SO/CU 350-A - GERMAN POPULAR CULTURE
IES Abroad Berlin

DESCRIPTION:
This course provides fundamental insights into contemporary German popular culture: Who or what is currently 'hip' in the German context? How are German pop phenomena related to U.S. culture? Which formats are original, which transcultural? This course focuses on different pop-cultural phenomena of the 21st century from diverse media: from cinema and music, to TV, radical young theater, literature, and club culture. The seminar follows a historical approach. It is based on the assumption that German popular culture has been influenced by U.S. popular culture from its beginnings in the 20th century to the 1990s. As a cultural practice of “Self/Americanization”, specific German formats have emerged that continue today, both in the East, the West, and the reunited Germany. Furthermore, the seminar investigates the political subtexts of German pop cultural practices. One theme of the seminar is that popular culture always works with 'the abject', i.e. the rejected and traumatic elements of a culture. At the end of the seminar, students will be familiar with the latest trends, the trendsetters, and the historical-theoretical discourses of German pop culture. In excursions, workshops, and guest lectures, students will also be encouraged to experience and participate in German pop culture.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Hakki Kurtulus

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

ADDITIONAL COST: none

PREREQUISITES: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures
- In class discussions & cultural analysis
- Student presentations and research reports on chosen topics
- Field trips to pop culture sites
- Guest lectures and workshops
- Moodle will be used to enhance students' learning experiences.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Course participation - 10%
- Presentation - 20%
- Midterm Exam - 20%
- Research Paper - 25%
- Final Exam - 25%

Course Participation
Course participation includes regular attendance, participation in class discussions and moodle activities, familiarity with the reader texts and the topics covered in class. Students are expected to come prepared with personal thoughts or notes on the readings. The grading rubric for participation is available in the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle.

Midterm Exam
The midterm exam has the dual purpose of testing students’ knowledge of facts, evaluating their ability to critically analyze and contextualize historical events, and political trends. It will focus on material covered in the first half of the course (90 minutes, session 6).

**Research Paper**
Students will write a research essay (ca. 2,000 words) which is due in session 19. In their essay, students develop a coherent argument on a chosen topic with the support of textual sources to be cited according to MLA or Chicago standards. Students will be required to schedule a time to discuss their topic with the instructor before session 6.

**Presentation**
After the midterm exam, each session will be introduced by students with a 10-minute presentation on key concepts, central arguments and open questions of the readings assigned in the respective course session. These presentations will provide the possibility to focus on central aspects and open questions students have. In the first week, each student will be assigned for one presentation (to be held in session 14-23). Depending on the number of students in class, joint presentations by two or more students will be possible. In this case, each student will need to identify their contribution to the presentation.

**Final Exam**
The final exam focuses on material covered in the second half of the semester. Students should, however, also be able to integrate ideas discussed in the first half of the semester in their answers on the final (90 minutes, session 24).

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- identify the unique aspects of contemporary German pop culture
- relate pop culture to German politics and history
- apply categories of cultural analysis to pop cultural formats
- understand the term “pop culture” and its forms and functions in the German context
- compare German pop culture with American pop culture
- to identify the subtexts of German pop cultural phenomena

**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:**
Please note that films are to be watched outside class time and are available in the library at the IES center. All films have English subtitles. A reader including required and recommended readings will be handed out in the first session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Readings, Material and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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</table>
| Session 1| Introduction to seminar concept | Reading  
<p>| Session 2| German Stereotypes          | Reading                                            |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>The Roaring Twenties: Case Study Marlene Dietrich</th>
<th>Film</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Der blaue Engel</em> (Germany 1930, Regie: Josef von Sternberg)</td>
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**Reading**

**Recommended Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>Swing: popular culture as a form of resistance in Nazi Germany</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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### Historicizing German popular culture II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 5</th>
<th>The Holocaust as a paradigmatic shift and traumatic subtext in German popular culture</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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**Optional**


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<tr>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Rebels without a cause in the 1950s, West Germany</th>
<th>Film</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Die Halbstarken</em> (Germany 1956, Regie: Urs Egger)</td>
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**Reading**

## Historicizing German popular culture III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Hot summers in the 1960s, East Germany</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Film</strong></td>
<td><em>Der geteilte Himmel</em>, (DDR 1968, Regie: Konrad Wolf)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Heißer Sommer</em> (DDR 1968, Regie: Joachim Hasler)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>Playlist <em>Heißer Sommer</em> (Frank Schöbel 1968)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 8</th>
<th>West Germany of 1970s as Consumerist Heaven</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vicco von Bülow as Loriot and a ‘How to be able to Laugh After Auschwitz’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Film</strong></td>
<td><em>Alice in den Städten</em> (West Germany 1974, Regie: Wim Wenders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>Popol Vuh, Can, David Bowie’s Berlin Trilogy, Neu!</td>
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<td><em>99 Luftballons</em>, Nena</td>
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## Historicizing German popular culture IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 9</th>
<th>The “Merry-Go-Round” as an apparatus of desire and escape in the 70s, GDR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French Influence versus Soviet influence on the late GDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Film</strong></td>
<td><em>Die Legende von Paul und Paula</em> (DDR 1974, Regie: Heiner Carow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td><em>Puhdys</em> “Geh zu ihr und lass deinen Drachen steigen” (1974)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 10</th>
<th>The popularization of the silent revolution ’89 and the reunification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Film</strong></td>
<td><em>Coming out</em> (DDR 1989, Regie: Heiner Carow)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>“Wind of Change” (Scorpions)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Youtube Documentary</strong></td>
<td>4 11 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Dennis, David Brandon, “Coming Out into Socialism: Heiner Carow’s Third Way,” from <em>A Companion to German Cinema</em>, pp. 55-81.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Midterm exam | 90 minutes in class exam |
| Session 11 | Techno: The sound of German reunification | **Film**  
*Berlin Calling* (Germany 2008, Regie: Hannes Stöhr)  
*Als wir träumten* (Germany 2015, Regie: Andreas Dresen)  
**Excursion**  
Excursion DJ Workshop Berlin Kreuzberg, information will be given in class  
**Reading**  
| --- | --- | --- |
| Session 12 | Reconstruction and the revival: Ossis vs. Wessis and Die getürkte Berliner Republik  
Electronic Music: The German School | **Film**  
*Good Bye Lenin!* (2003, Wolfgang Becker)  
**Music**  
Tangerine Dream, Kraftwerk  
Einstürzende Neubauten, Meret Becker |
| Session 13 | Turkish-German Hip Hop & Rap | **Music**  
Islamic Force, Kool Savas, Killa Hakan; Cartel  
**Reading:**  
| Session 14 | German ‘Schlager’ and Indie Pop | **Music**  
Helene Fischer, Jens Friebe  
**Reading**  
| Session 15 | German Comedy Shows: Multikulti humor | **TV series**  
*Was Guckst du?* (2001-2005, Kaya Yener)  
**Reading**  
| Session 16 | German Series: Babylon Berlin, Berlin-Weissensee | **TV series**  
*Babylon Berlin* (Germany 2017, Regie: Tom Tykwer)  
**Reading**  
Dowling, Siobhan. “Ahead of the Third Reich: a dizzying...” |
### Pop literature and popular journalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Pop literature and Popular Journalism</th>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Belletristik, the Pop Literature Made in Germany, example of Charlotte Roche</td>
<td>Roche Charlotte <em>Feuchtgebiete</em> (Dumont: 2008)</td>
<td>Er, Yanbing, “In Search of Self: The Dysfunctional Feminism of Charlotte Roche's Wetlands” In: Women a Cultural Review, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bild and Axel Springer Verlag</td>
<td>klein Ulrike, “Tabloidized Political Coverage in the German” in <em>Tabloid Tales</em>, Rowman, 2000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pop Theater and Club Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Pop Theater and Club Culture</th>
<th>Excursion through Berlinale</th>
<th>Information will be given in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Metrosexual, Queer, and Trans: Appropriations in the Berlin Club Scene</td>
<td>Information will be given in class</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Wrap-Up and Finals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Wrap-Up and Finals</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Wrap-up and final discussion</td>
<td><em>Die Legende von Paul und Paula</em> (DDR 1974, Regie: Heiner Carow)</td>
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### Field Trips:
Field trips will encourage students to participate and experience German popular culture firsthand.

### Films

- *Menschen am Sonntag*, (Germany, 1930: Robert Siodmak, Edgar G. Ulmer)
- *Der blaue Engel* (Germany 1930, Regie: Josef von Sternberg)
- *Kuhle Wampe oder: Wem gehört die Welt?* (Germany 1932, Regie: Slatan Dudow)
- *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (DDR 1946, Regie: Wolfgang Staudte)
- *Die Halbstarken* (West Germany 1956, Regie: Urs Egger)
- *Heißer Sommer* (DDR 1968, Regie: Joachim Hasler)
- *Alice in den Städten* (West Germany 1974, Regie: Wim Wenders)
Christiane F. - Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo (GDR, 1981 Regie: Uli Edel)
*Coming out* (DDR 1989, Regie: Heiner Carow)
*Berlin Calling* (Germany 2008, Regie: Hannes Stöhr)
*Als wir träumten* (2015, Regie: Andreas Dresen)
*Babylon Berlin* (Germany 2017, Regie: Tom Tykwer)
*Baader Meinhoff Komplex* (Germany 2008, Regie: Uli Edel)
*Go Trabi Go* (1991, Regie: Peter Timm)
*Alles auf Zucker* (2008, Regie: Dani Levy)

**MUSIC**

Dietrich, Marlene: “Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt.” Aus: *Der blaue Engel* (1930)
Kalkbrenner, Paul: *Berlin calling* (2008)
Killa Hakan: *Kreuzberg City* (2007)
Helene Fischer: *Farbenspiel* (2013)
Udo Lindenberg: Stärker als die Zeit (2015)

**REQUIRED READINGS**


Raundalen, Jon. “A communist takeover in the dream factory – Appropriation of popular genres by the east German Film Industry.” In: *Slavonica* 11,1 (2005), pp. 69-86.


RECOMMENDED READINGS