

GERGEN 129/229 German Cinema

Prof. Adrian Daub

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Course Description

This course traces the history of German cinema from its beginnings in the “cinema of attractions,” to its heyday. We will pay particular attention to the cinema of the Weimar Republic, Nazi cinema and the films of the immediate aftermath of WWII. We will confront this history of cinema with the long and rich history of German thought on cinema, its political valences and social potential.

Course Requirements

15-20 page paper due on March 13 at noon. Topic open, but please consult with me about your project at some point *before* the last week of classes.

Preliminary Seminar Plan

Jan 7: Introduction to the Course

Jan 14: Tyrants

Films: Robert Wiene, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
F. W. Murnau, *Nosferatu*

Readings:

Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen*, “Chapter 1: The Beginnings of Expressionist Film”, Chapter 6 “The Symphonies of Horror”

Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, “Chapter 5: Caligari,” “Chapter 6: The Procession of Tyrants”

Thomas Elsaesser, “Expressionist film or Weimar Cinema?”

Jan 21: Woman

Films: G.W. Pabst, *Pandora's Box*

Readings:

Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen*, “Chapter 19: Pabst and the Miracle of Louise Brooks”

Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*, “Chapter 3: Mass Culture as Woman – Modernism’s Other”

Jan 28: Myth

Film: Fritz Lang, *Die Nibelungen*

Readings:

David Levin, *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang and the Nibelungen*, “Chapter 3: Viewing with a Vengeance”

Hermann Häfker, “Können kinographische Vorführungen ‘höheren Kunstwert’ haben?”

Tom Gunning, *The Films of Fritz Lang*, “Chapter 2: The Decay of Myth”

Feb 4: Face

Film: Fritz Lang, *M*

Readings:

Béla Balázs, “Minenspiel und Physiognomik im Film”

Béla Balázs, “The Close-Up,” “The Face of Man” (In Braudy and Cohen, *Film Theory and Criticism*)

Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen*, Chapter 14 “The Fritz Lang Thriller”

Anton Kaes, “Weimar Cinema: The Predicament of Modernity”

Claudia Schmölders, *Hitler’s Face*, “Chapter 3: Iconizations, 1923-1929”

Feb 11: Voice, Sound

Films: Fritz Lang, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*

F. W. Murnau, *Tabu*

Josef von Sternberg, *The Blue Angel*

Readings:

Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, Chapters 1-4

Sergei Eisenstein, “Achtung Goldgrube!”

Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, “Chapter 7: Dialogue and Sound”

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, “Chapter 9: The Components of the Image”

Amy Lawrence, “Marlene Dietrich: The Voice as Mask” (in *Dietrich Icon*)

Siegfried Kracauer, “The Blue Angel” (In *Weimar Sourcebook*)

Stefan Andriopoulos, *Possessed*, “Chapter IV: Bernheim, Caligari, Mabuse: Cinema and Hypnotism”

Feb 18: Heimat

Films: R.W. Fassbinder, *Katzelmacher*, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*

Readings:

Anton Kaes, "New German Cinema as National Cinema"

Elizabeth Boa/Rachel Palfreyman, "(Un-)Happy Families"

Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*, "6. West German Cinema 1962-89"

Feb 25: Heroes

Films: Werner Herzog, *Aguirre, The Wrath of God*
Wim Wenders, *Lightning over Water*

Readings:

Tim Corrigan, "The Commerce of Auteurism: Coppola, Kluge, Ruiz" (In *A Cinema Without Walls*)

Mar 4: Myth II

Film: Hans Jürgen Syberberg, *Our Hitler*

Readings:

Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, "We Live in a Dead Country" (in *West German Filmmakers on Film*)

Susan Sontag, "Syberberg's Hitler"

Tim Corrigan, *New German Film*, "Chapter 7: The Exorcism of the Image"

Eric Santner, *Stranded Objects*, "Chapter 4 – Allegories of Grieving: The Films of Hans Jürgen Syberberg"

Thomas Elsaesser, "Myth as the Phantasmagoria of History: H.J. Syberberg, Cinema and Representation"

Mar 11: Mourning

Films: Various, *Germany in Autumn*
Margarete von Trotta, *Marianne and Juliane*

Readings:

Nora Alter, *Projecting History*, "Chapter 2 – Framing Terrorism: Beyond the Borders"

Marc Silberman, *German Cinema*, "13. The Subject of Identity: Margarethe von Trotta's *Marianne and Juliane*"