Field of Study Course Proposal for MLC 365: German Film in Context (FSLT)

FOS:        FSLT
Course:     MLC 365
Title:      German Film in Context

Catalog description:
A survey of German cinema from the 1930s to the present emphasizing the historical and cultural context in which the films were produced.

Prerequisites: sophomore standing

Credit hours:  3 cr.

Estimated enrollment: 15-20

How often/by whom offered: every other year/Kathrin Bower

Staffing implications: none

Adequacy of resources: Some additional films and additional books on German film will be ordered for the library.

Interdepartmental and interschool implications: MLC 365 complements existing film studies courses in the English department.

Contact person: Kathrin Bower, kbower@richmond.edu

NOTE: MLC 365 was approved for academic credit by Academic Council on 1/25/2005.
MLC 365: German Film in Context examines films as verbal and visual texts in their cultural and political context. Central to the course is the acquisition of a critical vocabulary for “reading” film, both for form and content. With its focus on German film from the 1930s to the present, MLC 365 also addresses questions of language and meaning for the non-native speaker of German: How do non-German speaking audiences interpret these films? How do the meaning and impact of the films shift over time and across cultures? What nuances in the visual and textual allegories of the films can be uncovered with additional linguistic and cultural background from the films’ original German context? In order to answer these questions, screenings of each film are prefaced by discussions of the historical period, the political and social climate, and the attitudes of the public toward literature and film during the time in which the film was produced. Students are also introduced to concepts and techniques of film analysis to aid them in making connections between content and form in their interpretations of the films.

NOTE: The attached syllabus is from a pilot version of this course offered in Spring 2005 under another course number. The approach to teaching the course will remain the same.
German Film in Context

Instructor: Kathrin Bower
Office: Puryear 101-C
Telephone: 287-6060
E-mail: kbower@richmond.edu
Office hours: M 2:00–4:00pm
Class sessions: WF 2:45–4:00 pm in Puryear G13

Objectives:
This course is concerned with competing constructions of identity in German feature films from the Third Reich to the present. German Film in Context addresses not only the specific qualities of the filmic medium and its manipulation as a vehicle for ideology, but also the political, cultural, and historical contexts in which the films were produced and how the 'view from elsewhere' we inhabit as spectators outside those contexts influences our readings of German cinema. By the end of the course, the student should possess the critical apparatus to analyze the interplay of film form and content and demonstrate an increased sensitivity to the conditions of film production and spectatorship.

Films:
The course is divided into six roughly chronological periods, with two feature films representing each period. Seven of the films will be shown in class, the five indicated with an * will be screened outside of class or students must view them on their own prior to scheduled discussion.

Nazi cinema
Harlan, Veit. Jew Süss (1940) – ca. 95 min.
Baky, Josef von. Baron Münchhausen (1943) – 104 min.*

Post-war/anti-war film
Staudte, Wolfgang. The Murderers are among Us (1946) – 81 min.
Wicki, Bernard. The Bridge (1959) – 102 min.

Rebels with a Cause: Banned in the GDR
Maetzig, Kurt. The Rabbit is Me (1965) – 109 min.

New German Cinema

Post-unification

Re-writing the Past

Required text:
E-Reserve readings: [http://librarycat.richmond.edu]
Barnwell, Kathryn and Marni Stanley. “The Vanishing Healer in Doris Dörrie’s Nobody Loves Me.” 

Assignments:
- Three sequence analyses each focusing on a different aspect of film form: mise-en-scene, editing, and sound (750-1000 words)
- One oral presentation analyzing a central sequence in one of the films shown in the course
- An extended analysis of a film from one the six period categories but not on the course syllabus. This paper should be an original work of interpretation grounded in the background readings discussed in the course (1750-2000 words)
- Cumulative take-home final exam
Grade:
Active participation and attendance 15%
Sequence analyses 25%
Oral presentation 10%
Film analysis 25%
Final exam 25%
100%

Graduate degree candidates will be required to do a seminar project on one of the periods discussed in the course, combining extensive research into the historical and cultural context with a comparative analysis of two films not included in the syllabus. The seminar project will be completed in three stages: 1) thesis development and project outline with bibliography; 2) first draft of seminar paper; 3) final draft of seminar paper. This research paper will substitute for the film analysis and the final exam required of undergraduate students.
Graduate students are required to complete the three sequence analyses and the oral presentation, as described under assignments above.

SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) 1/12/05</td>
<td>Introduction and historical background: The Rise of Hitler and National Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 1/19/05</td>
<td>Veit Harlan, Jew Süss (1940) – in class Giannetti, Understanding Movies – Chpt. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 1/21/05</td>
<td>“The Elective Other: Jew Süss (1940)” pp. 149-169, 355-363 “Male Gaze and Female Reaction” pp. 117-133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) 1/26/05</td>
<td>Josef von Baky, Münchhausen (1943) – evening screening Giannetti, Understanding Movies – Chpt. 2, 3 Discuss mise en scene and movement in Jew Süss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) 1/28/05</td>
<td>“Of Lies and Life” pp. 303-317* “Self-reflexive Self-destruction” pp. 193-213, 374-386* Discuss context, form, reception, aspects of mise en scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) 2/2/05</td>
<td>“Occupation and Division, 1945-1949” pp. 129-167 “Dismantling the Dream Factory” pp. 9-24, 194 Sequence analysis #1 (mise-en-scene) due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8) 2/4/05 Wolfgang Staudte, *The Murderers are among Us* (1946) – in class

9) 2/9/05 “Coming Home through Rubble Canyons” pp. 25-46, 195-196*
   “The Anti-Fascist Past in DEFA Films” pp. 58-76*
   **Student presentation #1 - The Murderers are among Us**

10) 2/11/05 Bernhard Wicki, *The Bridge* (1959) – in class
    “A Flight from Memory” pp. 10-23, 215-219
    Giannetti, *Understanding Movies* – Chpt. 4

11) 2/16/05 **Student presentation #2 – The Bridge**
    Discussion of editing techniques in Wicki’s film

12) 2/18/05 “The Failed Socialist Experiment” pp.147-179*

13) 2/23/05 Kurt Maetzig, *The Rabbit is Me* (1965) – in class
    **Sequence analysis #2 (editing) due**

14) 2/25/05 “The Eleventh Plenum and *Das Kaninchen bin ich*” pp.151-175, 279-283

15) 3/2/05 “A Dream Deferred?” pp. 176-193, 283-286
    **Student presentation #3 – Trace of Stones**

16) 3/4/05 “New German Cinema” pp. 13-63, 324-331

**SPRING BREAK – 3/5/05-3/13/05**

    Giannetti, *Understanding Movies* – Chpt. 5

18) 3/18/05 “The Subject of Identity” pp. 198-213, 280-283
    **Student presentation #4 – Marianne and Juliane**

19) 3/23/05 “Angels, Fiction, and History in Berlin” pp. 163-190
    Discuss filmic aspects and sound
    **Student presentation #5 – Wings of Desire**

20) 3/25/05^ **Sequence analysis #3 (sound) due**
    “Unification and its Aftermath” pp. 325-348

^no class

21) 3/30/05 Doris Dörrie, *Nobody Loves Me* (1994) – in class
    Giannetti, *Understanding Movies* – Chpt. 7 – Drama (setting)
    **Outline for film analysis paper due**

22) 4/1/05 “The Vanishing Healer” pp. 119-126
    **Student presentation #6 – Nobody Loves Me**
    Discuss setting and elements of drama
23) 4/6/05     Giannetti, Understanding Movies – Chpt. 8  
Discuss the ‘Story’ and the re-writing of history  
Coming to terms with the past/present  

24) 4/8/05     Giannetti, Understanding Movies – Chpt. 12 (useful for film paper)  
Joseph Vilsmaier, Comedian Harmonists (1997) – in class  

25) 4/13/05    “Honor Your German Masters” pp. 349-375  
Student presentation #7 – Comedian Harmonists  

26) 4/15/05    Max Färberböck, Aimée & Jaguar (1999) – outside class  
Discussion of Holocaust representation in film and the ‘true’ story basis  
with examples from Schindler’s List (1993) and Europa, Europa (1990)  
Film analysis due  

27) 4/20/05    “A Story of Faces and Intimate Spaces” pp. 323-341  
Student presentation # 8 - Aimée & Jaguar  

28) 4/22/05    Concluding discussion  

Take-home final exam due by 5:00pm on Monday, April 25, 2005!