

"Bitte Zuhören!: Sounding off on Literature from the Radio Play to Podcast"

Peter Schwepe

Upper Level German (discussion in German)

*(can also be modified for General Education: H.G. Wells, Samuel Beckett, Lucille Fletcher, etc.)

Throughout the twentieth century, the radio has been a key transmitter of German literature. Due its eclectic blend of speakers, sounds, and music, German radio plays (*Hörspiele*) became a vastly popular medium for listeners to turn on and tune into. As a result, radio transmissions created new sounds and formats for literature. Despite their deep connection to the sounds of storytelling, however, German radio plays are often over-read and under-heard today. This course seeks to refurbish the practice of listening by surveying German *Hörspiele* from the Weimar Republic up to the present-day. In addition to listening, we will also read the radio plays in order to assess how sound mediated their scripts and helped transform an aesthetics of literature on the radio in Germany and West Germany. Through this introduction to well-known *Hörspiele*, students will be able to situate an aural tradition of listening and storytelling into theoretical discourses surrounding radio and sound.

While this course is designed for upper-level German, it could also be taught in English as an interdisciplinary course with general education credits. Students will be asked to keep a written journal that will be collected every two weeks. In the journal, they will answer a set of questions about the sound and text of the radio play as well as contribute to a collective list of new vocabulary words (in German) or theoretical concepts (in English). Each student will also conduct a verbal presentation that addresses the sound production of one radio play. By highlighting the interaction between sound and literature, students will contextualize sound of radio plays against the background of the narrative. In a final project, students will work in small groups to produce their own sound recording that analyzes one of the radio plays featured in class and submit a four-page written paper that frames their individual argument and contribution. Group recordings will be aired online as a public podcast or broadcast on the air at a community radio station.

Required Hörspiele and Texts

Each week will feature one mandatory *Hörspiel* and background texts, which can be purchased in a coursepack from the bookstore or found on the course website.

Grading:

15% Class Participation and Course Preparation

15% Individual Presentation

40% *Hörspiel* Journal

15% Group Podcast

15% Four-page paper

Week 1: Sendespiel

**Hören/Lesen*: Peter Ihle/Heinrich Heine: "Seegespenst" (1923); Hans Flesch, "Zauberei auf dem Sender" (1924)

Lesen: Wolfgang Hagen, Auszüge: *Das Radio*; Peter Jelavich, Auszüge: *Berlin Alexanderplatz*

Week 2: Klangkunst

Hören: Brecht, "Der Lindberghflug" (1929)

Lesen: Bertholt Brecht, "Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat"; Rudolf Arnheim, Auszüge: *Radio*

Week 3: Didaktisches Radio

*Hören/Lesen: Walter Benjamin, Episoden: "Aufklärung für Kinder"

Lesen: Sabine Schiller-Lerg, Walter Benjamin, Auszüge: *Radio Benjamin*

Week 4: Radiosendungen

Hören: Thomas Mann, episodes from "Deutsche Hörer!"; Bertholt Brecht, Gedichte

Lesen: Brian Currid, Auszüge: *A National Acoustics*;

Week 5: Hörstück

Hören: Borchert, "Draußen vor der Tür" (1947)

Lesen: Alexander Badenoch, Auszüge: *Voices in Ruins*

Week 6: Träume im Radio

Hören: Ingeborg Bachmann, "Ein Geschäft mit Träumen" (1952)

Lesen: Yuliya Komska, "Introduction: West Germany's Cold War Radio"

Week 7: Wettbewerb

Hören: Max Frisch, "Herr Biedermann und die Brandstifter" (1953)

Lesen: Marshall McLuhan, readings from *Understanding Media*

Week 8: Radio im Hörfunk

Hören: Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Die Panne" (1955)

Lesen: Dürrenmatt, readings from *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*

Week 9: Radio Play

Hören: Peter Handke "Radio Play" (1969)

Lesen: Daniel Gilfillan, Auszüge: *Pieces of Sound*; Sterne, Auszüge: *The Audible Past*

Week 10: Digitale Funkwellen

Hören: Jelinek, "Die Schutzbefohlenen" (2014)

Lesen: Tim Crook, Auszüge: *Radio Drama*

Weeks 11 & 12: Group Project

Group Podcast Project

* *Original audio recording not available.*