

German 470:392:01 • index 53794  
Comparative Literature 195:320:01 • index 55369

# BERLIN IN FILM

Spring 2009  
TTh6 (4:30-5:50)  
Frelinghuysen Hall A1

Professor Christopher Clark  
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Office hours: W 2-4 or by appt.

## Course description:

In the early days of the moving picture, Berlin established itself as an important center for film production. As setting and as subject, Berlin became the center of a tradition of the "Berlin Film," a genre we will trace from its beginnings in the Weimar era through the Nazi era, through the Cold War and divided Berlin into post-unification Berlin, once again Germany's political and cultural capital. While our primary focus will be on the films themselves, we will also examine early German film criticism and literary responses to the medium of film.

## Required texts:

- Irmgard Keun. *The Artificial Silk Girl*. ISBN 1892746816
- Christopher Isherwood, *The Berlin Stories*. ISBN 081121804X
- a number of readings to be downloaded from the course Sakai page
- occasional handouts and websites. Budgetary restrictions require the German Department to collect from each student 5 cents per page toward the cost of handouts other than the syllabus, quizzes and tests. The department may also assess a fee for optical media (blank CD-Rs and DVD-Rs), when appropriate. When readings are available electronically, students are expected to print them out and bring them to class.
- films to be watched either at Wednesday evening screenings at German Movie Night (see below), on reserve at the Language Lab (20 Seminary Place), or occasionally on your own on DVD or CD.

### **Film Screenings:**

Most of the films to be discussed in this seminar will be screened as part of a special "Berlin in Film" series taking place weekly in the German department's German Movie Night. These screenings will take place **Wednesdays at 7:45pm** in the **Upper Lounge in Leupp Hall** (604 George St.). Should you be unable to attend Movie Night (and in the case of those films not shown as part of the series), you should watch the film on reserve at the Language Lab; in some cases the film may be distributed on DVD or CD (the latter may require a computer for viewing, if your DVD player cannot play xvid/DivX CDs).

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:**

#### **Class Participation: 20%**

Your participation grade includes multiple factors including:

- Attendance. All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared. Those who miss more than two class sessions without a compelling excuse (a doctor's or college dean's note, for instance) should expect a one-step reduction in the course grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). Three late arrivals count as one absence. Note: It is the responsibility of students who have been absent (for any reason) to find out what they have missed and obtain materials that may have been handed out.
- Discussion and preparation. All students are expected to take part actively in class discussion.

#### **Papers: 35% (15 + 20)**

Each student will write one shorter paper (5-7 pages) and one longer paper (10-12 pages) on films studied up to that point in the course; they will be due on **Thursday, 2/19/09**, and **Tuesday, 5/5/09**.

#### **Tests and Quizzes: 45% (10 + 15 + 20)**

There are 3 scheduled examinations in this course:

- 1) an in-class quiz on film studies terms (10%)
- 2) an in-class midterm exam the week before spring break (15%)
- 3) a final exam during exam period (20%)

Students who are considering trying to make the course count toward a German major should consult with me to discuss options for additional/alternative requirements. Depending on your level of German, this will likely involve doing some readings in German and writing one or both of your papers in German.

## **SCHEDULE** (subject to change)

Tu. 01/20: Introduction: Berlin in film, the "Berlin film"

### **Weimar Berlin: Sex and the City**

Th. 01/22: Walther Ruttmann, *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1927)

Tu. 01/27: *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Großstadt*

Amy Villarejo, "The Language of Film"; glossaries from Gianetti and Bordwell

Rudolf Arnheim, "The Complete Film"

W. 01/28: SCREENING: *M*

Th. 01/29: Fritz Lang, *M* (1931)

Bock & Töteberg, "A History of Ufa"

from *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, chapter 25

Tu. 02/03: Siegfried Kracauer, from *The Mass Ornament*

W. 02/04: SCREENING: *Asphalt*

Th. 02/05: Joe May, *Asphalt* (1929)

Tu. 02/10: Irmgard Keun, *The Artificial Silk Girl* [Das kunstseidene Mädchen]

Th. 02/12: Edmund Goulding, *Grand Hotel* (1932)

from *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, chapter 27

Tu. 02/17: Christopher Isherwood, *The Berlin Stories: Goodbye to Berlin*

### **Postwar/Cold War Berlin: City in Ruins, City Divided**

W. 02/18: SCREENING: *The Murderers are Among Us*

Th. 02/19: Wolfgang Staudte, *The Murderers are Among Us* (1946)

#### **Paper 1 due**

Tu. 02/24: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

#### **Quiz: Film Studies terminology**

W. 02/25: SCREENING: *Germany Year Zero*

Th. 02/26: Roberto Rossellini, *Germany Year Zero* (1948)

Tu. 03/03: Billy Wilder, *A Foreign Affair* (1948)

Th. 03/05: Billy Wilder, *One, Two, Three* (1961)

Tu. 03/10: Martin Ritt, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1965)

Th. 03/12: **Midterm Examination (in class)**

## **SPRING BREAK**

### **70s and 80s Berlin: The Gritty City**

Tu. 03/24: texts on New German Cinema TBA

Th. 03/26: Bob Fosse, *Cabaret* (1972); from Linda Mizejewski, *Divine Decadence*

Tu. 03/31: Horst Claus, "DEFA—State, Studio, Style, Identity"; other texts on GDR history, culture, and cinema TBA

W. 04/01: SCREENING: *Solo Sunny*

Th. 04/02: Konrad Wolf & Wolfgang Kohlhaase, *Solo Sunny* (1980)

Tu. 04/07: Frank Ripplloh, *Taxi zum Klo* (1981); James W. Jones, "History and Homosexuality in Frank Ripplloh's *Taxi to the Toilet*"; Les Wright, "The Genre Cycle of German Gay Coming-Out Films, 1970-1994"

W. 04/08: SCREENING: *Christiane F. — We Children from Bahnhof Zoo*

Th. 04/09: Uli Edel, *Christiane F. — We Children from Bahnhof Zoo* (1981)

### **After the Wall: Generation Berlin?**

Tu. 04/14: from Jane Kramer, *The Politics of Memory*; from Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin*

W. 04/15: SCREENING: *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*

Th. 04/16: Wolfgang Becker, *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* [Life is a Construction Site/Life is All You Get] (1997)

Tu. 04/21: texts on the Berlinale TBA

W. 04/22: SCREENING: *Run Lola Run*

Th. 04/23: Thomas Tykwer, *Run Lola Run* (1998); Margit Sinka, "Tom Tykwer's *Lola rennt*: A Blueprint of Millennial Berlin"

Tu. 04/28: Deniz Göktürk, "Beyond Paternalism: Turkish German Traffic in Cinema"; texts on Turkish Germany TBA

W. 04/29: SCREENING: *Lola + Bilidikid*

Th. 04/30: Kutlug Ataman, *Lola + Bilidikid* (1999)

Tu. 05/05: Thomas Schadt, *Berlin Symphony* (2002)

Marco Abel, "Intensifying Life: The Cinema of the 'Berlin School'"

### **Paper 2 due**

Th. 05/07: Review and Conclusion

### **Final Examination: date/time TBA**