



N°1, JANUARY 2021

The Blue Bear Duke in Berlin Newsletter

What's going on in Berlin? Get the latest news and learn more about the program.



photo by [Robert James Hughes](#)

Meet the Team

This month, we'd like to introduce our DiB team members such as our art professor Matthias Pabsch, whose popular courses on Contemporary Art (Spring) and Architecture (Fall) are a fixture of the program.

[Read more on page 8.](#)

Meet an Alumna

Nobody can paint a better picture of the Berlin experience that we offer than our former students. Get to know Katja! She will tell you all about her favorite places and best memories.

[Read more on page 5.](#)



Dear Duke Community,

These are indeed trying times, but we would like to share some information with you so that you feel encouraged – once the pandemic allows us to operate again – to travel and broaden your academic and personal horizons by experiencing a truly global education.

We in Berlin have compiled some information about our program, so that you have an idea what to expect if you decide to join us in one of the most vibrant cities in Germany and Europe. We are hoping to publish newsletters on a regular basis to provide a better background for choosing your destiny. We offer German classes on every level from beginners to advanced learners of German. Courses in art, art history, environmental studies, economics, and engineering as well as internships and research projects complement our academic offerings.

I have had the pleasure to be one of the founding members of Duke in Berlin in 1988 – actually before the fall of the Berlin wall. My tasks entail teaching German studies – integrating literature, history, film, theater, and excursions – as well as academic advising and counseling for direct enrollment classes at the Freie Universität and the University of Technology in Berlin. We have an experienced staff and a renowned faculty who have been with the program for many years. We do invite you to browse through our letter and welcome the newly appointed academic director, Dr. Sarah Pourciau! We all hope that we can relaunch our Duke in Berlin Program in the near future. Please don't hesitate to forward any questions you may have to us at duke@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Viele Grüße

Jochen Wohlfeil,
Resident Director
Duke in Berlin

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THE DUKE-IN-BERLIN PROGRAM

Where to Find Us

Our new building at Königin-Luise-Str. 16a might not look like much from the outside, but upon entering, in pre-Covid times, you would have come upon a busy beehive of students, teachers and staff, occupying modern classrooms and offices, as well as a small kitchen.



It's quieter now but not less idyllic. You can sit on our terrace and enjoy the

Königin-Luise-Str. 16a, 14195 Berlin

garden, grab an apple from the tree, or walk a few steps and eat the best cake in Southern Berlin amidst an abundant bed of roses in the Royal Garden Academy.

Also not far are the Freie Universität with its cafeteria (our teacher Jari recommends the [Germknödel](#)) and the university library.



"Germknödel" by [florian.glechner](#)

What's Cooking

We have many plans in store for a time when abroad programs will be considered safer:

Housing

Students can be placed in individual housing facilities within walking distance of our study center to ensure as little exposure as possible.

Hygiene

Our offices and classrooms are equipped with virus-unfriendly tools according to the standards of the Duke Compact.

Excursions

With our trusted private bus operator, we will have day-trip excursions. Here are some destinations and highlights to look forward to:

Dresden: Semper Opera, Albertinum Art Museum, Volkswagen's Transparent Factory (e-Mobility)

Leipzig: Historic Convention City

Hamburg: Hamburg International Harbor, Speicherstadt, Elbphilharmony Concert Hall

Wolfsburg: Volkswagen (Golf, Touran, Tiguan production), Car City Museum Park, Phaeno Science Experiments Museum

Wittenberg/Dessau: Martin Luther Reformation history, original Bauhaus Center

Sample Internship Opportunity: *Artfacts*

The art world can be obscure. For everybody out there who needs to make a business decision involving art, it's useful to have an expert by their side who quantifies and digitizes statistics about art and artists. This is where [Artfacts](#) comes into play.

The *Artfacts* headquarters is located in the heart of Berlin-Kreuzberg, with a beautiful view onto the Engelbecken pond. Their office is bustling: Programmers, marketing specialists and editors join forces to make the art market more transparent.

Artfacts was founded in 2001 by Marek Claassen and Stine Albertsen. Our internship coordinator Daniela Jonas sat down with them in their office and wanted to know more...

What exactly does *Artfacts* do?

Artfacts collects and archives data about the art market. This way, we can rank artists and galleries. Our rankings measure an artist's or a gallery's position in the art world based on their exhibition history.

What do you like about your work?

Meeting all the interesting people. They are often very unique with funny stories.

For which fields of study could *Artfacts* be interesting?

Well, obviously art history, but we also welcome students with a background in programming and/or data science.



Victoria, one of our students in the Spring 2019 program, did a 2-month internship at Artfacts, working in programming and gaining a lot of insight into the tasks of the company. Please feel free to [send us an email](#) if you are interested in her experiences and we will forward it to her. Or, if you're interested in internship opportunities in Berlin in general, you can contact our internship coordinator [Daniela Jonas](#).



Picture Puzzle

Which German proverb are we looking for here?

Send your answer to duke@zedat.fu-berlin.de and win a Berlin bear!

(Tip: It translates to English literally!)

Meet Katja!

Hi Katja! Tell us: When were you in Berlin? How did the semester fit into your studies at Duke?

I first went to Berlin during the summer after my first year (2017), where I participated in the Duke in Berlin Summer Program. I loved the city, language, and culture so much that I came back for the full 6-month semester during the spring of 2019! Studying abroad in Berlin during the spring allowed me to take a mix of German and Biology courses through Duke and Freie Universität, thereby fulfilling requirements and accruing credits in both of my majors.

Was it hard for you to get used to some (German-/ Berlin-related) things? If yes, which ones?

I found that adjusting to Berlin life was similar to starting fresh in any new place - it can take a while to find your favorite spots and people you genuinely connect with in such an expansive, unfamiliar city. But with patience, time, and a willingness to step into the unknown, you eventually learn to find your way and put down roots.

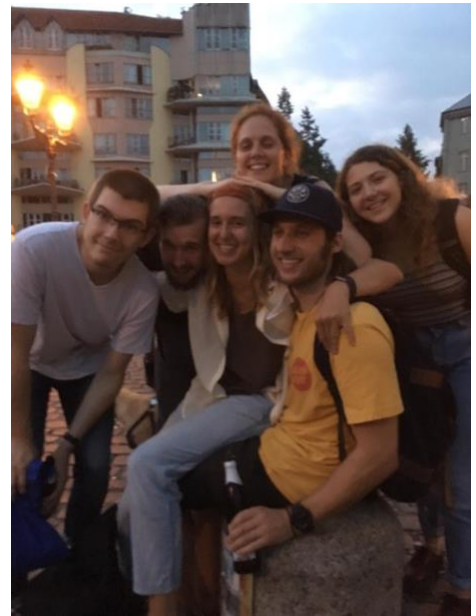
Sidenote: It can also be challenging at first to get used to living with a German host family, especially after coming from college dorm life. Many families have specific “rules” or ways they like things to be done in the house, which can be tricky to navigate in the beginning. Do the best you can while keeping lines of communication open and you’ll be fine!

What was a memorable moment for you?

My experience in Berlin was filled with memorable moments, but my last day in the city was an absolute highlight and something I will always look back fondly on. I invited all of the friends I had made in Berlin to celebrate with me, which included an eclectic collection of students in the program, other students I had met through the FU, ice cream shop work colleagues, and more. We all chilled at Tempelhofer Feld, a former airfield that has been repurposed as a huge public recreation space and one of my favorite spots in Berlin (*see page 7*), before later heading to the canal to watch the sunset. It was so incredible to bring together all these special people from different corners of my life, many of whom had never met, and talk, laugh, and enjoy the Berlin summer atmosphere together (there’s really nothing quite like it).

What should one do when in Berlin?

When in Berlin...there is SO much to do! It’s honestly so hard to be bored in this city. I have a lot of recommendations, but some of my all-time favorites are visiting the Flohmärkte (flea markets)



throughout the city on Sundays, relaxing by one of Berlin's many lakes for the afternoon, and of course, grabbing a Gemüse Döner at Mustafa's (yes, it's worth the wait). Oh, and if there's a street festival, you better be there.

What's your favourite place in Berlin?

I have so many favorite places in Berlin, but if I really had to pick one it has to be the Admiralsbrücke. It's a small bridge that crosses the canal in Kreuzberg, and it's always filled with people chilling and playing music and just overall good vibes. But please, let me know if you want a longer list, because I could go on for quite a while.

How does one learn German fast?

Speak German, speak German, speak German!! It's easy to fall back into English in Berlin, especially because most of the young people in the city speak excellent English and are excited when the opportunity arises to practice. Plus, people in your program will inevitably want to speak English, since it's almost certainly more comfortable. But if you make it your mission to speak German whenever you can, even if you're that annoying person that responds in German when someone speaks to you in English (yes, that was me), you are 100% guaranteed to improve your German, I can promise that. It can certainly be nerve-wracking to try out your German, especially when conversing with native German speakers, but nearly everyone I met was supportive and impressed with an English-speaker learning their language. So even if you have to take baby steps to get there, definitely do your best to put yourself out there - you'll be surprised at the progress and connections you make in the process.

How did Berlin contribute to your studies at Duke?

Berlin was, hands-down, the most enriching experience of my college career. I came into Duke without knowing a single word of German and left with a German major and a level of fluency I can be really proud of, which never would've been possible without spending a half year in Berlin. Of course, I learned a lot about German history, culture, and language in my classes there, but I learned even more in the city itself - by meeting people that know it better than I ever will, and living in it and seeing it for myself.

Could you imagine coming back to Germany?

The connections I made to people and places in the city are real and deep, and it's an incredible and heartening feeling to know that I have a second home across the world. This bond definitely makes the prospect of going back to Berlin more real, and I'm hopeful that one day I can return to live and work in Berlin - this time for more than just 6 months.



Note: *If you want to ask Katja even more questions about her Berlin experience, [send us an email](#) and we will forward it to her.*

The Tempelhof Airport

An outdoor sports area, a beer garden, a circus tent, public gardening, refugee accommodations, a bike workshop, sometimes an Open-air cinema, a festival of giant dragons and much more – we're not talking about different places and events in Berlin, but about one place only, the popular Tempelhof airport a.k.a. one of the largest inner-city open spaces in the world.

The space has had a many-faceted and sometimes dark history: Here, the Nazis kept political prisoners in Berlin's only concentration camp; later, the Allies provided the western part of the city with food via the renowned 'Luftbrücke' ("Air Bridge" or Airlift).

In 2008, the airport was closed, and two years later it was re-opened to the public. Today, you can use the space as an extension of your living room until they close it at dawn.



photo by [Gertrud K.](#)

Deutschstunde: What the Devil is a ... Stammtisch?

If a group of like-minded people meets in a bar on a regular basis, and especially if some card-playing and political or philosophical discussions is involved, they are free to call themselves (or the table they're meeting at) a **Stammtisch**.



photo by [dirrgang](#)

While, until 50 years ago, you would have had to be an intellectual or holder of a higher office to participate in a **Stammtisch**, nowadays, every club or group of people can have their own.

Allegedly, Duke in Berlin has one of the best: With biweekly meetings in local pubs or bars, students get to know the most vibrant districts of Berlin and try out their newly acquired German with tutors and staff.

MEET THE TEAM



[Sarah Pourciau](#) is assistant professor in the German Studies Department at Duke University. She joined the program in 2020 after living and working in Berlin for several years, so while she's still getting her bearings on the Durham side of things, she feels very at home in her new role as academic director of the Duke in Berlin program! Her teaching and research focuses on intersections between philosophy and literature, with side interests in opera, the history of science, and German Jewish intellectual history. She has two young children who eat up all the time she might otherwise spend on hobbies, but if she *were* to have hobbies they would include cooking, hiking, traveling, and concert-going.

Matthias Pabsch is a renowned artist and has published books on art, architecture and urban design. At DiB, he teaches courses in the Spring (Contemporary Art in Berlin), Summer (360° Berlin – Learning to See Art and Architecture), and Fall Program (Architecture, Art and the City).

“ In Berlin, art and life are more intensely interwoven than anywhere else in the world. By exploring art, it is possible to experience the true spirit of this fascinating city first-hand. Classes cover a wide range of content, from practical drawing to the theory of art. The main goal is to take full advantage of the unique opportunity of being in Berlin and create an authentic impression of the city. ”



Michael Tolksdorf, a former member of the Berlin House of Representatives, now holds a professorship in State Competition Policy and Market Regulation at the Berlin School of Economics and Law, is Visiting Professor at Kobe University, Japan and Mt. Holyoke College, Massachusetts, and, since 1994, Adjunct Professor of German Studies at Duke University. His fall semester course ‘Economics of a United Europe’ discusses current topics such as implications of a common monetary policy, common welfare standards, unemployment, and immigration in the EU.

Fazal E Elahi founded the [SID Institute Berlin](#) where he prepares students for the Technical University Berlin. As an expert for all things technical, he is the main figure of our engineering track in the Spring. With his help, our students are well prepared to follow the Technical University lectures.



Note: If you want to pose questions to our team about specific courses etc., [send us an email](#) and we will forward it on to them for response.

R. Andreas Kraemer is, among many other things, founder of the Ecologic Institute and Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science and Adjunct Professor of German Studies at Duke University.

“ ‘Environmental Policy for a United Europe’, my fall course, covers European Integration and the co-evolution of European environmental and climate policy since I started teaching in the Duke in Berlin Program in 1993. Two years later, I founded Ecologic Institute, a leading environmental think tank in Berlin today, which I ran for 20 years. Now I divide my time between the Oceano Azul Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal, the Center for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Canada, Duke University and the EADA Business School in Barcelona, Spain, and occasional work at Ecologic Institute. My teaching goal is to appeal to students of all disciplines and orientations and interest them in Europe, currently the most ambitious project for democratic governance at continental scale, and the dynamics of environmental change that will impact their personal and professional lives.”



Jari Splettstößer is a language teaching specialist and native Berliner with a keen interest in constantly evolving interactive teaching methods (accelerated German for beginners, German for engineers, interactive excursions, graphic novels, debating, simulations, board games etc.). Jari received a Master of Education (German and North American Studies) from Freie Universität Berlin and a Master of Arts (German as a Foreign Language) from Humboldt-Universität Berlin - including exchange years at the University of Nottingham, UK, and the University of Minnesota, USA.

Lina-Sofie Raith is the Administrative Assistant and teaches German.

“ With a Master in German as a Foreign Language from Humboldt Universität Berlin and a lot of experience living and studying abroad, I started teaching German for Duke in Berlin in the Spring of 2016. In addition, after a year of teaching at Duke in NC, I took over the position of the Administrative Assistant. Working closely together with Jochen Wohlfeil, I take care of the host family matching and the sometimes-abundant paperwork, and accompany the excursions. The daily chatting and exchange with the students add a lot of joy to my life.”



Daniela Jonas studied French in Neuchatel, Switzerland and comparative literature in Bielefeld/Germany. She is an instructor for German as a Foreign Language (GFL) and has been teaching German courses for the DiB Program since 2017. Since 2019, she has been Internship Coordinator for the DiB Program.

“Berlin is a great city: no longer as rough around the edges as it was right after reunification, but still edgy. Learning German here offers students the opportunity to study much more than just the language. They learn a lot about the history of Germany, they experience the great cultural life of Berlin, they are at the center of German and European political power. Students have the opportunity to gain professional experience in the form of internships in small interesting startups, or to try their hand at large companies. This is a great opportunity and certainly a unique experience to participate in the program here in Berlin.”



Claudia Stehr is an instructor for German as a Foreign Language (GFL). Since 2011 she has been teaching Advanced German Language and Culture courses for Duke in Berlin (Fall and Spring Program). Claudia studied GFL, English Literature, Linguistics and Media Studies at the Universities of Braunschweig/Germany and Waikato/New Zealand. Her particular interests include film and theater studies, music (singing / organ / piano / guitar) and phonetics.

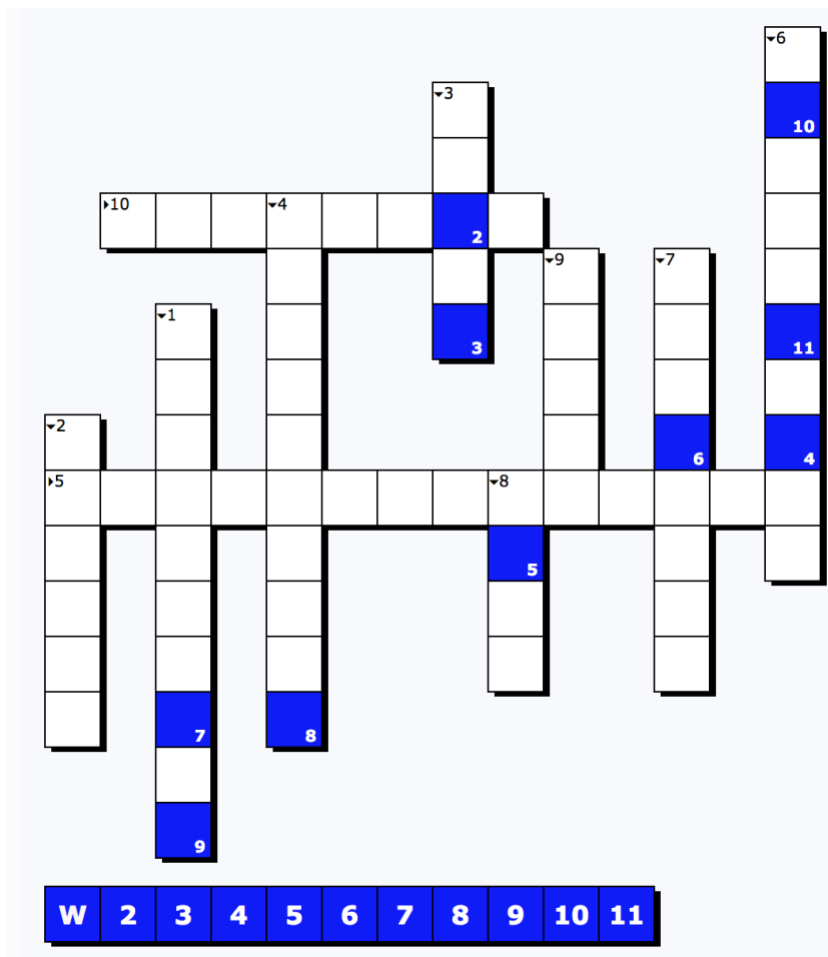
After studying history, philosophy, and political sciences at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, and Tel Aviv University/Israel, **Johannes Zechner**

completed his doctorate at Freie Universität Berlin with a thesis on German forest imaginations between Romanticism and National Socialism. Additionally, he served as a research fellow and curator for several exhibitions at Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin. For his postdoctoral project 'Nations Behind Glass' at Freie Universität Berlin, he investigated representations of collective identity in history museums of Germany and the United States of America. Currently, he is curator of the permanent exhibition at the Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung in Hamburg. As an academic resource of the DiB program, Johannes Zechner has supervised student research projects on many occasions.



Crossword Puzzles

We're looking for a German word that implies not only goodbye, but also hope. Send the correct answer to duke@zedat.fu-berlin.de and **win a Berlin bear!**



1. The German word for a table of regulars in a bar
2. Our art professor's last name
3. Our address's queen's first name
4. A bridge through the air?
5. Another bridge and Katja's favorite place in Berlin
6. What does Jari recommend in the Free University's cafeteria?
7. Our newly appointed academic director's last name
8. Berlin's heraldic animal
9. What do you get at Mustafa's? A Gemüse ...
10. Which institute did Andreas Kraemer found?

Find your way to the GEO Duke in Berlin website if you want to [learn more about the program →](#)

Please let us know if you want to be taken off the mailing list: duke@zedat.fu-berlin.de

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