A Short History of German Film
(This course may count toward the Minor in Film Studies)

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00-13:00 Thursday 16:00-17:00 (or by appointment)

Course Description
This course presents an overview of the history of German film-making from its beginnings to the present. Starting with the early experimentation with moving images in the 1890s, we will explore the styles and techniques of expressionist and avant-garde film, the transformation of German cinema as an ambitious modernist art form and an internationally successful mass medium during the Weimar years, the use of film as a propaganda tool in the Nazi period, the rubble film of the immediate post-WWII period, the socialist DEFA films of East Germany and the confrontation with the Nazi past in the New German Cinema in the West, and the comedy and multicultural narratives in recent films. Throughout, we will be paying especially close attention to the relationship between film and society and examine both how film reacts to the dramatic upheavals in German culture and politics and what role film plays in the creation of individual as well as national identity.
To capture the diversity of film-making, the lectures will at times present excerpts from various different films. But we will also see a number of films in full length, among them: The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari (1920), The Blue Angel (1930), The Murderers are Among Us (1946), Aguirre: The Wrath of God (1972), The Marriage of Maria Braun (1979), Wings of Desire (1987), The Edukators (2004), Almanya (2011).

Required Text
Stephen Brockman, A Critical History of German Film (available at the bookstore)

Course Evaluation
Attendance/Participation 15%
2 Take-Home Midterm [15% each] 30%
2 Short Film Analyses [10% each] 20%
Final Take-Home Exam 35%

Grade Scheme

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100 A+</td>
<td>77-79 B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-89 A</td>
<td>73-76 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84 A-</td>
<td>70-72 B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-49 F</td>
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To familiarize yourself with the UVic grading guidelines, please consult the University Calendar.
## GMST 350 Spring 2016 Syllabus

### Week 1
**Wilhelminian Germany to WWI**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topics</th>
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| 07/01 | - The cultural landscape of pre-WWI Germany: unification, militarism, authoritarianism, decadence  
- The catastrophe of WWI  
- Stylistic and narrative features of early film  
- The beginnings of expressionist film  

Film Screening: *Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1920, Dir. Robert Wiene)  

**Assigned Readings**: textbook, Chapter 1, 3, 4 (Ch. 3 & 4 also apply to Week 2)

### Week 2
**Weimar Germany**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topics</th>
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| 14/01 | - “A Democracy without Democrats:” The extremist culture and politics of the Weimar Republic  
- Expressionism and New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*): Film as the new medium for social critique  
- The unhinged camera  
- Point of View: Placing the individual in the urban context of unfettered capitalism  

Film Screening: *Der letzte Mann* (The Last Laugh, 1924, Dir. F. W. Murnau)

**Assigned Readings**: textbook, Chapter 5

### Week 3
**Weimar Germany**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topics</th>
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| 21/01 | - The conflict of the generations and the rebellion of youth against authoritarian morality  
- The New Woman and the crisis of masculinity in Weimar Germany  

Film Screening: *Der blaue Engel* (The Blue Angel, 1930, Dir. Joseph von Sternberg)

**Assigned Readings**: textbook, Chapter 7

### Week 4
**Film During the Third Reich**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topics</th>
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| 28/01 | - Nazi cultural policies and the assault on Weimar modernism  
- Fascist aesthetics in overt propaganda film  
- Discreet propaganda in entertainment film  
- The realignment of gender roles  

Screening: excerpts from  
*Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will, 1935, Dir. Leni Riefenstahl)  
*Jud Süß* (Jew Süss, 1940, Veit Harlan)  
*Wiener Blut* (Viennese Blood, 1942, Dir. Hans Moser)  
*Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, 1941, Dir. Veit Harlan)  
*Die große Liebe* (The Great Love, 1942, Dir. Rolf Hansen)

**Assigned Readings**: textbook Ch. 9, 10, 11
### MIDTERM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED

**Week 5**

**Rubble Film and the Reconstruction of Germany**

**04/02**

- **Lecture Topics**
  - Culture at/of the Zero Hour
  - The emergence of the Cold War and Allied politics in the reconstruction of Germany
  - The ideological divide in the early East- and West-German film industries (Early DEFA film vs. cinematic *Heimat* fantasies)
  - The *mise-en-scène* of Germany’s confrontation with the past

Film Screening: *Die Möder sind unter uns* (The Murderers Are Among Us, 1946, Dir. Wolfgang Staudte); excerpts from various *Heimat* films of the 1950s

**Assigned Readings:** textbook Ch. 12, 13

### MIDTERM DUE BACK

**Week 6**

**11/02**

**READING BREAK**

**Week 7**

**The History of East Germany and the Story of DEFA Film I**

**18/02**

- **Lecture Topics**
  - GDR culture and politics during the Ulbricht Era (1949-1971)
  - The socialist environment of the DEFA: Creative autonomy vs. censorship
  - Overview of DEFA film productions
  - Artistic visions of socialism vs. Socialist Realism
  - The interface of a socialist narrative with visual elements of Hollywood film

Film Screening: *Spur der Steine* (The Trace of Stones, 1965, Dir. Frank Beyer)

**Assigned Readings:** textbook Ch. 14, 16

**Week 8**

**The History of East Germany and the Story of DEFA Film II**

**25/02**

- **Lecture Topics**
  - GDR culture and politics during the Honecker Era (1971-1989)
  - The myth of *real existing socialism* and the repressiveness of the *Stasi* state
  - The retreat of artists away from collective socialist narratives towards a focus on the individual's search for happiness in a socialist society
  - GDR socialism and gender norms

Film Screening: *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (The Legend of Paul and Paula, 1973, Dir. Heiner Carow)

**Assigned Readings:** textbook Ch. 17

### Week 9

**New German Cinema: Werner Herzog**

**03/03**

- **Lecture Topics**
  - The Oberhausen Manifesto and the Rebellion of “Young” German filmmakers against *Heimat* film
  - The *auteur* film
• The cinematic and narrative style of Werner Herzog and the (dis-)placement of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past)
• The theme of madness and Herzog's cinematic post-romanticism

Film Screening: *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* (*Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, 1972, Dir. Werner Herzog)

**Assigned Readings:** textbook Ch. 19, 22

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### Week 10

**New German Cinema: Rainer Werner Fassbinder**

10/03

**Lecture Topics**
• The political and social vision of New German Cinema
• Film as an anti-capitalist tool for social criticism
• Uncovering the legacy of fascism in post-WWII Germany
• The personality and politics of Fassbinder
• Fassbinder’s Brechtian approach to cinema and his subversion of conventional film genres

Film Screening: *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, 1979, Dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder)

**Assigned Readings:** textbook Ch. 24

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### Week 11

**New German Cinema: Margarethe von Trotta**

17/03

**Lecture Topics**
• The German Women’s Movement of the 1970s and 80s
• Women directors of New German Cinema
• The era of left-wing radicalism and terrorism in West Germany
• The controversy of the Baader-Meinhof trial and the complexities of the West German social/cultural landscape
• Margarethe von Trotta’s cinematic oeuvre and cinematic style

Film Screening: *Die bleierne Zeit* (*Marianne and Juliane*, 1981, Dir. Margarethe von Trotta)

**Assigned Readings:** textbook, Ch. 26

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### Week 12

**New German Cinema: Wim Wenders**

24/03

**Lecture Topics**
• The cultural-historical significance of Berlin for the divided Germany
• Alienation and the search for identity and meaning during the Cold War in the 1980s
• The transition in German cinema from the social and political to the private and personal
• History/memory and narrative vs. storytelling in Wender’s cinematography
• Wender’s approach to directing and the fusion of scripted and unscripted elements, mise-en-scène and spontaneity

Film Screening: *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*, 1987, Dir. Wim Wenders)
**Course Work**

**Attendance/Participation**
Class attendance is required unless you can provide a documented medical reason. You are also expected to have done the assigned readings for the day they have been assigned.

**Midterm and Final Take-Home Exams**
The two take-home exams are entirely based on the films viewed in class, the lectures and the assigned readings. They do not require any additional research. Both exams consist of a number of short-answer to page-length questions. Questions are distributed on Jan. 28. and March 10. The responses are due back the following week, i.e. Feb. 4 and March 10. The final exam is similar in structure, but longer and cumulative. Questions will be distributed on the last class and the responses are due back a week later, on April 7.

**Film Analyses**
You have to write two four-page film analyses of two films screened in class. The analysis is due on the week after the screening. You have three tasks: discuss the cinematographic and narrative features of the film; make reference to the chapter reading in the textbook (do you agree/disagree with the author’s take on the film? Why?); include at least one additional source.
Course Policies

Accessibility
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. RCSD staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Concessions and Documentation
Students may ask for an academic concession, such as rescheduling a quiz or test or an extension for an assignment, upon providing proper documentation of a personal or medical affliction or of a time conflict. Proper documentation would include a doctor’s note or a memo from Counseling Services, or a memo from a coach, employer or faculty member. It must be dated before or close to the time of the missed work or classes.

Withdrawals and Deferrals
Students who miss substantial amounts of class and assignments without documentation will be asked to withdraw, or will receive an 'N' at the end of the semester. Even when the reasons for failing to meet course requirements are valid, it is not academically sound to allow students missing significant amounts of work to continue in the course.
Students are to familiarize themselves with the withdrawal dates in the current academic calendar.

A Note on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
Actions such as plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials used in academic evaluations, cheating or aiding others to cheat violate University policies on academic integrity and are considered serious offence. You must inform yourself about the university regulations (see UVic Policy on Academic Integrity).

Classroom Conduct
Since the quality of the learning environment is paramount, every student has the right to learn and your instructor has the duty to perform his or her teaching duties in a cooperative, distraction-free and effective manner.
Activities that could disrupt the learning environment for you and your instructor would include the non-academic use of electronic devices. Students are expected to turn off their cell phones, PDAs and mp3 players during class. The use of laptops is not necessary in the dynamic and participatory environment of a language class.

Add/Drop Deadlines
It is the student’s responsibility to attend to ADD/DROP dates as published in the Calendar and the Undergraduate Registration Guide and Timetable. You will not be dropped automatically from a class that you do not attend.