

(c.) GERMAN 671 -- GERMAN CINEMA TO 1945

Professor John E. Davidson / Claudia Galberg Room: CC 240 TR 4:00-5:48
Office Hours: T&R 2:00-3:30, and by appt.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

German 671 -- German Cinema to 1945 is a survey of the development of film in Germany from its origins in the German Empire of the late nineteenth century through the end of the National Socialist period. While this course centers on close readings of works that belong to the canon of German film, it also investigates the consequences of proposing the notion of any unified national cinema, specifically a "German" cinema. This course will investigate how factors such as the potentially international audiences for films, the competition between different agents of production and distribution, and the relation of film to other intellectual and artistic traditions shape German film. The course hopes to achieve three interrelated aims:

- 1) to introduce students to fundamental elements of film and film analysis;
- 2) to foster a critical understanding of how film functions as an art form;
- 3) to explore the developments within German film in light of specific historical and cultural frameworks; but also to make students aware of the complicated issues involved in defining any unified national cinema, specifically, the pitfalls inherent in ready conceptions of German cinema.

This course assumes no prior knowledge of German, German films, or film theory in general. It is taught in English.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Students are not required to purchase textbooks for this course; however, they will be held responsible for the materials from the book *Film Art: An Introduction*, Bordwell / Thompson, and students who have no previous experience with film analysis are strongly encouraged to buy this (or another appropriate) introductory text. Sections of *Film Art* which are particularly germane to each week's topic will be announced.

Students will also be assigned occasional reading from a course packet on reserve in the Main Library Closed Reserve Room and 317 Cunz Hall.

Films to be Viewed in their Entirety

Brecht / Dudow	<i>Kuhle Wampe (Kuhle Wampe, oder wem gehört die Welt?)</i>
Käutner	<i>Under the Bridges (Unter den Brücken)</i>
Lubitsch	<i>Meier from Berlin / Kohlhiesel's Daughters</i>
Metzner	"Assault" (<i>Überfall</i>)
Murnau	<i>The Last Laugh (Der letzte Mann)</i>
Pabst	<i>The Love of Jeanne Ney (Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney)</i>
Pick	<i>Shattered (Scherben)</i>
Riefenstahl	<i>The Blue Light (Das blaue Licht) / Olympia</i>
Ruttmann	<i>Berlin, Symphony of a Great City (Berlin, Sinfonie einer Großstadt)</i>
Sierk	<i>La Habanera</i>
Thiele	<i>Three Good Friends (Die Drei von der Tankstelle)</i>
Wiene	<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari)</i>

NB: Video copies of all films will be available. Please note that video-viewing is considered a supplement to and not a replacement for attending the film screenings.

REQUIREMENTS

Regular attendance, preparation, and participation in discussion	15%
Weekly Web Responses (best 5 out of 7)	50%
Paper	25%
Final Exam	10%

Description of Assignments

Attendance & participation are mandatory: more than 2 absences will affect this portion of the grade significantly.

Web assignments will require you to view clips and answer questions regarding the topics of the previous week. Go to <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/davidson92/>> and click on "German Film resources Library," then "German 671." You will need your OSU user name (e.g. davidson.92) and password to get into the site. Please read all the instruction before beginning. OIT computing centers (such as in Cunz Hall or the Main Library) have installed the required software, which is also available as a free download: you may need to bring headphones. The papers must concentrate on *one* specific formal aspect in providing an interpretation of *one* single film.

The paper should propose and support an argument about a film. The paper may be submitted at any time during the quarter before the last day of class; undergrads 3-5 pp; grads 4-6pp.

The final exam will ask you to view a film and answer questions about it in regard to formal film properties and other films in the class.

<u>Class#</u>	<u>Formal / Generic Questions</u>	<u>Thematic/Historical Issues</u>	<u>Film Example</u>
Week 1 Reading: Miriam Hansen, "Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?"			
1	Comedy & Film narrative	Intro to Film analysis	<i>Meier / Kohlhiesel</i> (Lubitsch)
2	"Kammerspiel"	Early Film & Gender	<i>Shattered</i> (Pick)
Week 2: Reading -- Eisner <i>The Haunted Screen</i> 9-37; Kracauer <i>Caligari to Hitler</i> 3-11 & 61-76 [<i>Film Art</i> Intro 3-24; Mise-en-scène 145-163; German Expressionism 459-62]			
3	Chiaroscuro	Expressionism I	<i>Caligari</i> (Wiene)
4	Myths and the camera	Expressionism II	Discussion of Fritz Lang
Web HW1: Identifying expressionism: Lang, <i>Destiny</i> ; <i>Siegfried's Death</i>			
Week 3: Reading – Kracauer "Analysis of a City Map"; Anthony Coulson, "Entrapment and Escape"; Eisner, <i>Haunted Screen</i> 251-68; 297-307[?] [<i>Film Art</i> The Shot 185-238]			
5	Camera Movement	New Objectivity	<i>The Last Laugh</i> (Murnau)
6	Objects and Realism	The "main character"	<i>Überfall</i> (Metzner)
Web HW2: Naturalism and the "Street Film": Grune, <i>The Street</i>			
Week 4: Reading -- Eisenstein "Dialectic Approach..."; Kuleshov, "Principles of Montage" [<i>Film Art</i> Nonnarrative 102-05; Editing 246-86]. Vertov "Kino Eye"			
7	Other Cinemas	"Absolute Film"; Montage	Shorts; from <i>Potemkin</i>
8	Non-narrative Cinema	Approaches to Modernity	<i>Berlin...</i> (Ruttman)
Web HW3: The Language of Cinema: Vertov, <i>Man with the Movie Camera</i>			
Week 5 Reading -- Rentschler, "Mountains & Modernity" [<i>Film Art</i> : Formal narrative]			
9	Mountain Films	Modern Fairy Tales	<i>The Blue Light</i> (Riefenstahl)
10	Framing and mise-en-scène	Technology & Nature	Discussion
Web HW4: Visualizing Modernity and Tradition in <i>The Prodigal Son</i>			

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Week 6	Reading – <i>Film Art</i> : Mise-en-scène in Space & time 163-73; Style 333-38		
11	History Films	WWI	... <i>Jeanne Ney</i> (Pabst)
12	Managing Time & Space	War, History, Cinema	Discussion
Web HW5:	Ufa's Histories: Ophuls <i>Liebelei</i> ; Borsody <i>Wunschkonzert</i>		
Week 7:	Reading – Witte “Visual Pleasure Inhibited”; [<i>FA</i> Sound 292-317]		
13	Musical	Intoning Weimar normality	<i>Three Good Friends</i> (Thiele)
14	Script & Dialogue	What's funny about comedy?	Discussion
Web HW6:	Dancing across cultures and through the ages: Jacoby, <i>The Woman of My Dreams</i>		
Week 8:	Reading – Murray <i>Film & the German Left</i> 186-224; <u>Brecht on Theatre</u> 31-33; 47-51; & 179-209		
15	Prometheus Films	Proletarians & Cinema	Excerpts; <i>Kulhe Wampe</i> (Brecht et al)
16	Epic Approaches Sound	The Eve of Revolution?	Discussion
Web HW7:	Appropriation by the Right: Steinhoff, <i>Hitler Youth Quex</i>		
Week 9:	Riefenstahl Redux -- NO READING; EXTRA FILM SESSION TBA [<i>FA</i> Sections on <i>Olympia</i> 105-12; 345-48]		
17	Light & speed	The fascist body & non-reason	<i>Olympia I & II</i>
18	Politics & Film Aesthetics	Approaches to Propaganda	Discussion
Week 10:	Reading -- Rentschler “Epilogue: The Testament of Dr. Goebbels”		
19	Melodrama	Non-Political Films	<i>La Habanera</i>
20	Star Appeal	Ideology and Identification	Discussion / Evaluations Exam Preparation