Classics of German Cinema: From Haunted Screen to Hyperreality

Description:
This course introduces students to canonical films of the Weimar, Nazi, post-war and post-wall period. Exploring issues of class, gender, nation, and conflict by means of close analysis, the course seeks to sensitize students to the cultural context of these films and the changing socio-political and historical climates in which they arose. Special attention will be paid to the issue of film style. We will also reflect on what constitutes the canon when discussing films, especially those of recent vintage. Directors include Robert Wiene, F.W. Murnau, Lotte Reininger, Fritz Lang, Josef von Sternberg, Leni Riefenstahl, Wolfgang Staudte, Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Andreas Dresen, Christian Petzold, Jessica Hausner, Michael Haneke, Angela Schanelec.
The films are available at the Douglass Media Center for viewing and will be screened Tu 7-8th period.
Taught in English.

Required Texts:
Anton Kaes, M
Catherine Wheatley, Caché
Robert Spadoni, A Pocket Guide to Analyzing Films

Recommended Texts (on reserve at Alexander Library):
Timothy Corrigan, A Short Guide to Writing about Film
Rob Burns (ed.), German Cultural Studies
Lotte Eisner, The Haunted Screen
Sigmund Freud, Writings on Art and Literature
Siegfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler
Anton Kaes, Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Cinema and the Wounds of War
Noah Isenberg, Weimar Cinema
Sabine Hake, German National Cinema
Béla Balázs, Early Film Theory
Siegfried Kracauer, The Mass Ornament
Articles will be available on-line.

Grade:
Participation 15%
Midterm 25%
Final Paper 25%
Final Exam 15%
Response papers (2 pages) on two films below to be handed in the class after the screening (additional response paper will receive extra credit)
Grade distribution:
A=90-100%; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=65-69; F=64 and below

Attendance for class is mandatory. A maximum of three absences is allowed. Therafter, each absence will result in a half-point drop of the final grade.

Departmental policies

- Attendance
All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Those who miss more than two class sessions without a compelling excuse should expect a one-step reduction in the course grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). Every additional three absences may entail a further one-step grade-reduction. 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.

- Cell Phones
Cell phones and all other technological devices (beepers, iPods, MP3players…) must be turned off during class out of respect for the instructor and fellow students. Please schedule all important phone communications outside of class time.

- Disability Support Services
Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged to speak with teachers about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

- Academic Integrity
Violations of academic integrity are an extremely serious matter, and can lead to a student’s failing the course and being referred to the University’s Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. When referring to ideas other than your own, always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely, whether you are quoting or paraphrasing. Note also that use of online translation services is not permitted as a tool for generating work that you submit for course credit. Please see the University’s policies on academic integrity at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/, and discuss with your instructor any questions you may have about this and related issues.

Introduction
Sept. 1: Clips from *Faust, Olympia, Wings of Desire*

States of the Psyche
Sept. 3: Robert Wiene, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920
   Clips from Erich von Stroheim, *Blind Husbands*
   Read Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 3-34, 61-87
   Recommended: Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, Ch. 2-3

[Sept. 8 = Monday class schedule]
The Uncanny
Sept. 10: View FW Murnau's Nosferatu, 1922
  Read Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” in Writings on Art and Literature
  Read Béla Balázs, “The Face of Things” in Early Film Theory
Sept. 15: Discussion of Nosferatu
  In class: Béla Balázs, “Immediate Present” in Early Film Theory
  Clips from The Last Laugh, 1924;
  Read Anton Kaes, “Dracula Revisited” in Shell Shock Cinema
  Recommended Lotte Eisner, “Symphony of Horror” in The Haunted Screen

Visions of the Future
Sept. 17: View Fritz Lang, Metropolis, 1927
  Read Tom Gunning, “Metropolis: The Dance of Death”
Sept. 22: Discussion of Metropolis
  Clips from Josef von Sternberg, The Blue Angel, 1929; Lotte Reiniger, The Adventures of Prince Achmed, 1926
  Read Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament”
  Recommended Stephen Lamb and Anthony Phelan, “Weimar Germany, The Birth of Modernism” in German Cultural Studies

City Under Siege
Sept. 24: Fritz Lang, M, 1931
  Read Anton Kaes, M
Sept. 29: Discussion of M
  Clips from Walter Ruttmann, Berlin, Symphony of a Great City, 1927; Robert Siodman et al., People on Sunday, 1930
  Read Wilfried van der Will, “Culture and the Organization of National Socialist Ideology 1933 to 1945” in German Cultural Studies

Presentiments of the Third Reich
Oct. 1: Leni Riefenstahl, The Blue Light, 1932
  Read Eric Rentschler, “A Legend for Modern Times: The Blue Light (1932)” in Ministry of Illusion
Oct. 6: Discussion of The Blue Light
  Clips from Triumph of the Will, 1935, Olympia, 1938
  Read Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism”
  Visitor: Dr. Evelyn Annuß

Charisma
Oct. 8: Billy Wilder, Sunset Boulevard, 1950
  Read Gerd Gemünden, “An Accented Cinema”
Oct. 13: Discussion of Sunset Boulevard
  Clips from Wolfgang Staudte, The Murderers are Among Us, 1946
  Read Gerd Gemünden, introduction to Continental Strangers

Institutions
Oct. 15: Volker Schlöndorff, Young Törless, 1966
  Read Sabine Hake, “West German Cinema 1962–90” in German National Cinema
Oct. 20: Discussion of Young Törless
  Clips from Alexander Kluge, Yesterday Girl, 1966
  Read Keith Bullivant and C. Jane Rice, “Reconstruction and Integration: The Culture of
The Leader and the Lure
Oct. 22: Werner Herzog, Aguirre, 1972
Reread Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism”
Oct. 27: Discussion of Aguirre
Clips from Herzog, Fitzcarraldo, 1982; Wim Wenders, The American Friend, 1977

Mourning Work? Terrorism in the Federal Republic
Read Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”
Nov. 3: Slides Gerhard Richter, 17. Oktober 1977
Clips from Margarethe von Trotta, Marianne and Juliane, 1981
Read Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, The Inability to Mourn (excerpt)

An Allegory of the Nation?
Nov. 5: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, The Marriage of Maria Braun, 1979
Read Anton Kaes, “The Presence of the Past”
Recommended Thomas Elsaesser, “The BRD Trilogy, or: History, the Love Story”
Nov. 10: Discussion of Marriage of Maria Braun
Clips from Fassbinder, Vomnika Vos, 1982; Ali: Fear Eats the Soul, 1974
Read Susan E. Linville, “Retrieving History”

Nov. 12: Review for Exam
Clips from Andreas Dresen, Grill Point, 2002
Read Sabine Hake, “Post-Unification Cinema 1990-2007”
Nov. 17: Midterm Exam

Surveillance
Nov. 19: View Michael Haneke, Caché, 2005
Read Catherine Wheatley, Caché
Nov. 24: tba
Dec. 1: Discussion of Caché
Read Jean Baudrillard, Simulations (excerpt)

The Horror of Hyperreality
Read Marco Abel, The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School (excerpt)
Dec. 8: Discussion of Yella, 2007
Clips from Tom Tykwer, Run Lola Run, 1998, Fritz Lang, Destiny, 1921
Read Sigmund Freud, “The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales” and “The Theme of the Three Caskets”
Recommended: Thomas Elsaesser, “Postmodernism as Mourning Work”

Afterimages
Dec. 10: View Jessica Hausner, Amour fou, 2014
Clips from Angela Schanelec, Marseille, 2004

** 10 page paper due Dec. 11, 5PM (see Timothy Corrigan, A Short Guide to Writing about Film)

Final exam during exam period, Dec. 18, 12-3PM