

# ISSS 2026

**27<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL SCHMALKALDEN**  
IN **BERLIN** (1 WEEK) AND **SCHMALKALDEN** (2 WEEKS)

International Economics and  
Cross-Cultural Management

**1 JUNE - 20 JUNE 2026**

**SCHMALKALDEN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, GERMANY**

**Co-ORDINATORS:**  
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# ISSS CULTURAL PROGRAMME 2026

## Berlin, Potsdam, Sachsenhausen (1-7 June),

all guided by a native Berliner:

- Brandenburg Gate (1793), Berlin's most famous landmark,
- Museum Island (1830-1930), hosting five world-class museums [UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- Berlin State Opera House (1743),
- Berlin Castle (1443/2020),
- Berlin Cathedral (1905),
- German Cathedral (1708/1785),
- French Cathedral (1785),
- Humboldt University of Berlin (1809), home to 29 Nobel Prize laureates (e.g. Albert Einstein) and famous alumni (e.g. Karl Marx, Otto von Bismarck),
- Reichstag building (1894/1999),  
seat of the German "Lower House" of Parliament ("Bundestag"),
- Chancellery building (2001),  
seat of the German "Prime Minister" ("Bundeskanzler"),
- Federal Assembly building (1904),  
seat of the German "Upper House" ("Bundesrat"),
- residential areas of the classical Modern Era (1913-1934)  
[UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- underground bunker system (1930s/1940s),  
air raid shelters for Berliners during World War II,
- Hitler's air raid shelter ("Führerbunker", 1936/1944), which Hitler has used as his headquarters for his last 3 ½ months and where he has committed suicide,
- airstrip (1936), where Count Claus of Stauffenberg (1907-1944), started his failed mission to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944,
- Holocaust Memorial (2005),
- former Sachsenhausen concentration camp (1936-1945), prison for more than 200,000 people, including the son of the then Soviet leader Stalin,

- Topography of Terror, open-air museum, former headquarters (1933-1945) of the Nazi SS ("Schutzstaffel") and the secret police ("Gestapo"),
- remains of the Berlin wall (1961-1989),
- Wall Museum at Checkpoint Charlie, the most famous former US checkpoint,
- Sanssouci castle (1747) and gardens in Potsdam, residence of former Prussian Kings and German emperors [UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- New Palais (1769) in Potsdam, palace with its large "Grotto Hall", which shows 24.000 jewels, shells and fossils in its walls [UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- river cruise, boat trip on a lake, flee market, shopping opportunities

## **Schmalkalden, Merkers, Erfurt, Wartburg (8-20 June),**

all guided by the ISSS Team:

- transport from Berlin to Schmalkalden by train, 230 miles (for free),
- tour to Weimar with Goethe's (1749-1832) and Schiller's (1759-1805) house [UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- tour of Schmalkalden with its Wilhelmsburg castle (1590),
- Midnight-Sun Lecture in the forest, including cold drinks, hot "midnight pizzas",
- tour to Eisenach and Wartburg Castle (1067), Martin Luther's former residence, [UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- tour to Erfurt with its Erfurt Cathedral (1117), housing the world's largest medieval bell (1497), and its Old Synagogue (1094), Europe's oldest synagogue [UNESCO World Heritage Site],
- tour to Merkers Adventure Mines, Europe's largest salt mine (1895-1993), formerly run by the world's largest Kali producer; 20-km underground tour in a truck, among others, to the cave, where the Nazis stored their gold and other reserves during World War II, to the world's largest underground-bucket-excavator and to Europe's largest underground concert hall,
- Schmallympics sports festival (16-18 June),
- 1<sup>st</sup> open-air concert on campus (16 June, 8 p.m. until midnight),
- 2<sup>nd</sup> open-air concert on campus (17 June, 8 p.m. until 2 a.m.),
- 3<sup>rd</sup> open-air concert on campus (18 June, 8 p.m. until 2 a.m.),
- fireworks on campus by a professional pyrotechnician (18 June, 11 p.m.),

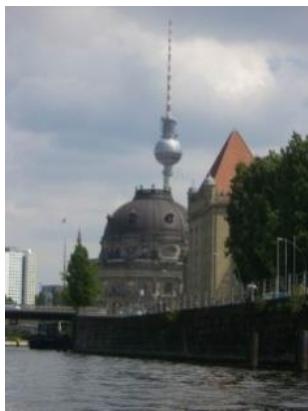
## Tours of Berlin, Potsdam, Sachsenhausen

As the capital of Prussia, Bismarck's Reich, the Weimar Republic, Hitler's Third Reich, the German Democratic Republic and nowadays the united Germany, Berlin looks back on a fascinating history of unparalleled complexity. For the four decades after World War II, Berlin was at the centre of the Cold War clash of ideologies between West and East and was most famous for the Wall dividing the city – the starker expression of the iron curtain cutting Europe in two. Berlin was unofficially reunified in November 1989, when the East German government, unable to resist the massive anti-government demonstrations and civil unrest, opened the border. Official reunification came the following year, and in June 1991, the German parliament voted to make Berlin once again the German seat of government. In the following decades, the city underwent a major transformation as the neglected eastern part was slowly brought up to western standards. The massive construction programme necessary for Berlin's new role has eradicated the divisions caused by the wall. With a population of 3.8 million, Germany's capital city is also its largest and has a cultural and social life to match. Famous landmarks and other attractions of interest include:



The Brandenburg Gate, Berlin's only remaining city gate, is the true symbol of the city. The city gate also became symbolic of the division of the city because it was situated in the no-man's land just behind the wall. After the fall of the Wall, the Gate was reopened on December 22, 1989.

The Reichstag is one of Berlin's biggest crowd-drawers and it is the seat of the German Bundestag or federal parliament. Its colourful past reflects the turbulence of German history since the 19th century.



Unter den Linden: Berlin's magnificent boulevard, the centrepiece of the Old Berlin, leads from Pariser Platz at the Brandenburg Gate to the Schlossbrücke. Unter den Linden was originally a bridle path that led from Berlin Palace to Lietzow, later Charlottenburg, and then on to Spandau in the year of 1573. From the year of 1701 the Linden became increasingly built up to mirroring the rising splendour of the monarchy and the new architectural style.

Museum Island: The consort of museums found on Museum Island is a unique cultural inheritance, which unites five important museum buildings into a heterogeneous but harmonic ensemble on the River Spree. The Island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Gendarmenmarkt: This is one of the most beautiful squares in Europe – a must for every tourist. Here, the Deutscher Dom (German Cathedral), the Französischer Dom (French Cathedral) and the Konzerthaus create a beautiful architectural ensemble.

Nikolaiviertel: With its winding medieval lanes and countless bars and restaurants, the Nikolaiviertel is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Berlin.

The Fernsehturm (television tower): This tower is the highest building in the city and is one of Berlin's main attractions. Its total height is 368 meters and the viewing platform is at a height of 203 metres.

Alexanderplatz: This is the most famous square in Berlin. Its present appearance dates from the construction of the East German city centre between the years of 1966-71.





Potsdamer Platz: This is symbolic of the New Berlin. Both Berliners and tourists are drawn to the Platz to pass the time because it has a lovely mix of restaurants, shopping opportunities, a theatre and 3-D cinemas. The former Postdamer Platz, once the busiest junction in Europe, is only a small part of the site now bearing its name.

Checkpoint Charlie: Numerous legends and spy stories are told about Checkpoint Charlie. The former border crossing point between East and West Berlin was the place where Soviet and American tanks stood face to face after the construction of the Wall in 1961. Today, a border sign and a soldier's post commemorate the checkpoint. The museum Haus am Checkpoint Charlie relates the history of the Wall.

The Kurfürstendamm: Quoted as being a “capitalism’s shop window” while Berlin was divided, is still the city’s showpiece boulevard and is popular among Berliners and visitors alike. From the Gedächtniskirche, it stretches for 3.5 km right out to Halensee, where the exclusive villa districts of West Berlin begin. In the lively upper part of the Kurfürstendamm and its extension, Tauentzienstraße, there are countless department stores and high fashion retail stores.

We will also visit places that played an important role during World War II, such as Hitler’s bunker, where he finally committed suicide.

## **Tour to Weimar**

On our way from Berlin to Schmalkalden we will stop at the city of Weimar. Despite its modest size (population: 65,000), Weimar is associated with some of the most important developments in German cultural and political history. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the town became a centre of German classicism with the presence of the writers Goethe, Schiller, Herder and Wieland. Previously, Luther and Bach had lived and worked there. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century many prominent musicians, including Franz Liszt, and numerous artists were attracted to the town. The famous Bauhaus school of art and design was founded

there in 1919, and in the same year, the German National Assembly met in Weimar to provide Germany with its first republican and democratic constitution. Weimar also has a negative association with the Nazi period because in 1937 the infamous concentration camp Buchenwald, where 65 000 people were murdered, was established on the outskirts of the town. The former camp now houses an extensive museum.

### ***Tour of Schmalkalden***



Schmalkalden is one of the oldest and most beautiful towns in Thuringia, situated between steep, romantic hills and woods. The town has already been officially mentioned in 874 and has had an eventful history since then. In 1531, the Protestant nobility formed the 'League of Schmalkalden' against the emperor Charles V. Subsequently Martin Luther published the 'Schmalkalden Articles', one of the founding documents of the Protestant religion, here in 1537.

Schmalkalden is on the 'German Timber-Framed Houses Trail'. The listed buildings in the historic town centre are particularly attractive, with their air of medieval romance, as is the late-gothic town church of St. George and the Wilhelmsburg Castle. This is the only Hessian castle in Thuringia and was built between 1585 and 1590. It exhibits wonderful wall paintings and stucco work. In the castle's chapel, where the ISSS ceremony takes place, there is a small, still playable organ, which counts among the most impressive listed musical instruments north of the Alps.



## Tour of Wartburg Castle



The Wartburg, a UNESCO world heritage site, is one of Germany's most interesting and famous castles, founded according to legend in 1067. The castle served not only defensive purposes, but was also a seat of government for the surrounding area. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century, the Wartburg is said to have staged a competition between the famous "Minnesänger" (singers of romantic ballads). Their "singers' war" is the subject of Wagner's "Tannhäuser" opera.

Martin Luther, who had been found guilty of heresy and made an outlaw, sought sanctuary in the Wartburg and was resident in the castle from 1521 until 1522 under the protection of Prince Friedrich the Wise. It is here that he translated the New Testament into German and thus, made a decisive contribution to the development of modern standard German. The Wartburg's historical and political importance also derives from its hosting of a meeting of the 'Burschenschaften' in 1817, which is considered an important step towards the founding of the German Reich in 1871. The castle contains numerous artistic, cultural and historical exhibitions. One can also visit the room where Luther lived and worked, which is virtually unchanged since the time when Luther was there.

Wartburg castle is close to the city of Eisenach, which was once the residence of the Dukes of Thuringia. The town lies on the north-west fringe of the Thuringian Forest at the foot of the Wartburg Castle. The town is associated with such famous people as Walther von der Vogelweide, Martin Luther, Johann Sebastian Bach, and Fritz Reuter. From 1150 onwards, the town developed into the political and intellectual centre of Thuringia. The old town market place with numerous remarkable buildings, the baroque castle, the Bach house, the Burschenschaft monument and the car museum is definitely worth seeing.

## **Tour to Europe's Largest Salt Mine**



800 meters below ground, you will experience life in a salt mine. During the 20 km round trip, you will observe the world's largest bucket-wheel excavator, be amazed by the salt crystals' play of colours and their glittering in the millions of years old crystal grotto

and have a glance into the room where the German "Reichsbank" (central bank) temporarily stored its gold and foreign currency reserves during World War II.



## **“Midnight-Sun” Lecture (from 8. p.m. until 6 a.m.)**



Since 2003, Schmalkalden University of Applied Sciences has offered a “Midnight-Sun” Lecture during one of the shortest nights of the year. During this night, we will have an interactive lecture. On the one hand, you have to take an exam between the unusual time of 4:30 a.m. and 5:30 a.m., on the other hand, you can enjoy a hot pizza and cold drinks around midnight. If weather conditions allow, this lecture will take place in the (safe) Thuringian forest. We will not be spoiled by any Power-Point presentations or by any artificial light, instead we be able to “breathe” pure nature, to observe the sunset, the moon, the Venus and plenty of stars, the milky way and later the sunrise accompanied by a concert of birds. This will be an unforgettable night, we hope. Do not forget to take **WARM CLOTHES** with you. Over the years, temperatures at Midnight-Sun Lectures varied between 35 degrees Celcius / 95 degrees Fahrenheit and minus 2 degrees Celsius / 28 degrees Fahrenheit.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Schmalympics (16-18 June)**

The annual “Schmalympics” have taken place in Schmalkalden since 2004, except for the two “Corona years” 2020 and 2021. Track and Field, Swimming, Triathlon, Soccer, Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Tennis, Table Tennis, Badminton, Bowling, Spinning and “Beerathlon” are the core elements of the programme. International teams will compete in the afternoon and relax in the evening during three open-air concerts on campus.

