

**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES  
WINTER 2005**

**German 250: German Literature and Popular Culture:  
East & West as reflected in popular Film and Literature  
(GEC course)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Andy Spencer

**Time:** T R 9:30 ~ 11:18

**Classroom:** HH 186

**Section:** 10244-9 (5 cr)

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**Office Hrs:** M W F: 12:30-2 & by appt.

In this class we shall be looking at examples of popular film and literature from the US, the UK, East Germany, West Germany, and united Germany in an attempt to question and complicate the understanding which we have of Germany and recent German history.

Following the euphoria which surrounded the 1990 unification of the two German States (the Federal Republic of Germany = West, and the German Democratic Republic = East) many outside of the country made the somewhat hasty determination that we had witnessed the end of an historical epoch, that things had, if you like, returned to normal. Those same people are now at a loss to explain the popular success in Germany of films such as *Sonnenallee* (unfortunately not available in a subtitled version) and *Good Bye, Lenin* which would seem to be making a case for a re-evaluation of the overwhelmingly negative view of East German history, or, on the other hand, the controversial success of novels such as Günter Grass' *Crabwalk*, and the questioning gaze which they focus upon post-unification Germany. It is my contention that if we are to better understand contemporary Germany then we need to question where our own ideas and opinions come from and then ask questions about these recent works. To this end we shall be looking at examples of works produced both inside and outside of the country.

**Required Texts** (at SBX)

1. Anna Funder. *Stasiland: True Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall*. Granta Books (May, 2003)
2. Hans Magnus Enzensberger. *Civil Wars: From L.A. to Bosnia*. New Press (September 1, 1995).
3. Günter Grass. *Crabwalk*. Harvest Books (April 5, 2004)
4. Winfried Georg Sebald. *Austerlitz*. Modern Library (September 3, 2002)

I had wanted to read a fifth book - Sven Regener's *Berlin Blues*, but unfortunately, just like good bacon, it is only available in Canada. Nevertheless, if at the end of this class you would like to read further I strongly recommend it and the film based on it, *Herr Lehmann*.

**Requirements**

Weekly Journals (8)	40% (due 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2/4, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4)
Midterm	20%
Final Paper	30%
Participation	<u>10%</u>
	100%

The **journals** you write will focus on single works and should incorporate ideas raised and discussed in class. In other words, I want you to write about the works in the context of our larger subject matter, but the journals should also include your own ideas and opinions. All journals should be typed in Microsoft Word format and e-mailed to me to arrive **no later than 5pm Friday**. I expect you to write around two pages, although you may write more.

The **midterm** exam will consist of short-answer questions covering the works we have looked at in class. The midterm is to be **typed, double-spaced, and handed in as a hard copy**.

There is no final exam in this class, rather a **final paper of at least 7 pages (2000 words** – include word count). The topic will be of your choosing and I shall be giving you more information as the quarter continues. It is never too early to be thinking about a topic! Since the final exam would have been **Thursday, March 17 at 9:30am**, I am setting that as the deadline for handing in papers which, as with the midterm should be **typed, double-spaced, and handed in as a hard copy**.

Class **participation** accounts for 10% of your final grade. I will evaluate you on your willingness to participate in classroom discussions and group work. **Attendance** is expected and crucial for your learning success in this class – any unavoidable absence should be cleared with me in advance. It is departmental policy that **five unexcused absences result in a failing grade in the class**.

### Grading Scale

93 - 100 = A	83 - 87 = B	73 - 77 = C	63 - 67 = D
90 - 92 = A-	80 - 82 = B-	70 - 72 = C-	below 63 = E
88 - 89 = B+	78 - 79 = C+	68 - 69 = D+	

The **Office for Disability Services**, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

### Academic Misconduct Policy

Students enrolled in courses at OSU are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic conduct. I will be alert to any kind of inappropriate conduct in the course. Suspicion of misconduct will be handled by official rules and policies of OSU. Penalties for cheating or plagiarism may result in a failing grade in the course or expulsion from the university. The Department will abide by the decisions of the Academic Misconduct Committee.

### Schedule

#### Week One

Jan. 4: Intro. to class and background history

*The Communists Are Our Friends: US Wartime Propaganda*

Jan 6.: Film: **The North Star** (dir. Lewis Milestone, 1943)

#### Week Two

*The Communists Are Our Enemies: Espionage Films And the Image of East Germany*

Jan. 11: discussion of preceding film

Film: **Torn Curtain** (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1966)

Jan. 13: conclusion of film and discussion with clips

### **Week Three**

Jan. 18: Film: **The Spy Who Came In From The Cold** (dir. Michael Ritt, 1965)

Jan. 20: discussion of film with clips

### **Week Four**

*The “real” secret police*

Jan. 25: Reading: Anna Funder: **Stasiland: True Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall.**

Jan. 27: continuation of discussion of reading plus additional materials to be provided

### **Week Five**

*Images of East German from Popular (East) German Culture*

Feb. 1: Film: **The Legend of Paul and Paula** (dir. Heiner Carow, 1972)

Feb. 3: discussion of film with clips

### **Week Six**

*Reactions to a Unified Germany*

Feb. 8: Film: **Good Bye, Lenin!** (dir. Wolfgang Becker, 2003)

Feb. 10: discussion of film with clips. Midterm questions handed out. No journal this week.

### **Week Seven**

Feb. 15: Midterm due

Readings: Martha Gellhorn: **Ohne Mich: Why I Shall Never Return to Germany** (3 pages), Max Thomas Mehr and Regine Sylvester: **The Stone-thrower from Eisenhüttenstadt** (8 pages, both texts to be provided by instructor)

Feb. 17: Reading: Hans Magnus Enzensberger. **Civil Wars: From L.A. to Bosnia.**

### **Week Eight**

Feb. 22: Film: **The Legend Of Rita** (dir. Volker Schlöndorff, 2000)

Feb. 24: discussion of film with clips

### **Week Nine**

March 1: Reading: Günter Grass: **Crabwalk.**

March 3: continuation of discussion of reading plus additional materials to be provided

### **Week Ten**

*Complicating our understanding of history*

March 8: Reading: Winfried Georg Sebald: **Austerlitz.**

Note: Sebald’s novel is not easy reading! I would advise you to get started as early as possible.

March 10: continuation of discussion of reading and final discussions