

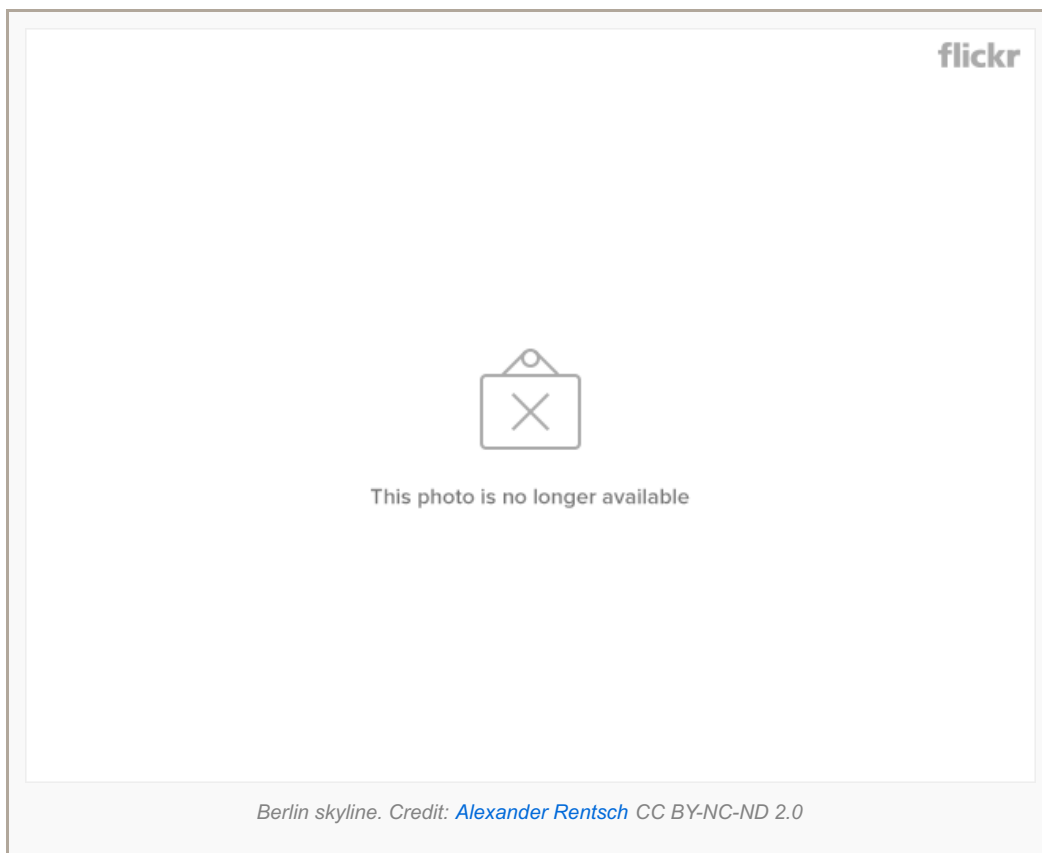
The best bookshops in Berlin

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseviewofbooks/2014/08/30/the-best-bookshops-in-berlin/

2014-8-30

Evan Easton-Calabria is a research assistant at the Oxford Department of International Development. In this post she talks us through the best bookshops in **Berlin, Germany**. If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, find more information about contributing below.

In the year 1800, the composer Franz von Suppe wrote, *'Du bist verrückt mein Kind, du mußt nach Berlin.'* ('You are crazy, my child. You must go to Berlin.') Over 200 years later, this vibrant, so-called 'poor but sexy' city still welcomes the eclectic, evident through its independent bookshops, which range from small used-book community initiatives to a multi-storied 'culture house' offering everything from contemporary books on tape to medieval German poetry. Berlin is one of the best cities I know of to walk around in, and is made all the more enjoyable through the bookstores to discover as one does.



[Berliner Büchertisch](#) ('Berlin Book Table') has over 50,000 used books spread out across three cosy shops in Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg, arguably two of the coolest neighbourhoods in Berlin. Known as a community project, the project emphasises reading in the community through sharing book trolleys in schools and creating spots across Berlin where free books, and sometimes chairs in which to read them are publicly offered. In the stores themselves are ceiling-high bookshelves, divided into themes as diverse as historical novels, poetry and medical textbooks, and comfortable couches for reading. A wide range of books – including many in English and other languages – offers a chance for anyone in the neighbourhoods to further this community project and find something exciting to read.



Credit: [Berliner Bücherisch](#) CC BY-SA 2.0

For anyone who finds themselves in need of a quiet spot in the middle of Berlin, or a magazine or book in their native tongue, [do you read me?!](#) is the place to go. Refreshingly modern, with sleek books and magazines on black shelves, the bookstore caters to foreign travellers as well as Berlin's large ex-pat population. The store offers a reading room to host book and poetry readings as well as lectures and meetings, and its newer satellite store takes up a corner of a larger space in West Berlin. The main store in particular offers a thorough range of contemporary literature, from social critiques to *Vogue*, while maintaining a polished yet welcoming atmosphere in which to browse.



[do you read me?](#) bookshop, Berlin. Credit: [Lux & Jourik](#) CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

[Hacker and Presting Buchhandlung](#) is a small, friendly bookstore in Charlottenburg, one of Berlin's quieter

neighbourhoods, offering a carefully curated selection of English books as well as an online shop offering deliveries within 24 hours. The owners, Julia Hacker and Ulrike Presting, opened the shop over fifteen years ago and are still on hand to offer recommendations and smiles. Weekly emails to subscribers are friendly and informative, containing tips about new releases, upcoming readings, and radio interviews with authors. The bookstore, with bright red awnings and creative displays, has a Parisian flair that adds to the charm of the street. The books as well as the staff inside add to the charm of the shop itself.

Just up from the famous Friedrichstrasse subway station in Berlin Mitte is [Dussman](#), one of Berlin's largest and most successful independent bookstores. Its five floors provide space for a vast assortment of German and foreign language books (on tape as well as on paper), films, writing and art accessories, and music. The newly opened café-restaurant 'Ursprung' ('Origin') makes it easy to spend an afternoon enjoying tapas as well as books. Some of Germany's most famous authors have held readings and discussions here at the regular – always free – events the bookstore hosts. Despite its size, Dussman is easy to navigate and is a great place to pick up a dictionary, city guide, or gift to bring back home.

Evan Easton-Calabria studied for a Master's degree in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from the University of Oxford. She is a writer and consultant focusing on refugee livelihoods and international development.

Do you have a favourite bookshop? If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, then now's your chance to tell us all about it.

As part of a new weekly feature on LSE Review of Books, we're asking academics and students to recommend their favourite two or three bookshops in a particular city, with the aim of building an exciting online series for our book-loving community of readers the world over.

Bookshops could be academic, alternative, foreign language, hobby-based, secret or underground institutions, second hand outlets, or connected to a university. We'd like to cover all world regions too.

If something comes to mind, we're looking for around 100 words per bookshop, detailing why this place is a must-see. Our editorial team can then find suitable photos and links to accompany the piece, though you're welcome to supply these too. We only ask that you focus on just one city or region, and two or three bookshops within it.

Email us now if you'd like to contribute: lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk

- Copyright 2013 LSE Review of Books