

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | OFFICE OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Berlin

BERLIN CONSORTIUM FOR GERMAN STUDIES
SPRING 2010 HANDBOOK



“BERLIN IST MEHR EIN WELTTEIL ALS EINE STADT”

Jean Paul, 1800

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Getting Started

Whether you have visited Germany before, are already familiar with German culture and customs, or have never traveled outside of the U.S., your time abroad in Berlin will probably be the experience of a lifetime. In order to prepare for this adventure, please read the following information carefully. After you have had a chance to review the materials, please feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have

The Staff and Their Contact Information

New York

If you should have any questions regarding the program prior to your departure, please feel free to call Lindsey Schram or Fay Ju.

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Berlin

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Program Calendar

Students should plan to arrive in Berlin no later than the day orientation begins and leave Berlin no earlier than the last day of classes. Most students stay until the end of the month. After classes end, there is about a week during which you can complete your coursework and hand in final papers. For students who choose to live in apartments, you will be required to pay the full month's rent so you might want to take advantage of the extra time in Berlin.

Note on travel plans

Please do NOT plan weekend trips during the language practicum. A required part of the practicum are the weekly cultural activities and you are expected to attend. You will also be very busy during this time looking for apartments.

Spring 2010

<i>Last day to arrive in Berlin</i>	February 27
<i>Required orientation</i>	February 27–March 1
<i>Host family stay begins</i>	February 28
<i>Language placement test</i>	March 2
<i>Language practicum begins</i>	March 3
<i>Host family stay ends</i>	April 3
<i>Holiday (no classes)</i>	April 2-5
<i>Language practicum ends</i>	April 9
<i>Freie Universität Berlin classes begin</i>	April 12
<i>Holiday (no classes)</i>	May 13
<i>Holiday (no classes)</i>	May 24
<i>Final selection of classes</i>	May 28
<i>Freie Universität Berlin classes end</i>	July 17
<i>Final papers and coursework due</i>	July 27

Students say:

"You will be continually frustrated by challenges, in terms of language, living, academic system; however, the experience is tremendously beneficial in the long run. Be prepared to take things as they come, but still do not let your first impressions narrow your perspective. Look deeper, try for understanding, come prepared to adapt, speak German as much as possible, do background reading, and refresh your interests, explore and enjoy your time- it goes by faster than you can imagine".

"Go for the whole year! I went only for the semester and it was not long enough. My German is just getting to the point where I am satisfied and I am just getting comfortable with my friends and roommates and I don't want to leave."

Pre-departure Meeting

Students in the NYC area are invited to attend Columbia's pre-departure meeting. This meeting will be near the end of the Fall Semester. The date and time will be sent with your acceptance email. If you are a non-Columbia student and would like to come, please inform the Office of Global Programs.

Columbia/Barnard students are required to attend this meeting. Students from other schools are invited, but not required to attend.

Your Mailing Address

Since you will not know your mailing address before you depart, your mail can be sent to the BCGS office and throughout your entire stay in Berlin:

BCGS/FU Berlin
Boltzmannstr. 4
D-14195 Berlin
GERMANY

BCGS and the Freie Universität Berlin (FU) in Dahlem

The BCGS facility is located on the main FU campus in Dahlem and functions as a home base for program participants. The building houses administrative offices for the BCGS staff; a small library of books, magazines, and newspapers; classroom space where students convene for the Selected Topics courses; and limited computer facilities where students may check e-mail, and which have ethernet plugs and W-LAN access for their own laptops.

Approximately 39,000 students comprise the FU Berlin student body, including over 5,500 international students from more than 140 countries. The main campus is located in the upscale residential district of Dahlem, while some departments are located in the neighboring districts of Steglitz and Zehlendorf. The main campus encompasses lecture halls, charming villas, green parks, and wooded areas.

Life as a Student in Berlin

Student life at the FU is vastly different from what you, going to college in the U.S., might be accustomed to. The program attempts to prepare you for your new life in Berlin and to encourage you to live life as a German student does. You will find you have a lot of independence. You will be expected to learn how to navigate the bureaucracy when it comes to applying for a residence permit, finding an apartment, and choosing classes at the FU. You will not live on campus but you will commute to and from school. When on campus, you can have lunch at the local *mensa* but since you will probably be living in an apartment, you will be responsible for making (or buying) your own breakfast and dinner. Depending on your class schedule and the course requirements, you may find yourself with less pressure than if you were at home since you may not be asked to show that you are working steadily on your coursework. Instead, you will have a lot of independence in determining your own academic rhythm during which you must ultimately produce work at the end of the term to be graded. You will spend time at the library doing research but you won't be able to take books out. This will be frustrating to you as you juggle writing your final papers for your classes. You will have an entire life outside of the BCGS in which you will be responsible for making sure that things get done such as doing laundry, paying rent, and going grocery shopping—much different from your life at your home university. And all of this will be done in German. While this might seem overwhelming at first, it is also a unique opportunity to learn so much about yourself and the world around you. Sometimes it is only in hindsight do you realize how much you gain from the challenges of living overseas.

Pre-Departure Logistics

KEY:

BCGS students: University of Chicago, Barnard College/Columbia University, Cornell University, The Johns Hopkins University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, and Vassar College students

Visiting students: Students from institutions other than those mentioned above.

Before you leave, you are responsible for completing the steps below which are described in detail in this section of the Handbook:

- Acceptance Materials (submitted to Columbia's Office of Global Programs by stated deadline)

- Study Abroad Registration (if required by your home school)
- Passport
- Tuition Payment
 - Columbia email set-up if Visiting Student
- Financial Aid
- Health and Medical concerns
 - Check-ups
 - Insurance
- Flight arrangements

Acceptance Materials

All acceptance materials are due in one packet in the Office of Global Programs. It is extremely important that you return the forms to us by the deadline. If you have any difficulties, please contact the office.

Study Abroad Registration

While you need to keep in contact with Columbia's Office of Global Programs Office, you must also inform your home school of your intent to study abroad as they will formally register you for your study abroad.

Visiting students: By returning your Intent to Enroll, you will be registered at Columbia. Check with your home school about other paperwork that you must complete in order to register for study abroad.

BCGS member students: Please return the appropriate paperwork (not included in this packet) to your school's study abroad office so that you will be registered to study abroad.

Columbia students: Please make sure you return the signed Financial Aid form, if applicable, by April 15 for fall/academic year study abroad and November 15 for spring semester study abroad to the Office of Global Programs. This form will be sent to you by Karin Bonello in the OGP as part of your "Next Steps Email." GS students should complete the appropriate GS paperwork which can be found at http://ogp.columbia.edu/pages/columbia_students/GS/apply/index.html

Barnard students: Please return the appropriate paperwork to Dean Gretchen Young so that you will be registered to study abroad. This paperwork can be found on the Barnard study abroad website and in the Office of the Dean of Studies.

Home School Obligations

Keep in mind any obligations you may have to your home institution for semester after your term abroad (early program filing, dormitory reservations, etc.). If you have reserved a room on your home campus for the term that you are studying abroad, make sure you cancel the reservation before departing for Berlin, and confirm the cancellation before you leave. Contact your home school academic adviser to ensure that the courses you wish to take in Berlin will count toward your degree. Do not wait until you arrive in Berlin to take care of this.

Passport

If you do not have a passport, please apply for one immediately as the process can be a lengthy one. You will need to have a passport before you can travel overseas. If you have one that will expire within ninety days of your planned return date, you will need to renew it before leaving for Berlin. Many of the larger cities have passport agencies. Check <http://travel.state.gov/> for more information.

Visa

Citizens of the United States of America, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, as well as EU citizens may apply for their residence permit after entering Germany without a visa.

Citizens of other countries are required to apply and obtain a residence permit prior to entry (an option also open to US citizens) at the German Embassy in Washington, the Consulates in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York or San Francisco.

Residence Permit

Students who are U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter the country, but must apply for residence permits in Berlin. Non-U.S. citizens should contact their local German consulate for their particular visa regulations.

At orientation, the Resident Director will provide specific instructions to students for obtaining the residence permit. However, it is very important that you bring the following items with you to Germany which you will need to apply for the permit:

- A valid passport expiring no earlier than 90 days after the last day of the program.
- Two biometrically identified passport-style photos. (These are easy to get in Germany, so you can wait until you are there.)
- Your BCGS admission letters (on Columbia University and BCGS letterhead).
- A letter of financial guarantee—a notarized statement from a parent or guardian assuring the applicant a monthly allowance of at least \$750 for the period of stay; or proof of income of \$750/month or more; or a letter from your home school saying that all tuition, room, and board are paid in advance. A letter of financial guarantee is included with your online acceptance materials
- Confirmation of health insurance. For proof of medical insurance, please try to obtain a bilingual form letter on the letterhead of and signed by your insurance carrier, school health insurance office, or employer's benefits office (see sample on Acceptance Materials website.) If you cannot attain a bilingual letter, you will be able to have it translated for a fee in Berlin. An insurance card bearing a policy number is not adequate.
- Application fee of approximately 60 €.

More information will be provided at the orientation in Berlin. You are responsible for the fees.

Tuition Payment Information

BCGS member students: You will be billed by your home school at your school's regular tuition rate. Please skip the following sections on payment

Visiting Students: In order to receive your tuition bill electronically and pay it on time, you must set up a Columbia email account. Instructions for how to do this are below under "How to set up a Columbia email account." Columbia will only send your bill to a Columbia email account. If you would like to pay your bill with a credit card, you can do so once you receive the electronic bill.

If you are not paying your bill yourself, you need to be sure to submit it to the responsible party (Financial Aid Office, Study Abroad Advisor) as soon as you get it, so that it is paid by the due date. You may also give that person the Tuition Payment form in your acceptance materials.

You should receive your first tuition e-bill in mid-August (Fall participants) or mid-December (Spring participants) and it will be due in mid-September (Fall) or mid-January (Spring). You may pay your bill anytime AFTER August 1 (Fall) or December 1 (Spring) by mailing a check to the address on the Tuition Payment form in the acceptance packet or by following the instructions once you receive the tuition e-bill electronically.

***If you have any problems with your bill, please contact Columbia's Office of Global Programs.

How to set up your Columbia email account

All admitted students are assigned a Columbia network ID called a UNI which all students are required to activate. The UNI is your username for all Columbia accounts including an e-mail account which all students are required to have because all official university communications including tuition e-bills are sent to your Columbia e-mail account.

To activate your UNI and set up an email account, please follow the instructions below. **You may activate your UNI two weeks PRIOR to the billing date. We will send you a reminder when it is time to activate your account.**

1. Go to the following site: <http://uni.columbia.edu/>
2. Select "Activate a New UNI Account"
3. Read and accept the user agreements
4. On the "Activate Your Account" page, next to the box "Enter your UNI," select "Look up UNI"

5. When prompted, enter your name. Note that you might need to reenter your name on the next page under "Find People."
6. Once your name appears, your UNI is the identifier that has your initials and then 2-4 numbers.
7. Write down your UNI and hit the back arrow to return to the page that asks you to enter your UNI.
8. Continue activating your account by entering your UNI and creating a password.
9. Once you have created your account, you will have access to your Columbia email. If you do not plan on checking your account regularly, please be sure to forward your email to your usual account.

Financial Aid

BCGS member students: Please review your financial aid situations with your designated financial aid adviser. For Columbia students, your advisor can be found in 407 Lerner in the Office of Financial Aid.

Visiting students: Consult with a financial aid adviser at your home institution. Generally, some or all of your financial aid package will support your study in Berlin. If you cannot meet the tuition payment deadlines, please contact the Office of Global Programs.

If you anticipate the late receipt of financial aid funds, you may want to provide a relative or friend in the U.S. with the necessary power of attorney to endorse bank loan checks and other items for deposit into your home college account. If some of the financial aid funds are designated for your use overseas, you should let your financial aid adviser know that your checks should be sent to you in Berlin or to your designated power of attorney. Do not wait until one or two weeks before you go to Berlin to make sure that your finances are in order. Check with your financial aid adviser now to guarantee that you will have your money in Berlin when you arrive.

Health and Medical Preparation

Your Health

Before you go abroad, it is wise to make sure you are in good health both physically and mentally. A general physical check up is recommended as well as a visit to your dentist and any other specialists that you might use (ie: eye doctor etc.) In addition to confirming your health situation, you can also follow up with your doctor about necessary prescriptions and immunization recommendations.

If you have a medical condition that can be aggravated by the local environment, consult your doctor about the best way to deal with it. If you have a medical condition that can not be easily identified (ie: diabetes, epilepsy, severe allergies, etc.), you may want to consider wearing a medical alert bracelet.

If you are currently or have recently been under psychological care, you should consult with your doctor about your plans to go abroad. You might plan to discuss how the stress that comes with adapting to a new country will affect you. Be aware that crosscultural adjustment without your familiar support network could exacerbate any conditions that you might have. In consultation with your doctor, try to determine the appropriate care that might help you with the transition -- this could mean finding a comparable counselor overseas and/or making sure that you have enough medication for your entire time abroad.

The Medical Form found on the Acceptance Materials website is designed for you to let us know about any conditions that might impact your time abroad. Please feel free to let us know if you have any specific needs with which we can help.

You should plan to bring your medical history and prescriptions. Make sure you bring enough of your prescription medication as well as a prescription with the generic name of your medication in case you need a refill while abroad. German law prohibits the mailing of prescription medications, so bring as much medication as allowed and have a doctor's signed prescription available. Please notify the Office of Global Programs so that we can assist you in making sure your medication is available.

Immunizations

No immunizations are required to enter Germany although a certificate for yellow fever vaccination may be required if you are coming from parts of Africa and tropical South America. The Centers for Disease Control recommend the preventive measures you need to take while traveling in Western Europe depend on the areas you visit and the length of time you stay.

For more information, please call them at 1-888-232-3228 or check their website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.

The following vaccines may be recommended and you should discuss these options with your healthcare provider to determine whether or not they are needed.

- Routine: Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, etc.
- Hepatitis B: If you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months in Southern Europe, or be exposed through medical treatment.

Keep in mind that it might take one to two months to administer the entire course of some immunizations.

Medical Insurance

It is essential that you carry medical insurance with overseas coverage. The minimum required by the German authorities is full hospitalization and accident coverage. Proof of this is required for your residence permit application.

For many colleges including those on the Columbia University Student Health Insurance, the medical coverage that students obtain through their school includes overseas coverage covering two periods, the fall term or the spring/summer terms (usually through August 31). Other students may be covered through their parents' medical insurance.

Please check carefully to make sure that you have proper overseas coverage that is effective from the date of your arrival in Germany. If you are not covered, you may purchase Columbia University Student Health Insurance. Barnard College and other BCGS member students are not eligible to purchase Columbia University Student Health Insurance and must follow the guidelines established by their school regarding medical insurance.

It is hoped that you won't need these services but in case you do, the fees can be enormous compared to purchasing supplementary insurance that covers these services.

The following organizations offer various types of insurance for travelers:

CISI	www.culturalinsurance.com
Haylor, Freyer, & Coon	http://www.haylor.com/
HTH Worldwide	www.hthstudents.com
Marsh	www.InternationalPlans.com
T.W. Lord Associates	www.TWLord.com

The above listings are provided for your information and are not a comprehensive list. Please determine your needs and review your options carefully. Columbia University has no affiliation with the above and do not endorse any of them as the sole providers for the program. Participants are free to make their own arrangements.

Columbia University Student Health Insurance:

The Columbia Student Health Insurance provides a range of coverage while students are in the United States and abroad. The plan also provides special travel benefits through Assist America Program.

Fall coverage is usually effective from September through mid-January. Spring/Summer coverage covers mid-January through the end of August.

For more information, please go to www.health.columbia.edu and click on Health Insurance.

German Public Health Insurance Coverage (AOK)

Once you begin classes at the FU, you have the option of enrolling in the German Public Health Insurance (AOK). This coverage, which is more comprehensive than most American plans (including choice of doctor, dental and corrective lenses), is available to non-German students studying in Berlin. However, this coverage is only valid in Germany and some European countries, whereas coverage under your school's, your parents' or Columbia's plan

is valid worldwide. Therefore, we recommend that students consider the AOK option as a supplement to your personal policy. More information will be provided at the orientation in Berlin.

Emergency Services

International ISOS (ISOS) is the world's largest medical and security assistance company, maintaining health clinics and remote-site medical facilities across five continents. All students will be covered by ISOS which will provide world-wide assistance in the event of an emergency that requires special evacuation and repatriation services or immediate medical intervention.

ISOS is NOT health insurance. Please maintain your own health insurance plan. Requests for reimbursement for medical care received while abroad should be submitted to your health insurance provider.

ISOS services include:

- pre-trip information on travel health issues
- emergency message transmission
- emergency evacuation
- medically supervised repatriation
- companion ticket for medical repatriation
- medical monitoring
- online travel security information

In order to use their services, you will need Columbia's International SOS membership number: **11BSGC000064**.

You will receive more information and an ISOS card at the onsite orientation.

For more information go to <http://www.internationalsos.com>

ISOS 24-Hour Alarm Centers

If calling from the US, Mexico, Central or South America:

Philadelphia, PA

24 hours: 1-215-942-8226 (call collect where available)

Within U.S.A. call: 1-800-523-6586

If calling from Europe, CIS, Africa or the Middle East:

London, England

24 hours: 44-20-8762-8008 (call collect where available)

If calling from Asia, Australia or the Pacific Rim:

Singapore

24 hours: 65-6338-7800 (call collect where available)

Flight Arrangements

The program does not include the flight arrangements. We recommend that you reserve your U.S.-Berlin tickets as soon as possible. You are required to arrive in Berlin in time to attend the orientation. Most students depart on the Friday before orientation and arrive in Berlin on the following Saturday morning. Since you will probably be required to pay a full month's rent anyway, you may want to take advantage of staying until the end of the month rather than leave once you have turned in your final papers.

What to Bring

Weather: The climate of Berlin is moderate. Extremes of very hot or very cold weather are uncommon and generally short-lived. Winters are relatively mild and December through February record the coldest temperatures. Trees bloom in May and June and Biergarten season begins. Rain is more likely during this time although it can rain at anytime during the year. July and August are the warmest months while September and October are

generally the nicest times to be in Berlin. Keep in mind that Berlin apartments, stores, etc. are generally not as well heated as their American counterparts and it will be pretty chilly at the end of the fall term and the beginning of the spring term.

Laptop: A laptop is recommended for completing your work while in Germany.

Cellphone: You will probably want to have a cell phone during your time in Berlin. First, check if your existing cell phone can be used in Germany, whether or not it needs to be unlocked, and what the roaming charges might be.

You can also consider buying a phone in Berlin. The BCGS staff will offer advice on this during the onsite orientation.

Clothing: We recommend that you bring durable, easy-care clothing. If you plan to travel, your clothes may experience wear and tear. Since you will have limited luggage space, you should plan to bring clothing that you can mix and match and layer and unlayer for colder and warmer weather.

We also recommend that you bring at least one nice outfit for when the occasion calls for something dressier than everyday wear.

Toiletries: Many American and European brands of soap, shampoo, and toothpaste can be bought in Germany. We recommend that you bring one of each unless you favor a particular brand.

Medication: You may want to bring a small supply of over the counter medication such as pain relievers and diarrhea medication.

If you regularly take any special medications, be sure to bring along an adequate supply as well as a written prescription with the generic name of the medication. German law prohibits the mailing of medication through the mail.

Electronic Equipment: Try not to bring too much electronic equipment if you can since the electrical supply in Germany is 220V, 50 Hz but anything requiring 240V will work. The U.S. supply is 110V, 60 Hz AC. Most plugs have two round pins so adaptors which can be purchased at any hardware store can be useful.

While not required, we do recommend that you bring a laptop if you have one. Most laptops are set up for both 110/220. You should check the information under "input" on the power-cord of your computer.

What to Put It In: If you plan to travel around either before, during, or after the program, a large travel backpack or even a big duffle bag is more mobile than a suitcase. A daypack is useful for daily use and a money belt or pouch is a good for storing your passport, money, credit cards, and student ID.

Most airline companies limit check in luggage to two bags. Don't forget to check the requirements of your particular carrier.

TIP

You cannot bring everything you normally would have for your year at school. Plan to pare down what you think you will need overseas. Please check with your airline about baggage limits. Remember that you will no doubt purchase items throughout your stay. It's nice to have variety but during your time overseas, a minimalist approach is recommended. A good test to determine whether or not you will be able to manage what you've packed is to walk at least 50 feet carrying all of your bags.

Students say:

Bring a laptop. You will be very happy that you did.

I would suggest bringing German dictionaries and grammar books.

Pack lightly, but not that light. Fit as much as you can into your two pieces of luggage.

It's easier to have your parents send you clothes later than dragging your wardrobe to Berlin.

Get a bike-you can rent or go to a flea market. It makes life 100% easier.

In Berlin – Academics

Course Selection and Registration

During your first semester of study in Berlin, whether it be fall or spring, you should plan to enroll in the following courses:

- **German Language Practicum**, 6 points
(intermediate, advanced intermediate, or advanced levels)
- **Selected Topics in German Studies**, 3 points
Students have a choice of the following courses in Spring 2010:
 - **German Studies I3600y. US Perceptions of Germany and the Germans from Bismarck to Hitler.** 3 points. Instructor: C. Müller
 - **German Studies I3994y. Berlin East-East-West.** 3 points. Instructor: K. Pahl.
- **Supervised Study in the German University System**, a minimum of 6 points
(Choose at least two courses from the FU Berlin courses in humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences – see below for examples of previous courses.)

Upon completion of the six-week German language practicum, students are required to take a German language examination. As a result of this diagnostic examination, some students may be required to enroll in an FU German course for foreign students and to reduce the number of non-language courses they can take that term.

Course selection for all students takes place in Berlin. Since specific information regarding German university courses is generally not available until the start of the semester, you may find it necessary to fax or e-mail course information to your home school adviser from Berlin in order to secure approvals. It is recommended that before you leave, you should check with your academic adviser for guidelines, credit approvals and major requirements.

Once you are in Berlin, you will be asked to compile a list of FU courses for which you might be interested in registering. Based on your preliminary selections, you will be enrolled in the respective departments which will allow you to register for these courses. After four weeks (beginning of October for the fall term or April for the spring term), you will be able to register online for these particular courses through the Campus Management system. While you will be able to drop courses easily, it will be difficult to add new courses because of restricted admission. You will also not be able to choose a course from a department in which you are not already enrolled.

The Office of Global Programs will forward your registration to the Columbia University Registrar (or for consortium schools to those schools' registrars).



Course descriptions and other academic information can be found on the web under Academics in the Program Information section of the Berlin website: www.bcgs.columbia.edu.

Class Schedule

During the first six weeks of the program you will be in the Language Practicum from 9 am – 1:15 pm four days a week. One day a week will be devoted to cultural activities. In the fall semester, there are usually two levels of German since there are fewer students and in the spring semester, three levels are usually offered.

One day a week is devoted to a cultural activity in or around Berlin led by the Resident Administrative Director and the Academic Director. **These cultural activities are an integral part of the language program.**

After the Language Practicum is finished, class schedules will vary for each student depending on the courses chosen at the FU and the other universities. Also, during this time, the Academic Director's course begins (in the spring, also the Resident Administrative Director's course) and they tend to meet for two hours each week.

Cultural Program

One day a week during the first six weeks of the program, BCGS organizes mandatory activities to orient students to Berlin and to expose them to German culture and politics. These activities change each semester depending on what is happening in Berlin at that time. Past activities have included:

- Guided city tours through Berlin districts such as Berlin-Mitte
- Guided tour through the Botanical Garden
- Performances at *Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin*, *Deutsche Oper Berlin*, or *Komische Oper Berlin*
- *Deutscher Bundestag* – political discussion with a politician or administrative representative, attendance at a plenary session, and a tour of the dome
- Guided tours of Berlin and Brandenburg castles such as *Charlottenburger Schloss* or *Schloss Sanssouci*
- Guided tours through Berlin museums such as the *Jüdisches Museum* (Jewish Museum) or the Berlin Film Museum
- Saturday railway trip to Dessau – Guided tour through the Bauhaus Building and the Master Houses in Dessau

Students say:

The Friday excursions, which the program organized, were very pleasant, especially for the way in which they brought the program participants and professors together in an informal but structured social setting. It was especially heartening how both directors of the program were always eager and available to lunch and converse with the students after each excursion.

Supervised Study in the German University System

Below please find courses that previous BCGS students have taken at the FU or one of the other German universities. The courses below are provided to give you an idea of the types of courses that you can choose from. Not all courses are offered each semester. Check the FU website for the most up to date information.

Department	Title
American Studies	Introduction to American Jazz History
American Studies	Contemporary American Poetry and Poetics
Art History	Dutch Paintings of the 15th and 16th Centuries in the Picture Gallery
Bio-Chemistry	Basics of Bio-Chemistry
Comparative Literature	Introduction to Narrative Theory
Comparative Literature	'Literaturwissenschaft,' Criticism, Critique
Comparative Literature	Poetics, Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Intermedial Orpheus Poems
Cultural Studies	Memory of the GDR - Video Project
Cultural Studies	Violence and Culture
Economics	Principles of Economics
Economics	Income and Employment Theory
Film Studies	German Cinema from the 90s until Today: Rebellion
German	Integrated Course II E - Berlin History between East and West: the Berlin Wall
German	Integrated Course II F
German	Integrated Course II H - Project Course Film
German	Simultaneous Interpreting
German Literature	The Beginnings of German Literature and an Introduction to the Middle High German Language (Courtly Love Poetry)
German Literature	Hans Blumenberg for Literary Scholars
German Literature	The Short Story after 1945
German Literature	Lyric after 1945
German Literature	Goethe and Antiquity
German Literature	Self-Reflexive Narration from Enlightenment to Romanticism
German Literature	The New German Film - The Beginnings

German Literature	Fairytales of German Romanticism
German Studies	Departure towards Modernity? Literature around 1900 (1880 - 1914)
German Studies	Berlin in Literature
German Studies	Ethics, Poetics, and Gender: Critique of Sympathy by Bertolt Brecht
German Studies	Viennese Modernity
German Studies	Literature from/in the GDR
History	'Antifascism' and 'Coping.' Dealing with the NS-Past in the FRG, the GDR, and the Reunited Germany
History	Biography as Genre of the Science of History
History	Everyday Life in the Early Middle Ages
History	Politics and Society in the Weimar Republic
History	Introduction to Modern History. National Socialism: Origins, History, and Remembrance
History	What is Terrorism?
History	New Excavations relating to the History of the Bronze Age in Europe
History	Gravestones and Memorials, Biographies and Obituaries - Aspects of the Memory Cultures in Berlin (1800 - 2000)
History	The Soviet Union as a Multinational State
History	New Literature about the Theories of Nationalism and Colonialism
History	'Berlin - Bagdad': The German Reich and the Ottoman Empire around 1900
History/Sociology	Acquisitions and Problems of Individualization in Eastern Europe
Jewish Studies	Jewish-German Literature after 1945
Latin American Studies	Uncertain Past: Memories in Latin America and Spain in the 20th/21st Centuries
Latin American Studies	The Fight Against Corruption in Latin America
Music	Creation, Analysis, and Reception of the Song Cycle 'Winterreise' by Franz Schubert
Music	Music in Cuba - Music from Cuba
Philosophy	Introduction to Kant's "Critique of the Power of Judgment"
Philosophy	The Early Heidegger with Inspection of Schelling and Hegel
Philosophy	Schopenhauer and Nietzsche
Political Science	The Governmental System of the Federal Republic of Germany
Political Science	Introduction to European Integration
Political Science	The Political and Social System of the GDR
Political Science	The Change of the European Law Community
Political Science	Competing Theories of International Economic Policy
Political Science	The Legal and Political Basis for Paternalism
Political Science	Migration Policy in Germany and The Netherlands
Political Science	German Social Democracy
Political Science	Reflection on the NS-Past - A German-German Story
Political Science	Introduction to International Environmental Policy
Political Science	Violence Against Women from an International Perspective
Political Science	From Divided Germany to Reunification 1945 - 2005
Political Science	Introduction to German Foreign Policy
Political Science	The Divided Berlin 1948 - 1989
Political Science / Economics	Policy and Theory of Economic Development: Europe Compared to Other Regions
Psychology	Autism: Developmental Anomaly of Cognition?
Psychology	Memory Psychology
Psychology	Emotion Psychology
Sociology	The Relevance of Sport in the US-American Society
Sociology	The Sociological Analysis of Service in US Consumer Markets
Spanish	Spanish Module 1

Adapting to the German Academic System

Most students take classes at the FU but students are also able to take classes at the other universities in Berlin including the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the Technische Universität Berlin, the Universität Potsdam, the

Universität der Künste Berlin, the Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee, and Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler." Please note that studio courses are usually not available due to limited space. You may, however, enroll in courses dealing with historical or theoretical topics. You will be required to register for all university courses through the BCGS office. More information about how to register for university courses will be provided in Berlin.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to provide a brief overview about the structure of the German universities and how they work. The German and American university systems are fundamentally different in structure as well as the type of experiences provided especially for what a traditional American undergraduate may be accustomed. Being aware of some of these differences will help you to transition into the German university system.

The German university system is a public system where university study is less structured than in the U.S. Without a formal curriculum, German students shoulder the responsibility for completing the courses needed to earn a degree. Class sizes also tend to be very large and German university students are generally older than the traditional American student. The different types of student services that you may find on your home campus may not be as readily available at a German university.

German professors do not always provide course syllabi and reading lists. You are expected to find most of your books and articles on your own and participate in class. Unlike American courses where there may be several chances to be graded, German professors usually evaluate students based on one 15-20 page research paper due at the end of the term. In some courses, students are also asked for oral presentations (*referate*) in class during the semester.

Because the FU is a pioneer in implementing the Bologna process, registering for classes and obtaining grades can be even more bureaucratic than ever. However, the BCGS and the FU International Office is making every effort to assist students with these issues.

Tutors

The BCGS employs two academic tutors. They are generally graduate students from the FU and are available to assist you in reviewing your papers, answering questions relating to assignments, and helping you to learn the German academic methods.

Students say:

The university is divided into separate departments according to subject field and do not necessarily communicate with each other. There is more focus on the depth of your studies rather than breadth. It was a much more independent way of working which I really enjoyed and because for us we only took three classes you got to really focus on your readings and your work. Students were on average older than here and it was a much more relaxed atmosphere. Although everyone took their classes seriously, there wasn't the idea of the 'college experience' and in that sense it was an academic culture where students seemed more connected with the world around them and were connected to a 'life outside of college' which was really nice. I didn't have any problems adjusting. It wasn't always easy taking academic subjects in German, but the professors and other students were very friendly if you took the initiative and they are very used to international students on campus.

Set a schedule for yourself so that you can do something productive (or not) with the unbelievable amount of free time you have.

The informality of the German system was a shock, and led me to have some misunderstandings and misconceptions. The classroom in all, classes were a bit underwhelming, due in part to the language barriers, my own attitude, and the attitude of students.

Make use of the tutors!

How much you learn in your classes depends almost entirely on you. It's amazing how little some professors actually teach during class. You really have to rely on your own reading and research.

Get started early on research for Hausarbeiten (final papers). German students usually spend 3-4 weeks per paper after the semester and they take longer than you might think.

It was so easy not to do any work and not to participate in class. It was difficult to concentrate on work that I wasn't required to do, particularly when so many other things were educational, such as the simple act of talking to native Germans, and also particularly when I had independent work to do for Princeton, which took a lot of concentration.

...Classes were more challenging and intellectually stimulating than I expected.

It would be a good idea to speak to the professor early on, so that they know you're an exchange student and so that you know the precise requirements.

This requires a lot of initiative and self-discipline in order to really get a lot out of the academic aspect.

There are major problems with the university—instructors' lack of motivation, overcrowding, lack of organization. However, you can get lucky. I would recommend going to as many classes as possible on the first day. I went to over 20 and am much happier with my classes this semester.

Do all of your research for papers weeks or months ahead of time. The libraries usually won't let you check books out.

The availability of tutors was key to a good scholastic experience. They help to bridge some of the differences between the German and American educational systems.

Studying at the University in Germany is definitely an experience worth having, but it is also difficult at times. The system is very different, with referats (formal presentations) dominating the structure. The libraries are also difficult to use at times, so start your final papers early. Look into getting a library card at the Staatsbibliothek.

In Berlin – Housing and Fees

Housing in Berlin

The program provides a variety of living situations which will allow you to explore different neighborhoods in Berlin.

Orientation Weekend: Hostel

During orientation weekend, students stay together for one night at a local hostel where orientation is held.

First Month: Guest Stay in a German Household

On the Sunday afternoon of orientation, students meet host families and move in with them for a month. Living in a German household offers students valuable exposure to German language and culture that students might not otherwise have. It is a unique opportunity to experience first hand the daily rhythm of German life, learn about Berlin from an insider's perspective, and immerse yourself into a living situation that encourages you to speak German rather than English. The extent and quality of the relationship between the host and the student will vary depending on personalities and lifestyles. In other words, in some cases, you may be expected to interact with a family while in other instances, you will be treated as a boarder and have more independence.

In general, the families have offered to open their homes to you because they have some interest in cultural exchange rather than as a way to collect extra rent. The families live in neighborhoods throughout Berlin and have been personally screened and interviewed by BCGS staff.

Students are expected and required to move out after a period of one month. Students who fail to find accommodations of their own should be ready to invest about a month's rent as a fee for a housing agency. Students should not take advantage of host families who might offer an extension of their stay since the family agreed to host for one month and not more.

Each homestay family is expected to provide:

- A private room with a bed and closet or dresser for one month only.
- No meals except for breakfast daily and one dinner a week. More meals are not included since you will probably spend your days and evenings either at school or out exploring Berlin. One dinner is included as an opportunity to socialize with your host family.

The intensive language practicum is conducted during this time and living in a German household will provide the ideal setting to make practical use of what you are learning in the classroom. Living with a host family is voluntary

but is strongly recommended as an integral part of the program. Please review the *Guidelines for the Guest Stay in a German Household* below and complete the Guest Stay Questionnaire. Please note on the Questionnaire form if you have any special housing requirements due to allergies, dietary restrictions, religious observance, smoking. Only in special cases can a student petition to opt out of the guest stay. Please contact your study abroad advisor and OGP if you wish to explore this option.

Guest stay assignments will be provided to you after you arrive in Berlin. However, some host families might contact their students earlier via email. If this is the case, students are, of course, expected to answer these messages.

You may decide to bring a gift for your host family. We suggest bringing something that reflects a unique aspect of your life in the US. For example, items with your school logo, something reflective of your regional background, etc. It is also appropriate to get flowers for your hosts at the conclusion of the stay.

Remainder of the Semester: Apartments or FU housing.

Upon completion of the first month, students must move into housing that they have found on their own or move into FU housing. Most students do not choose the FU housing but instead choose to search for an apartment share. Please read the below to determine what best meets your needs. Please be forewarned that searching for an apartment can be stressful especially since you need to start searching during your first month in Berlin, while enrolled in the language practicum.

Apartment Shares:

During the month-long homestay, students begin searching for apartment shares to move into for the remainder of the semester. German students and other young adults are often looking for roommates to share apartments--WGs (Wohngemeinschaften). As in the U.S., there are many flyers posted on campus with offers, as well as classified ads in newspapers and city magazines. You can also check local magazine such as *Zitty* and *Tip* for leads. Average prices for a room in a shared apartment run from \$300-500 monthly.

While it is stressful not knowing ahead of time whether or not you have housing for the rest of the semester, all students find something and most students actually choose this option rather than apply for program-arranged housing. The advantage to an apartment share is that you will be immersing yourself into the local environment and have a better learning opportunity, both linguistically and culturally.

Former students all recommend that you begin the apartment search immediately and that you continue to focus on the apartment search until you find an apartment. Do not wait until the last minute. Finding an apartment share is not easy but it is well worth the search!

Below please find websites which may be helpful in learning more about the Berlin housing market.

No fee services:

<http://www.wg-gesucht.de/>
<http://host1.tagesspiegel.de/kleinanzeigen/lesen/>
<http://www.studenten-wg.de/>
<http://www.zwischenmiete.de/>
<http://www.wggruendung.de/>
<http://berlin.studenten-wohnung.de/>
<http://www.studentenwohnungsmarkt.de/>
<http://www.wgcompany.de/>

Fees may be charged:

<http://www.easywg.de/>
<http://www.zweitehand.de/>
<http://www.city-mitwohnzentrale.com/>
<http://www.wohnwitz.de/>
<http://www.immobilienscout24.de/>
<http://www.freiraum-berlin.com/> (also in English)
<http://www.fineandmine.de/> (also in English)
<http://berlin.homecompany.de/> (also in English)

Program-arranged Apartments:

There are three options and you can book them directly with the FU. Please note that you must be in touch with the Studentenwerk before leaving the U.S.

The three options are:

1. Single Occupancy Apartments at Celsiusstrasse (EUR 345/month)
2. Studentendorf Schlachtensee (EUR 200 or 260/month)
3. Studentenwerk Dorm Buildings (EUR 150 – 250/month)

Further information and application information and forms can be found at <http://web.fu-berlin.de/deutsch-vorkurs/>. Please take your time and read everything thoroughly. Please note the indicated deadlines for your application.

For students interested in the Studentenwerk Dorm Buildings: Although you may list your choice of dorms, a placement in your preferred dorm can NOT be guaranteed. Usually the Studentenwerk Berlin places FU exchange students in the following dorms: Goerzallee, Halbauerweg, or Eichkamp.

Students say:

A student dorm is a great way of making sure that you have a secure and legit place to live. I was in a good and safe environment in Berlin even though it was about 40 minutes away from the city center. My surroundings however were so pleasant and gorgeous (specifically in the summer time). I lived in a suite with other international students. This was a great way to practice my German and not feel intimidated.

I would recommend that all students should try to find a regular apartment with Germans because that is the surefire way of practicing German on a consistent basis. However, if they cannot, they shouldn't worry about it and just go ahead and try to get into a Studentendorm.

If you are interested in any of the three options, please complete the relevant application form online and send it off. **Please read the form carefully because once you have signed and sent it, it is binding.**

If you have any questions, please contact: Christiane Flaemig at Freie Universität Berlin, ERG Universitätsservice GmbH (Otto-von-Simson-Strasse 26, 14195 Berlin, phone/fax: +49-30-8 38-7 34 70/-5 31 94, email: accommodation@fu-berlin.de).

Once you have been placed into housing and receive a confirmation email from ERG Universitätsservice, you will be asked to transfer a deposit of Euro 400 – 415 to reserve your space. This amount will be either used as a security deposit and final cleaning fee or it will be applied towards the rent of the second and, where applicable, following month(s). In the latter case, you will be asked to pay a security deposit with your first rent (one month's rent plus Euro 10).

Students say:

My host family exceeded my expectations; we became very close and stayed in touch throughout the year. I am grateful for their friendship and support. My apartment situation improved my language, my cooking, and I gained life long friends.

I started my apartment search early and it proved very beneficial – I was the only one housed and settled in early on and avoided much of the excess stress. I would recommend, if capable, that future students might want to consider coming a bit earlier to look for housing.

Homestay was a wonderful way to start out but I am really really glad I lived in an apartment with German students. Not only did I need my space once the semester started but my German also improved by having conversations with my roommates.

The apartment search was more stressful than I imagined. Take advantage of the fact that you're arriving more than a month before the semester starts and start looking for your apartment quickly. Also, don't assume apartments will stay available for long... You should call the ad the day it comes out.

Finding an apartment was very difficult because my language abilities were still very awkward and fresh when I had to look. I ended up living with another BCGS student because we both had trouble finding WG's but I would recommend living with Germans, if you can. Living in an apartment is the only way to go. I really felt like a Berliner after a while, and now that I am back in Baltimore, I miss that feeling.

Searching for an apartment is less about finding the perfect place and more about interviewing with people in hopes that they chose you. Tell them on the spot if you want the place or you'll be out of the running.

I had a great experience living with German students in an apartment. It was different in that I met people in all different age groups who did all different things. At home, all my friends were my age and went to my university.

Finding an apartment wasn't hard, just stressful. I really enjoyed living with German roommates. That, working at an office, and classes were the best part of the stay. I would definitely recommend living in an apartment with other German students. You get to be a part of the city. You have your own neighborhood, your own bakery, butcher, green grocer, favorite café and you are a part of the city in a whole different way. And, it's a really great way of meeting people.

Try looking at apartment listings before going to Berlin. I had no idea where to look. I would recommend looking for places in Prenzlauerberg, Kreuzberg, and Friedrichshain.

I was very apprehensive about finding an apartment, but I'm so glad that I went that route. It takes persistence, but you WILL find something, and the process-talking to Germans and seeing how they live-was interesting in itself.

Don't live alone! I did – it wasn't expensive but I wished I had German roommates to speak with.

Speak German whenever you get the opportunity; don't rely on your English-speaking friends. Live in a WG with other native students!

Guidelines for the Guest Stay in a German Household

Below please find some suggestions about how students are expected to act while living in the German household for one month. Many of you may not have lived in someone else's home before so we thought it might be helpful to provide this information and some of the expectations that your German hosts might have. If most of this seems like common sense, you are absolutely right.

- Please realize that Germans do not usually open their homes to acquaintances or colleagues, much less strangers. It is a privilege that these families have agreed to open their homes to the BCGS students.
- Please be aware that you are a guest in someone's home and that you are not living in your own home or a hotel. Do not expect that someone will clean up after you. It is your responsibility to keep your room tidy, make your bed, and pick up after yourself. You may be expected to participate to some extent in family life, which may include household chores.
- Shortly after you arrive, make sure that you are familiar with the expectations of your hosts and with the household equipment. Do not be embarrassed or timid to ask how things work (ie: how the toilet flushes). Check with your family about what household items you may and may not use. For example, check if you are allowed to use the phone. If they say yes, then make sure that you use a calling card to pay for the calls and also do not spend a long time on the phone. Another example is to check if you are allowed to use the kitchen or if you may store food. Do not smoke in the house, linger in the bathroom, or stay out overnight without giving your family advance notice. Please think before you act since you are living in someone else's home and not your own. You are responsible for yourself and your actions and for any damages you might cause. Please use common sense during your stay.
- Communication is the most important part of your stay. Speak German as often as possible, even if it is difficult in the beginning. Take advantage of the fact that you are sharing a home with native speakers. You may find that your host family, especially the children, want to talk with you in English. Be aware that your host family has agreed in advance that your primary language of interaction must be German. Ask and answer as many questions as possible. The guest stay is your unique opportunity to get an inside view of Berlin from its inhabitants. In return, your hosts are interested in a bicultural experience. They want to help and inform you, but, of course, they also want to get to know the American way of life.

- Be polite. Say “Guten Morgen” or “Gute Nacht” on a daily basis. Make the time to chat with your hosts even if you feel tired. Your host might sometimes appear tired and less talkative during the week. Do not take it personally, but respect the fact that most of your hosts hold exhausting full-time jobs and did not sign up to entertain you. Try to do something nice for your host family such as offering to cook a meal, bringing dessert for the weekly dinners, or offering to take the kids to the zoo.
- Respect that your family has agreed to host you for one month and not longer even if they offer to extend your stay. Some host families may offer the extension as a courtesy but even though you may be enjoying your stay, we recommend that you do not accept such offers as it puts extra pressure on your family and it makes it highly unlikely they will host another student in the future.
- The extent and quality of the relationship between the host and the student will vary depending on personalities and lifestyles. In other words, in some cases, you may be expected to interact with a family while in other instances, you will be treated as a boarder and have more independence. In either case, the very act of living in a German household will certainly provide new insight into German culture.
- If you have any questions during your guest stay, please ask the Resident Administrative Director or the Academic Director.



After your stay, please express your gratitude in some way. A letter of thanks and/or flowers is always appropriate. Our families deeply appreciate postcards and letters, especially the ones students send after they are back in the United States.

Personal Finances and Budget

There are different options for bringing your spending money and you may want to consider a mix of the options rather than relying on one source to ensure that you will have immediate access to funds.

ATMs: If your bank is on NYCE, Cirrus, or another major Automated Teller Machine networks, you should be able to access funds directly from your home account through ATMs located throughout Berlin. You might want to check with your bank regarding the fees that might be charged. Most students rely on this option.

Credit Cards: You should bring a major credit card if you have one. Please be aware, however, that credit cards are still not as widely accepted in Germany as they are in the U.S., ie: do not expect to use them at the supermarket or out at restaurants. Instead, they might be useful for bigger purchases such as a plane ticket. Visa is more widely accepted than MasterCard.

Bank Account: Students staying for the academic year may want to seriously consider this option. If you decide to open a bank account in Berlin, money should only be sent to you in the form of banker’s drafts, international money orders, or direct bank transfers to your Berlin account. Personal checks from home should be avoided—they can take months to clear and be subject to substantial bank charges. Citibank can be found throughout Berlin. Many students find having a German account helpful when paying monthly expenses like rent.

Travelers Checks: Consider this as a back up option. You can purchase them in various denominations of US dollars. Some US banks will waive the purchase fee for students. Travelers checks are easy to cash and are a safe way to carry your money overseas.

Please remember that each person has individual spending habits and that ultimately, you must decide how much you should bring. Below please find an average of what students have spent in the last year. Depending on your living arrangements and own spending habits, you may decide to bring more than is listed below especially if you plan to travel.

During your first couple of months in Berlin, you will probably spend more money than you budget for because of start up costs (ie: apartment rent and security deposits; not knowing the most economical places to eat; etc.) so be prepared for this by either bringing or making sure that you have enough cash available.

Housing	\$400/month
Meals	\$400/month
Miscellaneous	\$550/month
Total	\$1350/month



For the current dollar/euro exchange rate, check www.oanda.com

Students say:

I just kept my Citibank account. It was easy to use here with all of the ATMs. Bring a Visa card.

I found the best way to get money was from the ATM. However, if you're here for the year, it definitely pays to open up a bank account. Most banks offer free checking for students and the EC card is accepted everywhere, including almost all grocery stores.

Pay with credit card or bank card when possible. Otherwise use an ATM here. Don't bring money from home, as ATMs and credit cards give you a better exchange rate.

Your money will almost invariably disappear faster than you expect.

Make German friends because they are habitually good at budgeting money and having fun without paying for it (going to the lake in summer is fun and free!)

If you plan on traveling by train a lot within Germany, definitely buy a BahnCard – 50% off all tickets and (the card is inexpensive) for students.

Get a German Konto as soon as possible. Some people didn't and they constantly had problems. I recommend Sparkasse—they were forever understanding with language problems.

Most people used electronic transfers to pay rent. You need to have an account opened in Germany for this. Buy a bicycle – it is so useful! Berlin is very bike-friendly.

Inform yourself early about student discounts about traveling at the beginning of the semester. I could have saved a lot of money if I had bought a Bahn card.

Books

All required textbooks will be available for purchase in Berlin. The cost is approximate to what you will spend in the U.S.

Meals

In addition to restaurants and cafes in neighboring areas, there is a café and a cafeteria on campus that students can use and receive discounts with a student ID.

Students Say:

Don't eat out too much – it's cheap, so you do it more and it adds up.

The mensa at the FU or any of the other universities are convenient and inexpensive.

If you're a vegetarian, be prepared to have a much more limited diet in Germany compared to the U.S. Vegetarian options exist in most places, but they aren't very varied.

In Berlin – Orientation, Arriving in Berlin, Activities, Practicalities

Orientation

Upon arrival at the hostel, you will receive a packet of information that will give you the details for the orientation weekend. Generally, orientation begins with a dinner on Saturday evening at a local restaurant which will give you an opportunity to meet the staff and other participants. The Sunday session will cover the academic program and its policies, provide tips for living in Berlin, and a checklist of things to do. Typically, you will meet your host family and move into your homestay on Sunday afternoon. On Tuesday, a language placement test is given. There is also a follow up session about two weeks into the program. Orientation is mandatory for all participants. All students will also be required to attend the FU orientation for international students.

Date:	February 27, 2010
Time:	evening around 7pm
Place:	Jugendgästehaus Central Nikolsburger Straße 2-4 D-10717 Berlin (Wilmersdorf) Tel: (011-49-30) 873-01-88/89 Fax: (011-49-30) 861-34-85 http://www.jugendgaestehaus-central.de/index.shtml.en

Students say:

Even though your first week is crazy busy with official paperwork, getting to know your host family, the language practicum, and just general adjusting to living in a new city, I recommend that you start your apartment search as soon as possible—within your first week of being in Berlin! It takes more time and energy than you think!

I wish someone told me that finding an apartment would be so time consuming. Start searching immediately. Don't wait or you will find the last week of the homestay more stressful than it needs to be.

Finding an apartment was difficult, but only because it required persistence. After a few interviews with potential roommates, I learned the correct things to ask and the correct ways to reply. I enjoyed living with German roommates. In talking to them I learned different things from those I learned in talking to my host family or other people. Your roommates are also more willing to interact with you than most people you meet, and this is very helpful especially at the beginning. I certainly recommend it to others, and the only caveat is that I would recommend living with more than one person. Then you have a chance to meet several people and more opportunities for conversation.

Open a student account as soon as possible so money can be wired quickly and obtained early.

Arrival in Berlin

Students will arrive at either Tegel or Schoenefeld airports (we recommend Tegel if possible).

By Taxi:

The approximate taxi fare from Tegel to the hostel is 20 Euros; from Schoenefeld, 30 Euros.

Since the public transportation route from the airport to the hotel involves numerous transfers between subway and bus, a taxi is the suggested mode of transport.

By public transportation:

A ticket can be purchased on the bus and used for two hours for both bus and subway. Hold on to your ticket—if lost or invalid, an inspector can fine you!

From Tegel: Take bus 109 to Subway U 9 (orange line) Kurfuerstendamm (in direction to Rathaus Steglitz). Get off after two stops at Guentzelstrasse station.

From Schoenefeld: Take bus 171 to Subway U 7 (blue line) Rudow (in direction to Rathaus Spandau) to Berliner Strasse station. Change trains to U 9 (orange line, in direction to Osloer Strasse). Get off after one stop at Güntzelstrasse station.

Language Commitment

While the BCGS does not officially have a language pledge, the main goal of the program is to help students refine their spoken and written German. In order to provide an environment that supports this objective, the language used at the BCGS is German. Exchanges among students, faculty, and staff are expected to take place in German. A student who persists in using English is likely to be dismissed from the program.

Students say:

Read the newspapers and watch TV (especially the news) a lot – it helps a lot for vocabulary and comprehension.

When I first came my German definitely felt rusty and frustrating. By the time I left I had written three research papers, given three in class presentations covering politics, economics and art. I understood everything that was said around me and although I'm still frustrated by the grammar at times, I feel comfortable in Berlin, and very comfortable speaking German.

I never knew that I would have to deal extensively with the German bureaucratic system on my own (i.e. residence permit, police registration, etc.). But then again, the challenge stretched me further than I thought I could go, helping me learn way more than I expected.

Independent Travel

If you travel during the program you will be asked to provide the resident director with information about your trip such as your itinerary, and contact information. This information is necessary in case there is an emergency and you need to be contacted.

Please note that independent travel should be limited to days during which there are no program activities planned. Please wait until after you receive the program schedule onsite to make weekend travel plans. Please do not plan any weekend travel until you have arrived in Germany and found a place to live. Missing class or class activities because of travel plans is not permitted.

Computer Facilities

You will have access to computer facilities but it might not be 24/7 like you are accustomed to on your home campus.

The program office has several computers and a printer available for student use.

You also have access to the FU computer centers and can sign up for an FU e-mail account. They have PCs and some Macintoshes. Laser printers are available for a small fee.

If you have a laptop, you should bring it with you. You will find it helpful for writing papers. In addition, access points for wireless LAN (Local Area Network) in the BCGS facilities and several other designated areas at the FU allow for wireless access to the Internet with your laptop, provided that you have a FU e-mail account, VPN (Virtual Private Network) client software, and a wireless LAN card. Even laptops without LAN cards can easily be plugged into Ethernet ports both at the program office and at the FU computer center.

Connections to the Internet from your homestays or apartments may not be available.

Cell Phones

You will probably want to have a cell phone during your time in Berlin. The most current plans and prices will be available at the onsite orientation.

Transportation

Berlin is an easy city to get around and has an excellent public transportation system with subways, buses, night buses, streetcars (some lines run 24 hours on weekends), and taxis.

Starting with orientation, BCGS students will rely on public transportation to commute to the language labs, to run errands, and to explore Berlin. Therefore, it is advisable for you to purchase commuter tickets right away.



Upon arrival in Berlin, purchase a monthly pass, the "VBB-Umweltkarte" (unlimited trips). Once you begin classes at the FU, you will receive a public transportation ticket for one semester (Semesterticket) for the entire Berlin Area (ABC) along with your student ID. The "Semesterticket" is valid during the spring term from April 1st through September 30th and during the fall term from October 1st through March 31st.

Student Activities

Trips Outside of Berlin: In the spring, governmental organizations sponsor trips for the BCGS program that allow students to learn more about German history, the political system, German reunification issues, and Germany's role in Europe. Trips have been organized to Bonn, Cologne, Weimar, and Erfurt. In the fall semester, the BCGS organizes a trip. In the past they have been to Nuremberg, Munich, and Dresden. One excursion is obligatory and usually related to one of the courses.

Extracurricular Courses and Activities: BCGS students can participate in a range of activities at the FU. Activities range from the orchestra to horseback riding to an international club. Participating in these types of activities is a great way to meet German students while pursuing personal interests.

Students say:

Take advantage of the BCGS trips. We were able to meet and hear from important people we never would have met on our own and we saw other cities of Germany.

Take advantage of cultural opportunities in Berlin earlier.

Try not to hang out with other program students. Make a concerted effort to get to know Germans and other international students. Don't lose this opportunity! This is my one regret.

The success of your year/semester in Berlin really depends on what you make of it. Take the extra step and get an apartment with German roommates and get involved in student groups/extracurriculars. I made lasting friends that way and enriched my experience incredibly.

It was not easy to meet people. You have to take the initiative but a little goes a long way... Take at least one class with German students. Students in the JFK School were particularly interested in getting to know Americans. Introduce yourself... they will warm up.

Uni sports are a great way to meet Germans—not as easy as you think!!

I joined the choir and met some great people.

Students wanting to meet other students should attend the International Student Get-Togethers at the FU or HU. Great opportunity!

Inform yourself early about Tip and Zitty which are magazines that give you information about what is going on in the city. I can't even think about the number of times I missed something because I didn't look!

The excursion to Weimar and Erfurt was a unique experience; it not only provided us with a chance to visit two interesting German cities, but also gave us the opportunity to hear about the life in the former East Germany. The three days were very well organized, there was never a dull moment. Our visit to Buchenwald made the Nazi horror more vivid, it was more than any book or movie can provide a student with. Our tour guide was very informative, which also helped. The discussions that we had with the students, who grew up in the GDR, were fascinating, but it was disappointing that there were very few students to offer their experiences. For me it was especially interesting - growing up in the former USSR (Russia) I could relate to these students. And it also made me realize how grim the Russian life was for people, since for us, GDR was the 'good life'.

Through the tours of Erfurt and Weimar we discovered the little hidden treasures of both cities. The churches, the winding cobblestone streets, the antique look of the houses - all created the quaint atmosphere of a stereotypical 'old German' town, the kind that you see in pictures in a textbook. Overall, I found the trip very satisfying. It was both touristy and educational, which gave it a good balance and kept me from feeling bored. It was also a nice break from work and the busy life in Berlin.

Internships

Internships are a great way to gain some real-life experience while using your German in a professional setting. Internships in Germany are rigorous and time-consuming. Students who opt to do an internship will find that their time in Berlin is taken up with academic studies and interning, leaving little time for travel and other personal pursuits.

The Berlin staff is not in the position to find or guarantee internship placements, especially for students who are in Berlin for the spring semester only. However, the program will support you in your internship search by reviewing resume drafts and cover letters as well as facilitating contact with potential internship sponsors.

If you are committed to an internship experience, you can take several steps to move the internship search process along:

1. Visit the Career Office on your home campus to do your homework and find leads about possible internships sponsors in Berlin.
2. Develop a German-style resume (see the sample on the Acceptance Materials website.)

Internship sponsors will be looking for students with a high command of German and previous experience in the field of expressed interest. Internships do not normally take place on a weekly basis, ie: work a few hours each week throughout the semester. Instead, internship sponsors usually ask for an intern for one, two, or three months. The best time to intern is usually between the fall and spring semesters when you will have time to devote to the internship and not have to worry about your class schedule. However, in exceptional circumstances there might be the opportunity to intern during the semester. The internships are usually unpaid.

Once in Berlin, you should make an appointment with the Resident Administrative Director to discuss your internship interest and possibilities.

Previous internship sponsors have included political foundations, government offices, hospitals, opera houses, public relations firms, and schools.

Below please find some websites that provide internship information:

<http://karriere.unicum.de/praktikum/>
<http://www.praktikuss.de>
<http://www.prabo.de>
<http://www.praktikums-boerse.de>

Places where BCGS students have interned include:

- *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik* (DGAP) (foreign policy think tank)
- *Rotes Kreuz* (Red Cross, accounting division)
- *Deutscher Bundestag* (German parliament)
- Mayor's office (Division for Protocol and International Affairs)
- *plan B communication* (public relations and marketing firm)
- American Academy
- *Umweltamt Mitte* (Berlin district environmental office)
- *Kanzlei Veronika Arendt-Rojahn* (legal office specializing in asylum law)
- *Großer Grenzverkehr* (social and cultural projects in East German villages)
- *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung* (Berlin government office for urban planning)
- *Komische Oper* (Opera House)
- Gymnasium (German high school)
- *Benjamin Franklin Krankenhaus* (FU hospital)
- *Distributed Campus* (FU e-learning project)

Students say:

I would really recommend volunteering or working in any field of interest while you are abroad. Not only will you learn more about that interest and how it may differ from the U.S., but you will also get to know more people and

learn a lot of vocabulary. The opportunities are there if you just ask, and people are generally understanding of whatever language difficulties you may have.

I worked with Deutsche Real Estate AG, which is a smaller real estate opportunity fund which does projects only within Germany. The office is on Gendarmenmarkt. I had fixed days when I would work, but it was relaxed, and I could come and go when I wanted, unless something pressing had to be finished; and my hours would never exceed 20 per week, because that is the most students are allowed to work while they are studying. Things they would have me do included financial models of potential projects, finding information regarding projects, and translating documents into English. The experience was great, the people I worked with were really nice, and although the pay wasn't fabulous, I could use the money while in Berlin.

My internship was at the small publishing company Edition Ebersbach in Berlin-Charlottenburg. The internship lasted from May 15 until July 18. I worked in the office about three days a week, for around 12 to 15 hours a week. I spent a lot of time working with computers, using Microsoft Excel, and Access. I sent information out to the press, recorded weekly sales, kept a record of reviews written about the company's books, and went to the post office. I also typed a few letters and translated a short text from German to English. It was a great experience working for Frau E. Now I have a lot of experience working in an office, especially computer experience, which I feel will help me in any future positions.

On a very basic level, I have been able to witness the every day differences between German and American formalities within an office. For example, I was never referred to by my first name, but rather my last name, or, for instance, the result of having a Beamter, who claims he is sick for five weeks.

As a group leader I was responsible for the finances, recording the activities and number [of] participants, speaking with the media, translating when needed and keeping things moving smoothly. This was the absolute best way to end my year abroad in Berlin, because I had the opportunity to practice my German in a practical situation and it was an incredible experience.

I occupied myself with telephone calls for various employees, translation of documents into English (letters, presentations, an architectural plan, etc.), and with a self-prepared project that will later become the basis for a Bachelors thesis.

The Komische Oper is a wonderful place to intern. There is always something going on, whether it be auditions for positions in the orchestra, rehearsals, or premiers. Usually the tasks of the day include inputting who has been at rehearsals onto the computer, organizing applications for auditions and streamlining all outdated material that may still be on file. While I was there I was able to visit many "behind the scenes" aspects of the opera - the ballet troupe rehearsing, the orchestral auditions for new players and the very early rehearsals of The Barber of Seville which was put on after I had left. This internship was thoroughly enjoyable, and I would recommend it to any one interested in the arts as well as those who wish to experience the German perspective of the arts.

Cultural Preparation

Students say:

I'd suggest disregarding one and all stereotypes-good and bad- one may have about the country and its citizens. I found that these stereotypes were rarely useful and that one is forced to really learn about the culture when one does not have these to fall back on

Understandably, the practical and logistical concerns such as getting course approval, purchasing a plane ticket, and making sure your bills are paid will probably consume the few short months that you have prior to your departure. Another aspect to begin thinking about before you depart is how you will adjust in the new overseas environment. In addition to learning as much as you can about Germany, you may want to consider learning about culture and the process of cultural adjustment. Below are some tools and information to help you get started on the process.

Learn about Germany

This Handbook purposely does not go into detail about living in Berlin because we recommend that you purchase a guidebook about Berlin and read through it. It will answer many of your questions regarding daily living in Berlin and Germany. Useful guides include Time Out Berlin, Let's Go, Lonely Planets, Michelin Guides, Insight Guides (for more cultural information and less travel information), and Blue Guides (for more historical information). There are many types of guidebooks so please choose according to your own needs. A Falk map of Berlin is also essential.

Talk to those who have been to Germany, either past participants of the program or German students studying at your university.

Keep up on the current events of Germany through the newspaper, news, Internet sites or periodical such as Time, Newsweek, or the Economist. Check the latest information in the consulate information sheets from the U.S. State Department at <http://travel.state.gov>.

In the months leading up to your departure, practice your German whenever you get a chance. Keep a daily journal in German or read German newspapers online. Do whatever you can to maintain your reading and writing skills because you will need them when you begin taking classes. The following websites might be useful: www.goethe.de and www.berlin.de.

Learn as much as you can about Germany. Read up on Germany, watch German movies and programs on Germany, and attend local events on Germany.

Suggested Readings:

The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture by Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried Van Der Will (Editors)

The German Way: Aspects of Behavior, Attitudes, and Customs in the German-Speaking World by Hyde Flippo

Germany: Unraveling an Enigma by Greg Needs

Teach Yourself German Language, Life, and Culture by Ian Roberts

When in Germany, Do as the Germans Do: The Clued-In Guide to German Life, Language, and Culture by Hyde Flippo

As you think about your upcoming semester abroad, ask yourself why you are going overseas and also test yourself on how much you know about Germany. If you don't know the answers now, consider working on these questions and formulating responses as part of your preparation for what you might encounter while you are in Berlin.

- What are your academic and personal goals?
- What is the perception of Americans in Germany?
- What are some of the cultural and social taboos of Germany? What are some unspoken rules?
- Are you familiar with recent pop culture, political and social currents there? Who are the people admired/disliked by the Germans?
- What is the perception of gender roles in this country and how do they differ from those in your country? Are you prepared to be open-minded on this matter?
- Socially, what are your expectations of the people there? Do you have ideas on how to make friends from Germany once you've arrived? Is this a goal for you?

- How important is the role of family there and does it differ from that in the U.S.?
- Once you're far away from your friends and family will you have a (healthy!) coping mechanism for when you feel down?
- What is the perception of time in Germany? What about in the U.S.? Does one stay strictly on schedule there or is the attitude towards time more lax in your host country?
- What is the most common and preferred teaching style where you're from and how might it differ in Germany? Could you be open and flexible if it differs greatly from what you know and like in the U.S.?
- Are you familiar with the educational system there?
- Might the student-teacher relationship differ? What is the perception of teachers there and what is their role in the culture? Are they extremely respected/revered or thought of basically as equals, and could you relate to your teachers accordingly?
- Do you believe you're able to perceive the things that are different about Germany as part of the experience of studying abroad, without being too judgmental and/or getting angry?

Talk to Returned Students

Many returned students are eager to share their knowledge and experience with those of you about to leave. If you would like to talk to a returned student from your school, you can either contact students listed on the last page directly, or send an email to the Office of Global Programs at Columbia; we are happy to put you in touch with a returned student.



Want more information about Berlin and Germany that you are not finding in this information packet? Check out the Distributed Campus website for up to date, useful information about living in Berlin. <http://www.distributed-campus.org>

Distributed Campus Website

The Freie Universität Berlin's Distributed Campus was developed to help foreign students in their preparation for study abroad. You will find that this website offers some supplemental information about Berlin and Germany that you won't find in guidebooks or elsewhere.

The website offers the following sections:

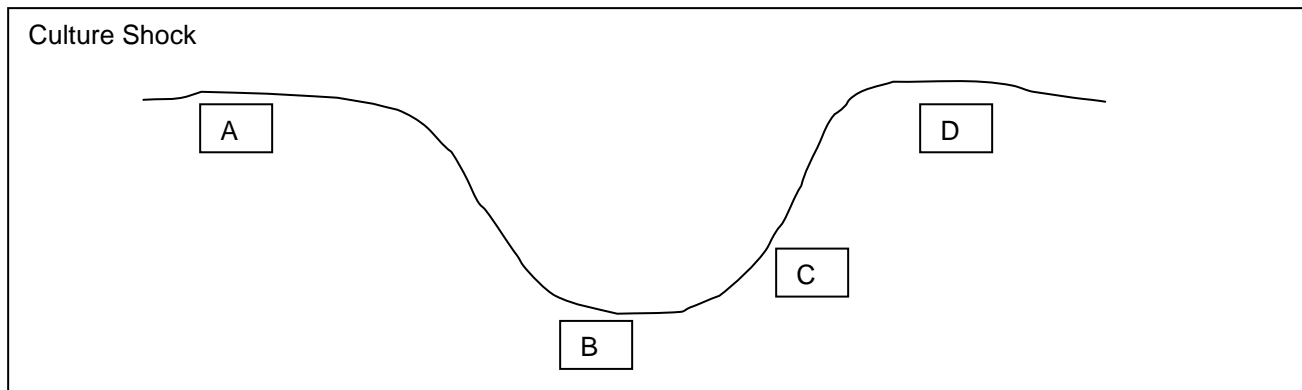
1. Resources: Includes over 100 topics about living in Germany and Berlin. Short essays, personal accounts, and interviews with students or other "experts" give you insight into German culture and lifestyle, alternative lifestyles, food, nightlife, academics, traveling, shopping, etc.
2. German: Includes interactive and fun lessons in German specific to living in Berlin.
3. Community: Provides a forum for students to be in contact online.
4. Tasks: Provides some "homework" to be accomplished before you depart for Berlin. Your homework is basically to read through the Resources section and to practice your German on a daily basis. We provide suggestions about how you can do this.

To register, please go to <http://www.distributed-campus.org> and take advantage of the information that would be helpful as you prepare for your time abroad. We think you will find part one and part two particularly useful.

Culture Shock

Going abroad to study is the chance of a lifetime to master a language, live overseas, gain international experience, and usually learn a lot about yourselves in the process. Part of adjusting to living overseas usually includes

experiencing some *culture shock* which is a disorientation that occurs from living within a new culture. This disorientation or confusion is caused by a lack of familiarity with patterns and meanings that you take for granted in your own culture. You may feel that you are trying to operate in a world without knowing all of the rules. Feelings of frustration may occur because the situation is ambiguous or doesn't match your expectations.



Culture shock usually occurs in the following stages and may vary in length and intensity for each person:

- **Initial euphoria:** Everything is fresh, new, and exciting. The sights, sounds, and smells of your new home stimulate your desire to learn and experience as much as you can. You begin finding similarities between your life at home and overseas.
- **Irritability and hostility:** What was once interesting and fun because it was new becomes frustrating and annoying because it is different from what you are accustomed. You become aware of the subtle differences in food, clothing, manners, tone, sense of space and time, telephones, etc. The novelty has worn off and you may begin feeling homesick, anxious, bored, depressed, tired, confused, or inadequate. Other ways that culture shock may manifest itself include avoiding contact with host nationals and spending time with others from your home country only, withdrawing from others by spending a lot of time reading or sleeping, the inability to study or work productively, compulsive eating or drinking, and verbal or physical aggressiveness.
- **Gradual adjustment:** As you gradually settle into a routine and establish a life for yourself overseas, you begin to become more familiar with the culture and are better able to interpret the more subtle cultural cues that may have eluded you earlier. You begin to feel more comfortable in your home away from home.
- **Adaptation and biculturalism:** You are able to function in two cultures with relative ease and will even miss some of the ways and manners of your new home. You may not be ready to leave your new home and more likely than not, will experience a form of "reverse culture shock" upon your return home.

Coping with Culture Shock

- Experiencing culture shock to some degree is normal and not unlike any other transition in your life such as leaving home and going to college. Expect there to be some bumps along the road.
- Take the initiative and learn as much as you can about your host country. Buy guidebooks and maps. Become familiar with your local neighborhood. Try to use your foreign language skills as much as you can.
- Ask questions. Take the opportunity to talk to as many people as you can. Create a loose network of host nationals, expatriates, and other international students in order to gain different perspectives. Try not to spend too much time with expatriates who are unhappy living overseas.
- Try not to spend all of your time sending e-mails home, surfing the Internet, and watching CNN. Try to become more involved with your host culture.
- Cultivate a personal interest while abroad. If you play a musical instrument or sports at home, try to become involved while abroad. Not only will you do something you enjoy but you will probably make new contacts as well.

- Take care of yourself. Eat, sleep, and exercise regularly.
- Keep a journal to record your experiences. Take photos to document your time abroad.
- If you develop a physical problem such as a headaches, stomachaches, or insomnia, you may want to learn how to handle stress by talking to a doctor or counselor.
- If you have trouble coping, talk to friends or a counselor and try to map out a plan of how to address your issues.
- Maintain a sense of humor and don't feel shy about sharing some of your mistakes with friends and family.
- Take a break by going on short trip, getting a massage, or even taking in an English-speaking movie. Treat yourself so that you feel more energized to "return" to your local surroundings.

Reverse Culture Shock

It may be surprising to hear that students often experience culture shock upon their return home. The familiar is no longer familiar. You've changed as a result of your overseas experience and you'll be viewing everything and everybody through a different lens. The stages of reverse culture shock are similar to those of culture shock.

Identity Issues for Study Abroad

Students usually find their time abroad to be a transforming experience. In addition to the stimulating academic environment that it provides, living overseas often impacts how students view themselves and the world around them. How am I defined and how do others define me? Characteristics that help to shape oneself such as ethnicity, heritage, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, minority/majority issues, physical appearance, and language may come to the forefront while abroad (or not.). The effect of these issues may be completely different from your experience in your own country. For example, some students may experience more racial tolerance overseas while others feel there is less or that an openly gay man may not feel comfortable being open about his preferences or that women may discover a different gender balance to which they are accustomed. How large a role identity issues play will vary depending on the person and the circumstances. No two experiences are ever alike and most students wouldn't trade their time abroad for anything.

Country specific guidebooks may help you to clarify the cultural components as related to these topics. If you would like some further information, below please find some web resources. They have been provided for your information and is not a comprehensive list.

www.miusa.org

Includes resources for people with disabilities.

www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/

Includes resources for study abroad students who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

www.journeywoman.com

An online travel resource for women.

General and Personal Safety

The excitement of travel and the newness of the environment can make it easy to become careless or distracted. The following suggestions are mostly common sense. The idea is to be aware of where you are and what is going on around you at all times. In preparing for your time abroad, talk to students from the places or who have visited the places you intend to stay. Their insights will prove very helpful.

- Always travel light. You will be less tired and less likely to set your bags down. Never leave your baggage unattended; it contains everything you own. This hold true no matter where you are – in an airport, a hotel, the train station, the beach or library.

- Protect your valuable documents. Make copies of important documents and information and leave it in a separate place.
- Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a secluded place.
- Do not use illegal drugs. You are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling. Hundreds of American travelers end up in foreign jails each year as a result of carrying, using or being suspected of using drugs. There is little the American embassy can do on your behalf in these cases and the laws in many countries are more severe than in the U.S. It just isn't worth the risk.
- Avoid demonstrations, especially in politically volatile countries. Read the local newspaper and learn about potential civil unrest. What appears peaceful can suddenly become a dangerous situation, and you could be caught in the middle.
- Travel with a companion at night and stay in populated, well-trafficked areas. Do not travel to areas of a city or country which the program host has labeled "unsafe." Use common sense if confronted with a dangerous situation. Your personal safety is far more important than any property. In some countries it will be important to have a male companion in the group.
- Try to avoid arriving in unknown towns at night. If you must arrive at night, make sure you have reserved accommodations.
- Plan where you are going in advance and be aware of your surroundings. This is not paranoia – it's good common sense. You know what feels comfortable and what doesn't. If your instincts tell you a situation is uncomfortable, trust them and move along.
- Do not swim at an unfamiliar beach unless you are positive it is safe.
- Stay healthy by eating well and getting sufficient rest. If you become ill, take care of yourself by getting the proper care. Don't be afraid to visit a doctor or hospital because you don't speak the local language. Usually there is someone there who speaks English.
- Learn the traffic signals, patterns and signs when you arrive in a country, even if you are not driving. Many countries drive on the opposite side of the road than the U.S. Be aware of our natural reaction to look to the left and then right.
- Take only taxis clearly identified with official markings and when you get inside, note the cab number. Beware of unmarked cabs. Settle on a price before leaving and pay while in the taxi.
- Theft on public transportation along popular tourist routes is not unheard of. It is most common on overnight trains. Be aware of your possession when traveling.
- There is risk involved in operating any motor vehicle. It is strongly recommended that students do not drive in another country.
- Many students dress in a way that immediately identifies them as American. It's important to realize that this can bring you unwanted attention. College or fraternity sweatshirts, baseball hats, carrying water bottles and wearing sneakers will highlight the fact that you are American – and some people may resent you for that fact.
- If any of your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the police and other appropriate authorities. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and an explanation. Traveler's check loss must be reported within 24 hours.
- If someone tries to take your purse, backpack, or other property by force, let them have it. Your personal safety is far more important than any property.
- A camera is the most often lost or stolen item on off-campus programs. Be especially careful not to leave the camera in a taxi, hotel room, or on a bus.

Again, following these safety precautions will not guarantee your safety, but they reduce your chances of problems.

The U.S. Department of State routinely updates their advice for Americans visiting Germany. Please take the time to read their information as you prepare yourself for your time abroad:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1123.html

Have a Great Term!

Used with a guidebook on Germany, this BCGS Handbook should provide you with what you need to know before going to Germany. As you are all coming from a variety of backgrounds and each of you has a different reason for wanting to study in Berlin, we may not have covered all of your concerns. Feel free to call us if you should require any more information.

Our last piece of advice is to prepare for the unexpected and maintain a sense of humor when things don't go the way you expect. Your experience will be what you make of it. We wish you the best for your upcoming studies in Berlin!

Students say:

BCGS helped me learn a lot about myself as well as a lot of German.

Berlin is an awesome city – thank you for having a program here...Have a really clear picture in your head of what you want to get out of your experience abroad and work toward that.

My experiences in Berlin are sure to be one of the most incredible parts of my college experience, and I am so glad I got the opportunity to participate. My language competency, although not noticeable all the time, seems to improve with every minute I'm over here. The people on the program became great friends, people I will keep in contact with even after the program. The homestay part of my trip was, for me, the most wonderful aspect. They became a family for me, inviting me over for dinner, taking me for tours of the city, even after the month was up. Make friends with them and keep in touch after you leave. Don't try to stress yourself out with too many classes and too much work. Study abroad is as much about the cultural immersion and language improvement. Also, take the time to get to know all aspects of Berlin—clubs, bars, opera, shopping, parks, and so much more.

Transcripts and Academic Policies

Grades and Transcripts

Many times grades are not received from your FU professor(s) until mid-April if you studied in Berlin for the fall semester and late October for the spring semester. Once your grade report is completed with all of your grades, a grade report or transcript will be forwarded to your home school. We apologize for any inconvenience. If you need to have grades posted earlier, please talk to your university professors about submitting grades to the BCGS office as early as possible.

BCGS students: Your home school registrar should be able to provide you with official transcripts

Visiting students: If you would like a personal copy or additional copies of your Columbia transcript, please submit a written request with your name and address of where transcript(s) should be sent to:

If you would like to request additional copies of your Columbia transcript, please see the Columbia Registrar's instructions: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar/docs/alumni/transcripts.html>

There are no fees for additional transcripts.

Academic and Program Regulations

Following are the academic regulations for all BCGS students. BCGS member students should consult their home schools for additional academic regulations which may not be included here.

Statement on Academic Integrity

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Students from BCGS member institutions may also need to follow their home school policies.

Credit and attendance

During their first semester (fall or spring) students enroll in the German Language Practicum, the Academic Director's course, and two university courses for a minimum of 15 points:

Students continuing from the fall to the spring term may take a minimum of 12 points which include four university courses.

Students may audit classes, but will not receive course credit for audited classes.

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to fulfill all requirements to maintain good academic standing. Those missing classes for more than two consecutive days are required to notify the Academic Director, the Resident Director, and the professor(s) concerned.

Generally speaking, the FU instructors determine the course grades by evaluation of a final paper ("Hausarbeit"), two or three short reaction papers during the semester, an in-class presentation ("Referat"), a final examination ("Klausur"), and/or attendance. The BCGS, however, will not accept grades resulting from a paper with less than ten pages, an in-class presentation, an oral examination, or attendance only. All papers and coursework are due on the internal BCGS deadline, irrespective of the individual professor's requirements.

Credit is determined by each home school. Students are strongly advised to keep all syllabi, bibliographies, notes, corrected papers, and examinations.

Students must observe the rules of academic and personal conduct as outlined by the BCGS and their home college. Infractions of those rules may lead to suspension of the student by the program.

Grading Policy

Students receive letter grades in all courses for which they are registered. Grades are assigned on the basis of coursework, examinations, written papers, attendance, preparation, progress, and/or professors' letters of evaluation.

Plus or minus grades may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor (except with the grade of D). A final grade cannot be improved by reexamination or additional work.

Grades may also be subject to individual institutional policies.

The grading system is as follows:

A	excellent
B	good
C	fair
D	poor but passing (amount of credit toward degree is determined by each school)
F	failure (the grade of F is a final grade and is not subject to re-examination)

Pass/Fail (P/D/F)

This mark is available only to students from Columbia College, Barnard College, and the School of General Studies for one course per term and it must comply with their home school policies. Whether students from other institutions may have letter grades changed to P/D/F on their home school transcripts is a policy question decided by each institution. All students must submit their request for P/D/F in writing along with their home school approval of their request to the Resident Director by the appropriate deadline. Required language courses and courses that students might want to petition for major credit may not be taken for P/D/F. Students who earn a C- or better will be issued a P on their transcripts. Students who earn a D will receive a D and students who earn an F will receive an F.

Incomplete (INC)

This mark may be given to a student who has satisfactorily met all requirements in a course but can not complete their coursework because of incapacitating illness, a serious family emergency, or other circumstances of comparable gravity. The student must petition for an incomplete by filling out the **Incomplete Request Form**. The student's home school must also approve the request. Such prior

approval is required both for program courses and university courses. The mark may be changed at the discretion of the instructor if the student submits all required written work within a period of time determined by the Resident Director, but in no circumstances later than the beginning of the term after that in which the incomplete was granted. Students must comply with the regulations of their respective schools.

Unofficial Withdrawals (UW)

Given to students who have not officially dropped a course and who have not completed any substantive work in the course. It is not sufficient for students to notify the instructor of the course from which they intend to withdraw.

For students who have not officially dropped a course but who have completed substantive work, such as a paper or a midterm exam, the uncompleted work may be averaged into the final grade as a zero or an F, and the instructor may compute and award a final course grade. A UW is a permanent grade and will remain on the transcript even if the student repeats the course.

Terms of Participation

Before submitting your application you agreed to the Terms of Participation which is included here for your reference:

In order to participate in the Berlin Consortium for German Studies to abide by the following terms and conditions with respect to the program I have selected:

Academics

I agree to participate fully in the academic program and fulfill the academic requirements by regularly attending classes and completing assignments in a timely manner. I understand that one of the principal purposes of the program is to provide the opportunity to improve my foreign language skills, and I therefore promise whenever possible to communicate in the host country's language to optimize not only my own learning experience but that of my fellow students. I also agree to uphold and maintain the academic standards of Columbia University.

Medical

I understand that Columbia University may not provide medical and other insurance and that, in any case, it is my responsibility to ensure appropriate insurance coverage.

In the event of a medical emergency, I authorize a representative of Columbia University to procure medical diagnosis and treatment for me, and to be in contact with my parents or designated emergency contact. I understand that I am responsible for the fees incurred.

Name, Photos, and other Materials

I grant permission to Columbia University to include my name and school on a list to be sent to the program participants. I also grant permission to Columbia University to use, for the purpose of promoting the goals of the University and not for commercial purposes, my name, voice and likeness in any writings, photographs, films, and recordings collected as a result of my participation in the program.

Conduct

I agree to abide by the rules, regulations, and laws established by Columbia University, the United States of America, the host institution and the host country. Behavior judged as inappropriate by the resident staff will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Release

I choose voluntarily to participate in the program and may choose at any time to withdraw, with the understanding that academic and financial consequences will be determined by the relevant Columbia University regulations. I understand that there are inherent risks that may come with international travel and participation in the program. I take full responsibility for my participation, including any travel that I undertake during the program, assume the risks and release Columbia University from any liability arising out of my participation in the program.

Past Participant List

The following students have agreed to speak to students planning to participate in the Berlin Consortium for German Studies. Please feel free to contact them!

2008-2009 participants

Applebaum	Brynn	University of Pennsylvania	brynn@sas.upenn.edu
Doran	Ian	Hamilton College	idoran@hamilton.edu
Fleishman	Aaron	University of Pennsylvania	aaronf@wharton.upenn.edu
Fuchs	Romy	University of Pennsylvania	awm24@cornell.edu
Gomes	Zachary	Columbia College - C.U.	zrg2101@columbia.edu
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