



FS/HS 342g – CONTEMPORARY GERMAN FILM
IES Abroad Berlin

DESCRIPTION: German unification marked the beginning of a new era in German film: a generation of young filmmakers developed new forms of film aesthetics. Beginning in 1989, the time of fundamental changes in Europe and the postwar world, a strong desire for filmic investigation and invention emerged. The most interesting films of this artistic and cultural new beginning display intriguing relations to these social-political transitions. Berlin has been at the crossroads of these developments. Since the breakdown of the iron curtain, the city has sought to restore its status as a center for the global film industry, as it was at the beginning of the 20th century. In short: Berlin is the place where one cannot only observe contemporary German film, but also directly grasp its dynamics and movement. In our course, we will examine major representatives of the contemporary German film scene. We will learn about trends, schools, and genres and about historical and aesthetic developments of German cinema. Categories like gender, race, class and their intersectional relations will structure our deep readings of the films. We will also explore the lively film city through various field trips around Berlin

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

ADDITIONAL COST: none

PREREQUISITES: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Seminar format
- (Short) lectures
- Discussions
- Language exercises (written and oral)
- Field Trips
- Moodle will be used to enhance students' learning experiences

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Participation - 10 %
- One response paper – 30%
- Group Presentation - 15 %
- Midterms - 15 %
- Final/Research Paper - 30 %

Participation

Oral participation in class is very important; every session requires your oral contribution. Group discussions will help you explore a topic. You will present the findings of your response papers in class. The grading rubric for participation is available in the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle.



Response Papers

- You will write one response paper during the course (around **700 words** in length) on a film we discuss in the seminar.

Group Presentation

Explore one filming location of *Lola rennt* and observe the transition of real space into cinematic place. Present your findings in a multi-media presentation in class.

Midterm Exam

Demonstrate your familiarity with German film terminology and answer one essay question on a film of your choice that we discussed in class (written exam, 90 minutes in-class).

Final Research Paper

Apply the interpretative methods acquired in this seminar to a contemporary German film of your choice, or to a comparison of two films. Paper length: **ca. 2.000 words**.

- Discuss at least three scholarly secondary sources.
- Observe the usual rules of academic writing.
- Final Paper due Thursday of finals week (2:00 PM).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Overview of contemporary German film after 1989
- Situating these films in the history of German film
- Analysis of contemporary films according to methods and criteria of film theory
- Combining theoretical insights with practical film analysis
- Reflecting on filmic representation and socio-political contexts
- Experiencing fundamental sites of Berlin as city of films
- Structuring and expressing observations and thoughts on films and texts
- Scrutinising a specific topic through question-driven essays

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

For our up-to-date attendance and exam policy, see: <https://moodle.iesabroad.org/mod/page/view.php?id=1004317>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Academic Integrity Code. Assigned papers need to be properly and amply footnoted where appropriate, with all sources attributed. Poorly written and grammatically sloppy papers will be judged more severely. Work with a language tutor.

CONTENT:

Note: Students are expected to watch all films outside of class (individually or in self-organized groups)

Week	Content	(Reading) Assignments

Week 1	Session 1: Introduction Session 2: Talking about German Film <i>Joshua</i> (Dani Levy, 2009) (Watch clippings in class)	• Bordwell/Thompson, "The Significance of Film Form" 56-77. • Faulstich, "Die Analyse der Bauformen" 114-125. • "Sprache der Filmanalyse" (Handout, 4 pp)
Week 2	Sessions 3/4: Berlin's Urban Space I <i>Der Himmel über Berlin</i> (1987) The divided city in GDR film (watch clippings in class)	• Brockmann, "Introduction", In: <i>A Critical History of German Film</i>. 1-9. • Skidmore, "Berlin, the Unchanging Symphony of a Big City: Determining Story in <i>Der Himmel über Berlin</i> and <i>Lola rennt</i>," 17-29.
Week 3	Sessions 5/6: Berlin's Urban Space II <i>Lola rennt</i> (1998) Exploration of filming locations	• Brockmann. "<i>Lola Rennt</i> (1998) or Cool Germania," 457-467. • Mesch, "Racing Berlin: The Games of Run Lola Run" (web) <u>Research Assignment (Group Work):</u> Research one filming location of <i>Lola rennt</i>. Creatively analyze the site in its relation to the film. Use your experience of the location as an entry point to your discussion of the movie. Prepare a <u>multi-media presentation</u>
Week 4	Sessions 7/8: Berlin's Urban Space III "Lola's Berlin": Group presentations on the filming locations of <i>Lola rennt</i> <i>Der schöne Tag</i> (2000)	Presentations in class • Abel, "Intensifying Life: The Cinema of the 'Berlin School'" (web)
Week 5	Sessions 9/10 Dramatising Stasi <i>Das Leben der Anderen</i> (2006) <i>Gundermann</i> (2019) Representing GDR in the contemporary German film	• Brockmann, "<i>Das Leben der Anderen</i> or the Power of Art," 489-500. • Dresen, "Vom Zoo in den Dschungel. Ostdeutsche Filmkultur 20 Jahre nach dem Mauerfall," 37-43.

Week 6	Sessions 11/12: Post-Migrant Cinema in Germany <i>Gegen die Wand (Head-On, 2004)</i>	- Brockmann. "<i>Gegen die Wand</i> (2004) or Germany goes multicultural", 479-487. „Es ist so schwer, man selbst zu sein, und dann noch auf Deutsch..." <i>Spiegel</i> Review of <i>Futur 3</i> „Futur 3 – Kritik" auf critic.de
Week 7	Midterm in class	
Week 8	Session 13/14: Film as system critique <i>Systemsprenger</i> (2019)	Exposé due session 15 Drehbuch Systemsprenger von Nora Fingscheidt
Week 9	Session 15/16: New German comedy <i>Toni Erdmann</i> (2016)	Discussion: German Cinema goes international reading material handed out in class
Week 10-11	Student presentations on a chosen German film project, Sessions 17-20	
Week 12	Session 21/22, final screening & final discussion, wrap-up and paper consultation	

FIELD STUDIES:

- Exploration of filming locations of *Lola rennt* (group project)
- Field trip to Filmmuseum Potsdamer Platz

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Abel, Marco. "Intensifying Life: The Cinema of the 'Berlin School'," in *Cineaste* 33.4 (Fall 2008) (web)
- Allan, Seán. "Ostalgie, Fantasy and the Normalization of East-West Relations in Post-unification Comedy." in *German Cinema Since Unification*. Ed. David Clarke. London: Continuum, 2006. pp. 105-126.
- Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. "The Significance of Film Form," in *Film Art: An Introduction* (9th ed.). N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 2010. pp. 56-77.
- Brockmann, Stephen. "Das Leben der Anderen or the Power of Art." *A Critical History of German Film*. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2010. pp. 489-500.
- Brockmann, S. "Gegen die Wand (2004) or Germany goes multicultural." *Critical History of German Film*, pp. 479-487.
- Brockmann, S. "Lola Rennt (1998) or Cool Germania", In: *A Critical History of German Film*, pp. 457-467.
- Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung "Am Ende kommen Touristen": <http://www.bpb.de/files/1AUZJI.pdf>; 1-15; 19-26.
- Dresen, Andreas. "Vom Zoo in den Dschungel. Ostdeutsche Filmkultur 20 Jahre nach dem Mauerfall." *German Studies Association Newsletter XXXIV.2* (2009-10) (web).
- Faulstich, Werner. "Die Analyse der Bauformen," in *Grundkurs Filmanalyse*. München: Fink, 2002. pp. 114-125.
- Kadritzke, Till. „Es ist so schwer, man selbst zu sein, und dann noch deutsch“. Rezension von *Futur 3. Der Spiegel*, 23.09.2020 (web)
- Kapczynski, Jennifer. "Negotiating Nostalgia: The GDR Past in *Berlin is in Germany* and *Good bye, Lenin!*" In: *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* (2010), pp. 78-100.
- Küper, Anne. „Futur 3 – Kritik.“ *Critic.de*, 15.04.2021 (web)
- Mesch, C. (2000). "Racing Berlin: The Games of Run Lola Run." *M/C Journal*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.1845>
- Skidmore, James. "Berlin, the Unchanging Symphony of a Big City: Determining Story in *Der Himmel über Berlin* and *Lola rennt*," in *GFL* 1 (2003), pp. 17-29.

FILMOGRAPHY:

- *Futur 3* (Faraz Shariat, 2020)
- *Gegen die Wand* (Fatih Akin, 2004)
- *Good bye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003)
- *Der Himmel über Berlin* (Wim Wenders, 1987)
- *Joshua* (Dani Levy, 2009, in: *Deutschland 09*)
- *Kleo* (Netflix, 2022)
- *Das Leben der Anderen* (Florian Henckel v. Donnersmarck, 2006)
- *Lola rennt* (Tom Tykwer, 1998)
- *Der schöne Tag* (Thomas Arslan, 2000)
- *Systemsprenger* (Nora Fingscheidt, 2019)
- *Toni Erdmann* (Maren Ades, 2016)