

Contemporary German Cinema
Film 2243F/German 2261F/CLC 2292F
Fall Term 2015

Professor Janelle Blankenship
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Course Description:

This course introduces students to the history of Contemporary German Cinema after unification. Topics include *Ostalgie*, the "Berlin School", European identity and transnational film production, migration, and historical memory. The relationship to the *auteurism* of post-war New German Cinema will also be examined. By the end of this course, you will be able to identify major trends and tendencies in contemporary German Cinema and situate them in their historical, cultural and aesthetic contexts.

Learning Outcomes:

Understanding, capacity for argument, judgment and analysis will be fostered by essays, presentations and other assignments, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion. Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion and credit will be given for frequency and quality of contributions. Essays and other written assignments are marked in accordance with the grading criteria listed below and include benchmarks for the expectations associated with each grade. Awareness of the limits of knowledge will be enhanced by exploring the legitimate differences of opinion and methodology within the field, and by requiring students to negotiate the formulation of their own opinions in-class with the terms and knowledge brought to discussions by other students and the instructor. The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by essays and in-class discussion. Time management skills will be fostered by the need to prepare properly for class and to deliver assignments in a timely manner. Academic responsibility will be developed by the need to source assignments accurately.

Suggested Writing Guide on Reserve at Weldon Library:

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

Additional texts will be available on OWL

Grade Breakdown

Attendance and Classroom Participation (includes a pop-quiz): 20 %
Sequence Analysis (2): 20 % (1st paper, 4-5 pages, 2nd paper 6-7 pages)
Midterm Essay Exam 25%
Final Exam 35%

Prerequisites: None

Antirequisites: None

Course Schedule

Week One

Sept 15 Screening: *Lola rennt/Run Lola Run* (Tykwer, 1998)

Sept. 16 Introduction: German Film Historiography

Discussion: '*Lola rennt*', Tykwer and X-Filme Production

Reading: Christine Haase, "You Can Run, but You Can't Hide: Transcultural Filmmaking in *Run Lola Run* (1998)" 395-413; "Tom Tykwer's *Lola rennt*: A Blueprint of Millennial Berlin"; Evans "Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run*: Postmodern, Posthuman, or 'Post-Theory'"

Week Two

Sept 22 Screening: *Die Ehe der Maria Braun/Marriage of Maria Braun* (Fassbinder, 1979)

Sept. 23 Discussion: **Fassbinder and the New German Cinema**

Reading: "Oberhausen Manifesto" 201-202, "Rainer Werner Fassbinder" 229-235; Alexander Kluge, "What do the 'Oberhauseners' want?" 203-205; Mary Beth Haralovich, "The Sexual Politics of *The Marriage of Maria Braun*" 378-390; (Suggested: Crofts, "Reconceptualizing National Cinema")

Week Three

Sept 29 Screening: *Der Himmel über Berlin/Wings of Desire* (Wenders, 1987)

Sept 30 Discussion: **The Topography of Historical Memory**

Reading: Ian Garwood, "The Autorenfilm in Contemporary German Cinema" 202-210; Andrew Higson, "The Concept of National Cinema" 52-67

Week Four

Oct. 6 Screening: *Bin ich schön/Am I Beautiful?* (Dorris Dörrie, 1998)

Oct. 7 Discussion: **German Comedy: The Cinema of Consensus**

Reading: "Angst Takes a Holiday in Doris Dörrie's *Am I Beautiful* (1998)" 376-391; Eric Rentschler, "From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus," 245-261

Week Five

Oct. 13 Screening: *Good bye Lenin!* (Becker, 2003)

Oct. 14 Discussion: *Ostalgie* (Clips: *Sonnenallee*)

Reading: Sean Allan, "Ostalgie, Fantasy and the Normalization of East-West Relations in Post-Unification Comedy"; Anton Kaes, "The Staging of Memory: Rewriting the Past in Contemporary German Cinema", Hodgin "Taking Leave of the GDR: Berlin is Germany and *Good Bye Lenin*"

Week Six

Oct. 20 Screening: *Das Leben der Anderen/Lives of Others* (Donnersmarck, 2006)

Oct. 21 Discussion: **Politics of Ostalgie Revisited** Sequence Analysis I Due

Reading: Enns, "The Politics of Ostalgie: Post-socialist Nostalgia in Recent German Films"; "Normalizing" the past: East German culture and Ostalgie" (Suggested: Review, "The Lives of Others: Matthew H. Bernstein on an Emotive Surveillance Thriller)

Week Seven

Oct. 27 Screening: *Die Fälscher/ Counterfeiters* (Ruzowitzky, 2007) and *Comedian Harmonists* (Vilsmaier, 1997)

Oct. 28 Discussion: **Heritage Cinema** Clips *Downfall* (Hirschbiegel, 2004) *Sophie Scholl* (Rothemund and Breinersdorfer, 2005)

Reading: Matthias Fiedler, "German Crossroads: Visions of the Past in German Cinema after Reunification" 127-143; Lutz Koepnick, "Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and the Holocaust in the 1990s; 347-369; Higson, "Re-presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film" (6 pgs)

Week Eight

Nov. 3 Screening: *Gegen die Wand/Head-On* (Akin, 2004)

Nov. 4 Discussion: **Turkish-German Cinema: European Identity I**
Clips: *Die alten, bösen Lieder* (Akin, 2004)

Reading: Deniz Göktürk, "Beyond Paternalism: Turkish German Traffic in Cinema", 248-255; Petra Fachinger, 'A New Kind of Creative Energy: Yade Kara's *Selam Berlin* and Fatih Akin's *Kurz und Schmerzlos* and *Gegen die Wand*' 243-260 (Suggested: Rob Burns, "Turkish-German Cinema: From Cultural Resistance to Transnational Cinema?" 127-150)

Week Nine

Nov. 10 Screening: *Die Fetten Jahre sind vorbei/Edukators* (Weingartner, 2004), Clips, *Black Box BRD* (Veleil, 2001)

Nov. 11 Discussion: X-Film Production & Topography of Terrorism: RAF
Reading TBA (reviews): **MIDTERM ESSAY EXAM**

Week Ten

Nov. 17 Screening: *Funny Games* (Haneke, 1997)

Nov. 18: Discussion **Media and Violence: European Identity II** [Sequence Analysis II due] Reading: Willy Riemer, "Michael Haneke, *Funny Games*: Violence and the Media"; Jurgen Felix, Marcus Stiglegger, "Austrian psycho killers & home invaders: the horror-thrillers *Angst & Funny Games*"

Week Eleven

Nov. 24 Screening: *Yella* (Petzold, 2007) and *Lichter/Distant Lights* (Schmid, 2003)

Nov. 25 Discussion **Borderlands, the 'Berlin School' and the New Realism**

Reading: "The Cinema of Identification Gets on my Nerves: An Interview with Christian Petzold"; Marco Abel, "The State of Things: More Images for a Post-Wall Reality—The 56th Berlin Film Festival," *Senses of Cinema* 39; Paul Cooke, "Abnormal consensus?: the new internationalism of German cinema"

Week Twelve

Dec 1 Screening: *Alles auf Zucker!/Go for Zucker!* (Levi, 2004)

Dec. 2 Reading: Susanne Jones, "Who is laughing at whom: Jewish humor in Dani Levy's *Alles auf Zucker*"

Week Thirteen

Dec. 8 Screening: *Vier Minuten/Four Minutes* (Kraus, 2006) or "Oh Boy" [A Coffee in Berlin, Jan Ole Gerster, 2012]

Dec. 9 NO READING/COURSE REVIEW **Sequence Analysis II Due**

Final Exam TBA

Prerequisite: none

Antirequisite: none

Please Note: The film screenings for the course are mandatory. If you miss a class or a screening you are responsible for arranging a viewing of the assigned film at the Film Resource Centre in AHB 1G19. Please note that not all films are available at the Film Resource Centre. Students with special permission to watch films on their own time and needing to do so during the 2.00-4.30 period should contact Chris Bell in the Film Library (cbell57@uwo.ca) to make special arrangements to do so, as normally the Film Library will be closed during the afternoon. More than one unexcused absence will be reflected in your attendance mark. Assignments handed in late without prior approval will be penalized 3% per day. You must request an extension *before* the due date, and extensions will be given at my discretion.

1. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage, from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

2. **Plagiarism Checking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).

3. **Prerequisites:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

4. **UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and or assignments must apply to their Academic Counseling Office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Please go to the following site for information on the university Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

5. Mental Health: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

6. Complaints: If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the Film Studies Office, IGAB 0N64. These regulations are in place because a failure to follow these procedures creates the potential for injustices of various kinds affecting either the instructor or the students themselves, or both parties. Concerns should not be allowed to fester but should be raised with the instructor in a timely manner, so that they can be addressed in time to make a difference to the course.

Grading Criteria for Written Assignments

A (80 and up)

Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphs

Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses)

Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors

Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response

Quotations well integrated into text, with proper documentation

Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

B (70 to 79)

Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs

Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation

Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor

Adequately detailed reference to texts

Quotations well integrated into text, with proper documentation

Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity

C (60 to 69)

Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs

Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma

Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

Effort to support points with references to the text, with reasonable effort at documentation

Basic ability to expound ideas

D (50 to 59)

Inadequacy at *one* of the following levels:

Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought

Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding

Ideas inchoate, but clouded by weak expression

Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy irrelevant paraphrase

F (49 and down)

Inadequacy on *several* levels at once

Ideas too simple for level of course

Content largely “borrowed” from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive

0 (Report to Department)

Plagiarism with intent to deceive