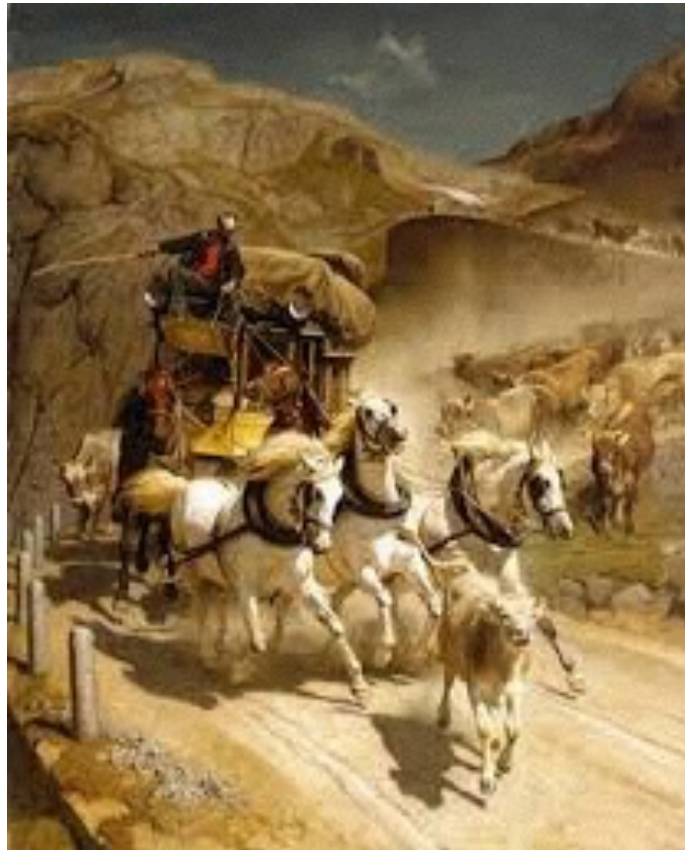


German 301/376: Screening Swissness An Introduction to Swiss-German Film

German Studies Program, Spring 2019



Filmposter, Der letzte Postillion, 1941

Professor

Office

Office Hours Office Hours

E-mail

Telephone

Caroline Wiedmer

North Campus 6

M/TH, 15:45-16:45, and by appointment on Wednesdays

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Meeting time & place

Film Screenings

Monday and Thursdays, 14:30 to 15:45

Thursdays following class, in Class Room

Course Description

This course can be understood as a cultural history of Switzerland and will trace the development of key cultural moments through Swiss-German film over the last several decades. We will be paying close attention to tropes and metaphors such as the mountains, the tension between city/countryside in the conception of Heimat, ideas of Swiss identity, and

portrayals of the other. Swiss-German film made its entry on the international stage in the thirties, with films that reacted to the threat of war and critically reflected on the notion of the *Geistige Landesverteidigung*, or the spiritual resistance, a concept, which would become a rallying cry during World War Two. The fifties and sixties with the so-called *Heimatfilme*, in which Jeremias Gotthelf's novels and stories were brought to the big screen in beautiful black and white renditions that fuelled the national imaginary with more soothing notions of what it meant to be Swiss. The seventies and eighties then saw rather more reflected takes on what it meant to be Swiss. Films, like for instance Rolf Lyssy's *Die Schweizermacher*, that explored the arduous process of procuring a Swiss passport, and is thought of today as a break-through in Swiss film history is a case in point. Today, we look back on almost five decades of Swiss film since *Die Schweizermacher* as a site of avid and often provocative cultural criticism that has turned the idea of Swissness upside down.

The goals in terms of language acquisition are primarily to hone listening, speaking and writing skills. To this end, students will be expected to write protocols on the films they view, to participate avidly in the class discussions, to give a formal presentation on at least one film and to produce three formal essays. This class is a split-level class and will be taught in German. Film screenings will take place regularly on Tuesday evenings in the class room and must be attended in addition to the regular classes. Students in 301 will be expected to produce half the written homework (see below under requirements), but participate equally in the class room discussions.

Course Goals

The goals of this course include the following:

- to develop critical thinking and vocabulary about films
- to practice synthesizing information from classroom discussions, and film viewings;
- to present this information in a variety of formats, including oral presentation, weekly protocols and in short essays and homework assignments;
- and to demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively and use technology effectively in group work and as an individual.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this class, students should:

- be acquainted with a differentiated understanding of filmic representations of Swiss themes and cultural topics
- be able to reflect on different cultural themes in Swiss-German film
- be able to express themselves fluently in German
- be able to produce, scholarly writing in German
- be able to use media, library and university resources to complete papers and presentations

Class Requirements:

Please note: the number before the slash is for German 301 students; please submit all work to Moodle.

- one analytical essay of 3/6 pages
- one final comparative essay of 5/10 pages

- one formal presentation that includes research of the cultural context
- class participation

Grading

Analytical essay, 3/6 pages	25%
Final comparative essay of 5/10 pages	35%
Formal presentation	20%
Class participation	20%

Grading Rubrics for Presentations

- Introduction of the film's director and the context in which the film was made: 20%
- Presentation of major themes and how they are embedded in the times of its making: 20%
- Analysis of the film with thesis statement and structure of presentation: 20%
- Flawless presentation in terms of grammar (for presentations, be sure your pp has no mistakes), time (ca 15 minutes): 20%
- 3 questions about the film and the historical moment to start off class room discussion: 20%

Attendance Policy

This is a class that lives from regular reading and writing, engaging with films and the cultural contexts that produced them, and ongoing, open-minded conversation. It is yours to take responsibility for and to shape and mold with engaged presence. You will do well, if you hand in your assignments on time, come regularly and participate avidly. Having said that, I do understand that sometimes attendance is impossible. For this reason, you can miss two classes, no questions asked. Save this freebie for your parents' or friends' visits, for that extra-long week-end or for staying home with a cold. For a second and third absence to be excused, I require a doctor's note. All absences after that will result in automatic withdrawal from the course.

Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism

To plagiarise means to use someone else's work without giving them appropriate credit. This includes anything from the failure to reference sources to paying someone else to write a paper for you. This is the official statement of the university on plagiarism:

A student whose actions are deemed by the University to be out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives or the spirit of good conduct as fostered by the University and Swiss community, may be placed on Disciplinary Probation or become subject to dismissal from the University. Cheating is a dishonest action out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives and spirit of the University. Furthermore, cheating reflects negatively on one's personal integrity and is unjust to those students who have studied.

See the Academic Catalog for full statement (page 199):

https://www.fus.edu/images/pdf/FUS_ACADEMIC_CATALOG_2018_2020_web.pdf

Readings

All readings are available on Moodle. Some readings are already indicated on the syllabus and I will be adding readings in accordance with class interest.

Phones and computers

Please keep both turned off while in class, unless I ask you to do otherwise, for instance during peer reading and writing sessions.

Course Calendar (subject to change in accordance with class needs)

Part I: Switzerland and the Mountains

Jan 21	Einführung
Jan 24	Screening - Heidi (Comencini, 1952) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wu0qZIJZsU
Jan 28	Diskussion: Heidi Reading: Marcy Goldberg, "Suspekte Schönheit: Ueber die Darstellug der Berge im Neueren Schweizer Film" http://www.cinemabuch.ch/article/53006 Presenter:
Jan 31	Screening- Der letzte Postillion vom St Gotthard (Heuberger 1941)
Feb 4	Diskussion Postillon Reading: Judith Schueler, "The Gotthard as a national image" Presentation:

Teil II: Switzerland at War

Feb 7	Screening - Gilberte de Gourgenay (Schnyder, 1941)
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<https://www.geschichte-schweiz.ch/erster-weltkrieg-1914-1918.html>

Feb 11

Diskussion- Gilberte de Gourgenay
Presentation:

Feb 14

Screening - Die Erschiessung des Landesverrätters Ernst S. (Dindo und Meyenberg 1976)

<https://www.tagblatt.ch/ostschweiz/noch-immer-ungut-der-fall-ernst-s-ld.665151>

Feb 18

Diskussion- Die Erschiessung
Presentation:

Teil III: Switzerland and the Jews

Feb 21

Screening - Akte Grüniger (Alain Gsponer, 2014)
<https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/spaete-rehabilitation-paul-grueningers-1.18363718>

Feb 25

Diskussion Akte Grüniger
<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/de/exhibitions/righteous/gruninger.asp>

Presentation:

Feb 28

Screening on your own: Das Boot ist voll (Imhoof 1981)

[Due - draft of analytical essay](#)

Peer review

March 4

Discussion Das Boot
Chapter 3 of the Bergier Report: <https://www.uek.ch/de/schlussbericht/synthese/uekd.pdf>

Presentation:

Part IV: Switzerland and Immigration

March 7

Screening: Siamo Italiani (Gnant und Kovach, 1964)
<https://www.watson.ch/schweiz/wissen/392044607-die-italiener-in-der-schweiz-eine-geschichte-in-5-akten>

Due- final analytical essay

Academic Travel: March 11-22

- March 25 Discussion Siamo Italiani
- Presentation:
- March 28 Screening- Die Schweizermacher (Lyssy 1978)
- <https://www.filmpodium.ch/film/167302/die-schweizermacher>
- Task: What would you have to do to get the Swiss passport? Be ready to report.
- April 1 Discussion Die Schweizermacher
- <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/kino/die-entstehung-seines-erfolgsfilms-die-schweizermacher-1.18698205>
- Presentation:
- April 4 Screening - Eldorado (Imhoof 2018)
- April 8 Discussion Eldorado
- Part V: Switzerland and Women**
- April 11 Screening: Die Herbstzeitlosen (Oberli, 2006)
Due-second essay
- April 15 Discussion Die Herbstzeitlosen
- April 18 Screening - Die Göttliche Ordnung (Volpe, 2017)
- <https://demokratie.geschichte-schweiz.ch/chronologie-frauenstimmrecht-schweiz.html>
- April 22 Discussion Die Göttliche Ordnung
<https://www.nzz.ch/frauenstimmrecht-1.9350588>
- When did women receive the right to vote in your country?
- Presentation:
- Part VI: Switzerland and the Others**
- April 25 Screening Der Verdingbub ((Imboden, 2011)

<https://www.beobachter.ch/administrativ-versorgte/verdingkinder-du-chasch-nuut-du-bisch-nuut-us-dir-gits-nuut>

April 29

Due - rough draft, final paper, peer review

May 2

Discussion Der Verdingbub

Presentation

Final's period (tba)

Wrap-up and conclusion

Due - final copy of final essay