

Prof. Fatima Naqvi
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Fall 2017

16:470:671 (cross-listed with Comparative Literature 16:195:609:01)

Tues. 2,3 (9:50am-12:30 PM); Academic Building 4140 -- Cinema Studies Seminar Room

Weimar Cinema: German Film of the 1920s and 1930s

Course description:

Although the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) was characterized by economic depression, political instability and class conflict, it also witnessed the emergence of a vibrant art scene—especially in film. In this course we will look at seminal works by Robert Wiene, Walter Ruttmann, Ernst Lubitsch, Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, G.W. Pabst, Josef von Sternberg, Lotte Reininger, Leontine Sagan, Robert Siodmak, and Billy Wilder. We will discuss questions relating to the emergence of mass media, shock, sound, gender, genre (horror, melodrama), auteurism, nationalism, and class politics; we will also look at the afterlife of Weimar cinema. Special attention will be paid to the emergence of theoretical and proto-theoretical discourses relating to the moving image and the history of film history—as it relates to changes in the study of Weimar cinema.

Texts by Rudolf Arnheim, Béla Balázs, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, Miriam Hansen, Anton Kaes, Heide Schlüppmann, Tom Gunning, Thomas Elsaesser, Eric Rentschler, Lutz Koepnick, and others.

Taught in English.

Readings and discussion will be **in English**; all films are with subtitles. The readings and films can be accessed by clicking the links below:

• German course –

https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/eresas/reserve_aa/phtml/ServeRes.php?file=%2Fu4%2Fru1%2Feres%2Ffal17%2Fnaqvif_16_470_671_01_syllabus.htm

• Comp Lit course --

https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/eresas/reserve_aa/phtml/ServeRes.php?file=%2Fu4%2Fru1%2Feres%2Ffal17%2Fnaqvif_16_195_609_01_syllabus.htm

(Readers of German are encouraged to read the texts in the original where possible. Advanced undergraduates may take this course with approval of the Undergraduate Director.)

On reserve:

Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, Michael Cowan, *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory 1907-1933*

Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*

Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*

Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*

Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary*

Anton Kaes, *M*

Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*

Miriam Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno*

Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema*

Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*

Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War*

Noah Isenberg, *Weimar Cinema: An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*

Béla Balázs, *Early Film Theory*

Required Books:

- Anton Kaes, *M* (ISBN-10: 0851703704)

Requirements:

Active class participation/attendance [30%]

Oral report (30 minutes: close analysis of film segment in relation to the reading; must be discussed with Prof. Naqvi in advance of the class) [20%]

Short outline of proposed final project (1-2 pp. double-spaced) and bibliography (1 p.) [10%]

Presentation of final project (10 mins. with clips/PPT) [20%]

Final paper (15-20 pp.) [20%]

1. class (9/5): Robert Wiene, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920)
Robert Reinert, *Nerves* (*Nerven*, 1919)

2. class (9/12): FW Murnau, *Nosferatu* (1922)
Read Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 3-34, 61-87
Anton Kaes, "Dracula Revisited" in *Shell Shock Cinema*
Lotte Eisner, "Symphony of Horror" in *The Haunted Screen*
Heide Schlüppmann, "The Heart of Reason: The Beginnings of Narrative Cinema" from *The Uncanny Gaze: The Drama of Early German Cinema*

3. class (9/19): Walter Ruttmann, *Lichtspiel – Opus I* (1921); *Symphony of a Great City* (*Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, 1927)
Recommended: Walter Ruttmann, *German Tanks* (*Deutsche Panzer*, 1940)
Read Michael Cowan, "Absolute Advertising: Walter Ruttmann and the Weimar Advertising Film"
Albrecht Viktor Blum, "Documentary and Artistic Film" (1929) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 103)
Rudolf Arnheim, "The Absolute Film" (1925) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 459)

4. class (10/3): Karl Grune, *The Street* (*Die Straße*, 1923)
Recommended: FW Murnau, *Sunrise* (1927)
In class: clip from Fritz Lang, *Scarlet Street* (1945)
Read: Emilie Altenloh, "On the Sociology of Cinema: The Cinema Enterprise and the Social Classes of Its Patrons" in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 156)
Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"

5. class (10/10): FW Murnau, *The Last Laugh* (*Der letzte Mann*, 1924)
In class: clip from Michael Haneke, *Rebellion* (1995)
Read: Karl Freund, "Behind My Camera" (1927) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 509)
Vicki Baum, excerpt from *Grand Hotel* (1929)
Miriam Hansen, "Film, Medium of a Disintegrating World," in *Cinema and Experience*

6. class (10/17): Lotte Reiniger, *The Adventures of Prinz Achmed* (*Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*, 1926);
Ernst Lubitsch, *Sumurun* (1920)
In class: clip from Michael Curtiz, *Sodom und Gomorrah* (1922)
Read: Lotte Reiniger, "Living Shadows: The Art and Technology of the Silhouette Film" (1929) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 470)
Ernst Lubitsch, "Film Internationality" (1924) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 298)
Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov"

7. class (10/25, 4:30 PM): Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)

Recommended: King Vidor, *The Crowd* (1927)

Read Tom Gunning, "Metropolis: The Dance of Death," from *The Films of Fritz Lang*

Fritz Lang, "Will to Style in Film," in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 95)

Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament"

8. class (10/31): GW Pabst, *Pandora's Box* (Die Büchse der Pandora, 1929)

Read: Béla Balázs, "The Close Up"

Robert Musil, "Toward a New Aesthetic" ["Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik: Bemerkungen über eine Dramaturgie des Films"]

G. W. Pabst, "Reality of Sound Film" (1929) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 563)

Recommended: Thomas Elsaesser, "Lulu and the Meter Man: Louise Brooks, G.W. Pabst, and Pandora's Box" in *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary*

9. class (11/7): Billy Wilder, Edgar Ulmer, Robert Siodmak, et al. *People on Sunday* (*Menschen am Sonntag*, 1930)

Read: Siegfried Kracauer, "On Photography"

Lutz Koepnick, "The Bearable Lightness of Being: *People on Sunday* (1930)" in Noah Isenberg, ed., *Weimar Cinema: An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*

Outline of Final Paper due Wednesday via Email

10. class (11/14): Fritz Lang, *M* (1930)

Recommended: Billy Wilder, *Some Like It Hot* (1959); Robert Siodmak, *The Killers* (1946)

Read: Anton Kaes, *M*

Film-Kurier, Fritz Lang: "Problems in Sound Film Design" (1931) in *The Promise of Cinema* (p. 575)

11. class (11/28): Joseph von Sternberg, *The Blue Angel* (*Der blaue Engel*, 1930)

Recommended: Joseph von Sternberg, *Morocco* (1930)

Read: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

12. class (12/1, 10:30 AM): G.W. Pabst, *Threepenny Opera* (*Die 3-Groschen Oper*, 1931)

Read: Miriam Hansen, "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology"

Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*

Recommended: Thomas Elsaesser, "Transparent Duplicities: Pabst's *Threepenny Opera*?" in *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary*

13. class (12/5): Leontine Sagan, *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931); Richard Oswald, *Different from the Others* (*Anders als die anderen*, 1919)

In class: Leni Riefenstahl, *The Blue Light* (1932); *Triumph of the Will* (1934)

Read: Eric Rentschler, "A Legend for Modern Times: The Blue Light (1932)" from *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife*

14. class (12/12): presentation of projects with clips/PPT

Papers due Dec. 15 by 5PM via email: 15-20 pp.