

## FS317 – TRANSATLANTIC CINEMA: GERMANY AND THE U.S.

IES Abroad Berlin

### DESCRIPTION:

German and American filmmaking looks back on a long, interconnected history. Ever since the invention of the moving image, contact across the Atlantic has proved mutually stimulating, supportive, and competitive. This transatlantic relationship involves directors and actors travelling in both directions in search of inspiration, money, and (in the case of filmmakers fleeing Hitler Germany) safety; it also relates to reciprocal aesthetic influences, imaginings of the self and the other, and to flows of capital both ways. As one chief object of analysis, this course will highlight the close relations between the (Berlin-) Babelsberg and Hollywood film studios in the early twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We will address questions like the following: what were the historical contexts of these moments of cooperation during the Weimar Republic of the 1920s and the post-*Wende* cinema since the 1990s? What impact has the economic power of Hollywood had on German filmmaking? What strategies has German film developed to approach this economic imbalance? As another central topic, the course will address the question of Americanization. How did American culture and power engender attraction as well as fear in Germany during the Weimar Republic? How did post-war West German and East German filmmaking differ dramatically in the positions they took regarding their relation to the United States? Is Americanization still an adequate concept to understand the globalizing film market in which the U.S. and Germany are only players among others? On a theoretical level, a transatlantic perspective invites us to ask questions about the idea of a national cinema in the light of the international dimension of the production and reception of movies, and to explore the ways in which cinema cultures coexist within the broader context of globalization. Concepts of the national, the international, the transnational, and the global will be discussed in their relations to film aesthetics and economies. On a thematic level, the course explores how U.S. and German cinemas have engaged with major themes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These include: Urbanization and Modernization, World War II, the Holocaust and the Cold War, the Fall of the Wall, Globalization, as well as concepts of capitalism, gender and race. We will analyze how discussions of these topics and concepts differ and change not only through time (and from film to film) but also depending on their national-cultural contexts. The city, which for the greater part of the films discussed in this class functions as setting and symbol, will be analyzed as a critical platform on which (trans)national identities are negotiated.

**CREDIT:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 contact hours

**PREREQUISITES:** none

### METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Seminar format
- (Short) lectures
- Discussions
- Course-related study trips
- Most films will be watched outside of class, with close readings of specific scenes in class

**ADDITIONAL COST:** none

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand the histories of US and German film and how they interconnect
- Apply the concepts of the transatlantic, the nation, and the transnational to understanding global film production
- Combine theoretical insights with practical film analysis
- Reflect on Berlin as a city of transnational films and filmmaking
- Reflect on filmic representation and socio-political contexts
- Structure and express observations and thoughts on films and texts

- Scrutinize a specific topic through question-driven essays

#### REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation – 10%
- Midterm exam – 25% (2.000 words)
- Response paper (1.000 words)– 20%
- Case study (10 minutes presentation) – 15%
- Research paper (3.000 words) – 30%

#### Course Participation (10%):

- You are expected to come to class fully prepared (reading and film assignments); to critically engage in the discussion of films, texts, and concepts through questions and comments; and to participate in the creation of a productive learning environment.
- See IES grading rubric for participation (on Moodle site)

#### Midterm Exam (25%):

- Essay format (take-home). Approx. 2000 words based on critical thinking & creative writing.

#### Response Paper (20%):

- In your response paper (à 1.000 words) you will discuss one of the films from the syllabus, paying attention to two aspects: (1) Explore the film's transatlantic character – use the reading and the lecture material, and focus on one aspect that you find particularly interesting. (2) Select one scene or motif from the film that best illustrates your argument, and describe by which means it does that (dialogue, camera, mise-en-scène etc.). Turn in your paper prior to the respective class session (email to instructor).

#### Case Study (15%):

- Location exploration for *Lola rennt*. This is a creative assignment, and you are invited to engage with Berlin's city space on the traces of the movie *Lola rennt*. Group work is possible (depending on class size). Take an excursion to a filming location of *Lola rennt*, and research that site. Possible questions: why was this site chosen for the film? How does it appear in the movie? (How) has it changed since the filming? What is your site's history (and does it play a role in the movie, maybe unconsciously)? *Lola rennt* is a film about chance: what will you discover at the site, by chance? You can make interviews with people passing by (e.g., have they seen *Lola*? What do they think about the movie? Are they aware that they stand in a filming location? What else is on their mind, here, now?). Take pictures to document your (creative) research. You can also shoot a short film that explores your site, or engages with Berlin as a filming location in a larger sense. The result is a **presentation on 4/28** (10 minutes).

#### Research Paper (30%):

- **Topic and thesis development:** Apply the interpretative methods acquired in this seminar to an in-depth discussion of a film, or two films in comparison, or a theoretical question. Your paper can address any topic covered in class. It can (but does not have to) develop from your response paper.
- **Research:** Your paper should demonstrate two things: your ability to interpret a film and/or a concept of transatlantic cinema, and your ability to connect your interpretation to existing ideas/research.
- Please consult instructions on Moodle about paper format and style.
- Final paper due **last session** (by email)

#### 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.

## SYLLABUS

Session	Topics	Readings/Assignments
Session 1-2	<b>Introduction: Film – Languages and Contexts</b> Talking About Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bordwell/Thompson, “The Significance of Film Form” (56-77).</li> <li>Yale Film Analysis Web Site 2.0</li> </ul>
Session 3-4	<b>Cinema as a Contact Zone</b> <u>Film:</u> <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> (Q. Tarantino, 2009)  How does <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> exemplify a way to express U.S. – German transatlantic relations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitz/Kamm, “Transatlantic Cinema: An Introduction” (9-17)</li> <li>A. Higson, “The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema” (63-74)</li> <li>M.L. Pratt “Arts of the Contact Zone” (excerpts)</li> </ul>
Session 5-6	<b>Cityscapes of Transatlantic Modernism</b> How can Transatlantic Modernism serve as a foil to look at film as a common, transnational project?  <u>Films:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Manhatta</i> (Strand/ Sheeler, 1920)</li> <li><i>Berlin, Die Sinfonie der Großstadt</i> (<i>Berlin, Symphony of a Great City</i>, Walter Ruttmann, 1927)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S. Hake, “Weimar Cinema, 1919-1933” (27-59)</li> <li>C. Mouat, “Experimental Modernism in City Symphony Films” (20-26)</li> </ul>
	Independent Excursion to <b>Film Museum Potsdamer Platz</b> (Visions of cinema; transatlantic connections before and after WWII; Marlene Dietrich; Leni Riefenstahl & Nazi film) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C.R. Pierpont, “Bombshells” (1-12)</li> </ul>	
Session 7-8	<b>Moral Ambiguities in the Rubble of WWII</b> How have US politics shaped Post War (West) Germany?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Film:</u> <i>A Foreign Affair</i> (B. Wilder, 1946)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>G. Gemünden, <i>A Foreign Affair</i> (6-29)</li> </ul> <u>Recommended:</u> A. Slane, “The Iconology of the Sexy Nazi Woman: Marlene Dietrich as Palimpsest” (213-240)
Session 9-10	<b>The Holocaust in German and US American Memory</b>  How is the Holocaust approached in German film culture? What is the Americanization of the Holocaust?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Film:</u> <i>Schindler’s List</i> (S. Spielberg, 1993)</li> </ul> <u>Film (watch in class):</u> <i>Am Ende kommen Touristen</i> (1:21) ( <i>And Along Come Tourists</i> ; R. Thalheim, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D. Bathrick, “Cinematic Americanization of the Holocaust in Germany: Whose Memory is it?” (129-147)</li> </ul> <u>Recommended:</u> S. K. Schindler, “Displaced Images: The Holocaust in German Film” (192-205)
<b>Midterms</b>		Take-home Exam (Moodle)

<b>Session 11-12</b>	<b>Cold War I: The “Americanization” of West Germany and The New West German Cinema</b> How did US culture influence West German culture and film production during the Cold War? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Film: <i>Alice in den Städten</i> (<i>Alice in the Cities</i>, W. Wenders 1974)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>W. Fluck, “California Blue: Americanization and Self-Americanization” (221-237)</li> <li>R. Kilborn, “‘The Yanks have colonized our sub-conscious’: Transatlantic Relations and the Films of Wim Wenders” (51-64)</li> </ul>
<b>Session 13-14</b>	<b>Cold War II: The US Imaginary in East German film</b> Films (watch excerpts in class): <i>Berlin-Ecke Schönhauser</i> ( <i>Berlin – Schönhauser Corner</i> ; 1957) <i>Heißer Sommer</i> ( <i>Hot Summer</i> , J. Hasler, DEFA 1986) <i>Dean Reed – The Red Elvis</i> (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>G. Gemünden, “Between Karl May and Karl Marx. The DEFA-<i>Indianerfilme</i>” (243-256)</li> <li>J. Raundalen, “A Communist Takeover in the Dream Factory” (69-86)</li> </ul> Recommended: S. Hake, “Anti-Americanism and the Cold War: On the DEFA Berlin Films” (148-165)
<b>Session 15</b>	<b>Post-Wall Cinema</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Film: <i>Lola rennt</i> (<i>Run, Lola Run</i>, T. Tykwer, 1998)</li> </ul> Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Haase, “Lola rennt: A Study in Transcultural Filmmaking” (174-188)</li> </ul>
<b>Sessions 16-17</b>	Case Study Research: Creatively explore a filming location for <i>Lola rennt</i>	
<b>Session 18</b>	Presentations: Screening Locations for <i>Lola rennt</i>	
<b>Session 19-20</b>	Post-Wall Netflix: <i>Kleo</i> (Netflix, 2022) <b>Screening Diversity in the US and Germany</b> How does German film culture address ethnic diversity? How does it cope with US influences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M. Stehle, <i>Ghetto Voices in Contemporary German Culture</i> (1-19)</li> <li>G. Gemünden, “Hollywood in Altona” (180-190)</li> </ul>
<b>Session 21-22</b>	<b>Films:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Brothers and Sisters</i> (<i>Geschwister/Kardesler</i>; T. Arslan, 1997)</li> <li><i>Auf der anderen Seite</i> (<i>The Edge of Heaven</i>; F. Akin, 2007)</li> </ul> Individual Consultations: sign up	
<b>Session 23</b>	Individual Consultations: sign up	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY (midnight) during finals week (upload on Moodle)</b>

#### Field Studies:

- Museum of Film and Television Berlin
- Exploration of filming locations of *Lola rennt* (case study)
- Depending on tickets availability, non-mandatory field studies may lead us to a Berlinale screening or a silent film screening with live music

#### Filmography:

- A Foreign Affair* (B. Wilder, 1946)
- Alice in den Städten* (*Alice in the Cities*, W. Wenders 1974)
- Am Ende kommen Touristen* (*And Along Come Tourists*; R. Thalheim, 2007)
- Auf der anderen Seite* (*The Edge of Heaven*; F. Akin, 2007)
- Berlin-Ecke Schönhauser* (*Berlin – Schönhauser Corner*; G. Klein, 1957)
- Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (W. Ruttmann, 1927)
- The Bourne Supremacy* (P. Greengrass, 2004)

- *Brothers and Sisters (Geschwister/Kardesler; T. Arslan, 1997)*
- *Dean Reed-The Red Elvis (L. Grün, 2007)*
- *Heißer Sommer (Hot Summer, J. Hasler, DEFA 1986)*
- *Inglourious Basterds (Q. Tarantino, 2009)*
- *Kleo (Netflix, 2022)*
- *Lola rennt (Run, Lola Run, T. Tykwer, 1998)*
- *Manhatta (C. Sheeler/P. Strand, 1921)*
- *Schindler's List (S. Spielberg, 1993)*

## REQUIRED READINGS

- Bathrick, David. "Cinematic Americanization of the Holocaust in Germany: Whose Memory is it?" *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German Encounter with American Culture After 1945*. Ed. Alexander Stephen. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. 129-147.
- Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. "The Significance of Film Form," in *Film Art: An Introduction* (9th ed.). N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 2010. 56-77.
- Fitz, Carsten, and Jürgen Kamm. "Transatlantic Cinema: An Introduction." *Transatlantic Cinema: Production – Genres – Encounters – Negotiations*. Passau: Ralf Schuster, 2020. 9-17.
- Fluck, Winfried. "California Blue: Americanization and Self-Americanization." *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German Encounter with American Culture After 1945*. Ed. Alexander Stephen. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. 221-237.
- Gemünden, Gerd. "Between Karl May and Karl Marx. The DEFA-Indianerfilme," Colin Gordon Calloway et al., eds. *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*. Lincoln, NE: U. of Nebraska Press, 2002. 243-256.
- Gemünden, Gerd. "Introduction." *A Foreign Affair: Billy Wilder's American Films*. New York: Berghahn, 2008. 6-29.
- Gemünden, Gert. "Hollywood in Altona: Minority Cinema and the Transnational Imagination." Agnes C. Mueller, ed. *German Pop Culture: How "American" Is It?* Ann Arbor: U Mich Press, 2004. 180-190.
- Haase, Christine. "Lola rennt: A Study in Transcultural Filmmaking," in "'Bambi, Zombie, Ghandi': The Cinema of Tom Tykwer") *When Heimat Meets Hollywood: German Filmmakers and America, 1985 – 2005*. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007. 162-196 (excerpt: 174-188).
- Hake, Sabine. "Weimar Cinema, 1919-1933." *German National Cinema*. London: Routledge, 2002. 27-59.
- Higson, Andrew. "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema." M. Hjort, S. MacKenzie, eds., *Cinema and Nation*. Routledge, 2000. 63-74.
- Kilborn, Richard. "'The Yanks have colonized our sub-conscious': Transatlantic Relations and the Films of Wim Wenders." *Transatlantic Cinema: Production – Genres – Encounters – Negotiations*. Passau: Ralf Schuster, 2020. 51-64.
- Mouat, Cecilia. "Experimental Modernism in City Symphony Films." Robert P. McParland, ed. *Film and Literary Modernism*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2013. 20-26.
- Pierpont, Claudia Roth. "Bombshells. How Marlene Dietrich and Leni Riefenstahl divided a world between them." *The New Yorker* (Oct. 18, 2015; printout 1-12)
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* (1991): 33-40. (excerpts)
- Raundalen, Jon. "A Communist Takeover in the Dream Factory — Appropriation of Popular Genres by the East German Film Industry." *Slavonica* 2005 (11.1): 69-86.
- Stehle, Maria. *Ghetto Voices in Contemporary German Culture. Textscapes, Filmscapes, Soundscapes*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012. 1-19.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Seductive departures of Marlene Dietrich: Exile and Stardom in *The Blue Angel*." *New German Critique* 89 (2003): 9-31.
- Cooke, Paul. "Supporting Contemporary German Film: How Triumphant is the Free Market" *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 15.1 (April 2007): 35-46.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. "American Friends: Hollywood Echoes in the New German Cinema." Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and S. Ricci, eds. *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity: 1945-95*. London. British Film Institute, 1998. 142-155.

- Elsaesser, Thomas. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2005.
- Göktürk, Deniz, et al (eds). *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955-2005*. Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2007.
- Fehrenbach, Heide. "Learning from America: Reconstructing 'Race' in Postwar Germany." *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German Encounter with American Culture After 1945*. Ed. Alexander Stephen. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. 107-125.
- Hake, Sabine. "Anti-Americanism and the Cold War: On the DEFA Berlin Films." Alexander Stephen, ed. *Americanization and Anti-Americanization: The German Encounter With American Culture after 1945*. New York: Berghahn, 2005. 148-165).
- Halle, Randolph. "Apprehending Transnationalism." *German Film After Germany: Toward a Transnational Aesthetic*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2008. 13-29.
- Halle, Randolph. "The Work of Film in the Age of Transnational Production." *German Film After Germany: Toward a Transnational Aesthetic*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2008. 1-11.
- Hozic, Aida A. "Between 'National' and 'Transnational': Film Diffusion as World Politics." *International Studies Review* 16 (2014): 229-239.
- Kaes, Anton. *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989.
- Loewenstein, Joseph, and Lynne Tatlock. "The Marshall Plan at the Movies: Marlene Dietrich and Her Incarnations." *The German Quarterly* 65.3-4 (Summer-Fall 1992): 429-442.
- Newman, Kathleen. "Notes on Transnational Film Theory: Decentered Subjectivity, Decentered Capitalism." Durovicova, Natasa, and Kathleen Newman, eds. *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2010. 3-11.
- Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust in American Life*. Boston [u.a.]: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
- Rentschler, Eric. "From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus." Hjort, Mette and Scott Mackenzie, eds. *Cinema and Nation*. London: Routledge, 2000. 260-277.
- Saunders, Thomas J. *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994.
- Schindler, Stephan K. "Displaced Images: The Holocaust in German Film." Schindler, Stephan K. and Lutz Koepnick, eds. *The Cosmopolitan Screen: German Cinema and the Global Imaginary, 1945 to the Present*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 2007. 192-205.
- Shaw, Debora. "Deconstructing and Reconstructing 'Transnational Cinema'." Stephanie Dennison, ed. *Contemporary Hispanic Cinema: Interrogating the Transnational in Spanish and Latin American Film*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013. 47-65.
- Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam, eds. *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2003.
- Slane, Andrea. "The Iconology of the Sexy Nazi Woman: Marlene Dietrich as Political Palimpsest." *A Not So Foreign Affair: Fascism, Sexuality, and the Cultural Rhetoric of American Democracy*. Durham: Duke UP, 2001. 213-240.
- Willett, Ralph. *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

(01/2024)