

"1968" and its West German Discontents

Peter Schweppe

Graduate Level Interdisciplinary Seminar

(presented here in English, can also be taught in German)

Following two decades of the post-war "Economic Miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*), West German discontentment with society and politics spilled onto university campuses and public streets, ushering in a culture of protest which impacted West Germany in ways which are still felt and disputed. On one hand, this culture expressed discontentment with global events like the Vietnam War or domestic issues like German identity. On the other hand, it revealed how the trope of "protest" impacted trajectories of literature, cinema, and theory. Being *discontent* with produced cultural conventions of resistance that transformed art and philosophy in Germany and beyond.

In this seminar, students will become familiar with key theoretical debates, literary practices, and historical events that fueled the protest movement in the late 1960s. In addition to analyzing texts through close-read activities, students will practice contextual and visual methods of interpretation. Throughout the semester, students will be required to participate in a variety of course activities, which include a short presentation on one of the texts; two mini research projects (theoretical inquiries into the role of an archival object, literary work, or cinematic work); two film screenings; and an end of the semester workshop that introduces the final research paper's topic to the class in a conference-like presentation format.

This course is designed for graduate students in the Humanities and will train them in theoretical, textual, and visual analysis. With exception of 2 extra screenings, films will be shown in class and placed on hold in the library. All readings and discussion will occur in English.

Required Texts

Brown, Timothy. *West Germany and the Global Sixties* (2013)

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle* (1995)

Habermas, Jürgen. *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991)

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man* (1964)

Slobodian, Quinn. *Foreign Front* (2012)

Grading

25% Class Participation and Course Preparation

10% Individual Presentation

10% 2 Mini Research Reports (2-3 pages each)

20% Written Exam

10% End-of-term conference

25% Research Paper (18-20 pages) (due 2 weeks after the seminar ends)

Week 1: Frankfurt School

Texts: Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer, "Culture Industry"; excerpts from Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*

Week 2: Public Sphere

Text: Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

Week 3: Theory and Protest

Texts: Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*; Timothy Brown, "Introduction" and "Space" (*West Germany and the Global Sixties*)

*Textual Analysis (Due Week 5)

Week 4: Literature

Texts: Alfred Andersch, "Jesuskingdutschke"; poetry from Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and Erich Fried; Timothy Brown, "Word" (*West Germany and the Global Sixties*)

Week 5: Print Culture

Texts: Excerpts from Ulrike Meinhof/Karin Bauer, *Everyone Talks About the Weather*; excerpts from Alexander Cook, *Mao's Little Red Book*; Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Commonplaces on the Newest Literature"

*Visual Analysis (Due Week 8)

Week 6: Visual Culture

Texts: Timothy Brown, "Vision" (*West Germany and the Global Sixties*); W.J.T. Mitchell, "Image, Space, Revolution"

Photography: Michael Ruetz, Bernard Larsson, Ludwig Binder

Week 7: Cinema

Films: Harun Farocki, *The Words of the Chairman (1967)*; *Inextinguishable Fire (1969)*

Texts: Quinn Slobodian, "The Cultural Revolution in West Germany" (*Foreign Front*)

*Extra Screening: Andres Veiel, *If Not Us, Who?* (2011)

Week 8: Art

Texts: Excerpts from Richard McCormick, *Politics of the Self*; excerpts from Sabine von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination!*; Susan Sontag, "Happenings"

Art: Valie Export, Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell, Andy Warhol, Fluxus

Week 9: Music

Texts: Timothy Brown, "Sound" (*West Germany and the Global Sixties*); Ulrich Adelt, excerpts from *Krautrock*

Music: Franz Josef Degenhardt, Amon Düül, Tangerine Dream, Guru Guru

Week 10: Memory and Literature

Texts: Excerpts from Susanne Rinner, *The German Student Movement and the Literary Imagination*; Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Hitler's Children?"

Week 11: Memory and Film

Texts: Chris Homewood, "Have the Best Ideas Stood the Test of Time?"; Alexander Vazansky and Marco Abel, "Introduction: What Was Politics in '1968'? in West Germany?"

Film: Hans Weingartner, *Edukators* (2004)

Week 12: In-class Conference & Workshop

Other Recommended Readings

Bentz, Ralf, et al. *Protest!: Literatur um 1968* (1998) (visual resource for English readers)

Jameson, Frederic. *Late Marxism* (1990)

Negt, Oskar, and Alexander Kluge. *Public Sphere and Experience* (1993)

Olick, Jeffrey K, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy. *The Collective Memory Reader* (2011)

Smith-Prei, Carrie. *Revolting Families* (2013)

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics* (2005)