

### 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

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

Winter 2022 T2 | 3 Credits  
Mon/Wed | 2:00pm-3:30pm  
Buchanan A203

### Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Ervin Malakaj (he/him)  
Student Hours: Mondays 4-5pm & by appt  
Office Location: Buchanan Tower 927  
Email: [ervin.malakaj@ubc.ca](mailto:ervin.malakaj@ubc.ca)

TA: John O'Hara (he/him/they/them)  
Email: [johara8@student.ubc.ca](mailto:johara8@student.ubc.ca)

### 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.

Each 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

Self-Assessment/Participation	20%
Quizzes	15%
Midterm Examination	30%
Final Project	35%

### Grading Scale

A+ (90-100%)	A (85-89)	A- (80-84)
B+ (76-79)	B (72-75)	B- (68-71)
C+ (64-67)	C (60-63)	C- (55-59)
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.55r8Jc>. 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. Paul Dobryden, "23 May 1920: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* Brings Aesthetic Modernism to the Fairground"
6. Lotte Eisner, "The Symphonies of Horror"
7. Sabine Hake, "*The Oyster Princess* and *The Doll*: Wayward Women of the Early Silent Cinema"
8. Jochen Hung, "The Weimar Years, Episode 1"
9. Laurie Marhoefer, "Did Sex Bring Down the Weimar Republic?"
10. Camilla Smith, "The Weimar Years, Episode 2"
11. Katie Sutton, "The Weimar Years: Episode 3"
12. Mihaela Petrescu, "Brigitte Helm and Germany's Star System in the 1920s"
13. Lotte Reiniger, "Living Shadows: The Art and Technology of the Silhouette Film"
14. Samper Vendrell, "The Queer Threat to Civilization in Fritz Lang's *M*"
15. 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 or through our library's internal streaming service. You can reach Kanopy through this link: <https://ubc.kanopy.com>. You can reach the films available through the library through our course reserve site. 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)

### **Self-Assessment & Participation**

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 (i.e., reading or watching) the material for the days on which it is assigned. Reading and watching, for our purposes, are not passive activities: take notes about things you found engaging, confusing, illuminating, frustrating in a given 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.

You will be asked to submit four progress reports in which you assess your own contributions to class. You will find detailed information about what this entails on our course Canvas site. In addition, you will be asked to complete participation assignments throughout the semester. These and the self-assessment assignments will inform the self-assessment/participation portion of your final grade.

### **Quizzes**

You will complete regular 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.

### **Midterm Exam**

You will complete a take-home midterm examination. This exam will cover all the material for the class leading up to it. You will receive more information about this exam ahead of time.

### **Final Project**

You will complete a final project for our course that will serve as the final exam. In this project, you will have the opportunity to showcase your thinking on critical matters pertaining to the texts and ideas we address in our course. You will receive a prompt for this assignment 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 classroom and in online forums used for class. 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 official UBC email account 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 travel (unlikely during pandemic!), I will be unavailable via email but will respond to your inquiries as soon as I return to campus. John O’Hara, the TA for our course, prefers the following salutation: “Dear John: . . .”

## **Academic Accommodation**

If you require any accommodation that can improve your experience in and facilitate success in the 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:

<http://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>.

## **Technology/Other Distractions/Food in the Classroom**

Technology has enhanced academic life tremendously and continues to impact our work! I love technology as much as you do. It can be a great asset to your experience in our class. To this end, you might like to take notes on laptops or tablets and might like to consult resources during class. However, technology can be distracting and can negatively impact your learning and that of your fellow students. Please refrain from texting and other distracting communication, which includes working with materials not required for course, online shopping, and completing assignments for another class.

Sometimes we lose track of time. Or things happen. If you have to eat in class, try to be as considerate of the other people in class as possible. When possible, try to eat before or after class.

**Content Warning**

Our class will feature written and/or visual material which depicts violence. 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.

**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. For more information about these programs, check out the department website ([cen.es.ubc.ca](http://cen.es.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	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Jan. 9	Syllabus	Introduction to course The case of <i>Different from the Others</i>
Wed., Jan. 11	Hung, "The Weimar Years, Ep 1"	Emancipation movements and cinema cultures History of the Weimar era
Week 2	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Jan. 16	Smith, "The Weimar Years, Ep 2"  Sutton "The Weimar Years, Ep 3"	Art, cinema, and sex during the Weimar era
Wed., Jan. 18	Marhoefer, "Did Sex Bring Down the Weimar Republic?"	Dangerous sex  <b>Due: Quiz #1</b>
Week 3	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Jan. 23	Watch: Wiene, <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i>	Cinematic expressionism
Wed., Jan. 25	Sikov, mise-en-scene, the shot, subject-camera distance 5-12  Dobryden, "23 May 1920: <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i> "	Film form & anxiety  <b>Due: self-assessment</b> <b>Due: Quiz #2</b>
Week 4	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Jan. 30	Watch: Murnau, <i>Nosferatu</i>	Greedy vampires
Wed., Feb. 1	Sikov, camera angle, space and time on film 12-18  Eisner, "The Symphonies of Horror"	Cinematic production of dread and desire  <b>Due: Quiz #3</b>
Week 5	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Feb. 6	Dupont, <i>The Ancient Law</i>	<i>The Ancient Law</i> and modernity
Wed., Feb. 8	Sikov, editing, 55-69  Walk, "Film Restoration and Jewishness in German and Austrian Silent Cinema"	Jewishness and the politics of passing  <b>Due: watch party assignment</b>

### 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	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Feb. 13	Lang, <i>Metropolis</i>	Femme fatale aesthetics
Wed., Feb. 15	Sikov, Performance 129-137  Petrescu, "Brigitte Helm and Germany's Star System in the 1920s"	Weimar star system  <b>Due: self-assessment</b> <b>Due: Quiz #4</b>
Week 7	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Feb. 20	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>
Wed., Feb. 22	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>
Week 8	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Feb. 27	Review notes for class	Midterm preparation
Wed., Mar. 1		<b>Midterm Exam</b>
Week 9	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Mar. 6	Pabst, <i>Pandora's Box</i>	Politics of sexual violence
Wed., Mar. 8	Sikov, motion picture photography, aspect ratio, and lightning, 38-47  Balázs, "Only Stars"  Anonymous, "In the Empire of Film"	The miracle of Brooks  <b>Due: Quiz #5</b>
Week 10	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Mar. 13	von Sternberg, <i>The Blue Angel</i>	Dietrich the star
Wed., Mar. 15	Sikov, camera movement, 24-33  Alter, "The Legs of Marlene Dietrich"	Sexual allure & performance  <b>Due: discussion board</b>

### 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 11	Prepare for Class	Work in Class
Mon., Mar. 20	Reiniger, <i>Harlequin</i>  Sikov, narrative, 89-100	Discomforting romance
Wed., Mar. 22	Reiniger, "Living Shadows"	Animation and mediation

	Diebold, "The Future of Mickey Mouse"	<b>Due: Quiz #6</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Mar. 27	Lubitsch, <i>The Doll</i>	Lubitsch's comedy aesthetics
Wed., Mar. 29	Sikov, filmmakers, 116-124  Hake, "Wayward Women of the Early Silent Cinema"	Hesitant heterosexuality  <b>Due: Quiz #7</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Apr. 3	Lang, <i>M</i>	Lang and crime cinema
Wed., Apr. 5	Sikov, sound, 74-83  Vendrell, "The Queer Threat to Civilization"	Pathologized sexuality  <b>Due: self-assessment</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Apr. 10	<b>No Class: Easter Monday</b>	<b>No Class: Easter Monday</b>
Wed., Apr. 12	Final project outlines	Final project consultations

**Submit the final project to me through our Canvas site by Friday, April 21, 11:59pm.**