

## Cinematic Germany: Camera and Culture

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German Studies, Upper Level (taught in German – can also be taught in English)

What constitutes a “German” national cinema? What is its history and what drives this history today? How has the nation of Germany (or both Germanys) coordinated its cinema around aesthetic, political, or historical models? With these questions in mind, "Cinematic Germany" pursues two primary goals. First, students will be introduced to German cinema through camera and culture. From Europe's first film in 1895 to the present-day, German cinema has ushered in angles, captured events, promoted propaganda, and challenged the core idea of what cinema is and what it can become. Second, students will be asked to read a mix of influential primary and secondary texts as they practice analyzing film and engaging with theoretical concepts. Students will practice "close-reading" and demonstrate their interpretation of film through brief sequence analyses that give the scene context and through a term paper at the end of the semester. This course will be conducted in German.

In addition to activities in class, there will be an extra screening in weeks 3 and 8. Where possible, we will watch these films outside of class in a more cinematic atmosphere. Students will be asked to prepare for each class by reading the assigned texts and attending the extra screenings. For instances where students are unable to attend, films will be available on course-reserve at the library. Throughout the course of the semester, each student will be expected to participate in one group presentation on a given film. Groups will be asked to record their presentation and introduce the recording live to the class. Presentations should last 5-7 minutes and focus on a topic that the film brings up. Students will write one sequence analysis, one in-class quiz, and a 10-page term paper at the end of the semester.

### **Required Texts:**

Each week will include a mandatory text or texts. See course website for details.

### **Other Recommended Readings and Resources:**

David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, *Film Art* (2009); James Monaco, *Film Verstehen* (trans. 2000); Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* (2010)

### **Grading:**

15% Class Participation and Course Preparation

15% Group Film Introduction

15% Sequence Analysis

25% Short Answer Quiz

30% Final Paper, 10-pages in German

### **Week 1: Kino der Attraktionen**

Film: Max Skladanowsky, George Méliès, Auguste & Louis Lumière

Text: Béla Balász, Auszüge: *Der sichtbare Mensch*; Alfred Döblin: "Das Theater der kleinen Leute"

### **Week 2: Expressionismus**

Film: Robert Wiene, *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920)

Text: Siegfried Kracauer, Auszüge: *Von Caligari zu Hitler* und *Theorie des Films*

### **Week 3: Sinfonie**

Film: Walter Ruttmann, *Berlin: Die Symphonie der Großstadt* (1927)

Text: Walter Ruttmann, "Wie ich meinen BERLIN Film drehte"; Fritz Lang, "Der künstlerische Aufbau des Filmdramas"

\*Extra Screening: Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)

### **Week 4: Propaganda**

Film: Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens* (1935), *Olympia* (1938)

Text: Leni Riefenstahl, "Kraft und Schönheit mögen filmische Form gefunden haben"; Sabine Hake, "Popular Cinema, National Cinema, Nazi Cinema: A Definition of Terms"

### **Week 5: Trümmerfilm**

Film: Wolfgang Staudte, *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (1946)

Text: Wolfgang Staudte, "Eine Überlegung" und "An die Zentral-Kommandatur des sowjetischen Besatzungszone"; Sebastien Heiduschke, "The Rubble Film, Wolfgang Staudte, and Postwar German Cinema"

\*In-Class Sequence Analysis – Selected film sequence from first four weeks\*

### **Week 6: DDR Film**

Film: Gerhard Klein, *Berlin Ecke Schönhauser* (1957)

Text: Sebastien Heiduschke, "The *Gegenwartsfilm*, West Berlin as Hostile Other, and East Germany as Homeland"

### **Week 7: Manifest**

Film: Alexander Kluge, *Brutalität im Stein* (1961); Harun Farocki, *Nicht lösches Feuer* (1969)

Text: "Oberhausener Manifest"; Miriam Hansen, "Cooperative Auteur Cinema and Oppositional Public Sphere"

### **Week 8: Auteur**

Film: Wim Wenders, *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987)

Text: Muriel Cormican, "Goodbye Wenders: *Lola rennt* as German Film Manifesto"; Eric Rentschler, Auszüge: *West German Film in the Course of Time*

\*Extra Screening: Tom Tykwer, *Lola rennt* (1998)

\*Short Answer Quiz\*

**Week 9: Transkulturelles Kino**

Film: Fatih Akin, *Gegen die Wand* (2004)

Text: Fatih Akin, Auszüge: *Transit Deutschland*; Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling & Anton Kaes, "What is a German? Legislating National Identity"

**Week 10: Geschichte im Film—Film Geschichte**

Film: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, *Das Leben der Anderen* (2006)

Text: Jens Gieseke, "Stasi Goes to Hollywood"; Jaimey Fisher, "German Historical Film as Production Trend"

**Week 11: Die neue (Berliner) Schule**

Film: Christian Petzold, *Yella* (2007)

Texts: Christian Petzold, "Keine Geschichten am Lagerfeuer"; Marco Abel, "Imaging Germany: The (Political) Cinema of Christian Petzold"

**Week 12: Urteile**

Film: Margarethe von Trotta, *Hannah Arendt* (2013)

Text: Margarethe von Trotta, Auszüge: *Hannah Arendt* and "My Approach to Biography"