

Mysteries and Horror in German Literature and Film

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Office Hours: MWF 9-10:50; W 1:30-3:20, and by appt.

In this course we will examine examples of the mystery and horror genres from late 18th-century German fairy tales to contemporary German movies. Our goal is to increase our understanding of, and sensitivity to, representative works of the genres and of the times that produced them. This involves taking them seriously as works that pose the same sorts of questions that a philosopher might pose -- What's the meaning of life? What's the root of evil? Are human beings good or evil? What motivates them? What do they need? What do they fear? Why do they fear the things they do? Many of those questions will remain unanswerable, but we will have three guidelines which will produce at least tentative conclusions. We will endeavor to understand the popular mystery and horror genres in more complex and intellectual ways, in particular as reflections of basic personal and social questions; we will view entertainment as something more than escapism, i.e. as an opportunity for reflection, analysis and understanding; and we will learn to appreciate older, less easily accessible examples of the genres, and to better understand more recent ones.

Texts

„Das Märchen von dem Machandelbaum“

E.T.A. Hoffmann. „Das Fräulein von Scuderi.“

Kafka. „Der Landarzt,“ “In der Strafkolonie,“ and Kapitel 1 from „Der Prozeß.“

Freud. „Das Unheimliche.“

Films

Nosferatu

M

Veronika Voss

Winterschläfer

Funny Games

Anatomie

Course Requirements

In addition to preparing and discussing the readings and films, students must write four critiques/responses (to the films) of about 200 words and two short analytical papers (one on a text and one on a film) of about 750 words in German. Substantive rewrites will be required on the two papers. A midterm and a final will evaluate student performance.

Evaluation

Two exams	26%
Two Oral exams	8%
Quizzes	10%
4 short critiques	16%
2 papers	16%
2 rewrites	6%
prep., part., & att.	18%

Preparation, Participation, & Attendance

Attendance is a prerequisite for participating and for demonstrating preparation. The percentage of days attended will be the upper limit for this grade. The prep. and part. grade will, in fact, be multiplied by the percentage of days attended. If, for example, you receive a 93% for prep. and part., but are absent twice (86%), your prep., part., & att. grade will be the product of the two grades (93% x 86%), which equals about 80%. Attendance will also directly and indirectly affect the exam, paper, and quiz grades. Since this class meets only once a week, any absence is a major event.

Participation doesn't mean talking all the time (particularly if you haven't prepared). It means listening carefully to both your instructor and your classmates and responding thoughtfully when appropriate. Contribute your ideas to the class, but be aware of others.

Learning Outcomes

--Students will read complex texts and view films in German from the late 18th century to the early 21st century. They will discuss these literary and filmic texts in German, and write about them in increasingly sophisticated and correct German. Their reading, speaking, writing, oral comprehension, and analytical skills will progress.

-- Students will demonstrate enhanced ability to analyze literary texts of the horror and mystery genres from both earlier literary-historical periods and from the present time.

-- They will show an understanding of how these literary and filmic texts function in a broad cultural context – how they satisfy human needs and introduce more complicated intellectual material to a general population.

-- They will improve their ability to think critically and formulate in-depth arguments, and to communicate their findings clearly in both oral presentations and formal writing.

General Weekly Plan (subject to revision)

Jan. 14: Einführung; Machandelboom; Nosferatu Viewing
Jan. 21: MLK day
Jan. 28: Finish Machandelboom; Nosferatu discussion; check on reading
Feb. 4: discuss Scuderi; view M
Feb. 11: discuss M; quick discussion / check up on Scuderi
Feb. 18: Scuderi discussion / view Veronika Voss
Feb. 25: Scuderi fertig besprechen / Veronika Voss besprechen
Mar. 3: Der Landarzt besprechen
Mar. 10: discuss Der Landarzt; view Winterschläfer
Mar. 17: Spring Break
Mar. 24: discuss Strafkolonie; view Funny Games
Mar. 31: discuss Funny Games
Apr. 7: discuss "Das Unheimliche" relative to texts and films
Apr. 14: View Anatomie; begin discussion
Apr. 21: Finish Anatomie; discuss chapter one of "Der Prozeß"
Apr. 28: Final discussion
Final Exam: Monday, May 5, 5:30-7:30

Reading Schedule

Jan. 14: Machandelboom (in class)
Jan. 21: Scuderi 1-10
Jan. 28: Scuderi 11-20
Feb. 4: Scuderi 21-30
Feb. 11: Scuderi 31-40
Feb. 18: Scuderi 41-50
Feb. 25: Scuderi 51-63
Mar. 3: Landarzt
Mar. 10: Strafkolonie 1-10
Mar. 17: Spring Break
Mar. 24: Strafkolonie 11-27
Mar. 31: Das Unheimliche
Apr. 7: Das Unheimliche
Apr. 14: Der Prozeß 1-12
Apr. 21: Der Prozeß 13-24
Apr. 28: Catch up!