

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (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).

GMST 335 102: GERMAN CINEMA

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

Winter 2023 T1 | 3 Credits
Online Course – Fully Asynchronous
(no scheduled class meetings)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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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.

This course is taught online and is fully asynchronous. There are no scheduled class meetings. Instead, each week will follow a variation of the following structure: 1. Students prepare material (viewing, listening, or reading). 2. Students watch class lecture designed to contextualize the material prepared. 3. Students complete assignments intended to help them assess their understanding of the material. See schedule below and the modules on our Canvas website for more information.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Consult the schedule below for detailed outcomes affiliated with each unit of the course. 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; and
- **describe, discuss, analyze, and interpret** visual material using standard tools of film style.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Self-Assessment	10%
Quizzes & Assignments	25%
Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	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.BZ3mhd>. 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," *Dietrich Icon*, eds. Gerd Gemünden and Mary R. Desjardins (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 60-78.
2. Anonymous, "In the Empire of Film," *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*, eds. Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 349-350.
3. Bela Balázs, "Only Stars," *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*, eds. Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 325-327.
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," *A New History of Germany Cinema*, eds. Jennifer Kapczynski & Michael David Richardson (Rochester: Camden House, 2012), 80-85.
6. Lotte Eisner, "The Symphonies of Horror," *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 95-113.
7. Sabine Hake, "The Oyster Princess and The Doll: Wayward Women of the Early Silent Cinema," *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions*, eds. Sandra Frieden, Richard McCormick, Viebeke Petersen, and Laurie Vogelsang (New York: Berg, 1993), 13-32.

8. J. Hoberman, "The Twinned Evils of *Nosferatu*," *Tablet Magazine* May 19, 2020.
<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/nosferatu-hoberman-murnau>.
9. Jochen Hung, "The Weimar Years, Episode 1," *Radio 3: The Essay* November 11, 2019.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000b7h8>.
10. Laurie Marhoefer, "Did Sex Bring Down the Weimar Republic?" *Bulletin of the GHI* 65 (Fall 2019): 59-71.
11. Camilla Smith, "The Weimar Years, Episode 2," *Radio 3: The Essay* November 12, 2019.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000b7r9>.
12. Katie Sutton, "The Weimar Years: Episode 3," *Radio 3: The Essay* November 13, 2019.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000b5xr>.
13. Mihaela Petrescu, "Brigitte Helm and Germany's Star System in the 1920s," *Continuity and Crisis in German Cinema, 1928–1936*, eds. Barbara Hales, Mihaela Petrescu, and Valerie Weinstein (Rochester: Camden House, 2016), 189-209.
14. Lotte Reiniger, "Living Shadows: The Art and Technology of the Silhouette Film," *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907-1933*, eds. Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 470-471.
15. Samper Vendrell, "The Queer Threat to Civilization in Fritz Lang's *M*," *The Germanic Review* 92.3 (2017): 264-279.
16. Cynthia Walk, "Filmrettung: Save the Past for the Future!" *Film Restoration and Jewishness in German and Austrian Silent Cinema*, eds. Barbara Hales and Valerie Weinstein (New York: Berghahn, 2021), 327-337.

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. 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

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 during discussions on our class forums. Being prepared also means that you should have copies of all the material required to class handy as you are completing the assignments.

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. The self-assessment assignments will inform the self-assessment portion of your final grade.

QUIZZES & ASSIGNMENTS

You will complete regular quizzes and assignments 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 & FINAL EXAMS

You will complete a take-home midterm and final examination. These exams will cover all the material for the class leading up to it. You will receive more information about both ahead of time.

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, I will be unavailable via email but will respond to your inquiries as soon as I return to campus. Shoshana Schwebel, the TA for our course, prefers the following salutation: “Dear Shoshana: . . .”

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 honesty and standards policy here: <https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/academic-honesty-and-standards>.

CONTENT WARNING

Our class will feature written and/or visual materials which depict 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 and make publicly available any component of the course.

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 (cenec.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 by Fri, Sept 8
		1. Read syllabus 2. Listen to podcast: Hung on “The Weimar Years Ep 1” 3. Watch lecture: intro to course 4. Complete assignment #1: discussion board (intro)
Week 2	Complete by Wed, Sept 13	Complete by Fri, Sept 15
	1. Listen to podcast: Smith on “The Weimar Years, Ep 2” 2. Listen to podcast: Sutton on “The Weimar Years, Ep 3” 3. Read: Marhoefer, “Did Sex Bring Down the Weimar Republic?”	1. Watch lecture: art, cinema, and sex during the Weimar era 2. Complete quiz #1
Week 3	Complete by Wed, Sept 20	Complete by Fri, Sept 22
	1. Watch: Wiene, <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> 2. Read: Dobryden, “23 May 1920: <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i>” 3. Read: Sikov, mise-en-scene, the shot, subject-camera distance 5-12	1. Watch lecture: cinema, film form, anxiety 2. Complete assignment #2: discussion board 3. Complete self-assessment #1
Week 4	Complete by Wed, Sept 22	Complete by Fri, Sept 29
	1. Watch: Murnau, <i>Nosferatu</i> 2. Read: Eisner, “The Symphonies of Horror” 3. Read: Hoberman, “The Twinned Evils of <i>Nosferatu</i>” 4. Read: Sikov, camera angle, space and time on film 12-18	1. Watch lecture: greedy vampires & cinematic production of dread and desire 2. Complete quiz #2
Week 5	Complete by Wed, Oct 4	Complete by Fri, Oct 6
	1. Watch: Dupont, <i>The Ancient Law</i> 2. Read: Sikov, editing, 55-69 3. Read: Walk, “Film Restoration and Jewishness in German and Austrian Silent Cinema”	1. Watch lecture: modernity/tradition, the politics of passing, and unsanctioned desire 2. Complete: assignment #3: collective viewing

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	Complete by Wed, Oct 11	Complete by Fri, Oct 13
	1. Watch: Lang, <i>Metropolis</i> 2. Read: Sikov, Performance 129-137 3. Read: Petrescu, "Brigitte Helm and Germany's Star System in the 1920s"	1. Watch lecture: femme fatale aesthetics & the Weimar star system 2. Complete quiz #3 3. Complete self-assessment #2
Week 7	Complete by Wed, Oct 18	Complete by Fri, Oct 20
	1. Review: your class notes in preparation for midterm	1. Complete midterm exam
Week 8	Complete by Wed, Oct 25	Complete by Fri, Oct 27
	1. Watch: Pabst, <i>Pandora's Box</i> 2. Read: Sikov, motion picture photography, aspect ratio, and lightning, 38-47 3. Read: Balázs, "Only Stars" 4. Read: Anonymous, "In the Empire of Film"	1. Watch lecture: the miracle of Brooks and the politics of sexual violence 2. Complete assignment #4: discussion board
Week 9	Complete by Wed, Nov 1	Complete by Fri, Nov 3
	1. Watch: von Sternberg, <i>The Blue Angel</i> 2. Read: Sikov, camera movement, 24-33 3. Read: Alter, "The Legs of Marlene Dietrich"	1. Watch lecture: Dietrich the star, sexual allure, and performance 2. Complete quiz #4 3. Complete self-assessment #3

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	Complete by Wed, Nov 8	Complete by Fri, Nov 10
	1. Watch: Reiniger, <i>Harlequin</i> 2. Read: Sikov, narrative, 89-100 3. Read: Reiniger, "Living Shadows" 4. Read: Diebold, "The Future of Mickey Mouse"	1. Watch lecture: consent culture, discomfoting romance, and playful animation 2. Complete assignment #5: scene analysis

Week 11	Complete by Wed, Nov 15	Complete by Fri, Nov 17
	Midterm Break! No Class!	Midterm Break! No Class!
Week 12	Complete by Wed, Nov 22	Complete by Fri, Nov 24
	1. Watch: Lubitsch, <i>The Doll</i> 2. Read: Sikov, filmmakers, 116-124 3. Read: Hake, "Wayward Women of the Early Silent Cinema"	1. Watch lecture: Lubitsch's comedy aesthetics & hesitant heterosexuality 2. Complete quiz #5
Week 13	Complete by Wed, Nov 29	Complete by Fri, Dec 1
	1. Watch: Lang, <i>M</i> 2. Read: Sikov, sound, 74-83 3. Read: Vendrell, "The Queer Threat to Civilization"	1. Watch lecture: crime cinema & pathologized sexuality 2. Complete assignment #6: discussion board 3. Complete self-assessment #4
Week 14	Complete by Wed, Dec 6	Complete by Fri, Dec 8
		1. Watch lecture: Weimar afterlives

Submit the final exam by Friday, December 15, 11:59pm.