

# German 347: Weimar Cinema: The “Golden Age” of German Film

Amherst College  
Spring Semester 2020  
Prof. Christian Rogowski

## Office Hours:

**Required books** (available at Amherst Books, 8 Main Street), please support our local bookstore:

1. Noah Isenberg, ed., *Weimar Cinema: An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. [= WCEG]
- 2.
3. Christian Rogowski, ed. *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema. Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010 [= MFWC]

There will not be a Course Reader. Items marked with “x” will be distributed in class as xerox copies. Items underlined are hyperlinks to websites (some reading materials are available online via Frost Library, resp. the other libraries in the Five Colleges).

There will be **at least one required film screening /viewing a week** (if possible, on Thursdays, after our regular class).

For each film screened, please submit a short response (ca. five to ten sentences) to the Moodle blog, so that a fellow student can lead the discussion portion of the class session.

For films discussed on Tuesdays, these responses are due on Sunday night (by 6:00 pm), for films discussed on Thursdays, these responses are due on Wednesday evening (by 6:00 pm).

This is a **gadget-free class**: please don't bring and/or use any electronic devices in class.

Class-time is for real, human, face-to-face interaction!

## Course requirements:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 25 %     | Regular attendance ( <b>no unexcused absences</b> ) and active participation in class, including submitting film responses (as assigned). |
| 15 %     | One oral presentation of a film of your choice we have not discussed in class.  |
| 15 % x 2 | Two short papers (ca. 5 pages each).  |
| 30 %     | One final paper (ca. 10 pages; can be based on an earlier paper or on your oral presentation).  |

	DATE	PREPARE FOR CLASS:
1)	1) Tue., Jan. 28	Intro: Course content and objectives. Expectations and requirements. Some “samples” of Weimar Cinema.
	2) Thu., Jan. 30	Read: <b>Rogowski</b> , “Preface” & “Introduction: Images and Imaginaries,” MFWC 1-12. <b>Isenberg</b> , “Introduction,” WCEG, 1-12. <b>Kracauer</b> , “Preface” (pp. V-VI) and “Introduction” (pp. 3-11) to <i>From Caligari to Hitler</i> (1947) can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.archive.org/details/fromcaligaritohi013829mbp">http://www.archive.org/details/fromcaligaritohi013829mbp</a> (note that book page number 3 corresponds to “page” 21 in the pdf) <b>Eisner</b> , excerpts from <i>The Haunted Screen</i> (1952) (x)  <b>Afternoon:</b> FILM: <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i> ( <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> , Robert Wiene, 1920; 55 min.)
2)	3) Tue., Feb. 4	Film analysis exercise 1 Discuss Wiene, <i>Caligari</i> Read: <b>Gemünden</b> , “How to read a film” (x) <b>Andriopoulos</b> , “Suggestion,” WCEG 13-32. <b>Kracauer</b> , “Caligari,” 61-77, from <a href="http://www.archive.org/details/fromcaligaritohi013829mbp">http://www.archive.org/details/fromcaligaritohi013829mbp</a>  Watch on Moodle, for Thu.: FILM: <i>Anders als die Andern</i> ( <i>Different from the others</i> , Richard Oswald, 1919, ca. 50 min.)
	4) Thu., Feb. 6	Film analysis exercise 2 Discuss Oswald, <i>Anders als die Andern</i> Read: <b>Smith</b> , “Richard Oswald and the Social Hygiene Film,” MFWC 13-30. <b>Otto</b> , “Veidt’s Masculine Masquerades,” MFWC 134-152.  <b>Afternoon:</b> FILM: <i>M</i> (Fritz Lang, 1930, 117 min.); 4:00 pm & 7:30 pm, Stirn Auditorium

3)	5) Tue., Feb. 11	<p>Discuss Lang, <i>M</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Herzog</b>, “Open Case,” WCEG 291-309.</p> <p>Watch for Thu.:  FILM: <i>Nosferatu</i> (F. W. Murnau, 1921, 64 min.)</p>
	6) Thu., Feb. 13	<p>Film analysis exercise 3</p> <p>Discuss Murnau, <i>Nosferatu</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Elsaesser</b>, “No End,” WCEG 79-94.  <b>Corrigan</b>, “<a href="#">Writing about Film</a>” (excerpts)</p> <p>Watch for Tue:  FILM: <i>Sumurun</i> (Ernst Lubitsch, 1920, 103 min.)</p>
4)	7) Tue., Feb. 18	<p>Discuss Lubitsch, <i>Sumurun</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>McCormick</b>, “Desire versus Despotism,” MFWC 67-83.  <b>Rogowski</b>, “Movies, Money, and Mystique,” WCEG 55-77.</p>
	8) Thu., Feb. 20	<p><b>Kaes</b>, “<a href="#">Introduction</a>,” <i>Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War</i> (2009), 1-6 [click above for online pdf].</p> <p><b>Hales</b>, “Unsettling Nerves,” MFWC 31-47.</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Der letzte Mann</i> (<i>The Last Laugh</i>, F. W. Murnau, 1924, 101 min.)</p>
5)	9) Tue., Feb. 25	<p>Film analysis exercise 4</p> <p>Discuss Murnau, <i>Der letzte Mann</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Hake</b>, “Who gets,” WCEG 115-134.</p>
	10) Thu., Feb. 27	<p>Hyperinflation</p> <p>Read:  <b>Widdig</b>, “Flirting with Disaster” (2001) (x)</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Die freudlose Gasse</i> (<i>The Joyless Street</i>, G. W. Pabst, 1925, 150 min.) [Don’t watch a (mutilated) 60 min. version!!]</p>
6)	11) Tue., Mar. 3	<p>Discuss Pabst, <i>Die freudlose Gasse</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Hall</b>, “Gender, Space,” WCEG 135-154.</p>

	12) Thu., Mar. 5	<p><b>FIRST PAPER DUE (in class)</b></p> <p>Gender and genre: Weimar German comedies</p> <p>Read:  <b>Horak</b>, “German Film Comedy” (2002) (x)  <b>Kracauer</b>, “Cult of Distraction” (1926) (x)</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Metropolis</i> (Fritz Lang, 1927, 145 min.)</p>
7)	13) Tue., Mar. 10	<p>Discuss <i>Metropolis</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Kaes</b>, “Metropolis: City, Cinema, Modernity” WCEG 173-191.  <b>Connolly &amp; Bradshaw</b> <a href="#">articles</a> in <i>The Guardian</i> (2008)</p>
	14) Thu., Mar. 12	<p>Dancing on a volcano?</p> <p>Read:  <b>Laqueur</b>, “Berlin s’amuse” (1974) (x)  <b>Garncarz</b>, “The Star System,” MFWC 116-133.</p> <p>Watch for Tue. after Spring Break:  FILM: <i>Berlin, die Symphonie der Großstadt</i> (<i>Berlin, Symphony of a Great City</i>, Walther Ruttmann, 1927, 65 min.)</p>
		<p><b>SPRING BREAK (March 14 - 22)</b></p>
8)	15) Tue., Mar. 24	<p>Discuss Ruttmann, <i>Berlin Symphony</i></p> <p>Experimental film in Weimar</p> <p>Read:  <b>Westerdale</b>, “Musical Promise,” MFWC 153-166.</p> <p>Watch for Thu.:  FILM: <i>Das alte Gesetz</i> (<i>The Ancient Law</i>, E. A. Dupont, 1923, 128 min.)</p>
8)	16) Thu., Mar. 26	<p>Discuss Dupont, <i>Das alte Gesetz</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Walk</b>, “Romeo with Sidelocks,” MFWC 84-101</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Die Büchse der Pandora</i> (<i>Pandora’s Box</i>, G. W. Pabst, 1929, 105 min.)</p>

9)	17) Tue., Mar. 31	<p>Discuss Pabst, <i>Büchse der Pandora</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>McCarthy</b>, “Surface Sheen,” WCEG 217-236.  <b>Brooks</b>, excerpts from <i>Lulu in Hollywood</i> (1989) (x)</p> <p>Watch for Thu.:  FILM: <i>Der blaue Engel</i> (<i>The Blue Angel</i>, Josef von Sternberg, 1930, 108 min).</p>
	18) Thu., Apr. 2	<p>Discuss von Sternberg, <i>Der blaue Engel</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Petro</b>, “Multiple Versions,” WCEG 255-270.  <b>Wahl</b>, “Babel’s Business,” MFWC 235-248.</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Das blaue Licht</i> (<i>The Blue Light</i>, Leni Riefenstahl, 1932, 70 min)</p>
10)	19) Tue., Apr. 7	<p>Discuss Riefenstahl, <i>Das blaue Licht</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Rentschler</b>, “Mountains and Modernity: Relocating the Bergfilm.” <i>New German Critique</i> 51 (Fall 1990); 137-161.  <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/488175">http://www.jstor.org/stable/488175</a></p>
	20) Thu., Apr. 9	<p><b>SECOND PAPER DUE (in class)</b></p> <p>In class:  FILM: <i>Kuhle Wampe</i> (Slatan Dudow, 1932; 69 min.)</p>
11)	21) Tue., Apr. 14	<p>Discuss Dudow, <i>Kuhle Wampe</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Silberman</b>, “Whose Revolution,” WCEG 311-330.</p>
	22) Thu., Apr. 16	<p>Read:  <b>Bock/Töteberg</b>, “History of Ufa” (2002) (x)  <b>Ashkenazy</b>, “A New Era of Peace and Understanding,” MFWC 249-267.</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Ein blonder Traum</i> (<i>A Blonde Dream</i>, Paul Martin, 1932, 102 min.)</p>
12)	23) Tue., Apr. 21	<p>Discuss Martin, <i>Ein blonder Traum</i></p> <p>Read:  <b>Petrescu</b>, “Unmasking [...] the Vamp,” MFWC 299-316.  <b>J. Kapczynsky</b>, “Still Motion: Dance and Stasis in Weimar Operetta Film,” <i>Seminar</i> 46: 3 (Sept. 2010), 293-310.</p>

	24) Thu., Apr. 23	<p>Read:  <b>Sloterdijk</b>, “<a href="#">Cynicism–The Twilight of False Consciousnes.</a>”  <i>New German Critique</i> No. 33 (Autumn, 1984) 190-206 (online via jstore).</p> <p>Watch for Tue.:  FILM: <i>Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse (The Testament of Dr. Mabuse</i>, Fritz Lang, 1933, 124 min.)</p>
13)	25) Tue., Apr. 28	<p>Discuss Lang, <i>Testament</i>  <b>Weitz</b>, from <i>Weimar Germany. Promise and Tragedy</i> (2007) (x)</p> <p>Watch for Thu.:  FILM: <i>Niemandland (No Man’s Land, aka Hell on Earth</i>, Victor Trivas, 1931; 68 min.) Available for streaming at <a href="http://www.archive.org/details/HellOnEarth">http://www.archive.org/details/HellOnEarth</a></p>
	26) Thu., Apr. 30	<p>Discuss Trivas, <i>Niemandland</i>  Read:  <b>Nenno</b>, “Undermining Babel,” MFWC 286-298.</p>
		Final papers: due date to be determined.