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Urban Sustainability Living Lab

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Course Guide: Lessons Learned from a Circle U. Collaborative Field Trip

Comparative Perspectives on Local Democracy and Climate Adaptation

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Vienna, 2025

This report is the output of a Circle U. COIL-Project.
For details, see:

<https://urbanlab.univie.ac.at/en/climate-change-adaptation-and-democracy-in-vienna/>



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1. Introduction

The course “Comparative perspectives on local democracy and climate adaptation” was held as a combined seminar and field trip between Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany) (HU-B) and University of Vienna (Austria) (UniVie). This course was initiated and designed as part of the Circle U. European University Alliance. It brought together two Circle U. universities (UniVie and HU-B) and two of the Circle U. Knowledge Hubs (Climate and Democracy), represented by two of their Academic Chairs (Univ.-Prof.ⁱⁿ Dr.ⁱⁿ Kerstin Krellenberg, UniVie, Climate Hub and Univ.-Prof. Dr. Henning Nuißl, HU-B, Democracy Hub), which enabled fruitful comparative learning and knowledge exchanges across themes, cities and institutions.

The course team (Univ.-Prof.ⁱⁿ Dr.ⁱⁿ Kerstin Krellenberg, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Henning Nuißl and Dr.ⁱⁿ Julia Wesely (UniVie)) acquired Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) funding and translated - supported by Aileen Pohl (UniVie, HU-B) - the course content, pedagogical approach and organizational aspects into this Course Guide.

This Course Guide is the result of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the course, which brought together 22 undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Geography Departments of HU-B and UniVie in summer term 2025. At HU-B, the course was offered within the field trip module (10 ECTS); at UniVie it was offered as a 5 ECTS field trip plus 5 ECTS accompanying seminar. The course was open to Bachelor (HU-B) and Master students (HU-B and UniVie) and included teaching sessions at the respective universities, joint online sessions across the two universities via Zoom and independent group work, which culminated in field trips to Vienna and Berlin (5-7 days each) that were at the centre of this course.

This Course Guide is primarily targeted at university lecturers, who consider developing or are already designing field trip courses with a comparative perspective. We recognize that productive comparison does not happen automatically when multiple cities (two universities) are included in a course. Rather, it needs active curation and incentivization. The recommendations in this Course Guide stem from our experiences in this regard and are of course not fully transferable to other contexts and topics. Nevertheless, they demonstrate possible challenges or dynamics in comparative work that teachers should be aware of when engaging in such a joint teaching activity. Moreover, we propose that this Course Guide can also be useful for other Circle U. courses, as it includes pedagogical and organizational considerations and ideas for designing, planning, implementing and evaluating collaborative and comparative courses more broadly.

This Course Guide aims to contribute to the following wider objectives:

- Internationalize teaching across Circle U. partners (starting with UniVie and HU-B) as well as across Circle U. Hubs (Climate and Democracy) with shared urban challenges in terms of adapting to climate change (especially heat), situated within a complex web of top-down and bottom-up democratic processes;
- Widen comparative and collaborative perspectives in the field of local democracy and climate change adaptation for students, lecturers as well as potentially practitioners involved in the field trip program;
- Promote new, and strengthen existing, long-term collaborations between Circle U. universities so that international collaborative courses like this can become part of universities and partnerships in a sustainable manner.

1.1. Course Aims and Content

The course “Comparative perspectives on local democracy and climate adaptation”, which this Course Guide builds upon, focused on understanding and learning from local democratic processes for climate change adaptation, which were comparatively examined in Berlin and Vienna. An interdisciplinary perspective was adopted to teach students about the complexity of urban spaces at the interfaces of democracy and climate change. Transdisciplinary learning was promoted by encouraging students to engage with local stakeholders such as representatives from civil society organizations and local administration. Students worked intensively in teams of four (2 students from each university) on one of the following six pre-defined themes:

1. Environmentally and climate-just cities
2. Democracy and climate-just cities – Direct democracy
3. Democracy and climate-just cities – Urban social movements and organised civil society
4. Democracy and climate-just cities – Citizen participation
5. Democracy and climate-just cities – Tactical urbanism
6. Scalar dimensions of climate-just urban development

They were tasked with planning and implementing a 3-4-hour program on their theme during the field trip in their respective cities, which they subsequently reflected on in the form of blog posts (this was part of the final assignment).

You can find the documentation of the field trips here:



<https://urbanlab.univie.ac.at/klimawandelanpassung-und-demokratie-in-berlin/>

1.2. How to Navigate this Course Guide

The next section of the Course Guide introduces the institutional framework for setting up the course. It is followed by chapters that provide a general overview of each step of the course (see Figure 1), as well as concrete tools and advice based on teaching experience and student feedback. The tools and advice are structured around the following items: “What we did – what we learned” (dark blue circles) specifies particular teaching methods or parts of the course design that we reflected upon; “Aspects to consider” (light blue circles) are synthesized in bullet points or as questions; and the “Summary” at the end of the chapters includes a figure with key steps to take before, during and after the respective phase of the course.

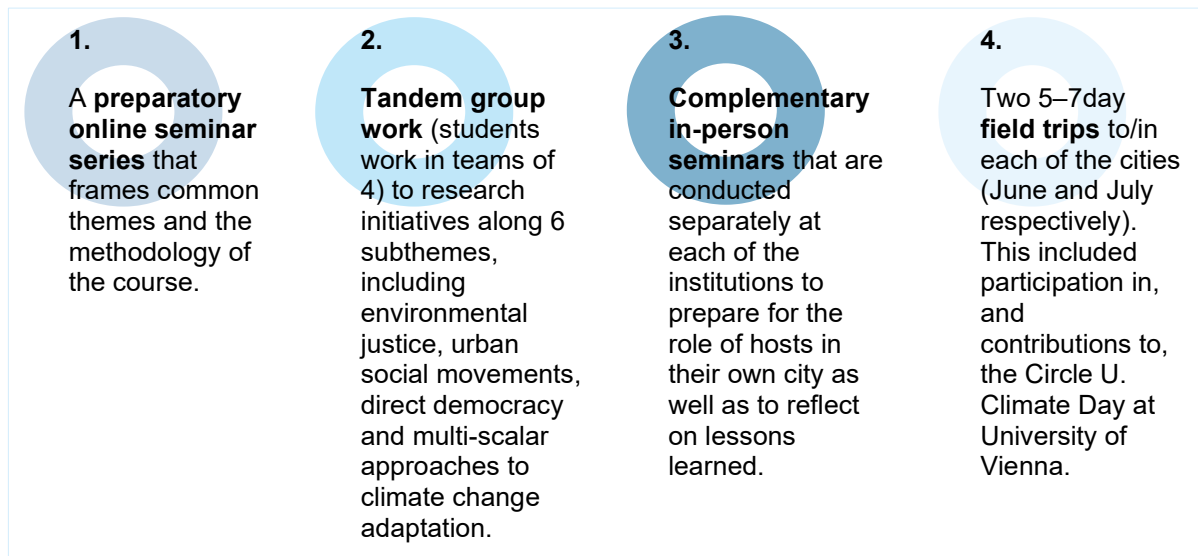


Figure 1: The four main stages of the course (own illustration)

2. Designing and Planning the Course

Collaborative course formats require paying particular attention to the structural requirements of each institution as well as to the “softer” architecture of the course, including pedagogic principles.

2.1. Course Preparation

The preparation of the course started in winter term 2024/25. UniVie put forward the central approach to the field trip – program slots organized by student groups – and HU-B suggested a first structure and outline of the themes. The teaching team then iteratively developed a first handout of a syllabus which included a timeline, deliverables, thematic groups and suggested literature (see [6.4 Appendix](#)). Particularly challenging were the coordination of different starting dates, timelines and assessment requirements for each course. For example, HU-B had a fixed week for their field trip in early June, which coincided with a regular course week for students in Vienna, who

therefore were unable to participate in the full field trip. Moreover, students at UniVie were assessed on their active contributions and participation during the seminar and field trip, as well as intermediate and final outputs (blog posts, a poster and video), while students at HU-B had to be assessed on their final output (blog post).

The handout was first presented in January 2025 at the kick-off meeting of the HU-B team, where students from Berlin voiced their thematic preferences and formed groups of two. The handout was then adapted into a PowerPoint presentation for UniVie at the start of their term (March 2025) to accommodate earlier-mentioned differences regarding assessments, timeline and participation. Finally, the teaching team developed a joint PowerPoint presentation for the collaborative kick-off in April 2025.

The following sections of the Course Guide focus on reflections and recommendations for the different stages of the course (see [Figure 1](#)).

2.2. Course Work Prior to the Field Trips

2.2.1. Preparatory Sessions at Each University

Before students at the participating universities have their first joint meeting, it can be very valuable for each university to hold at least one preparatory meeting on their own. This allows students and teachers from their respective university to get know one another as well as helping to prepare for the cross-university collaboration, ensuring that the following joint meetings can focus on group work rather than internal organizational aspects of each university.

In the preparatory session, a clear explanation of the course structure, and particularly its collaborative parts, is essential, as students might not have yet reflected on what a cross-university format entails in practice. This implies highlighting the strengths and opportunities that can arise through collaboration as well as the challenges that may come up.

To achieve this, it is important to clarify expectations and structures of collaborative work. This includes the organization of, and responsibilities for, group work within and across universities, the different assignments and requirements, particularly regarding the thematic program to be organized for the field trip. It is therefore essential that the sessions are closely coordinated between the teachers, as misalignment at this stage can result in different understandings and expectations among student groups, making collaboration more difficult.

Despite all efforts to ensure equal or similar conditions and requirements for the course for all students, grading or credit systems, workloads or even task instructions might differ between the partner universities. While these differences and variations do not necessarily need to be explained in full detail at this point, it is key to keep attentive to them in case they provoke further questions and discussions.

Aspects to consider

- What are relevant differences between the universities that students should know right from the start? What is necessary to communicate later in the process?
- How can we as teachers address these differences without creating hierarchies or feelings of inequality? How can we avoid rumours or misunderstandings from information spreading informally among students?

What we did - and what we learned

During the preparatory meeting in Vienna, the teachers introduced the overall goals of the course, the schedule and the upcoming assignments. Practical matters such as group and topic allocations, setting up the first individual group meetings as well as financial and organizational questions, were also being addressed. Beyond logistical issues, the students also got introduced to the topic of climate adaptation in the city. In preparation of the first joint session with the students from Berlin, they were tasked with giving short introductory presentations to frame climate change adaptation and local democracy in Vienna. Lastly, students were given reflective prompts that encouraged them to think about their own approach to collaboration and working in a group. Furthermore, they were asked to use these prompts during their initial group meetings.

Aspects to consider for the student groups were:

- When and how often will the group meet?
- How will agendas and deadlines be set?
- How will communication and documentation be managed?

More personal questions that informed the first group discussions were:

- What do you expect from this group work?
- Which roles do you usually take on?
- What are your strengths and what skills would you like to further develop?
- What are your tactics to handle stress in (unexpected) group work challenges?

2.2.2. The First Student Encounter: Setting Up the Collaboration Between Universities

The first joint meeting between students and teachers from both universities sets the tone for the upcoming collaboration. It is the first time students from partner universities meet, whether online, hybrid or in person. This meeting lays the foundation for building connections, clarifying expectations and creating a shared understanding of the course aims and structure. However, because students may not yet be familiar with working across different universities, locations, or even different languages (not in our case), this first meeting also comes with its own challenges. For this reason, teachers need to not only consider the technical and organizational aspects, but also the dynamics between all participants to ensure that everyone feels included and knows what lies ahead.

Key elements of the first joint session

The first joint session should begin with a **short welcome and a round of introduction**. It can be interesting for students to learn about the teachers' motivation for initiating this type of collaborative course, or their personal connection to the course topic. Moreover, students have the chance to get to know each other across universities. To keep the introduction round concise, it can be helpful to pose one or two of the following questions:

- What motivated you to take part in this course?
- What are your specific interests within the wider theme of the course?
- What is one issue you hope this course will help you understand better?
- Could you share one learning from a prior experience with collaborative teaching formats/field trips/inter- and transdisciplinary courses?
- If you could show visitors one thing about your city (in relation to the theme of the course), what would it be?

For teachers, these questions can also help to understand students' prior knowledge, expectations and needs. The answers can therefore guide any further adaptations or changes made to the course.

Part of the introduction can also be done asynchronously. For example, students can be asked to post short introductions on an online collaboration platform that is accessible for all course participants (e.g. Miro-Board). Alternatively, students might be asked to fill in a short survey answering these questions. However, any digital version should not be used to fully replace a live round of introductions but should rather be thought of as a supplement.

Building on the preparatory sessions at each university, the first joint meeting offers an important opportunity to reinforce the **key elements of the collaboration**. While organizational basics have been covered individually at each university, it is important to shortly bring the following aspects back into the joint group setting to ensure a shared understanding:

- **Purpose of collaboration:** Highlight the opportunities that arise when working across universities as well as acknowledge the potential challenges and discuss how they can be potentially addressed.
- **Group work structure:** Repeat how the collaboration and assignments are organized.
- **Potential differences:** While not all differences in ECTs, evaluation criteria, etc. need to be explained in full detail, it is helpful to acknowledge that variations exist.
- **Space for questions:** Provide students with the chance to raise doubts or concerns. Having the option to address them collectively at this stage can prevent further misunderstandings.

Breakout rooms for each thematic group can be useful to support the exchange between students who have just met for the first time. They offer a space for:

- Introductions in smaller groups and in a slightly more private and informal setting.
- Exchanging contact details.
- Discussing how to continue working together.

To ensure that this space and the allocated time is used effectively, short prompts for kicking off the discussion can be prepared in advance, while still leaving enough room for informal conversation. These prompts may include questions on communication routines – including exchange of contact information, anticipated challenges and expectations, and divisions of tasks and roles. Teachers may briefly visit the breakout rooms to check in and answer any open questions.

What we did - and what we learned

The first joint meeting of our course lasted 1.5 hours and was scheduled a month before the first field trip to Vienna. In Vienna, due to differences in the schedules of other courses before and after the meeting, the students had the option to meet either online or on campus and join the session together with the teachers, while for the students from Berlin, the format was completely online.

The session included:

1. Introduction to the course by all three teachers
2. Students' 10-minute input presentations regarding climate adaptation and local democracy in Vienna and Berlin
3. Q&A Session
4. Breakout rooms for the 6 thematic intra-university groups (see 1.1 Course Aims and Content) to exchange contact details and organize further collaboration

Input presentations: To get an introduction to the two cities from the perspective of the students, they were tasked - during the preparatory sessions at both universities - to prepare short input presentations for this first joint session, in which they started to reflect on their own city in relation to the course themes. Beyond learning about each other's cities, this exercise also aimed to create the role of students as "expert-hosts", which can stimulate comparison across cities.

Group 1: Vienna/Berlin and their Challenges in Relation to Climate Change and Democracy

- What are the main challenges Vienna/Berlin faces in relation to climate change?
- Who is particularly exposed? Who is particularly vulnerable?
- Which strategies or guidelines for climate change adaptation exist at the city level?
- In the case of Vienna: the city is currently "European capital of democracy". What does that mean and where do the strengths and weaknesses of Vienna's democratic structures lie?

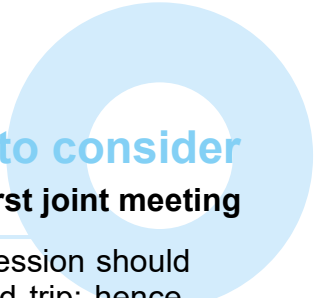
Group 2: Planning for Climate Change in Vienna/Berlin

- Who is responsible for implementing climate change adaptation?
- What opportunities for democratic participation exist in the field of climate change adaptation?
- How is the city administration structured?
Which municipal departments are responsible for adaptation measures?

Group 3: Climate Policy in Vienna/ Berlin

- What climate policies does the city government pursue?
- What have been the main climate policy priorities in the past five years?
- Which areas receive (too) little attention?

Although all students received the same instructions, it was interesting to see that their presentations turned out to be quite differently in terms of focus and depth. For example, one group decided to not only focus on their guiding questions, but to also present more generic information about their city. By contrast, another group used their time to already point out some similarities and differences between the cities which they came across during their preparation.



Aspects to consider

Timing and format of the first joint meeting

- **Schedule it early:** Ideally, the first joint session should happen several weeks before the first field trip; hence, before any substantial collaborative group tasks between the two student groups begin.
- **Choosing a format:** While hybrid set-ups might initially seem more engaging, they often also introduce additional technical difficulties. Thus, designing the session to be fully online can be easiest to manage, resulting in smoother communication.
- **Plan enough time:** Even well-prepared set-ups can run into technical difficulties, and it is important that essential elements of the sessions are not rushed.
- **Encourage camera use:** Seeing each other's faces, especially right at the start, helps to create a sense of personal presence and supports the process of getting to know each other and building trust.

2.2.3. After the First Joint Meeting

The first joint session contains a great amount of information, which needs to be summarized and shared with students from both universities, ideally through a collaborative online platform that is easily accessible and allows students to review and clarify information as well as contribute their own documents. Additionally, a space for follow-up questions should be provided in case of any questions after the session (e.g. an online Q&A space).

Supporting Ongoing Collaboration and Roles Among Student Groups

Since the collaboration of students across two universities is at the core of this course, it is essential to support and ease communication of students who are located at different places. Even in contexts of shared languages and similar cultures like Berlin and Vienna, (online) interactions of students must be proactively facilitated to initiate genuine collaboration as opposed to groups merely dividing tasks and working in parallel. Balancing guidance and autonomy of students is key to this phase.



What we did – and what we learned

In our course, the students from both universities were asked to prepare one timeslot for the two upcoming field trips, working on the six themes (see [1.1 Course Aims and Content](#)). Between the first session and the field trip in Vienna, which started roughly a month later, no further joint meeting with everyone was scheduled.

To get more insights into the students' work progress, we set up a first **online survey** (see [6.5 Survey](#)) to assess students' early experiences of group work. Survey results showed their challenges in scheduling (further) group meetings after the first session. Differences in semester structures, weekly study routines and other commitments made it difficult to find shared time slots for group meetings in a remote setting.

Moreover, results showed how differently students had **organized roles within their groups** while they were preparing for their timeslots during the field trips. While some groups had clearly defined responsibilities, the majority reported that they only informally distributed the tasks. The roles they most often identified with were organisation and program design, followed by research and communication. Most students felt satisfied with the division of tasks, especially when the internal communication within the group worked well and the distribution felt fair. Nevertheless, some students also expressed frustration and were wishing for clearer allocations of roles and tasks. They voiced feelings of carrying too much responsibility alone or struggling with uneven levels of commitment within their group.

Aspects to consider

While teachers can help with organizational issues by suggesting structures such as internal deadlines and optional check-in opportunities, it is even more important that they emphasize the importance of online meetings and collaborative work for comparative learning. This can happen, for example, through highlighting comparative questions that are relevant to contextualizing the themes in the respective cities, as well as through showing examples of previous comparative learning experiences. Including elements like check-in opportunities and internal deadlines can also provide benefits for teachers, as it allows them to better monitor and evaluate the groups' progress and identify where more support might be needed or what might still be unclear.

Clear role definition and effective cooperation are central for any type of group work, but in collaborative and remote settings, the challenges that arise can be amplified. The survey revealed issues that are common to any group work, such as uneven distribution of tasks, unclear responsibilities or frustration over the workload. However, these issues can become more noticeable and more likely, when students barely know each other, cannot meet in person regularly and simultaneously manage individual assignments. Teachers can prevent or reduce some of these frustrations by:

- Encouraging students to clearly define and communicate roles within their group early in the process to support responsibility and accountability.
- Formulating assignments explicitly in ways that require genuine cooperation instead of parallel work.
- Continuously highlighting the added value of collaborative and comparative work: why it matters, what students can gain from engaging and bringing together different perspectives and how it can enrich their overall learning and course experience.

However, experience shows that whenever tasks can be split up, they most likely will be. Moreover, while clarifying and communicating roles within the group can be helpful, it should not lead to a situation where responsibilities are so strictly divided that cooperation and exchange no longer take place. When the purpose of collaboration is becoming clear and meaningful, students are more likely to approach it with motivation and commitment.

2.3. Summary of Recommendations

Figure 2 summarizes the aspects that can help the first joint session to become fruitful for establishing further collaborations. It is not a checklist of mandatory actions to take, but rather a collection of points to consider, reflect on and adapt to the specific course context.

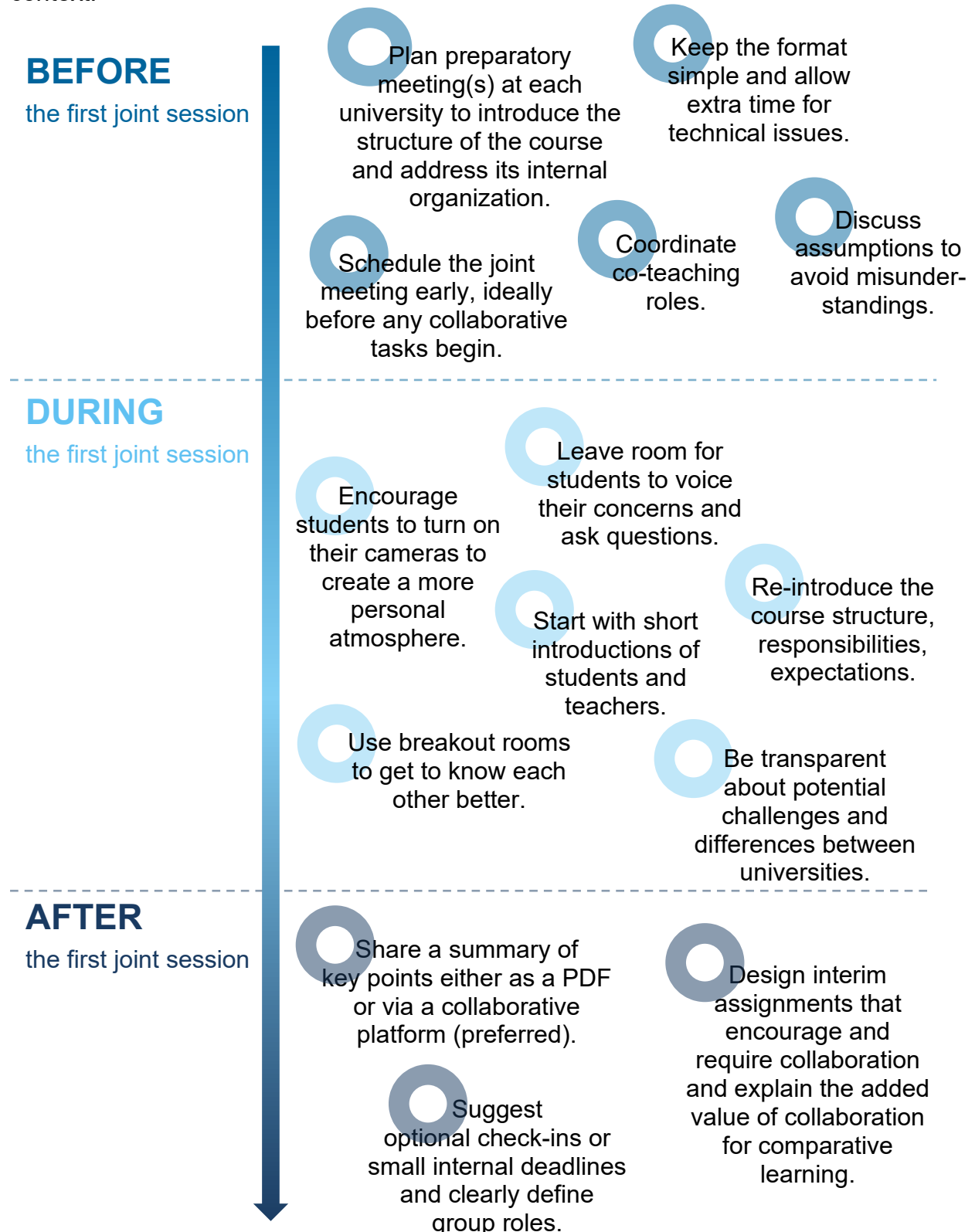


Figure 2: Summary of recommendations for the first joint session (own illustration)

3. Field Trips: Comparative Knowledge Exchange

The central elements of this course were the two field trips to Vienna and Berlin, which gave students the opportunity to experience their own and the 'other' city first-hand, engage with local contexts and stakeholders and deepen their understanding of the course themes in a comparative way. Each field trip was structured into timeslots of three to four hours, during which one of the six student groups had prepared a program according to their assigned theme. The student groups were free to choose the site(s) and/or initiatives to be visited, the learning method and program and whether to involve any external experts such as representatives from community-based organizations, or other researchers (see [6.6 Field Trip Program](#)).

Field trips hold a lot of potential for collaborative and cross-university learning; however, unlocking this potential is a complex endeavour. Based on our observations as well as student feedback from the surveys, we developed the following recommendations.

3.1. Pre-Field Trip Planning

3.1.1. Co-Teaching: Expectations and Roles

Like the first joint meeting, it is important for teachers to coordinate closely before and during the field trips. This relates particularly to the distribution of roles, expectations and dynamics such as moderation, hosting invited experts, logistics, public transportation, time management, etc. Depending on the location, responsibilities might shift, with the host location often assuming organizational tasks. Obviously, situations during field trips may require rapid adaptations (schedules may run late or weather conditions might require a change in plans). In such cases, it is important to remain flexible, which is facilitated if roles and decision-making responsibilities are clearly allocated.

3.1.2. Structuring the Program and Methods

It is a key element of field trips for students to engage with their themes not only in theory, but also through practical, first-hand experiences. By designing, planning and implementing the content and format of their own timeslots, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their individual and collective learning experience.

Overall, the process of organizing a field trip time slot offers a lot of learning potential: from deciding on the content and the location, to planning the mode of learning, moderation, and reflection. During the field trip, mixing the methods of each timeslot can support the continuous active engagement of students. These methods may include guided walks, expert talks, group discussions or other interactive elements,

such as experimental games. It is important to avoid over-reliance on a limited number of methods.

When the program is fully designed by the teachers, this variation of methods and formats is easily coordinated. However, when students are responsible for planning parts of the field trip themselves, the challenge becomes to ensure variation without taking away too much of creative freedom and responsibility for their timeslots. One way to avoid repetition and support variation is to introduce students early to a range of possible field trip methods and formats (see [6.2 Resources for Field Trip Methods](#)) and to stimulate creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Additionally, having students share their ideas and methods for their timeslots in advance, for example, by uploading them to a collaborative platform such as Moodle or Miro, allows teachers and other students to review, and possibly coordinate and adapt, the program as a whole.

What we did – and what we learned

In our course, students were free to design their timeslots without any pre-defined methods, tools or forms of interactions with the group. They were also free to invite experts to their timeslots. Prior to the course, most students did not have experience in getting in contact or working with experts from urban practice. Hence, they gained valuable competences and insights in the process, such as building new connections, negotiating expectations and communicating their research interest. They also reported in the survey that they became aware of the role of institutional backgrounds, as employees of larger institutions such as university researchers have been able to provide their expert contributions as part of their working hours, while members of smaller associations or initiatives often participated on a voluntary basis. Most groups aimed to make their time slots very interactive and to make active use of the city space. For instance, several groups decided to include perception walks of around 30-45 minutes. During these walks, the other students were asked to focus on specific aspects, such as elements of the space that demonstrate climate change adaptation as well as challenges in the public space. One student group in Vienna, for example, decided to present a superblock. For their perception walk, they divided the students into smaller groups. Each group had the task to focus on the potential ideas and needs of specific age groups in the further transformation of the public space. To make the task even more tangible, the student facilitators also provided street chalk, so each group could draw their ideas directly onto the pavement. Afterwards everyone walked through the neighborhood together, stopping to look at and discuss the different visualized ideas. Small adjustments like assigning each group a distinct focus

and encouraging them to visualize their ideas in the actual space made this perception walk particularly engaging and interactive.

3.1.3. Logistics and Organization

When planning a field trip program, it is important to consider a variety of practical details such as timing, transportation, schedules and communications. At the same time, field trips can also benefit from a certain degree of spontaneity. Unexpected opportunities, like last minute visits from experts or a chance to join additional local events, can enrich the experience if there is enough flexibility in the schedule. Furthermore, there should also be time for informal socializing.

In terms of communication, agreement on one main communication channel for any sort of logistical updates (changes of meeting points, reminders for material, etc.) is vital. Especially in times of numerous available options for informal group chats vis-à-vis formal university communication platforms, it is key that the agreed channel includes everyone and is frequently checked.

Aspects to consider

The following list gives a quick overview of logistical aspects, which help to guide the organization of the field trip:

- Allow for buffer times between timeslots and locations, especially when travelling as a large group.
- Highlight the importance of punctual arrival for all time slots, and particularly when external guests are involved.
- Consider whether group tickets or individual tickets should be purchased for public transportation, as the former might reduce costs for students while the latter allows for greater flexibility.
- Schedule breaks between time slots, particularly in hot weather.
- Think about alternative options for outdoor activities in case of heavy rain, etc.

What we did – and what we learned

Many of the field trip activities took place in public spaces. To make sure everyone could hear the facilitators and discuss with each other, we used small microphones and portable audio devices. This did not only improve the input for the group that was listening, but also made it easier for students, guests or teachers to present in busy environments. However, walking and talking with audio devices might also risk that participants walk at greater distance to each other and pay less attention to the presenter.

3.2. During the Field Trip

3.2.1. *Facilitating Knowledge Exchange*

One of the main goals of a comparative field trip is to enable effective exchange of knowledge and perspectives between the students (and teachers) from different universities. This requires extensive sharing of contextual information, which happens during the preparation (see [2.2.2 The First Student Encounter: Setting Up the Collaboration Between Universities](#)), as well as active and continuous participation of the entire student group during the field trip, to which they contribute their own knowledge, experiences and questions.



What we did – and what we learned

In our case, we aimed for comparing the urban contexts of Vienna and Berlin to better understand (the challenges of) climate adaptation, citizen participation and governance structures. Through these comparisons, students not only gained insights into the “other” city but also gained new perspectives and reflections on their own familiar context.

During the accompanying seminars, the Berlin group emphasised the topic of democracy and participation, while the students from Vienna focused more strongly on urban climate adaptation. This created interesting insights and influenced the way each city was perceived and discussed. A key challenge for teachers was to counteract the emerging tendency of comparative black-and-white thinking and to encourage students to instead recognize that each location and their potentially more distinct characteristics can become both strengths and challenges. While it is allowed and encouraged to identify differences, these have to be assessed without simplistically framing one case as inherently “better” or “worse.”

Without specific prompts or guidance for engaging in comparative thinking, comparative discussions are at a risk of remaining on a rather superficial level. To make the most of the presented examples, the teachers introduced comparative questions or reflection prompts that encouraged students to think more in depth about underlying structures, causes or implications of the encountered similarities and differences.

A **second online survey**, which students answered after the field trip, brought the following comparative insights between Vienna and Berlin:

- Students repeatedly highlighted that Vienna's long-term, politically stable urban planning approach is enabling a more coherent implementation of adaptation measures in the city, whereas Berlin's more short-term and politically more volatile institutional planning culture and strong bottom-up initiatives create challenges for continuity while bringing opportunities for social innovation and collective action.
- Becoming aware of these structural differences helped the students to understand how continuity in institutional and governance structures shapes climate adaptation.
- Students also recognized common challenges such as the overall need for prioritizing climate adaptation in urban planning and for enabling broad and inclusive citizen engagement despite resource constraints.

Exercises like perception walks and discussion prompts, and explicit comparative questions helped to identify and critically think about the similar adaptation goals Berlin and Vienna aimed for, even if their approaches differed.

3.2.2. Shared Documentation

Creating a shared digital space for students to upload photos, notes or quotes that they collect during the field trip, can help to collectively reflect on impressions and insights. If this task of sharing documentation is given as an ongoing activity throughout the field trip, then it can simultaneously encourage students to observe more carefully and intentionally. Providing a space for a collective memory of the field trip can also make it easier to revisit specific examples later in the course and to draw comparisons between the first and second field trip. Referring back to these shared documentations can allow students to see how similar themes manifested themselves differently in each context or identify recurring issues. However, to ensure that all students dedicate sufficient time and effort to this task, it seems crucial that sharing and reflecting on photos, notes and quotes is part of a mandatory assignment.

3.2.3. Encouraging Cross-University Interactions

Interaction among students from different universities during a joint field trip is crucial and can benefit from active stimulation. The beginning of the field trip should deliberately include time for another short “getting to know each other” activity which involves teachers and students. Another simple, but effective tool is to create name tags for everyone to lower the threshold for initiating conversations.

Furthermore, activities and assignments should offer the opportunity and encouragement to mix students from different universities. Without any guidance, students might tend to stay with students they already know. However, learning through collaboration is especially successful when different perspectives can be brought together.



What we did – and what we learned

One of the differences in course structures and requirements between HU-B and UniVie relates to the attendance requirements during field trips. Students from UniVie were not required to attend sessions outside of their own time slot during the field trip in Vienna. Indeed, most were unable to attend more than their own timeslot as the field trip occurred during semester time. In contrast, students from HU-B had an allocated field trip-week and had to attend the full program during both field trips. This difference reduced the potential for UniVie students to learn comparatively from Berlin. Most students from Vienna were not familiar with all cases visited in their own city, whereas students from Berlin could engage in a more comprehensive comparison of the two cities.

The organizing student groups in Berlin often paid attention to pair students from Vienna and Berlin, for example, during their perception walks. This gave the students from Vienna the opportunity to ask about the Berlin students’ personal connection to, and perspective of, places in the city and vice versa. These conversations often developed into deeper exchanges and comparisons regarding perceptions and locations and generated valuable learnings for both sides.

Aspects to consider

The following questions can be useful to prompt thinking about deepening the knowledge exchange:

- What are the institutional requirements for attendance and how might they impact the possibility for students to learn comparatively?
- If full attendance is not feasible due to different semester schedules, what alternatives could help to keep everyone informed and involved?
- How can teachers strengthen the value of attendance and participation, so that it becomes less about an individual choice, but more about a responsibility as a group?
- What informal activities can complement the main program to provide opportunities for cross-university interactions, provide space for more personal conversations and help to strengthen group cohesion?

3.2.4. Moments for Reflections

At the end of each day, or even after individual timeslots, it can be valuable to bring the group together for a short collective reflection. Even simple prompts, such as asking everyone to share one key take-away, can help capture everyone's impressions. These brief reflections can also provide teachers with the chance to guide the discussion and deepen comparative thinking between cities. They also offer the space to bring up questions or issues that have not yet been addressed.

Guided or not, short reflections can reveal how differently the same input can be perceived. Students and teachers may draw contrasting conclusions from the same presentations or observations, which in turn can lead to interesting discussions concerning perspectives, assumptions and expectations.

Such joint moments for the group can provide an important opportunity for critical conversations. Especially in time slots where external guests or experts are involved, students and teachers may choose not to voice critical perspectives in front of them. Offering a safe space afterwards, without guests present, allows for more open discussions and can lead to insights that would otherwise remain hidden.

Lastly, building on these immediate reflections, it is equally important to take the time to integrate moments that allow for reflections that cut across themes and timeslots. Dedicated and facilitated sessions for group discussions provide the opportunity to consolidate the experiences and insights from the entire field trip. Moreover, these sessions can also be valuable to gather feedback from the students about the field trip as a whole.

What we did – and what we learned

In Vienna, one group facilitated a short reflection round related to an expert talk, which focused on a program that aims for radical changes to energy infrastructures by the year 2040. When asked to share their impressions, very different perspectives emerged: one student described 2040 as still far away and struggled to imagine what could realistically be achieved by then, considering high uncertainties, for example, in budgets and political support. Another student, however, felt that 2040 was alarmingly close and equally struggled to envision 2040 as a realistic deadline for the presented goals given current rates of implementation. This small exchange revealed the potential variety of interpretations and made explicit different meanings and expectations of long-term planning.

As already mentioned, the course evaluations and reflections combined two different evaluation formats. On the one hand, two anonymous, individual online surveys were conducted shortly before the first field trip to Vienna and at the end of the field trip in Berlin. These surveys provided teachers with the opportunity to gain insights into the students' experiences regarding collaboration, knowledge exchange and issues that arose. Second, at the end of each field trip, students and teachers held a collective reflection session. These discussions focused on content-related aspects; however, they were also useful to address structural or organizational aspects of the field trip. Moreover, these sessions highlighted shared experiences, differences in perceptions, and allowed for clarifications or contextualization of findings. A very productive exercise at the end of each field trip was to map the different cases and initiatives that were presented during the week along two axes: climate adaptation and democracy. This matrix helped students to situate their insights and to deepen their discussions on the relations between climate adaptation and democracy in each city.

3.3. After the Field Trip(s)

Follow-up assignments can play a central role in strengthening the insights gained during the field trip. Furthermore, they help students to relate the practical experiences back to the theoretical concepts and the broader topics of the course, which were introduced in the accompanying seminars.

What we did – and what we learned

The final assignment of our course was to produce a 2.500-word blog post on one of the six themes. The task aimed to stimulate critical reflections on comparative learning between Vienna and Berlin. Students were given guiding questions that suggested to start from a personal key learning moment and highlight central similarities and differences between the two cities. Lastly, the reflections had to be based on at least 2-3 relevant documents, which included academic literature, policies and political programs. The blog posts are available on the Website of [UniVie's Urban Sustainability Living Lab](#).

3.4. Summary of Recommendations

Figure 3 summarizes practical recommendations for planning and coordinating field trips in a collaborative setting. These points are not meant to serve as a checklist but may instead function as a starting point for adaptation to the specific contexts of the collaborating universities and cities.

BEFORE the field trip

- Clarify co-teaching roles and expectations
- Find a balance between a program with varied methods and maintaining the student's creativity in designing their own timeslots
- Plan logistics like time buffers, breaks, modes of transport, tickets, communication channels and informal social time

DURING the field trip

- Facilitate knowledge exchange: provide necessary background information, avoid simple "black and white" comparisons and encourage more nuanced comparative reflections
- If possible, enable consistent attendance to maximize opportunities for comparative learning
- Create ways to share documentation to support later comparisons
- Promote interactions through icebreaker questions, nametags, mixed-groups and informal social time

REFLECTIONS and FOLLOW-UP

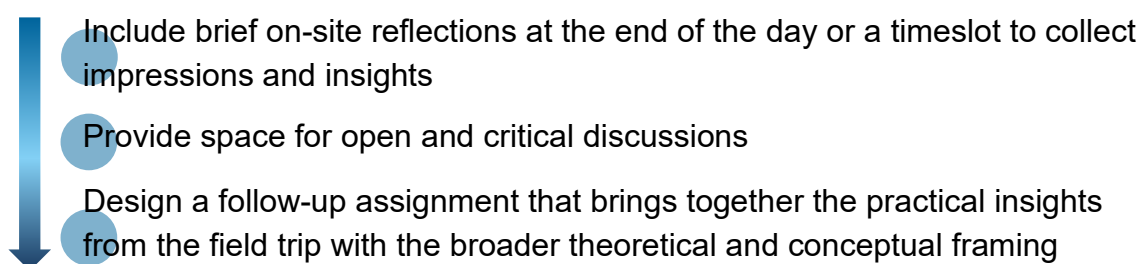


Figure 3: Summary of recommendations for the fieldtrip (own illustration)

4. Conclusions

4.1. Lessons Learned: Collaboration

Reflecting on the joint teaching experience, it became clear that the quality of collaboration is decisive for the overall experience of everyone involved. Many of the challenges and successes we encountered were directly linked to how well teachers, students and institutions were able to work together.

This summary helps to make aspects visible, which otherwise remain implicit in the background of teaching formats, and which we believe significantly contribute to genuine and productive collaborations. Additionally, it gives an overview of questions and uncertainties that are likely to come up again in future courses.

4.1.1. Co-Teaching

While co-teaching is a common practice within universities, co-teaching across universities might be a novel experience for many teachers. It requires an extra step of collaboration in terms of exploring different cultures of teaching and learning, challenging one's own, often implicit, assumptions and normalized teaching practices. In practical terms, co-teaching across universities necessitates that roles between teachers are agreed upon beforehand and that responsibilities, e.g. for moderation of sessions and communication with students, are clearly allocated.

From a student perspective, co-teaching can amplify comparative perspectives (e.g. across disciplines and cities) on a topic, as well as lead to experiencing new modes of teaching and learning. It is manifested in good coordination among the teachers, particularly to create a sense of being in one collaborative learning environment (rather than one per university) and, more practically, to help avoid confusions on course requirements and processes, which may be distinct for each university.

Like students, teachers need to coordinate at a distance, share responsibilities and reflect on each other's approaches to teaching. One lesson learned is that teachers also benefit from check-ins, explicit agreements and reflections on their own collaboration. In other words, it helps to see such courses as collaborative and comparative learning experience for the teaching team as well.

4.1.2. Structure and Transparency

One of the key lessons learned is that institutional structures and transparency are essential both among teachers and in communication with the students. As this collaborative course-setting was new to everyone involved, it became apparent that implicit expectations and misunderstandings, for example, about institutional differences in course requirements, can create uncertainty and even complicate effective collaboration. As it is unlikely that institutional differences can be fully resolved in advance, it becomes essential to find a balance between addressing structural challenges openly and overloading students with details about the institutional background of the course, so that all participants can feel heard, informed and on eye level with each other.

4.1.3. Balancing Freedom and Guidance in the Group Work Process

The student-led design of the field trips allowed for creativity and ownership over a great part of the time. However, the process of designing and planning the time slots had to be carefully curated to avoid confusion or repetition. For teachers trying to handle this balance between creative autonomy and guidance, it therefore might be helpful to create regular check-ins and milestones to remain informed about the process that the students make and to support them in realizing their ideas without losing sight of the overall goal.

4.1.4. The Importance of the Social Dimension

The social dimension of the course carries an important lever to facilitate not only group coherence but to deepen comparative learning. When students get to know each other better and feel at ease and more connected with the group, they are far more motivated to engage actively in timeslots, as well as to ask questions about each other's cities in-between timeslots, for example, when walking from one location to another. Making space for informal interactions, offline and online, should be seen as essential for creating a sense of shared ownership and identification with the course.

4.1.5. Awareness of Structural Differences

Planning the logistics of an international field trip format makes it necessary to also reflect on structural differences that can influence how students experience their time together:

- **Financial differences:** Depending on which universities collaborate, financial realities can strongly differ between locations. For example, students from a city with lower living cost may face significant financial burdens when travelling to a city where everyday necessities are more expensive. Simple considerations such as booking an accommodation with shared kitchens, can make the field trip more accessible.

- **Cultural differences:** Even in very similar cultural contexts like Berlin and Vienna, we noticed differences, e.g. regarding understandings of punctuality, which make it important to clarify expectations and set common rules.

4.1.6. The Role of Feedback and Evaluation

Another central lesson from this course is how vital structured feedback and evaluation are for collaborative formats. For students, evaluations create space to voice their feedback, concerns and wishes, but also to share their experiences and realize that their input is actively shaping the process of the course. For teachers, systematic evaluation can reveal aspects of the collaboration that might otherwise have remained invisible, like uncertainties about expectations, differences in workload or misunderstandings between the groups. Gaining these insights early on and continuously throughout the course makes it possible to adjust the process. Additionally, evaluation also plays a role beyond the individual course. By capturing experiences, it allows teachers to build on what has already been learned. Therefore, feedback is not only about improving the course development, but also about creating a foundation of knowledge for a sustainable development of collaborative teaching formats.

4.1.7. Thematic Considerations

In addition to organizational and methodological lessons, some conclusions can also be drawn about the overall theme of this course. In our case, the field trips did not only aim to compare two cities, but also to explore specific relationships between urban climate change adaptation and democracy. This double focus created interesting insights. On the one hand, students learned about the details of urban climate policies and adaptation measures. On the other hand, they reflected on more general questions concerning governance, history and path dependency of societal processes, participation, quality of life etc. in the two cities.

Moreover, it became visible that striving for climate adaptation and democracy is not just about practical solutions, but that these issues are socially constructed through different experiences and viewpoints of those who are engaging with them. Thus, it was highlighted that the same issue can be seen differently depending on who is looking at it and what priorities someone has in mind. For future courses with similar themes, it might be worth to actively reflect on these differences in perspectives and the framings of problems and solutions across different contexts.

4.2. Remaining Questions

The process of reflecting on this course format has been very generative and many of the insights directly shaped the content of this Course Guide. At the same time, this pilot course and the lessons we learned, could not address every aspect that can become relevant in the broader context of collaborations and university networks such as Circle U. The following aspects highlight additional dimensions and may serve as food for thought when designing future cross-university teaching collaborations.

4.2.1. Managing Unequal Teaching Resources

Successful collaboration requires a lot of preparation, coordination and communication by teaching staff, which are time- and resource-intensive. However, universities and teachers may not always have equal institutional support in terms of budgets, time resources, and supporting personnel such as course tutors. This might lead to differences in assumed roles and responsibilities for the design, planning and implementation of the course. In these cases, transparency and continuous communication become even more important.

4.2.2. Involving External Stakeholders

The collaboration with external stakeholders in the context of field trips has been very valuable for students and teachers. We see potential to further expand the collaboration with different stakeholders, for example, thinking about more reciprocal exchange formats, with clear benefits for everyone involved such as conducting research with students during the field trips which can provide relevant insights for these stakeholders.

4.2.3. Continuity Beyond the Course

Considering the potential impact of collaborative and comparative courses also raises questions regarding their long-term sustainability. Students and teachers alike are getting to know each other and are intensively working together during the course. However, these connections end in most cases abruptly with the end of the semester. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to think about ways of extending collaborations beyond the course and consider the advantages this could entail. From the perspective of teachers, being able to look back iteratively and update materials like this Course Guide, can help to continuously improve this format for future courses with similar structures.

5. Outlook

This Course Guide reflected on the experiences of our specific course set-up. It is important to keep in mind that this pilot course only involved two universities, HU-B and UniVie. With other partners or more than two partners involved, the course design would inevitably become more complex and needs to be strongly adapted. Not every university will be able to host; not every group can be equally involved. Thinking about these scenarios, new questions arise, for example, about comparative learning, but also practically, about workloads and the distribution of roles.

Finally, one dimension that has not yet been fully explored is the broader impact of such collaborative formats on higher education systems. Beyond the learning experiences of participating students and teachers, these course formats can serve to strengthen the relationship between Circle U. universities. A central question for the future is, therefore, how such formats can become more institutionalized through, for example, embedding them in existing study programs or long-term partnerships. In this sense, future outlooks go beyond scaling up and scaling out. They also ask how to build on what has already been learned and make sure it becomes part of universities and partnerships in a sustainable manner. Strengthening these connections not only makes it easier to organize such courses repeatedly but also ensures that the experiences and networks that emerge between students, teachers and external experts do not remain isolated projects but can instead develop into on-going collaborations.

6. Appendix

6.1. Resources for the Six Themes

1. Environmentally and climate-just cities

- Environmental Justice Atlas (Berlin)
- Wiener Klimafahrplan. Unser Weg zur klimagerechten Stadt (Vienna)
- Smart Climate City Strategy Vienna (Vienna)
- Project Urban Heat Equality (Vienna)
- Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit (BMUB) (2016): Umweltgerechtigkeit in der Sozialen Stadt - Gute Praxis an der Schnittstelle von Umwelt, Gesundheit und sozialer Lage, Berlin.
- Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung (BBSR) (2009): Klimawandelgerechte Stadtentwicklung – „Climate-Proof Planning“. *BBSR-Online-Publikation* 26/2009.
- Bunge, C.; Rehling, J. (2020): Umweltgerechtigkeit in Städten – Empirische Befunde und Strategien für mehr gesundheitliche Chancengleichheit (2020). Informationen zur Raumentwicklung 07/2020, 70-83.
- Pérez del Pulgar, C. (2021): Prioritizing green and social goals. The progressive Vienna model in jeopardy. The green city and social injustice, 267-282.

2. Democracy and climate-just cities – Direct democracy

- Grätzlmarie (Vienna)
- Ahn, B.; Friesenecker, M.; Kazepov, Y., Brandl, J. (2023): How context matters: challenges of localizing participatory budgeting for climate change adaptation in Vienna. *Urban Planning*, 8 (1), 399-413.
- Clar, C.; Omann, I.; Scherhauser, P. (2023). Der österreichische Klimarat-ein Beitrag zur Weiterentwicklung von Demokratie und Politik? *SWS-Rundschau* 63 (3), 259-275.
- Deutscher Bundestag, 20. Wahlperiode (2024): Vierter Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Entwicklung ländlicher Räume. Bundestagsdrucksache 20/13790, Kapitel D. (Politische Schwerpunkte und Maßnahmen der Bundesregierung).
- Greinke, L.; Mehnen, N. (2024): Urban Transformation through Public Participation. *pnd – Planung neu denken* 01/2024 [(Un)Möglichkeit der Teilhabe – Grenzen in der Stadtentwicklung], 41-62.
- Umweltinstitut München e.V., BürgerBegehren Klimaschutz e.V., Mehr Demokratie e.V. (Hrsg.) (2021): Klimawende von unten – Wie wir durch direkte Demokratie die Klimapolitik in die Hand nehmen.

3. Democracy and climate-just cities – Urban social movements and organised civil society

- Bicibus Wien (Vienna)
- Citizen Initiative „Freiraum Naschmarkt“ (Vienna)
- Initiative Lobau Bleibt (Vienna)
- Daniel, A.; Frey, I.; Strickner, A. (2021): Klimaaktivismus in Österreich. Eine gerechte und emissionsfreie Gesellschaft gestalten, 19-31.
- Haunss, S.; Sommer, M. (Hrsg.) (2020): Fridays for Future – Die Jugend gegen den Klimawandel: Konturen der weltweiten Protestbewegung. Bielefeld [u. a. Kapitel 6: Simon Teune: Schulstreik – Geschichte einer Aktionsform und die Debatte über zivilen Ungehorsam, 131-146].
- von Wehrden, H.; Kater-Wettstädt, L.; Schneidewind, U. (2019): Fridays for Future aus nachhaltigkeitswissenschaftlicher Perspektive. GAIA 28 (3), 307-309.
- Peer, C.; Semlitsch, E.; Güntner, S.; Haas, M.; Bernögger, A. (Hrsg.) (2024): Urbane Transformation durch soziale Innovation – Schlüsselbegriffe und Perspektiven. Wien [u. a. Beitrag zu Engagement, 33- 40].

4. Democracy and climate-just cities – Citizen participation

- Wiener Klimateam (Vienna)
- Grätzloase (Vienna)
- Bertram, G. F. (2024): Warum werden wir hier beteiligt? (Un-)Möglichkeitsstrukturen der Planungspartizipation in der multiplen Demokratie. pnd – Planung neu denken 01/2024 [(Un)Möglichkeit der Teilhabe – Grenzen in der Stadtentwicklung], 8-24.
- Ehs, T. (2024): Bürgerräte in der Klimakrise. Die soziale Frage am Fallbeispiel Klima-Zukunft Vorarlberg. pnd – Planung neu denken 01/2024 [(Un)Möglichkeit der Teilhabe – Grenzen in der Stadtentwicklung], 223- 238.

5. Democracy and climate-just cities – tactical urbanism

- Kiezblocks (Berlin)
- Supergrätzl Wien (Vienna)
- Comparative Research Project „Tune Our Block “
- Tiran, J.; Grigsby, J.; Gebhardt, V.; Kirby, N.; Leth, U.; Lorenz, F.; Müller, J. (2025): Superblocks between theory and practice: insights from an international e-Delphi process and urban living labs in Vienna and Berlin. Urban Research & Practice, doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2025.2456939.

6. Scalar dimensions of climate-just urban development

- Global Level: Agenda 2030 / SDGs
 - EU: Climate Adaptation Strategy
 - National Level: Austrian Climate Strategy
 - City Level: Smart City Climate Strategy, Klimafahrplan 2040, Wiener Klimagesetz (Vienna)
 - Neighbourhood Level: Grätzloase, Grätzlmarie (Vienna)
- Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) (2014): Perspektiven der Urbanisierung – Städte nachhaltig gestalten. BMZ- Informationsbroschüre 3 | 2014, Bonn.
 - Mocca, E., Friesenecker, M., & Kazepov, Y. (2020). Greening Vienna. The multi-level interplay of urban environmental policy-making. Sustainability 12 (4), 1577.
 - Umweltbundesamt (UBA) (Hrsg.) (2024): Abschlussbericht. Klimaorientierte Stadtentwicklung. Treibhausgasminderungspotentiale in synergetischen Handlungsfeldern. Climate Change 20/2024, Dessau-Roßlau, 85-202 [Kapitel 5: Synergien und Konflikte zwischen Klimaschutz, Klimaanpassung und anderen städtischen Umweltzielen].

6.2. Resources for Field Trip Methods

- Grube, N.; Thiele, K. (2020): Kritische Stadttextkursionen: Annäherung an eine reflexive Exkursionspraxis. sub\urban. zeitschrift für kritische stadtforschung, 8(3), 215-230.
 - Excursions-methods Toolbox
 - ReferentInnen Akademie Toolbox (not specific for excursions)

6.3. Resources from the Center for Teaching and Learning of the University of Vienna

- First Class Meeting
- Getting to Know Each One Another
- Blended Learning (only available in German)
- Teaching in Non-Native English

6.4. Handout

Main field trip Vienna/Berlin and accompanying seminar **Comparative perspectives on local democracy and climate change adaptation**

Preamble

This course is taught as part of the European University Alliance Circle U., of which University of Vienna and HU-Berlin are part. It is conceptualized as a tandem course, in which teachers and students from Vienna and Berlin collaborate. A central idea is to learn from each other, to get to know each other's perspectives and experiences and to reflect on them. Curiosity about different perspectives, an interest in urban research, and enthusiasm for teamwork are conditions for this course to succeed.

The field trip itself will be held as two blocks of 5 days each, in which the teams from Vienna and Berlin will first visit the Austrian capital (June) and then the German capital (July). These field trips will be prepared partially in an accompanying seminar at the respective universities and in shared digital sessions.

Focus

As capital cities and city states with a settlement structure characterized by multi-storey housing construction in the 19th and 20th centuries, Berlin and Vienna share many urban issues. In this course, the two cities will be examined from a comparative perspective to find out how climate adaptation is being pursued in the context of urban development and urban planning. There is a particular focus on the political – democratic – instruments and processes of climate adaptation at the local level.

Overview of the program

Date Berlin	CircleU partner 1 (HU_B)						CircleU partner 2 (U_Vie)						Date Vienna
Mo, Jan 20	First Consultation												tbd
Fr, Feb 14	A1 Kick-off						A1 Kick-off						tbd (March)
	B1 Introduction to the topic						B1 Introduction to the topic						tbd (March)
self organ.	B2_1 group 1B	B2_1 group 2B	B2_1 group 3B	B2_1 group 4B	B2_1 group 5B	B2_1 group 6B	B2_1 group 1W	B2_1 group 2W	B2_1 group 3W	B2_1 group 4W	B2_1 group 5W	B2_1 group 6W	self organ.
Fr, Apr 11	B3_1 Workshop (DELIVERABLE 1)						B3_1 Reporting back (DELIVERABLE 1)						tbd
Di, Apr 29 (15-17)	A 2 Getting acquainted (online) (DELIVERABLE 2)												Di, Apr 29 (15-17)
self organ.	B2_2 group 1		B2_2 group 2		B2_2 group 3		B2_2 group 4		B2_2 group 5		B2_2 group 6		self organ.
Fr, 23 May	B3_2 Workshop (DELIVERABLE 3)						3_2 Reporting back (DELIVERABLE 3)						tbd
	A4 (Final) Organisation of fieldtrip												tbd
							A3 Preparing for the host role						tbd
2-6 Jun	C_1 Fieldtrip 1 ‘Wien’ (5 d) (DELIVERABLE 4) (Di vormittag, Mi nachmittag, Do CircleU climate day, Fr)												4-9 Jun
Fr, 13 June	B4_1 Lessons learned (in Vienna)												
	A3 Preparing for the host role						A4 (Final) Organisation of fieldtrip						
7-12 July	C_2 Fieldtrip 2 ‘Berlin’ (8 d) (DELIVERABLE 4)												7-12 July
							B4 Lessons learned in Berlin						
Sa, July 12	B4_2 (Joint reflection on) Lessons learned												Sa, July 12
self organ.	B2_1: Preparing the final product (DELIVERABLE 5 = MAP)						B2_1: Preparing the final product (DELIVERABLE 5)						self organ.

Teaching and learning formats (The course is organised in different formats):

A) Coordination and reflection of joint activities

A1 Kick off – plenary meeting (~30')

Getting to know each other; explanation of course layout

A2 'Getting acquainted' – online colloquium (both groups) (~3h)

Getting to know the partners from abroad; students give **input** talks on 'their' country/city (**DELIVERABLE 2**); assignment of students to mixed thematic groups (consisting of 2 students from each university)

A3 Preparing for the host role – plenary meeting (~1h)

Organisation of fieldwork 'at home', based on the plans the working groups have developed

A4 (Final) Organization of field trip – plenary meeting (~1h)

Agreements on the field trip 'abroad' (how to get there? Where to stay? etc.) will be finalized

B) Exploring the topic (Climate sensitive urban development & local democracy)

B1 Introduction to the topic – seminar (~2h)

Thematic overview, introduction of subtopics to be studied; distribution of subtopics and reading assignments (students form 'thematic tandems' who are responsible for a particular subtopic and who will work together with their 'counterpart tandems' from abroad)

B2 Self-organized thematic group work on individual topics (~50h)

B2_1 group work (tandems of 2 students)

Students deal with a particular issue (subtopic) of climate sensible urban development, local politics and planning on the basis of their readings, they prepare an input on this issue (**DELIVERABLE 1**); students prepare another input that explains specificities of 'their' home case study for their fellow students from abroad (**DELIVERABLE 2**). After both field trips: Students prepare an **essay (blog posting!)** on what they found out (**DELIVERABLE 5**)

B2_2 online/IT-supported group work (blended groups of 4 students/2 from each university)

Students discuss their subtopic with their fellow students from 'abroad' who deal with the same subtopic; they define key problems they want to elaborate in depth; they meet continuously online to exchange their findings; they identify exemplary cases/projects to be visited and agree on methods to be employed on the field trips (**DELIVERABLE 3**)

B3 Workshop: Discussing the topic and reporting back on group work results (~2*3h)

B3_1 – seminar

Students give a **presentation** on their subtopic (**DELIVERABLE 1**); students report back on their preparation for the joint group work; plenary discussion on subtopics and organisational issues regarding the blended working groups (B2_2)

B3_2 – seminar (or individual consultation)

Students report back on the results from their blended working groups and explain their **plans for the field trip (DELIVERABLE 3)**

B4 Lessons learned (~4h)

B4_1 – colloquium

Exchange on the findings abroad' & comparison with the situation 'at home'

B4_2 – colloquium (both groups)

Joint exchange on the findings and specificities in the two field study areas

C) Field trips and joint field work (10-12d)

Student groups **present 'real' cases to exemplify their findings in a ½ day excursion (DELIVERABLE 4)**

C_1 Field trip to Vienna – 5 days (both groups)

C_2 Field trip to Berlin – 5-7 days (both groups)

6.5. Survey

This survey is only available in German.

Liebe Studierende aus Berlin und Wien,

dieser Fragebogen dient der Reflexion eurer bisherigen Zusammenarbeit und der Vorbereitung für die Exkursions-Slots in Wien. Die Teilnahme am Fragebogen hilft uns, dieses neue Exkursionsformat zu dokumentieren und somit laufend zu verbessern. Du wirst ca. 10-15 Minuten dafür benötigen. Die Eingaben sind anonym und die Ergebnisse werden zusammengefasst, sodass keine Rückschlüsse auf einzelne Personen oder Gruppen möglich sind.

Wenn sich Fragen auf die "Gruppe" beziehen, ist damit immer eure thematische Kleingruppe gemeint – also die Gruppe, die aus Studierenden beider Städte besteht und gemeinsam Exkursions-Slots vorbereitet.

Vielen Dank für eure Unterstützung!

1. Erwartungen & Verständnis

Individuell

1.1 Welche Erwartungen hattest du vor der ersten Einheit in Bezug auf die Inhalte der Exkursion? (*Offene Frage*)

1.2 Beschreibe Deine Erwartungen vor der ersten gemeinsamen Einheit in 3 Stichworten? (*Offene Frage*)

1.3 Was hat dir bei der ersten gemeinsamen Einheit mit den Studierenden aus Wien/ Berlin geholfen, um dich auf die Planung der Exkursion in Wien vorzubereiten?

1.4 Welche Aspekte haben dir gefehlt, um dich auf die Planung der Exkursion in Wien vorzubereiten? (*Offene Frage*)

Gruppe

1.4 Hast du den Eindruck, dass deine Gruppenmitglieder ein ähnliches Verständnis von der Gestaltung eures Exkursions-Slots haben?

- Ja
- Teilweise
- Nein

→ **Falls "Teilweise" oder "Nein":** Wie wurde mit diesen Unterschieden umgegangen? (*Offene Frage*)

2. Gruppenorganisation & Rollen

Individuell

2.1. Wie habt ihr bisher zusammengearbeitet? (*Mehrfachauswahl*)

- Online-Treffen
- Persönliche Treffen in den jeweiligen Untergruppen (nur Wien / nur Berlin)
- Schriftlich (asynchron via e-mail, WhatsApp, mit gemeinsamen Dokumenten o.Ä)
- Anders: ____

2.2 Ist eine Verteilung von Aufgaben für die Vorbereitung der Exkursions-Slots in deiner Gruppe vereinbart?

- Ja, klar definiert
- Teilweise / informell
- Nein

2.3 Welche Aufgabe/n übernimmst du innerhalb deiner Gruppe bei der Gestaltung der Exkursions-Slots? (*Mehrfachauswahl*)

- Organisation (der Gruppenarbeit und/oder des Exkursionsslots)
- Gestaltung/Konzept des Organisationsslots
- Recherche (z.B. zu Initiativen, Literatur im Themenbereich)
- Kommunikation (z.B. in der Gruppe, mit der LV-Leitung, mit Praxispartner*innen)
- Andere: _____

2.4 Bist du mit der jetzigen Aufgabenverteilung zufrieden? (*5-stufige Skala von sehr zufrieden bis sehr unzufrieden*) Warum? (*Offene Frage*)

Gruppe

2.5 Was funktioniert in eurer Gruppe bereits gut? (Zeitplanung, Aufgabenverteilung, Zuständigkeiten)?

(*Skala: 1 = sehr schlecht, 5 = sehr gut*)

2.6 Wo siehst du im Moment die größten Herausforderungen in eurer Gruppe? Welche Ideen für Lösungen hast du dafür? (*Offene Frage*)

3. Digitale Kommunikation & Zusammenarbeit in der Gruppe

Gruppe

3.1 Was funktioniert für dich bereits gut in der digitalen Zusammenarbeit?

(*Skala: 1 = sehr unwohl, 5 = sehr wohl*)

3.2 Wo siehst du momentan die Herausforderungen in der digitalen Zusammenarbeit? (*Offene Frage*)

3.4 Welche Tools oder Plattformen nutzt ihr hauptsächlich? (*Mehrfachauswahl*)

- WhatsApp/ Signal/ etc.
- Zoom / Teams
- Google Drive / Docs
- Miro
- Andere: _____

4. Zusammenarbeit mit Externen (Expert*innen, Organisationen, etc.) & Gestaltung

Individuell

4.1 Hat eure Gruppe externe Expert*innen für euren Slot identifiziert? Wenn ja, wie? (persönlicher Kontakt, Recherche, usw) Seid ihr bereits in Kontakt?

- Ja
- Nein

→ **Falls ja:** Inwiefern war dieser Kontakt konstruktiv oder bereichernd? (*Offene Frage*)

Gruppe

4.2. Wie seid ihr auf externe Expert*innen oder Organisationen aufmerksam geworden (eigene Recherche, Empfehlungen von ProfessorInnen oder Studierenden, Freunde)? (*Offene Frage*)

4.3 Welche anderen Methoden überlegt ihr für die Gestaltung eurer Exkursions-Slots? (*Offene Frage*)

4.4 Wie seid ihr zu diesen Methodenideen gekommen? (*Offene Frage*)

5. Reflexion & Verbesserungsvorschläge

Individuell

5.1 Was fordert oder überrascht dich persönlich am meisten an der Zusammenarbeit mit den Studierenden aus Wien/ Berlin? (*Offene Frage*)

5.2 In welchen dieser Bereiche verortest du bislang deinen Lernprozess (mit Skala von sehr stark bis gar nicht): (*Skala: 1 = gar nicht zufrieden, 5 = sehr zufrieden*)

- Verständnis des Themenfeldes,
- vergleichende Perspektiven Berlin-Wien
- Gruppenarbeit
- Austausch mit der Praxis
- Gestaltungsmethoden von Exkursionseinheiten

Gruppe

5.3 Was funktioniert in eurer Gruppe besonders gut? (*Offene Frage*)

5.4 Welche Ideen hast du, um städteübergreifende Gruppen in dieser ersten Phase in den nächsten Jahren besser zu unterstützen?? (*Offene Frage*)

6. Abschluss

Gibt es sonst noch etwas, das du zum bisherigen Format, zur Zusammenarbeit oder zu den Exkursions-Slots mitteilen möchtest? (*Offene Frage*)

6.6. Field Trip Program

6.6.1. Field Trip Program Vienna

PROGRAM					
	Tuesday 3.6.2025	Wednesday 4.6.2025	Thursday 5.6.2025	Friday 6.6.2025	
08:00					
09:00	Theme 1- 20., Brigittenau/Jägerstraße, meeting with GB*	Theme 4* - 15., Grätzloasen, Parklets, meeting with GB*	09:30-16:30 Circle U. Climate Day, University of Vienna	Theme 6 – 4., The end of Viennese gas boilers? meeting with Urban Innovation Vienna	
10:00					
11:00	(Optional) Walk around the urban renewal area Nordwestbahnhof			Optional: MAK Exhibition. Blockchain: Unchained. New tools for Democracy	
12:00					
13:00	Theme 2 - 18., Türkenschanzpark, meeting with BOKU University	Theme - 10., Superblock Favoriten			
14:00					
15:00					
16:00		(Optional) Künstlerhaus Exhibition: Imagine Climate Dignity		Shared reflection at University of Vienna	
17:00	Theme 1 - Part 2: 15., Pelzgasse				
18:00	Closure at the rooftop of IKEA Westbahnhof, followed by joint dinner			Final dinner	
19:00					

6.6.2. Field Trip Program Berlin

PROGRAM						
	Monday 7.7.2025	Tuesday 8.7.2025	Wednesday 9.7.2025	Thursday 10.7.2025	Friday 11.7.2025	Saturday 12.7.2025
am	Introduction and fieldwork methods part 1 (Vienna team)	free	Theme 3 - meeting with Fridays for Future Schöneeweide	Theme 4 - House of Statistics - Berlin Institute for Participation-Prinzessinnen-garten Community Garden	Theme 1 - Spree - Cool im Kiez program	Fieldwork methods part 2 (Vienna team)
Lunch						
pm	Theme 6 - Conflicts over the use of spaces – Flussbad-garten am Spreekanal – Gendarmen-markt	Theme 2 - Forms of claiming and using space - Tempelhofer Feld	Guided walk: Schwamm-stadt Adlershof (Vienna team)	Theme 5 - Superblocks Neukölln	free	Fieldwork methods part 2
			Factchecking - self-organized work (Vienna team)		Shared reflection and joint dinner	
Evening	Shared dinner					