaced), reflecting the experiences of one of the DIS study tours or a private trip, and relating it to the reading. In addition to this, each student is required to attach a photo and to analyze/comment on it, connecting it with course-relevant issues. This assignment is due on March 27th.

Research paper:

Each student will produce a research project in form of a topic paper that reflects the theme of the course from one of a range of disciplines: history, sociology, literature, or cultural studies. Throughout the semester, the students’ reflection process will become increasingly individualized as they find texts that fit into the research project that will be completed at the end of the semester as their topic paper. The paper is expected to be research-based, amount to 1600-1800 words, and have a clear focus on the history of travel in Europe. The final paper is to be turned in on May 1st.

As the first preparatory stage for this paper, a 200-250 word project proposal (in prose) is due on April 6th. The proposal describes the problem that will be discussed in the final paper, provides a brief literature overview, and raises the key questions guiding the research process. Furthermore, a bibliography is to be added, which includes both the assigned texts that are the starting point for the research process, as well as (minimum) additional five peer-reviewed academic articles or book chapters taken from research-based academic publications that are not part of the required or recommended course reading. Websites, encyclopedia articles, fiction, newspaper articles, book reviews, essays, movies, etc. do not count. Please do not hesitate to make use of the DIS library for this portion of the paper: http://www.disabroad.org/study-abroad-students/library/

All assignments must be handed in on the due date BOTH in hard copy (paginated and stapled) AND electronically (i.e. sent as an ordinary Word document attached to an email). Not meeting the requirements regarding word count, handing in assignments late, pagination, title, or failing to hand it in both forms will affect the grade substantially.

Additional exercises might include:

A. Analyzing travel websites or guide books and distillate the image of Denmark/Copenhagen and other cities presented here.
B. Observe, document, and comment on tourism infrastructure and tourist behaviour in Copenhagen
C. Discuss, why certain areas of Copenhagen are non-sites in a tourist sense
D. Collect postcards in Copenhagen or on trips, that can serve as source material, reflecting on the construction of sites and the framing of tourist perceptions
E. Analyse examples of virtual travelling in Copenhagen, in museums or exhibitions, such as David’s Samling, the Jewish Museum, etc.
F. Reflect on the structure of the itineraries of their study tours or their own trips within the framework of the issues raised above (Dybbøl Banke as battlefield tourism; visits to European cities, concentration camp memorials, specific landscapes; choices and priorities)

G. Analyze the significance of souvenirs

**Grade Components**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation and powerpoint slides</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travelogue and picture assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
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To be eligible for a passing grade in this class you must complete all of the assigned work.

**Disability and resource statement:**

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should immediately contact Office of Academic Support (acadsupp@dis.dk) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations.

**Attendance**

Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. If a student misses multiple classes, the Director of Academic Support and Registrar will be notified and they will follow up with him or her. Two unexcused absences will warrant a reduced letter grade. Three unexcused absences will result in failure. Absences will jeopardize grades and standing at DIS; allowances will be made in cases of illness, provided that a doctor’s note is submitted. Arriving late to class is unacceptable and will affect participation grades. In order to be eligible for a passing grade in the class, all work must be submitted.

**Classroom Etiquette**

The use of distracting devices (smartphones, iPads, laptops, etc.) is strictly prohibited during class. Failure to comply will adversely affect participation grades. Use of laptops for the purpose of note-taking requires prior consultation with the professor. Students should refrain from all other computer activities, as they prove distracting to themselves and fellow students. Mobile phones and other electronic devices should of course be turned off and stored away.

**Academic Honesty - Plagiarism and Violating the Rules of an Assignment**

DIS expects that students abide by the highest standards of intellectual honesty in all academic work. DIS assumes that all students do their own work and credit all work or thought taken from others. Academic dishonesty will result in a final course grade of “F” and can result in dismissal, and the students’ home universities will be notified. DIS reserves the right to request that written student assignments be turned electronically for submission to plagiarism detection software. See the Academic Handbook for more information, or see the professor with any questions. see the professor with any questions.
Final Syllabus

Course Schedule

Session 1
Thursday, January 19
Introduction to the course (practical information, assignments, reading material)
The course will set out with a discussion of different terms and forms of travelling, as well as a presentation of some theories of tourism. Instead of reinforcing conventional, but often arbitrary and construed differentiations between travel (virtuous) and tourism (dubious), travel, tourism, migration, and the diasporic condition will be presented as different, but intertwined and related forms of dislocation and mobility in an increasingly globalized world.

Required reading:
(Introduction, pp. 1-10, concluding chapter, 260-282, available on Canvas).

Recommended reading (as overview and introduction):
(available in library)

I. General Dimensions of Travel and Tourism

Session 2
Monday, January 23
Election of two class representatives
Text and Travel: images framing the travelling experience
The session will focus on the ways, in which travel experiences are mediated through texts and images. Travelling produces texts (travelogues, postcards, travel literature) and images (photographs and perceptions), and simultaneously, the experience of the traveller is shaped, conditioned, filtered by texts (e.g. guidebooks) and images, by expectations, cultural preconceptions and stereotypes. The ‘Tourist gaze’ (John Urry) focuses on the exotic, indigenous other, and the semiotics of tourism predetermine what is a sight and what is not, and predefine what is an ‘appropriate’ reaction to a certain experience.

Readings:

Recommended:

Presentation: Tourism and Photography
Session 3
Thursday, January 26
Landscapes and Cities as Spaces of (Self-)Exploration

The romantic idealization of nature and the educational or hedonistic experience of the metropolis are examples of changing cultures of perception. Literally and metaphorically ‘reading’ and ‘mapping’ a city as a space of (self-) exploration are central features of this dichotomy, as are the modes of inventing, imagining and re-interpreting ‘wilderness’ – turning terror into pleasure, the dreadful into the picturesque and sublime. The constant process of ‘discovering’ and consuming new sites generates the fundamental ambivalence of travel: between the elitist conception of the individual experience and its reproduction, popularization, potential devaluation or even ecological destruction by mass tourism.

Reading:

Recommended:

Presentations:
- a) Tourism and Social Media
- b) Visiting Harry Potter-Sites: Media Pilgrimage

Session 4
Thursday, February 2
Crossing and (re-)drawing boundaries: travel, identity, and gender

Travelling and tourism seems to be all about crossing borders and encountering the unfamiliar – but in the process, it engenders a reflection on what ‘Home’ is about, and who ‘We’ are. By drawing boundaries between the familiar and the foreign, mapping the imagined cultural ‘frontier’ is instrumental in prefiguring cultural and political perceptions and thus, has a crucial role in the formation of individual, gender, collective, and national identities.

Reading:

Recommended:
Presentation: Volunteer Tourism
II. The History of Travel and Tourism

Session 5
Monday, February 13
Ancient Travellers: Purposes, Destinations, Means.
Different forms of migration, discretionary or involuntary, seems to be part of the longue durée of human history. The pyramids as well as the Seven Wonders of the World already early on attracted cultural ‘tourism’.

Reading:


February 6-11: CORE COURSE WEEK

Session 6
Thursday, February 16
Travel in Medieval Europe: Vikings, Pilgrims, Apprentices, and Scholars

Only few individuals had the privilege of being able to travel in ancient and medieval times – be it for legal, social, or financial reasons – not to mention the technical hardships of a practically non-existent travel infrastructure. Pilgrimage (to Rome, Santiago de Compostela, or the Holy Land), the apprentice’s journey, and the wandering of the student-

Readings:

Recommended:
Nicole Chareyron, Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011 (on Canvas), 1-25.

Session 7
Monday, February 20
Early Modern Travelling

In the centuries before industrialization, patterns of travelling were generated, both in practice and discourse that remain influential to the present. While travel mostly still had to be legitimized by its practical usefulness, cultural curiosity and exotic pleasures early on began to play a role as well. Especially the purpose of gathering knowledge looms large – be it as part of an educational learning experience, or in the patriotic service of colonial expansion and imperialist conquest. Especially the religious pilgrimage and the aristocratic Grand Tour generated spiritual or Enlightenment-inspired concepts of travel that muted into crucial dimensions of tourism in the era of capitalism.
Final Syllabus

Reading:

Recommended:

Session 8
Wednesday, February 22
8:30-10:00 (Meet in classroom)
The Educational Journey as a Mode of Bourgeois Distinction and the Expansion of Social Mobility in the 19th and early 20th Century
Growing mobility, the romantic ideal of travel for the enjoyment of nature and to escape trivial everyday life, and the bourgeois concept of self-formation, education and cultural consumption became instrumental in creating a watershed in the development of modern tourism in the 19th century. Middle class individuals ‘discovered’ Europe as a shared cultural heritage, or – more often - asserted their own national identity and its superiority through travel. Both a clearer differentiation between – a still growing number of - hours of leisure and hours of work, and the growth of dispensable income provided a new base for travelling in industrializing societies. But the overarching change was of course the expansion of the railway infrastructure, opening up opportunities of travel to new – and lower - social classes.

Reading:

Recommended:
Excerpts from 19th-century novels and other writings, focusing on travel (J.H. von Goethe, Italian Journey, etc.)

Field study
Wednesday, February 22
10:30-12:30

Session 9
Thursday, February 23
Revolution on Rails: Thomas Cook and The Beginnings of Mass Tourism
Britain was pioneering the process of opening up opportunities of tourism to broader segments of society that hitherto had been limited to upper classes. A fundamental ambiguity was created: the growing popularity of the romantic notion of the authentic and individual travelling experience gradually implied the erosion of the material preconditions of such an experience. The criticism of the package tour became a constant theme of tourism discourse. Since the late 19th century, the individual traveller has been eager to distinguish himself from the herds of mass tourism, though such
distinctions seem questionable, as denouncing tourism has become part and parcel of marketing strategies of tourism themselves.

Reading:
Lynne Withey, Grand Tours and Cook’s Tours. A History of Leisure Travel, 1750-1914, London: Aurum, 1997, chap. 5: Traveling with the Millions, pp. 135-166

Recommended:

February 25 – March 5: TRAVEL BREAK/LONG STUDY TOURS

Session 10
Thursday, March 6
The Grand Hotel as a significant social and cultural innovation of the late 19th century
The development of travel and tourism produced new realms of traveling – be it the railway car, the highway service station – or the Grand Hotel: a fairly global phenomenon, the municipal luxury hotel was both the site of urban events and a place of business and consumption – a sphere of a specific urban lifestyle and economy before the advent of mass tourism.

Reading:

Recommended:

Session 11
Thursday, March 9
Travel in Time and Space: Exhibitions as Virtual Travelling and Real Tourist Destinations
With the rise of new social groups and the development of new patterns of representation and identity construction, exhibitions become major simulations of travel.

Reading:
Recommended:

Session 12
Monday, March 13
Unlimited Mileage? Automobile Individualism and the Transformation of the European and American Landscape
In the course of the 20th century, the car became a more and more affordable means of transportation – and the view from the highway came to constitute the predominant perception of the traveller: While travelling by rail had implied that focusing on the destination had become more important than the journey itself and had provided mobility to broader segments of society, the motorcycle and automobile came to mean the radical individualization of travel. Both a transformed landscape – that had to fit the drivers’ visual expectations – new consumer cultures and genres of travel literature reflected this thorough change of travelling.

Reading:

March 18-26: LONG TOURS/TRAVEL BREAK

Session 13
Thursday, March 16
Travel and Tourism in Weimar Germany
Sea spas became some of the first towns in Germany that were made ‘Judenfrei’ by their virulently anti-Semitic municipalities – years before the national government was handed over to the Nazis. Also travel reports such as Christopher Isherwood’s provide powerful portraits of Berlin in the early 1930s and the incremental breaking-apart of a democratic society.

Reading:

Recommended:
Session 14  
Monday, March 27  
Travelogue and picture assignment due  

_Nazi Germany: Tourism, Dictatorship, and Genocide_  
After 1933, tourism organized by Nazi organizations such as _Kraft durch Freude_ took the first steps towards a massive social and geographic expansion of tourism in the 20th century. During the War, occupation, violence and warfare create radically different ramifications for quasi-tourist experiences of soldiers and civilians.  

Reading:  

Recommended:  

Session 15  
Thursday, March 30  
_Travelling as a Culture of Remembrance in Post-War West-Germany_  
In the decades after 1945, travelling develops into a culture of remembrance of itself for Germans – either nostalgically looking back at what was lost, or becoming a mode of distancing oneself from the crimes of the fathers.  

Reading:  
Alan Confino, Travelling as a Culture of Remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960. History & Memory - Volume 12, Number 2, Fall/Winter 2000, pp. 92-121 [23pp.]  

Session 16  
Monday, April 3  
_Charter Tourism and the Beginnings of Global Travelling_  
The 1950s and 1960s became the era of a new mode of travelling, with charter operators paving the way for cheap air travel and opening up Southern Europe for mass tourism, while post-war consumer society generated a new automobile-based mobility, fundamentally reshaping the experience of travelling. The exponential growth of tourism was even pushed further by the deregulation of air transport since the 1980s, opening up a global market place of travel for the average consumer  

Reading:  
Recommended:

**III. Recent Trends in Travel and Tourism Studies**

**Session 17**

**Thursday, April 6**

**Project Proposal for final paper due**

*Dark Tourism and Holocaust Tourism*

*Dark Tourism*, and especially *Holocaust Tourism*, is drawn by the thrill of the battle fields and killing sites of past centuries; especially concentration camp memorials have to balance the urgent quest for historical and human rights education with the morbid and sensationalist demand for the ‘real’ horror. In a different context, programs such as *March of the Living* often express a sincere commitment to Holocaust commemoration, but have also been criticized as controversial parts of an agenda of identity politics.

Reading:

Recommended:

**Session 18**

**Monday, April 10**

*Heritage Tourism and the Construction of Cultural Identities through Travel*

**Case Study I: Eastern Europe: Virtual Jewishness and German Nostalgia**

New modes and variations of tourism are developed: *Heritage Tourism* creates a sense of belonging and rootedness by cultivating and mourning a lost past – of an idyllic countryside life as the presumed cradle of the nation, of long gone-by worlds of industrial production, or of traces of destroyed cultural/religious minority cultures

Reading:
Recommended:

Presentation: Viking Tourism

April 12-17: TRAVEL BREAK

Wednesday, April 19
13.00-17.00
Field Study

Session 19
Thursday, April 20
Heritage Tourism and the Construction of Cultural Identities through Travel
Case Study II: Israel/Palestine: Competing Narratives in the Holy Land

Reading:

Recommended:

Session 20
Monday, April 24
Virtual Modes of Travelling

Artistic spaces such as museums and exhibitions create opportunities for travelling virtually in time and space, and at the same time become potential tourist destinations themselves. The phenomenon covers a broad spectrum, from the large World Fairs of the 19th century to the Millennium Dome, the Expo and travelling in cyberspace at the turn of the 21st century
Reading:

Session 21
Thursday, April 27
Gender, Embodiment, and Performance
Travelling is very much also to be considered as a corporeal and performative practice, tourism can be understood as forming arenas of public culture, where embodied notions of identity – race, gender, and cultural affiliation - are staged, sold, enacted and negotiated. Tourists move from place to place fragile, aged, racialized bodies, encountering other bodies, objects, and the physical world multi-sensuously.

Reading:

Recommended:

Session 22
Monday, May 1
Final Paper due
Global Tourism and ‘Liquid Modernity’
Generally speaking, the 21st century seems to generate cultures that become so mobile that citizens feel they are entitled to travel, since it is an essential part of one’s life. Unrestricted and abundant mobility creates meaning and distraction, the physical experience of adventure tourism makes the traveller feel properly alive and rejuvenated, exposure to other cultures creates a sense of authenticity – spatial distance between people becomes insignificant. In contrast to this, the course aims to discuss what Zygmunt Bauman has dubbed the “Tourist Syndrome”, using the tourist and tourism as metaphors of contemporary life – its looseness of attachment, of ties with the place; its lack of firm commitment, its temporariness and its frailty of relationships.

Reading:
Presentation: City and Tourism

Session 23
Thursday, May 4
Closing Session – Final Discussion

NB: The schedule is subject to change if necessary with as much notice as possible.