

Name:	Dr. Brigitta Wagner
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Course title:	Imagining Germany - German Cinema after Unification
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	4

Course description

This course explores German cinema after the *Wende*, the period of political change surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. As we trace the development of a 'postwall' cinema, we will be paying particular attention to the cultural historical context in which the films were made. While examining the films as specific aesthetic and narrative products of and reflections on German unification, we will also consider how they relate to the project of national cinema in an increasingly global market. Our discussions will place artistic production and commercial interests within a number of shifting contexts: cultural politics, geography, historiography, multiculturalism, and collective memory.

Inviting students to critically reexamine filmic representations of Germany, the course will focus on several key topics: 1) The *Wende* or "turn" in East German politics in 1989-90; 2) the way that all-German cultural consensus was forged through popular comedies; 3) the legacy of the Third Reich; 4) coming to terms with the East and West German pasts; 4) the New Berlin in film production and spatial memory; 5) multiculturalism and migration; and 6) the rise of the Berlin School as well as more current trends in German cinema. These themes exemplify how "postwall" German cinema has been coping with Germany's complex and controversial past and present.

One goal of the course is to introduce students to film analysis through a number of important German films from the 1990s to today. A second goal is for students to acquire knowledge of the sociocultural discourses that inform the production and reception of these films. Students will work on a number of questions in small groups and will then be asked to share their analyses and thoughts with the rest of the class. A third goal of the course is to introduce students to relevant cultural and geographical resources in Berlin through field trips to, for example, the Museum of Film and Television and/or the exploration of film locations.

By the end of the course, the students will have gained a better understanding of contemporary Germany, its cinema, and its current public discourses. They will be able to analyse the ways in which film form, content, and historical context create meaning. Not only will the students enhance their skills in audiovisual analysis; they will also acquire the ability to interrogate the political circumstances that led to these films' creation.

Student profile

This course is open to anyone with an interest in cinema in general and German cinema in particular.

Prerequisites

No prior knowledge of German, German films, or film and media studies is required. Students must be able to speak and read English at the advanced intermediate level.

Course requirements

Attendance and participation in class, leading one class discussion, one field trip report, and one term paper.

Grading

Attendance and participation: 20%
 Chairing one discussion in class: 20%
 Field Trip Report: 20%
 Term Paper: 40%

Reading

A course reader will be provided on the first day of class.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Tuesday, July 25, 2017	<p>Introduction: How to Analyze a Film</p> <p>A short background on the history of German cinema. Introduction to film analysis.</p> <p>The political turn of 1989-90 as reflected in film.</p> <p>Films: <i>Ein-Blick</i> (In-Sight, Gerd Conradt, FRG 1987), <i>The Architects</i> (Peter Kahane, GDR 1990)</p>
Friday, July 28, 2017	<p>Consensus Comedy</p> <p>What is “National Cinema”? Why did postwall cinema embrace lighter genres? How did this relate to the Hollywood influence?</p> <p>Film: <i>Maybe...Maybe Not</i> (1994)</p>
Tuesday, August 1, 2017	<p>Coming to Terms with the Legacy of the Third Reich</p> <p>Film(s): Several film clip</p> <p>Field Trip: Museum of Film and Television</p>
Friday, August 4, 2017	<p>The Red Army Fraction as a Cinematic Obsession?</p> <p>What was the Red Army Fraction, and why did it become a cinematic obsession in post-unification Germany the last two decades? Coming to terms with the West German past in the unified Federal Republic of Germany.</p>

	<p>Films: several clips; <i>Black Box Germany</i> (Andres Veiel, 2001)</p>
Tuesday, August 8, 2017	<p>The New Berlin</p> <p>Why did Berlin become such an important center of film production and film space after the fall of the Wall?</p> <p>Film: <i>Run Lola Run</i> (Tom Tykwer, 1998); excerpts from <i>Goodbye, Lenin!</i> (Wolfgang Becker, 2003)</p> <p>Field Trip: Walking tour to film locations <i>and/or</i> a viewing a new German film relevant to the course in one of Berlin's cinemas.</p>
Friday, August 11, 2017	<p>Negotiating Multiculturalism, Migrants, Margins</p> <p>How does German cinema deal with immigration to the country? How do second and third generation immigrants challenge ideas of national identity?</p> <p>Film: several film clips; <i>Head-On</i> (Fatih Akin, 2004)</p>
Tuesday, August 15, 2017	<p>“The Berlin School”</p> <p>What is the Berlin School? What kind of images of life in contemporary Germany do these films provide?</p> <p>Film(s): several film clips; <i>Orly</i> (Angela Schanelec, 2010)</p>
Friday, August 18, 2017	<p>Wrap Up Session & The Future of German Cinema</p> <p>Course Summary & Thinking about the future of German Cinema and stories that may arise from current German cultural, historical, and political concerns.</p> <p>Farewell Ceremony (2:00 PM)</p>

*Field trips may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days adaptation of class times is possible.