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Spring 2002

German Film (Spring 2002) (Whitman College)

Robert D. Tobin

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WHITMAN COLLEGE

World Literature 279: German Film

Spring 2002

M, W 2:30-4:00

Movie Screenings Friday, 1:30, Olin 157.

My office: Memorial 312A

Tel: x-5061

This course is an introduction to German cinema. Students will study masterpieces of German cinema, important critical discussions of them, and the contexts in which they arose.

Grading:

2 short papers	20%
1 final internet project	20%
protocols	20%
participation	20%
final examination	20%

Short papers:

- The first short paper will be a response to Siegfried Kracauer's critical masterpiece, From Caligari to Hitler. Give an assessment of his analysis. 4-5 pages. Due Mar 1.
- The second short paper will be an annotated bibliography of one of the films we have watched in the first half of the semester. Find at least 5 scholarly critical essays (in film journals, booklength collections of essays, etc.; make sure that internet essays are of a scholarly nature) on the film, read them, and briefly indicate their main points and your assessment of them. "Lola and Billy the Kid," "Aimee and Jaguar," "I Am My Own Woman," and "Run Lola Run" are probably so recent that there is not enough critical literature available on them, so you will have to select another film. Due Mar. 19.

Final internet project: This will be an exhibit about a particular film in the virtual museum, which you will create collaboratively with students from other institutions who are also studying German film. It will be graded on creativity and thoroughness. You will present your exhibit to class in the last days of the semester. Please try to have something ready by the time we discuss the film, though, so that we can see that you are getting started.

The project will be created on “virtual museum” [<http://cet.middlebury.edu/virtualmuseum/#>]. On January 28, Aaron Coburn from Middlebury College will come and explain the workings of this program.

Protocols: for most days, there will be a student assigned to take notes. These should be written up into a report on the class by the next class section. If you want me to make copies of the protocol for the class, please have your original in to my office in Memorial at least a half an hour before class starts. Otherwise, bring enough copies for the class.

Participation: Discussion is vitally important to this class. Mere attendance without speaking will get you a “D,” which could seriously hurt your final grade.

Final examination: The final examination will be a series of essay questions in which you will have the chance to compare and contrast a number of films from the pre- and post-war eras.

Attendance: Attendance is vital for a seminar class. More than three absences may result in the lowering of your final grade by a whole letter.

Film Screenings: Films will be shown in Olin 157 at 1:30 on Friday. If you cannot make this screening, you may watch the films at your own leisure in the library. The videos/dvds are generally not to leave the library, however, so that other students may also have access to them.

Lateness: Late papers complicate the grading process. Therefore, I will take off a half grade for each day of lateness. I leave the calculation up to you whether the extra work you put into a paper will be worth the grade erosion caused by lateness.

SYLLABUS

Part I: Pre-War Films

- Jan. 14 Introduction. Film resources on internet and in library.
- Jan. 16 Informed film watching: Screening of Student of Prague in class.
- Jan. 18 The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari
- Jan 21 Holiday
- Jan. 23 Origins of German film. Discuss Student of Prague, Caligari. Conrad Veidt Casablanca). Reading: Kracauer, chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-76). If time, brief discussion of what we're missing: Lubitsch.
- Jan. 25 Film: Nosferatu. Symphony of Horror
- Jan 28 Aaron Coburn visits to explain "Virtual Museum." Set up details of collaborative internet project.
- Jan. 30 Discuss Nosferatu and vampires. Discuss Murnau. Clips of Last Laugh and Faust. Mention Shadow of the Vampire. Reading: Kracauer, chapters 6-11 (76-137). If time, brief discussion of what we're missing: Pabst, Joyless Street, Pandora's Box, Threepenny Opera.
- Feb. 1 Film: Metropolis
- Feb. 4 Discuss Metropolis. Fritz Lang (M, Fury, Big Heat etc.). Follow up with Lorre (The Maltese Falcon, Casablanca). Thea von Harbou. Reading: Kracauer, chapters 12-13 (138-164).
- Feb. 6 View clips of Berlin, Symphony of a Great City. Montage. Reading: Kracauer, chapters 14-15 (165-189).
- Feb. 8 Film: The Blue Angel
- Feb. 11 Discuss Sternberg. Discuss Dietrich. Clips of Morocco and Destry Rides Again. Arrival of sound films. Discuss The Blue Angel. Reading: Kracauer, chapters 16-18 (190-222)
- Feb. 13 Continued discussion of Sternberg/Dietrich. Reading: Koch (on reserve).
- Feb. 15 Film: Mädchen in Uniform
- Feb. 18 Holiday
- Feb. 20 Discuss Mädchen in Uniform. Reading: Kracauer, chapters 19-21, and Kaes, "German Cultural History and the Study of Film" (on reserve). Review Kracauer.
- Feb. 22 Film: Triumph of the Will

- Feb. 25 Discuss Nazi take-over. Discuss Riefenstahl. Clips of The Blue Light and Olympia. Discuss Triumph of the Will. Gender and directors. Riefenstahl's influence: Roland Emmerich, Independence Day. Hans Zimmer, Gladiator.
- Feb. 27. Clips of The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl. Discuss Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism" (on reserve). Is there a fascist aesthetic? Where does Schwarzenegger, in, say, Terminator, fit in? If time, brief discussion of what we're missing: Veit Harlan, clips of Jud Süß.
- Mar. 1 Film: Murderers are Among Us. First paper due: response to Kracauer's analysis
- Mar. 4 Discuss Murderers are Among Us. East German film: Carrow, etc.
- Mar. 6 Wrap up for first half of semester.
- Mar. 8 No film

S P R I N G B R E A K

Part II: Post-War Films

- Mar. 25 Lola and Billy the Kid: in class screening.
- Mar. 27 Discussion with visiting educator, Professor Joachim Pfeiffer
- Mar. 28 Mandatory evening lecture, Olin 157, by Professor Joachim Pfeiffer on culture in Germany after the unification.
- Mar. 29 Film: Nasty Girl
- April 1 Discuss Nasty Girl. German Comedy: Dorris Dörrie (Men, etc.). Billy Wilder. Reading: Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." (On reserve)
- April 3 Continue discussion of Benjamin.
- April 4 Possible video conference with actress from Nasty Girl.
- April 5 Film: The Marriage of Maria Braun
- April 8 Discuss Fassbinder. Clips of various films. Discuss Maria Braun. Reading: Rheuban (on reserve).
- April 10 Further discussion. Reading: Kaes on Maria Braun ("The Presence of the Past," excerpt of From Hitler to Heimat, on reserve). Douglas Sirk. If time, discussion of what we're missing: Wenders, Wings of Desire, Herzog, Fitzcarraldo. Klaus and Natasia Kinski.
- April 12 Film: The Tin Drum
- April 15 Discuss Schlöndorf. Clips of The Handmaid's Tale. Discuss Grass and The Tin Drum.
- April 17 Discuss Adorno, "The Culture Industry." Wolfgang Peterson, The Perfect Storm.
- April 19 Film: I Am My Own Woman

- April 22 More on Praunheim. Clips of Anita: Dance of Vice, A Virus Knows No Morals, Silence = Death, I Am My Own Woman.
- April 24 Other queer movies: Taxi zum Klo, All of Me, Salmonberries, Via Appia, Westler, Coming Out. Presentation: Occidentalism in German Queer Films.
- April 26 Film: Aimee and Jaguar
- April 29 Review of internet projects
- March 1 Review of internet projects
- March 3 Film: Run Lola Run
- March 6 Wrap up of semester.