



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

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Dorothea Löbbermann

PREREQUISITES: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Seminar format
- (Short) lectures
- Discussions
- Course-related study trips
- Moodle will be used to enhance students' learning experiences
- 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%
- Two response paper (1000 words) – 10% each
- Case study – 15%
- Two journal entries leading to your research paper plus your final research paper (3.000 words) – 30%

Late submission leads to a deduction of the grade for the assignment of 5% per day.

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).

Response Papers (10% each):

- You will write two response papers in this class (à 1000 words). Your **first response paper** discusses the film *Inglourious Basterds* in the light of theories of transnational cinema. Select one or two aspect(s) of the theories from the readings, and explore how it helps you understand the movie on a more academic level. **It is due at Session 3 (bring print-out to class).**
- Your **second response paper** will address one of the other films on the syllabus and explain how the film in question illustrates concepts of transnational cinema. Engage with the reading and identify a concept that plays a critical role in your film, or in your understanding of the film. Then suggest an interpretation of the movie, focusing on an essential scene, technique, or other element. Your paper is to be **submitted by 10:00 AM on the day of the seminar session** appropriate to your topic (email to instructor). Sign up for your selection during the first class meetings.

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 *Lola rennt*. Group work is possible (depends 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** in Session 18.

Final Research Paper and Moodle Journal Entries (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 one of your response papers. You are also welcome to develop an individual topic relating to this course, but you need to make sure that you get my okay for it. **Two Moodle Journal entries** will help you develop your idea. The **first entry** asks for a topic; the **second entry** asks for an exposé of your paper. Consult the Moodle site on the requirements for an exposé. It is strongly recommended that you discuss my feedback with me (in emails or in conversation).

- **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. **At least three secondary scholarly texts** are required in your bibliography: they can relate directly to the film/concept under consideration, or to its cultural and historical background, or to a theory that helps you interpret the text. Please note: neither Wikipedia nor film reviews are scholarly texts, even if film reviews may be part of the material you discuss. You can use books from the IES and Humboldt University libraries, the “required” and “recommended reading” sections on Moodle, or internet resources (please use them critically). I’m always happy to help you with your reading.
- Please consult instructions on Moodle about paper format and style.
- Final paper due **at the end of week 14.** (upload on Moodle)

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance and punctuality in all courses and field studies are mandatory. Absences can only be excused for valid reasons. Unexcused absences can affect students’ grades. Students who miss 25% or more of all class sessions will fail the course. Missed exams cannot be taken at another time except in case of documented illness. Late submission of term papers and other work will result in grade reduction unless an extension due to illness or an emergency is approved. Please consult the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle for additional details.

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, including images. Suspicious papers may be checked with plagiarism-detecting software.

CONTENT:

The usual structure of this seminar has you approach the topic theoretically in the first session of the week, and apply this to the discussion of a film in the second session of the week.

Week	Content	Readings/Assignments
Week 1	Session 1: Introduction Introduction & Definitions: course outline, requirements, etc.	
	Session 2: Flows of images, people, and funds between the US and Germany <u>Film:</u> <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> (Q. Tarantino, 2009) and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Halle, “The Work of Film in the Age of Transnational Production” (1-11)
Week 2	Session 3: Definitions and Discussions: Transatlantic relationships in the context of concepts of the nation, the international, the transnational and the global How does <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> exemplify a way to express U.S. – German transatlantic relations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Halle, “Apprehending Transnationalism” (13-29) • D. Shaw, “Deconstructing and Reconstructing ‘Transnational Cinema’ (47-65) • T.b.a. <p>First response paper due (bring print-out to class): Your first response paper discusses the film <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> in the light of theories of transatlantic cinema. Select one or two aspect(s) of the theories from the readings, and explore how it helps you understand the movie on a more academic level.</p>
	Sessions 4: Land/Cityscapes of Transatlantic Modernism <i>Manhatta</i> (Strand/ Sheeler, 1920) <i>Der verlorene Sohn</i> (<i>The Prodigal Son</i> , Luis Trenker, 1934) (excerpts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Hake, “Weimar Cinema, 1919-1933” (27-59)

Week 3	<p>Session 5: Land/Cityscapes of Transatlantic Modernism <u>Film:</u> <i>Berlin, Die Sinfonie der Großstadt</i> (<i>Berlin, Symphony of a Great City</i>, Walter Ruttmann, 1927) Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Mouat, “Experimental Modernism in City Symphony Films” (20-26) <p>Attention: do <u>not</u> watch the soundless youtube version of the film!</p>
	<p>Session 6: German Exiles in the US: Billy Wilder and Marlene Dietrich Artists, Film and (Anti)Fascism: The Lives of Billy Wilder, Marlene Dietrich, and Leni Riefenstahl</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Gemünden, <i>A Foreign Affair</i> (6-29) C.R. Pierpont, “Bombshells” (1-12)
	<p>Session 7: Course-related study trip to Museum of Film and Television, Berlin</p>	
Week 4	<p>Session 8: German Exiles in the US: Billy Wilder and Marlene Dietrich <u>Film:</u> <i>A Foreign Affair</i> (B. Wilder, 1946) Discussion</p>	
	<p>Session 9: German Exiles in the US: Billy Wilder and Marlene Dietrich The Sexy Nazi Woman: Marlene Dietrich between “Fascist Germany” and “Democratic America”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Slane, “The Iconology of the Sexy Nazi Woman: Marlene Dietrich as Palimpsest” (213-240)
Week 5	<p>Session 10: Cold War I: The “Americanization” of West Germany and The New West German Cinema How did US culture influence German culture and film production after WWII?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W. Fluck, “California Blue: Americanization and Self-Americanization” (221-237) T. Elsaesser, “American Friends: Hollywood Echoes in the New German Cinema” (142-155)
	<p>Session 11: Cold War I <u>Film:</u> <i>Alice in den Städten</i> (<i>Alice in the Cities</i>, W. Wenders 1974) Discussion</p>	
Week 6	<p>Session 12: Midterms</p>	<p>Take-home exam (upload on Moodle)</p>
Week 7	<p>Session 13: Cold War II: Images of the US in East German film Film excerpts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Berlin-Ecke Schönhauser</i> (<i>Berlin – Schönhauser Corner</i>; 1957); <i>Dean Reed – The Red Elvis</i> (2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S. Hake, “Anti-Americanism and the Cold War: On the DEFA Berlin Films” (148-165) G. Gemünden, “Between Karl May and Karl Marx. The DEFA-Indianerfilme” (243-256) <p>First Journal Entry: Paper Topic Due</p>
	<p>Session 14: Cold War II: Seeking Freedom Within the East <i>Coming Out</i> (H. Carow, 1989) Discussion</p>	
Week 8	<p>Session 15: The Holocaust in German and US American Memory How is the Holocaust approached in German film culture? What is the Americanization of the Holocaust?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S. K. Schindler, “Displaced Images: The Holocaust in German Film” (192-205) D. Bathrick, “Cinematic Americanization of the Holocaust in Germany: Whose Memory is it?” (129-147)
	<p>Session 16: The Holocaust in German and US American Memory <u>Film:</u> <i>Schindler’s List</i> (S. Spielberg, 1993) Discussion</p>	
Week 9	<p>Session 17: Post-Wall Cinema <u>Film:</u> <i>Lola rennt</i> (<i>Run, Lola Run</i>, T. Tykwer, 1998)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Haase, “Lola rennt: A Study in Transcultural Filmmaking” (174-188)

	Discussion	
	Session 18: Post-Wall Cinema Screening locations: <i>Lola rennt</i> explorations Your presentations (case studies)	Case Study Due Second Journal Entry: Exposé Due
Week 10	Session 19: Post-Wall Cinema <u>Film:</u> <i>The Bourne Supremacy</i> (P. Greengrass, 2004) Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M. Azcona, “‘Don’t Stop Me Now’: Mobility and Cosmopolitanism in the Bourne Saga” (207-222)
	Session 20-21: Field Trip to Film studios Babelsberg	
Week 11	Session 22: Screening Diversity in the US and Germany How does German film culture address ethnic diversity? How does it cope with US influences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M. Stehle, <i>Ghetto Voices in Contemporary German Culture</i> (1-19) G. Gemünden, “Hollywood in Altona” (180-190)
	Session 23: Screening Diversity in the US and Germany <u>Film:</u> <i>Brothers and Sisters</i> (<i>Geschwister/Kardesler</i> ; T. Arslan, 1997) Discussion	
Week 12	FINALS WEEK Session 24: Individual Consultations	FINAL PAPER DUE (

Course-related study trips:

- Museum of Film and Television Berlin:** This museum has an excellent permanent exhibition on German film from the beginnings of German cinema to the end of the Second World War and repeatedly touches on relations with Hollywood.
- Studio Tour Babelsberg:** This guided tour through the studios changes according to on-going productions; it focuses on the studio’s history and contemporary international production (Tarantino, Polanski, Jackie Chan, *The Bourne Supremacy*, *The Hunger Games* ...) (counts two sessions)

Filmography:

- A Foreign Affair* (B. Wilder, 1946)
- Alice in den Städten* (*Alice in the Cities*, W. Wenders 1974)
- 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)
- Coming Out* (H. Carow, 1989)
- Dean Reed-The Red Elvis* (L. Grün, 2007)
- Der verlorene Sohn* (*The Prodigal Son*, Luis Trenker, 1934)
- Inglourious Basterds* (Q. Tarantino, 2009)
- Lola rennt* (Run, Lola Run, T. Tykwer, 1998)
- Manhatta* (C. Sheeler/P. Strand, 1921)
- Schindler’s List* (S. Spielberg, 1993)

REQUIRED READINGS

- Azcona, María del Mar. “‘Don’t Stop Me Now’: Mobility and Cosmopolitanism in the Bourne Saga.” *Mobilities* 11:2. 207-222.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. *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.
- 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.
- 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. "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.
- Hake, Sabine. "Weimar Cinema, 1919-1933." *German National Cinema*. London: Routledge, 2002. 27-59.
- 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.
- 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)
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- 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.
- Durovicova, Natasa, and Kathleen Newman, eds. *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2005.
- Ezra, Elizabeth and Terry Rowden, eds. *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- 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-
- 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.
- Koepnick, Lutz. "Doubling the Double: Robert Siodmak in Hollywood." *New German Critique* 89 (2003): 81-104.

- 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.
- Miller, Toby (et al.): *Global Hollywood 2*. London: The British Film Institute, 2005.
- Naficy, Hamid. "Situating Accented Cinema." Elizabeth Ezra, & T. Rowden, eds. *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. Oxford: Routledge, 2006. 111-129.
- 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.
- Saunders, Thomas J. *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994.
- Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam, eds. *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2003.
- Willett, Ralph. *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949*. New York: Routledge, 1989.