FLGR 3050 German Cinema

Course Objectives

We will examine the differences between Movie - Film - Motion Picture Cinema, and you will get an overview of the History of German Cinema.

Course Requirements

1. Preparation before film showing. Selected readings: Course packet (University Bookstore). Online reading assignments. Participation in discussion following viewing.

2. Attendance at weekly viewings

3. **Eight** 2-page film journals

4. Midterm Final Examination

Your grade will be determined in the following manner:

1. Weekly Attendance at film showings (25%)

2. Journals or short papers (35%)

3. Midterm and Final Examinations (20% each =40%)

Grading Scale: A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 0-59%.

Students needing accommodations should arrange a meeting the first week of class. Come during office hours or email for an alternate time. Bring the Accommodation Memo and Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. Discuss items needed in this class. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need special accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT)
Academic Honesty: Students are expected to behave with integrity. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in the manner specified in the Tiger Cub.

Students may withdraw (although with a W on their transcript) until midsemester.

Make-ups for all missed and late work are allowed with proper University approved excuses within one week of the original due date.

Student emails will be answered within 48 hours of receipt.

The final exam will be given at the University set time and date.

Class attendance is required.

All readings are to be completed before coming to class.

There are no unannounced quizzes.

Schedule:

Week 1       Petersen: Die unendliche Geschichte
Week 2       von Sternberg: Der blaue Engel
Week 3:      Wortmann: Das Wunder von Bern
Week 4       Petersen: Das Boot
Week 5       Schlöndorff/von Trotta: Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum
Week 6       Schweiger: Barfuß
Week 7       Schlöndorff: Die Blechtrommel
Week 8       von Donnersmarck: Das Leben der Anderen MIDTERM
Week 9       von Trotta: Rosenstraße
Week 10      Akin: Im Juli [Wunschfilm 1]
Week 11      Sombogaart : De Tweeling
GUIDELINES FOR FILM JOURNALS

You are required to write eight 2-page film journals as part of your assignments for this course. These short essays should be a film critique/review. Please type and double-space your journals. Do not give a plot summary. Begin by presenting your specific approach to the film, or the particular way you wish to interpret the film. State your argument, and you should substantiate your position with references to the film itself. You may choose to include a supporting quotation from another source, including one of the film texts on reserve at the library. Your journal should be submitted the following week after we view the film in class.

How to Critique A Film:

1. Aim at saying something more than “It was great” or “It was boring.” Neither of these value judgments is particularly enlightening to others.

2. Consider each film craft individually. A great film results from the collaboration of all the film artists working together. Consider the way the actors communicate emotion; examine the look of the film (cinematography); consider the expressiveness of the sets and costumes (production design); listen to how the background score supports the action (music); see how the film flows from shot to shot (editing). All these aspects affect a film’s quality.

3. Don't assume the screenplay is just dialogue. The screenplay supplies the action of the film, its narrative structure, and its characters, as well as the dialogue. Notice how the movie is constructed.

4. Focus in particular on the director. Of course, the director, writer and producer can all have a strong authorial impact on a film. Yet it is the director who is
theoretically in charge of creative decisions, and as such may be regarded as the “auteur” of the final product. If you are familiar with other works by the same director, you may wish to discuss a particular film in this greater context.

5. Think about what the movie means. Even a movie that is clearly intended as entertainment can be analyzed for its thematic context and symbolic suggestiveness. Whether or not the writer of director thought consciously of the meaning may not ultimately matter. It is worth thinking about what elements may have contributed to the meaning you have found there.

6. Consider how the movie fits into its genre. To do this, think about the movies that came before it and those that came after. Films are divided into various genres, including: horror movies, musicals, westerns, detective films, science fiction films, melodramas, mysteries, historical epics, etc. Was the film you saw in this course original or clichéd? Did it elaborate on the clichés in new ways? Is it so original that it creates a new genre, or does it fall into an existing genre?

7. Think about how the movie uses film grammar. The shot is the basic unit of any film: a single continuous take, before the camera cuts to something else. To analyze a show, you think about how characters move within the frame, how light and dark are balanced in the frame, how the camera is positioned relative to the characters. Shots build into scenes: by analyzing how one shot follows another, you understand the scene better. Scenes build into sequences: by analyzing how one scene follows another in a connected way, you understand the sequence better.

8. Don’t assume the only good movies are ones with “important” topics. People have a tendency to judge films by their subject matter, paying more attention if a film deals with current social or political issues, or if it is based on a serious literary work or on the life of an important individual. Yet the movies that are most revered in the long run often seem like mere entertainment when first released.

9. Watch a lot of movies. Sample all genres and all time periods. Start with actors, directors and genres you like, but don’t just stay with them: try everything. Peruse lists of classic films and try and see as many of those as you can. The more movies you see, the richer your appreciation of any given movie will be.

10. Stay through the end of the credits. You’ll get to hear a substantial portion of the musical score, you’ll also see how many different kinds of professionals worked on the movie, and you’ll have time to let the film sink in before returning
to the real world. Who knows, you may also be rewarded by some additional cinematic treat (outtakes, or an extra scene).