

**German 240/340  
German Cinema  
Fall 2007**

**Syllabus**

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Office hours: by appointment

**Required Texts:**

All readings will be available as pdf documents at our WebCT site. Full bibliographical information for all readings is also be available on WebCT.

**Course Objectives:**

- Introduction to, and survey of influential German films and directors
- Analysis of film production within the socio-historical and cultural context of Germany and Europe
- Introduction to pivotal developments and trends in German film production (e.g. New German Cinema)
- Overview of techniques and themes of film production characteristic of German film-making
- Analysis and interpretation of film

**Grading:**

Quizzes (50 points each) x 4	20%
Oral reports on a film scene/director x 2	15%*
Written Film Critique	15%*
Examination I (take-home essays)	20%*
Examination II (take-home essays)	20%*
Class Participation	10%
Total:	100%

\*Note: Students who wish to count this course either toward the minor or toward the major in German must complete certain aspects of the course in German. Please see the instructor for additional information on this.

## **Viewing the Films:**

1. We will view most of the films in class together – please be aware of the exceptions! For the preparation of oral reports on specific scenes, students may have to view some films on their own well before our group viewing and discussion.
2. We will view a film in one session (usually a Monday) and begin discussion of the film in the following session. It will be most helpful to do the readings for each film before viewing them, but will be absolutely necessary before our group discussions.
3. You will also view and critique one German film in writing that we have not viewed in class (a list of acceptable films will be posted on WebCT).
4. Assigned films will be available on reserve in the Language Center (200 Buckman). They cannot be removed from the language center without my authorization. Some films may also be available in the library; they are marked on the syllabus with an asterisk.

## **Examinations:**

Both exams will be “take-home”, primarily essay questions based on the films, assigned readings, and our class discussions. Please be sure to take notes while viewing each film and during our class discussions in order to prepare for quizzes and examinations.

Exams must be type-written. You will be responsible for turning in each examination at the beginning of the class on the date it is due. Questions will be posted well in advance on our WebCT site. Late examinations will not be accepted (with the exception of a written medical excuse from a physician or a legitimate personal emergency). You should not have to use any outside sources – including internet sites for these exams. You may not “borrow”, “use”, “appropriate” anyone else’s ideas for your answers. Doing any of the above will constitute a violation of the Honor Code.

## **Quizzes:**

There will be four quizzes covering basic information from the films *and* questions on the assigned readings.

## **Oral Reports:**

Each student will give two short oral reports. The instructor will provide guidelines and a sign up sheet for the entire semester so that students can plan their preparations accordingly. Students can choose which type of report they would like to do first.

One oral report will be about one of the directors whose work we view in this class. It should be roughly 10-15 minutes in length and should cover the pertinent biographical information, the director’s most important films, and the topics and techniques that characterize their work. This report must introduce a new director to the class, so it must proceed our viewing of the director’s work. You must provide an accurate and thorough bibliography to the class for the outside sources you consulted in preparation of the report. Students may choose to support their report with a power point presentation and/or a printed outline.

The other report will be the analysis of a scene from one of our films. In the report (again 10-15 minutes) students should: 1) specify the reasons for choosing that scene; 2) lay out the technical and aesthetic construction of the scene; and 3) provide an interpretation of the scene for the class. We will do several of these together before students will be asked to do them individually. This report will require that everyone has seen the film in question already, so it will be part of our discussion of the film after the group viewing. It will not be necessary to consult outside sources for this report, so no bibliography will be required.

### **Class Attendance:**

This course is a collaborative discussion course. The instructor will provide students with viewing questions (available on-line) to help you prepare for our subsequent discussions. Please take notes on all readings, so that you can contribute to class discussions. You are expected to be in class for all sessions. While I realize that there may be legitimate conflicts, frequent and/or extended absences will hinder not only your ability to participate in class discussions, but also your opportunity to work with the course materials. Students may have **two** unexcused absences during the semester. For all other absences students will be required to notify me (via telephone or e-mail or in class) and provide credible excuses. (I reserve the right to require written excuses for medical or family reasons.) More than four absences for the semester will result in a 1/3 drop in your course grade (e.g. an “A-“ would drop to a “B+”). Further absences will also have an impact on your final grade. **Any student who misses more than 6 class sessions will automatically fail.** The instructor reserves the right to count as an absence frequent or extreme tardiness.

Tentative schedule: (films marked with an \* are available both in the Language Center and in Barrett Library)

*First week: Aug. 22-24*

W, 8/22: Short session because of Convocation: Course logistics and introduction to Image Analysis

F, 8/24:

Reading: Nick Lacey, Introduction to Image Analysis (5-27)

Sample analysis of both static images and select images from *The Last Laugh* (non-verbal communication and cutting)

### **The Formative Years**

*Second week: Aug. 27-31*

M, 8/27: No class

W, 8/29: Readings:

Nick Lacey, Introduction to Image Analysis (27-55)

Friedrich Ott, *The Great German Films* (9-23)

Viewing: *The Last Laugh* (Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, 1924: 91 min.) Note: I will not be here for this class session, but will arrange to have the film shown in our classroom during our regular class period.

August 31: Discussion: *The Last Laugh*

Readings:

Ott, 25-46

Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 96-106

*Third week: Sept. 3-5*

M, 9/3: No class, Labor Day

W, 9/5: Readings:

Ott: 46-52

Kracauer, 61-76

Viewing: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*\* (Robert Wiene, 1920: 71 minutes)

*Fourth week: Sept. 10-12*

M, 9/10: Discussion of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*\*

W, 9/12: Readings:

Ott, 73-81

Andreas Huyssen, "The Vamp in the Machine"

*Metropolis*\* (Fritz Lang, 1927: 124 minutes): Please view this film outside of class either in the library or in the Language Center: 1

*Fifth week: Sept. 17-19*

M, 9/17: Readings:

Readings:

Ott: 98-112

Viewing: *The Blue Angel*\* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930: 106 minutes)

### **The Early Sound Films**

W, 9/19:

Report on Josef von Sternberg

#### **Quiz I:**

Readings: Mulvey

Discuss *The Blue Angel*

*Sixth week: Sept. 24-26*

M, 9/24: Readings:

Ott 115-119, Kracauer, 215-222

Viewing: *M*\* (Fritz Lang, 1931: ca. 105 minutes)

W, 9/26: Discussion

### **Film and Propaganda**

*Seventh week: Oct. 1-3*

M, 10/1: Readings:

Lacey, 82-105

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<sup>1</sup> I will also have an evening viewing of the film for anyone who wants to watch it with me.

Ott, 139-154

Viewing: *Triumph of the Will*\* (Leni Riefenstahl, 1934: excerpts)

W, 10/3: Readings: Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism"

Lacey, 175-188

*Eighth week: 10/8-10/10*

M, 10/8: Readings: Friedrich Ott, 163-176

Viewing: *Olympia*\* (Leni Riefenstahl, 1938: excerpts)

W, 10/10: Discussion and review

**Quiz II:**

*Ninth week: Oct. 15-17*

M, 10/15: No class – fall break

### **New German Cinema**

W, 10/17: Reading: John Sandford, "The Emergence of the New German Cinema" and Ott, 288-291

Begin viewing: *The Tin Drum* (Volker Schlöndorff, 1979: 142 minutes)

*Tenth week: Oct. 22-24*

M, 10/22: Finish *The Tin Drum* and discuss

W, 10/24: **Examination I due:** No class – just turn in take-home exams

*Eleventh week: Oct. 29-31*

M, 10/29: Reading: Anton Kaes, "Images of History"

Viewing: *The Marriage of Maria Braun*\* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1979: 120 minutes)

W, 10/31: Finish viewing *Maria Braun*

Reading: Anton Kaes, on Maria Braun (pp. 75-90, 97-103)

*Twelfth week: Nov. 5-7*

M, 11/5: Reading: Anton Kaes, "Our Childhoods, Ourselves"

Viewing: *Germany, Pale Mother* (Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1979: 123 minutes)

W, 11/7: **Quiz III** and finish viewing *Germany, Pale Mother* and discuss

*Thirteenth week: Nov. 12-14*

M, 11/12: Readings: tba

Viewing: *The Nasty Girl* (Michael Verhoeven, 1990: 92 minutes)

W, 11/14: Discussion

Begin viewing: *Wings of Desire*\* (Wim Wenders, 1987: 127 minutes)

*Fourteenth week: Nov. 19-21*

M, 11/19: Reading: Sandford on Wenders, 103-115 and Kolker/Beicken, "Wings of Desire" and finish viewing: *Wings of Desire*\*

W, 11/21: No class: Thanksgiving break

*Fifteenth week: Nov. 26-28*

**Quiz IV:**M, 11/16: Discuss and begin viewing: *Goodbye Lenin\** (Wolfgang Becker, 2003: 121 minutes)

W, 11/28: Reading: Sabine Hake, "Post-unification Cinema 1989-2000" and tba  
Finish viewing: *Goodbye Lenin\** (Wolfgang Becker, 2003: 121 minutes)

*Sixteenth week: Dec. 3-5*

M, 12/3: Discussion and review

W, 12/5: no class

**Examination II due on Tuesday, December 11 at 8:30 a.m.** You may, of course, turn the exam in earlier if you wish. Leave your exam with the department secretary in 321 Rhodes Tower. Please have her note the time at which you turned it in.