

Land Acknowledgement

UBC's campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.



Image: Promotional Image showing Lancelot and Ossi in Ernst Lubitsch's Die Puppe/The Doll (1919).

GERM 304 001: German Cinema

The Sexual Politics of Weimar Cinema
The University of British Columbia
Dept. Central, Eastern, & Northern European Studies

Winter 2021 T2 | 3 Credits
T/TR | 11:00-12:30

Instructor Contact

Dr. Ervin Malakaj
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Student Hours:
T 10am or by appt

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Course Description & Goals

This course explores the political, social, and economic realities that shaped the German “Golden Age” of cinema: the Weimar Era (1918–1933). We will watch some of the most iconic along lesser known, yet impactful films from the period. We will examine the link between postwar anxiety and sexuality, the formation of the German star system with an eye to sexualization, and conceptualizations of childhood with regard to questions of sex, desire, and sexuality. There are no prerequisites for this course. Readings and discussion are in English and films are available with English subtitles.

Because of the emergency remote online instruction protocols in place at UBC, this class is conducted online until January 24, 2022. Unless otherwise announced by the university, the class will be conducted as an in-person course starting with our class session on January 25, 2022.

Format for Online Portion

Students will complete work synchronously and asynchronously. Each week is divided into these components.

1. Asynchronous: students read or view materials required for week. Students view pre-recorded lecture about materials, complete a quiz, as well as additional assignment related to material.
2. Synchronous: students attend one class session via zoom and complete various types of discussion exercises related to the material.

Format for In-Person Portion

Each in-person session will follow a variation of the following structure:

1. An introduction to the session with a short lecture on key historical or intellectual background required for discussion.
2. Structured group work in which students work collaboratively to generate answers to a series of questions about course material and engage in guided discussion about material.
3. A guided, open discussion in which students share their findings with the course.
4. Wrap-up lecture with comments about how daily discussion relates to upcoming lectures/course work.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- **describe** broad developments in the social, economic, and cultural history informing the cinema cultures of Weimar Germany (1918-1933)
- **discuss, analyze, and interpret** films from the era with a thematic and analytic focus on gender, sex, and sexuality
- **describe, discuss, analyze, and interpret** visual material using standard tools of film style

Consult the schedule below for detailed outcomes affiliated with each unit of the course.

Grade Breakdown		Grading Scale		
Self-Assessment of Participation	10%	A+ (90-100%)	A (85-89)	A- (80-84)
Quizzes	10%	B+ (76-79)	B (72-75)	B- (68-71)
Midterm Paper	35%	C+ (64-67)	C (60-63)	C- (55-59)
Final Paper	45%	D (50-54)	F (0-49)	

Books and Reading Materials

Through the UBC Bookstore, Online Vendors, OR: as eBook through our library!

1. Ed Sikov, *Film Studies: An Introduction*, second edition. New York: Columbia UP, 2020. **REQUIRED**

Online on our Course Reserves/Canvas Site

The URL for our course reserves site is: <https://courses.library.ubc.ca/c.z4FxJ6>. You can also reach the course reserves site through our Canvas site. There you will find the following texts:

1. Nora Alter, "The Legs of Marlene Dietrich"
2. Anonymous, "In the Empire of Film"
3. Bela Balázs, "Only Stars"
4. Bernhard Diebold, "The Future of Mickey Mouse (Theory of Animation as a New Cinema Art)"
5. Marlene Dietrich, "To an Unknown Woman"
6. Paul Dobryden, "23 May 1920: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* Brings Aesthetic Modernism to the Fairground"
7. Lotte Eisner, "The Symphonies of Horror"
8. Sabine Hake, "The Oyster Princess and *The Doll*: Wayward Women of the Early Silent Cinema"
9. Jochen Hung, "The Weimar Years, Episode 1"
10. Siegfried Kracauer, "All about Film Stars"
11. Laurie Marhoefer, "Did Sex Bring Down the Weimar Republic?"
12. Camilla Smith, "The Weimar Years, Episode 2"
13. Katie Sutton, "The Weimar Years: Episode 3"
14. Mihaela Petrescu, "Brigitte Helm and Germany's Star System in the 1920s"

15. Lotte Reiniger, "Living Shadows: The Art and Technology of the Silhouette Film"
16. Samper Vendrell, "The Queer Threat to Civilization in Fritz Lang's *M*"
17. Cynthia Walk, "Filmrettung: Save the Past for the Future!" Film Restoration and Jewishness in German and Austrian Silent Cinema"

Films Online on our Course Reserves/Canvas Site

NOTE: You will find these films on our course reserve site. They are streaming through Kanopy, which is an online streaming site to which our university has a subscription. You can reach Kanopy through this link:

<https://ubc.kanopy.com>. Please note that there are a lot of versions of these films circulating online. Many of the films on YouTube are not complete and you will miss key scenes. You should watch the version on the course reserve site. The library also has access to DVD prints of each.

1. Ernst Lubitsch, *The Doll* (*Die Puppe*, 1919)
2. Robert Wiene, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920)
3. F. W. Murnau, *Nosferatu* (1922)
4. E.A. Dupont, *The Ancient Law* (*Das alte Gesetz*, 1923)
5. Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)
6. G.W. Pabst, *Pandora's Box* (*Die Büchse der Pandora*, 1929)
7. Joseph von Sternberg, *The Blue Angel* (*Der blaue Engel*, 1930)
8. Fritz Lang, *M* (1931)
9. Lotte Reiniger, *Harlequin* (1931)

Class Preparedness & Online Learning

An ideal setting for the course is achieved when we are all present, prepared, and eager to engage the material in our class. Engagement takes place differently for different people: being engaged can take place by responding to class discussions, contributing in small group discussions, asking for clarification, agreeing with the point someone makes in class, respectfully challenging a point someone made in class, etc. Some people are more vocal during class discussions and others will be more vocal in small group discussions. The point here is that you will have different venues in which you can contribute your ideas and, as such, are expected to engage on some level regularly throughout our course.

One of the main aspirations of the course will be to help you develop communication skills on complex topics. To this end, I will develop material and prepare exercises, which will facilitate the development of such skills; however, the activities don't work without *your* contribution. Meaning, even though you may not be a vocal participant in other contexts, think of our class as a perfect venue in which you can practice being more vocal.

What does it mean to be prepared? You will succeed in our class by preparing the material for the days on which it is assigned. Reading/viewing, for our purposes, are not passive activities: take notes about things you found engaging, confusing, illuminating, frustrating in a given written or visual text. Those notes (in the margins, on printouts, in note-books) will come in handy when you are asked to tell your classmates about your reading experience. Being prepared also means that you should bring the text to class in some fashion (hard copy or digital). As for attendance, you will succeed in the course by attending regularly and being on time for class sessions.

Self-Assessment of Participation

You will complete four self-assessments of participation over the course of our class. These are designed to help you reflect on your learning progress and take ownership of your learning in our course.

Quizzes

You will complete weekly quizzes which will guide your reading/viewing progress in our class. These are designed to make sure that you are following the reading/viewing schedule. They are also educational tools that help you think critically about the material covered. There will be 10 quizzes total.

Midterm and Final Paper

You will complete two written assignments for our class. These assignments will give you a chance to showcase your thinking on critical matters pertaining to the texts and ideas we address in our course. You will receive prompts for these papers with detailed specifications ahead of deadline.

Inclusive Course

You will effectively learn in an inclusive space that continues to challenge you intellectually. I will strive to foster such a space in the online classroom. Most of all, *YOU* are required to contribute to the shaping of such an inclusive and intellectually stimulating setting by honoring the diverse backgrounds, statuses, and experiences of your fellow students. Please communicate to me any concerns or needs that immediately relate to your learning in this regard.

Communication

Communication is essential for your success in our course. I will send you regular updates about class via email and will post to our Canvas site. For this reason, you should regularly (i.e., daily) check your email account on record at UBC and our Canvas site for important announcements about our course.

If you send me an email, please use the standard format for addressing faculty or standards employed in professional communication. Begin an email with a salutation such as "Dear Dr. Malakaj: . . ." and you can close with "Best/Yours/Sincerely, . . ." I will respond to your email within one or two business days and usually do not respond to email on weekends. During professional meetings (online conferences), I will be unavailable via email but will respond to your inquiries as soon as I complete those responsibilities. Teis Jayaswal, the TA for the course, prefers the following salutation: "Dear Teis: . . ."

Academic Accommodation

If you require any accommodation that can improve your experience in and facilitate success in the (online) classroom, please reach out to me. Moreover, be sure to consult the Vancouver Academic Calendar, which provides helpful information about the services to which you have access as UBC student. For more info: <https://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,34,0,0>. Here is an excerpt from the calendar:

The University of British Columbia recognizes its moral and legal duty to provide academic accommodation. The University must remove barriers and provide opportunities to students with a disability, enabling them to access university services, programs, and facilities and to be welcomed as participating members of the University community. The University's goal is to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, including students with a disability, in accordance with their distinct needs and in a manner consistent with academic principles.

The UBC Centre for Accessibility can provide accommodations that enable successful classroom experiences for students with accessibility needs. For more information, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>.

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise, and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

I'd be happy to discuss this with you in more detail. You can also find more info about UBC's official academic integrity policy here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,286,0,0>.

Content Warning

Our class will feature written and/or visual material which depicts violence in various forms. The written and visual texts are not included in our syllabus because of an interest to engage gratuitously in violence. We will instead approach these texts intellectually and assess in which ways and why violent material is deployed in a given cultural text. I respect your perspective and will be very glad to discuss this with you individually.

Personal and Intellectual Support for Learning

UBC provides a number of services to help students succeed in learning and being in our campus community. This includes services on topics such as academics, money, immigration, health and wellbeing. You can find out more information about various programs following this link: <https://students.ubc.ca/support>. If you feel comfortable, reach out to me. I can try to provide additional information about available resources.

Academic Freedom and Students Residing Outside of Canada

Equity and academic freedom are two fundamental values of our UBC culture. Moreover, UBC is not subject to foreign censorship laws. Every effort is and will be made to ensure that UBC students living abroad are provided access to the same materials and digital learning spaces as domestic students. As long as students use institutionally-provisioned learning tools and applications (such as Canvas, UBC email and other such systems), students can expect to exercise their academic freedom whether they are in Canada or abroad. If you have any questions, please reach out to the course instructor.

Copyright

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. I do not permit students to record classes.

German Studies and Modern European Studies @UBC

You can complement the work you do in our course by enrolling in other courses offered in the German Program, the Modern European Studies Program, or other coursework in the Department of Central, Eastern, and Northern European Studies. We offer exciting minors and majors in language and culture studies, as well as interdisciplinary studies and encourage double majors. For more information about these programs, check out the department website (cenes.ubc.ca) or reach out to me! I'd be glad to put you in touch with the advisors for these programs.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The semester schedule is not absolute. I will adjust it as needed to suit the needs of the class.

UNIT 1: Postwar Anxiety, Modernity's Discontents, Troubles with Desire

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to

- recall key cultural, historic, and economic information regarding the formation of the Weimar Republic as it relates to Weimar cinema culture
- analyze visual texts with an eye to shot composition

Week 1	Complete in First Half of Week	Complete in Second Half of Week
	<p>Complete by Wednesday, Jan 12</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch introductory lecture Listen to Podcast: Hung, "The Weimar Years, Episode 1" 	<p>Attend Class Discussion on Zoom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions The case of <i>Different from the Others</i> (<i>Anders als die Andern</i>, dir. Richard Oswald) <p>Complete by Friday, Jan 14, 11:59pm</p> <p>Quiz #1</p>
Week 2	<p>Complete by Wednesday, Jan 19</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to Podcast: Smith, "The Weimar Years, Episode 2" Listen to Podcast: Sutton "The Weimar Years, Episode 3" Read: Marhoefer, "Did Sex Bring Down the Weimar Republic?" 	<p>Attend Class Discussion on Zoom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Live lecture: Art, cinema, and sexual politics during the Weimar Era Discussion: Marhoefer's thesis <p>Complete by Friday, Jan 21, 11:59pm</p> <p>Quiz #2</p>
Week 3	<p>Tuesday, Jan 25</p> <p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch: Wiene, <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> Read: Sikov, mise-en-scene, the shot, subject-camera distance 5-12 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Caligari</i> & Cinematic Expressionism Film form: shot dynamics 	<p>Thursday, Jan 27</p> <p>Complete Before Class</p> <p>Read: Dobryden, "23 May 1920: <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i>"</p> <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cinema & Sexual Violence Cultural Anxiety <p>Complete by Friday, Jan 28, 11:59pm</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz #3 Self-Assessment of Participation #1
Week 4	<p>Tuesday, Feb 1</p> <p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch: Murnau, <i>Nosferatu</i> Read: Sikov, camera angle, space and time on film 12-18 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Nosferatu</i> & Greedy Vampires Film form: camera angle 	<p>Thursday, Feb 3</p> <p>Complete Before Class</p> <p>Read: Eisner, "The Symphonies of Horror"</p> <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Queer Desire in <i>Nosferatu</i> Gender Troubles <p>Complete by Friday, Feb 4, 11:59pm</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz #4
Week 5	<p>Tuesday, Feb 8</p>	<p>Thursday, Feb 10</p>

	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: Dupont, <i>The Ancient Law</i> 2. Read: Sikov, editing, 55-69 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Ancient Law</i> and Modernity 2. Film form: editing 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <p>Read: Walk, "Film Restoration and Jewishness in German and Austrian Silent Cinema"</p> <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jewishness and the Politics of Passing 2. Assimilation Narratives and Troubles of Relationality <p>Complete by Friday, Feb 4, 11:59pm</p> <p>Quiz #5</p>
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UNIT 2: Star Systems and Women on Screen

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to

- identify key terms in film studies, particularly those relating to the formation of the German star system
- recall key cultural, historic, and economic information regarding the middle period of the Weimar Era as it relates to film culture
- analyze cinematic texts with an eye to camera movement, cinematography, and film editing

Week 6	Tuesday, Feb 15	Thursday, Feb 17
	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: Lang, <i>Metropolis</i> 2. Read: Sikov, Performance 129-137 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weimar Star System 2. Film form: performance 3. Writing Strategies 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read: Kracauer, "All about Film Stars" 2. Read: Petrescu, "Brigitte Helm and Germany's Star System in the 1920s" <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Femme fatale aesthetics 2. Class romances <p>Complete by Friday, Feb 18, 11:59pm</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz #6 2. Self-Assessment of Participation #2
Week 7	Tuesday, Feb 22	Thursday, Feb 24
	No class: mid-term break!	No class: mid-term break!
Week 8	Tuesday, March 1	Thursday, March 3
	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: Pabst, <i>Pandora's Box</i> 2. Read: Sikov, motion picture photography, aspect ratio, and lightning, 38-47 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Miracle of Brooks 2. Film form: cinematography/lighting 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balázs, "Only Stars" 2. Anonymous, "In the Empire of Film" <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Politics of Sexual Violence 4. Desire on Screen <p>Complete by Friday, March 4, 11:59pm</p> <p>Midterm Paper</p>
Week 9	Tuesday, March 8	Thursday, March 10

	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: von Sternberg, <i>The Blue Angel</i> 2. Read: Sikov, camera movement, 24-33 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dietrich the Star 2. Film form: camera movement 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read: Alter, "The Legs of Marlene Dietrich" 2. Read: Dietrich, "To an Unknown Woman" <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sexual allure & performance 2. Film poster culture and desire <p>Complete by Friday, March 11, 11:59pm</p> <p>Quiz #7</p>
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UNIT 3: Childhood and Sexuality

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to

- recall key cultural, historic, and economic information regarding the later years of the Weimar Era as it relates to film history
- analyze cinematic texts with an eye to sound, narrative, and performance

Week 10	Tuesday, March 15	Thursday, March 17
	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: Reiniger, <i>Harlequin</i> 2. Read: Sikov, narrative, 89-100 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's narratives 2. Film form: narrative 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Reiniger, "Living Shadows" 2. Read Diebold, "The Future of Mickey Mouse" <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discomforting romance 2. Animation and mediation <p>Complete by Friday, March 18, 11:59pm</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz #8 2. Self-Assessment of Participation #3
Week 11	Tuesday, March 22	Thursday, March 24
	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: Lubitsch, <i>The Doll</i> 2. Read: Sikov, filmmakers, 116-124 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lubitsch's comedy aesthetics 2. Film form: filmmakers 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <p>Read: Hake, "Wayward Women of the Early Silent Cinema"</p> <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hesitant heterosexuality 2. Gender performance <p>Complete by Friday, March 25, 11:59pm</p> <p>Quiz #9</p>
Week 12	Tuesday, March 29	Thursday, March 31
	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch: Lang, <i>M</i> 2. Read: Sikov, sound, 74-83 <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lang and crime cinema 	<p>Complete Before Class</p> <p>Read: Vendrell, "The Queer Threat to Civilization"</p> <p>In Class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pathologized sexuality

	<p>2. Film form: sound 3. Writing strategies for final paper</p>	<p>2. Aesthetic confusion</p> <p><u>Complete by Friday, April 1, 11:59pm</u> Quiz #10</p>
Week 13	Tuesday, April 5	Thursday, April 7
	<p><u>Complete Before Class</u> Read: Sikov, putting it all together, 198-213</p> <p><u>In Class</u> 1. Writing strategies 2. Peer-review</p>	<p><u>In Class</u> Course overview</p> <p><u>Complete by Friday, April 8, 11:59pm</u> Self-Assessment of Participation #4</p>

Final paper: submit the final paper to me through our Canvas site by Friday, April 15, 11:59pm.