DESCRIPTION: Contemporary German film marks the beginning of a new era. While maintaining awareness of their traditions, a generation of young filmmakers has developed new forms of film aesthetics. At the same time, this turning point occurred on a specific date. Beginning in 1989, the symbolic date of fundamental changes in Europe and the bipolarized postwar world, a new desire for investigation and invention emerged. So, the most interesting films of this artistic and cultural new beginning display intriguing relations to the social and political transitions of their time. By scrutinizing these works, two related aspects are revealed: fascinating insights into a new generation of filmmakers and challenging perspectives on Germany in transition. 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 one of the centers of the global film industry, as it was at the beginning of the 20th century. In short: Berlin is the place where one can not only observe contemporary German film, but also directly grasp its intriguing dynamics. 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, aesthetic, and economic developments of German cinema. And we will explore the lively film city Berlin by various field trips.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Dorothea Löbbermann

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

ADDITIONAL COST: none

PREREQUISITES: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
• Seminar format
• (Short) lectures
• Discussions
• Excursions
• Moodle will be used to enhance students' learning experiences

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
• Participation - 10 %
• Two response papers - 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 two response papers during the course (each around 800 words in length) on a film we discuss in the seminar.
• Please sign up for your selections during the first class meetings.
• Every response paper has the following goals: 1) identify, in your own opinion, a key scene or passage of the film in question. Justify your choice and describe the meaning of this particular scene or passage for the film in its entirety. Make
sure you pay attention to the visual language of your scene. 2) formulate a question for discussion in class that has resulted from your choice of the particular scene or passage.

- Response papers are to be submitted by 10:00 AM on the day of the seminar session appropriate to your topic by email.

**Group Presentation**

Explore one filming location of *Lola rennt* and observe the transition of real space into cinematic place. Present 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 (6:00 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
- Scrutinizing a specific topic through question-driven essays

**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. 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>(Reading) Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1&amp;2 Introduction</td>
<td>Session 1 Introduction</td>
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| Week 3 | **Session 4-5: Berlin’s Urban Space I**  
*Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987)  
Excursion to the Berlin Film Museum (Potsdamer Platz) |
| --- | --- |

| Week 4 | **Session 6-7: Berlin’s Urban Space II**  
*Lola rennt* (1998)  
Exploration of filming locations |
| --- | --- |
Research Assignment (Group Work): Research one filming location of *Lola rennt*. 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 multi-media presentation |

| Week 5 | **Session 8-9: Berlin’s Urban Space III**  
“Lola’s Berlin”: Group presentations on the filming locations of *Lola rennt*  
*Victoria* (2015) |
| --- | --- |

| Week 6: | **Session 10-11: ‘Wende’ Comedy**  
| --- | --- |
Jennifer Kapczynski."Negogiating Nostalgia: The GDR Past in *Berlin is in Germany* and *Good bye, Lenin!*" 78-100. |

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<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th><strong>Midterm</strong></th>
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<td>Written exam, 90 minutes in-class</td>
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| Week 8 | **Session 12-13**  
Excursion "Filmstadt Berlin - Das rollende Kino" (Bus tour) |
| --- | --- |
| Week 9 | Session 14-15: Dramatizing DDR  
*Das Leben der Anderen* (2006)  
Representing GDR History in the United Germany | Brockmann, “*Das Leben der Anderen* or the Power of Art,” 489-500.  
|---|---|
| Week 10 | Session 16-17: Berliner Schule  
*Der schöne Tag* (2000)  
Berliner Schule  
| Week 11: | Session 18-19: Turkish German Film  
Stephen Brockmann. “*Gegen die Wand* (2004) or Germany goes multicultural”, 479-487. |
| Week 12: | Session 20-21: The Presence of the Past  
*Am Ende kommen Touristen* (2007)  
*Finsterworld* (2014)  
Discussion of *Am Ende kommen Touristen*  
| | Session 22:  
Final Discussion, wrap-up and paper consultation | |
| Week 13 | Finals | Final research papers due, Thursday 6:00 PM |

**FIELD STUDIES:**
- Exploration of filming locations of *Lola rennt* (group project)
- Excursion to Filmmuseum Potsdamer Platz
- Excursion: “Filmstadt Berlin - Das rollende Kino"

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Abel, Marco. ““Intensifying Life: The Cinema of the ‘Berlin School’,” in *Cineaste* 33.4 (Fall 2008)  
  http://www.cineaste.com/articles/the-berlin-school.htm


FILMOGRAPHY:

• Am Ende kommen Touristen (Robert Thalheim, 2007)
• Erster Tag (Angela Schanelec, 2009, in: Deutschland 09)
• Finsterword (Frauke Finsterwalder, 2013)
• 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)
• Das Leben der Anderen (Florian Henckel v. Donnersmarck, 2006)
• Lola rennt (Tom Tykwer, 1998)
• Nachtgestalten (Andreas Dresen, 1999)
• Der schöne Tag (Thomas Arslan, 2000)
• Victoria (Sebastian Schipper, 2015)