BERLIN PERSPECTIVES

The Cinematic Representation of Berlin in German and Turkish Migration Films

Semester: Summer semester 2019
Course instructor: Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı, denizyardimci@web.de
Subject area: Kultur und Gesellschaft / Culture and Society
Credits: 5 ECTS
Time: Friday 12-16 c.t.: 12./26. April, 3./17./31. May, 14./ 28. June
Room: 0323-26 (HVT 5-7)

Course description:

The labour migration from Turkey to Germany, which started in the mid-1960s, had an important socio-economic and socio-cultural impact on both countries’ societies and influenced their film culture. German filmmakers began to feature the first guestworkers’ difficult lives in films such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s Katzelmacher (1969) and Angst Essen Seele Auf / Fear Eats Soul (1974). Later, German cinema began to cinematically capture the entire migrant family like in Shirins Hochzeit/ Shirin's Wedding (1975, Helma Sanders-Brahms) and Yasemin (1988, Hark Bohm). In the 1990s, second- and third –generation Turkish German directors such as Fatih Akın, Thomas Arslan, Ayşe Polat, Yüksel Yavuz, and Aysun Bademsoy marked the end of the so-called guestworker cinema (Gastarbeiterkino) of the 1970s and 1980s and started to create a transnational and diasporic cinema featuring a culturally hybrid Germany. Turkish cinema dealt with this migration phenomenon even in more than 60 films alone between 1960s and 1990s. Berlin (especially Kreuzberg) has always been one of the favourite settings in all of these migration movies. The transformation of Berlin’s first Guestworker Ghettos to culturally hybrid urban districts over the course of 60 years is very well reflected in all of these cinema cultures.

This interdisciplinary course crosses and connects the academic fields of migration studies, film studies, and cultural studies. In the first part of the course, we will explore how the socio-political and socio-cultural phenomenon of Turkish immigration into Germany, immigrants, and diasporas are represented in German and Turkish cinema from the 1960s
until the present. The second part of the course then gets more specific and we approach the representation of Berlin in these migration movies.

In this course, students will gain knowledge about film analysis, German immigration history, and theoretical concepts dealing with migration, diaspora, stereotype, culture, and identity.

**Learning objectives:**

In this interdisciplinary course, students will learn how the socio-political and socio-cultural phenomenon of Turkish immigration into Germany has influenced both countries’ cinemas from the 1960s until the present. They will explore the narrative and aesthetic shift in the cinematic portrayal of immigrants, diasporas, culture and identity that occurred over the past 60 years. The focus will lie on the social and urban transformation of Berlin into a culturally hybrid capital and how this change is featured in German and Turkish migration film. In this course, students will gain knowledge about film analysis, the characteristics of national and transnational cinema, German labour immigration history and theoretical concepts dealing with migration, diaspora, stereotype, culture, and identity. Moreover, students will learn the interrelation between real societal circumstances such as migration and film.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

**Knowledge**

- Understand Germany’s labour immigration history and identify its societal and cinematic impact
- Understand and identify the social and cultural transformation of Berlin and how this is reflected in different film cultures
- Understand and apply textual and contextual analysis in film
- Understand and identify key literature on transnational cinema and Turkish-German migration films

**Academic/Transferrable Skills**

- Analyse and critically reflect on selected theories of migration, culture and transnationalism
• Select relevant theories and methods for analyzing migration films and transnational cinema
• Communicate and discuss key concepts of migration cinema and transnational cinema

Competencies

• Analyze and discuss films
• Analyze and present a research topic in a group
• Research and structure an essay, formulate research questions, identify theories and methods to critically discuss research questions

Assessment portfolio:

• Participation and group work in course (20% of final grade)
• Group presentation (30 minutes in total including showing film sequences) (30% of final grade)
• Final written assignment in English, German or Turkish (50% of final grade)
• Deadline: 01.07.2019 / Format: 6-8 pages, 1,5-spaced, Times New Roman ft.12)

Language requirements:

This interdisciplinary English and German bilingual course is designed particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The course targets non-native English and non-native German speaking students as well as native speakers. The aim is to foster a creative exchange of ideas and analytical perspectives across any linguistic ‘barrier’ to enable more fruitful discussions and research outcomes. The course discussions and group presentations will be in English and German. A short translation will be provided for those having problems in understanding the used language and difficulties in following the discussion. The film critique/film review and the course paper can be written in English, German or. However, the language in class will be mainly English and a good standard of academic English (B2-level) is recommended. The films will be in German with German or English subtitles and in Turkish with English or German subtitles. Some basic German (A2-level) is also recommended.
Timetable:
(bi-weekly course)

Session 1:  12.04.2019

Part 1 – Introduction to Topic, Methodology and Theory
1st Week (4 hours):
Introduction to Course
- Introduction to course and required assessments, forming the presentation groups
- Introduction to the immigration history of Germany from the 1960 until the present
- Brief introduction to German Migration Cinema
- Screening: Katzelmacher (1969, Rainer Werner Fassbinder)

Session 2:  26.04.2019

2nd week (4 hours):
First Phase of German Migration Cinema (‘The Cinema of Duty’ 1960-1990)
- Screening: Angst essen Seele auf/Fear Eats Soul (1974, Rainer Werner Fassbinder)
- Group presentation: ‘Guestworker Cinema from 1960s - 1970s’
- Introduction to the methodology of film analysis 1

Session 3:  03.05.2019

3rd week (4 hours):
Second Phase of German Migration Cinema (‘Transnational Cinema’ 1990-Present)
- Screening: Kurz und Schmerzlos/ Short Sharp Shock (1998, Fatih Akin)
- Group Presentation: ‘Characteristics of Diasporic and Transnational Cinema’
- Introduction to the methodology of film analysis 2

Session 4:  17.05.2019

Part 2 – Berlin on-Screen: From Migrant Ghettos to Culturally Hybrid Urban Districts
4th week (4 hours):
Kreuzberg becomes Multicultural: Representing Early Guestworkers’ Lives in Berlin
- Screening: Almanya Aci Vatan/ Germany Bitter Homeland (1979, Serif Gören)

**Session 5: 31.05.2019**
5th week (4 hours)
Berlin in Transnational Cinema 1: Culture Clash Comedies
- Screening: Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh/Me Boss, You Sneakers (1998, Hussi Kutlucan)

**Session 6: 14.06.2019**
6th week (4 hours)
Berlin in Transnational Cinema 2: Thomas Arslan’s Berlin Trilogy
- Screening: Geschwister/Brothers and Sisters (1996, Thomas Arslan)

**Session 7: 28.06.2019**
7th week (4 hours)
Final Discussion / Concluding Remarks
- Screening: Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland/Almanya – Welcome to Germany (2010, Yasemin Şamdereli)
- Feedback on course, discussion

**Literature:**
All relevant literature will be available via moodle once the course has started.
A selection of suggested literature:


LEAL, Joanne and Rossade, Klaus-Dieter (2008) ‘Negotiating Gender, Sexuality and Ethnicity in Fatih Akin’s and Thomas Arslan’s Urban Spaces’ in German as a Foreign Language 3, pp. 59-87.


Remarks:

- Attendance policy (HU rules: 80% attendance needed in order to pass; absences need to be excused and backed up by doctor’s certificate)
- Plagiarism is not tolerated. Please provide correct citations when using another person’s ideas.