

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN FILM

The Individual and Society



Melancholia (Lars von Trier, Denmark, 2011)

DIS Spring 2012
European Humanities 3-credit course
Tuesdays and Fridays, 11:40am – 1:00pm, F24-306

Instructor: Anne Jespersen

Cand.mag. (English Literature, Film History and Theory, University of Copenhagen, 1982.) Editor of the yearbook "Filmsæsonen". Bookpublisher (Forlaget April) 1985-93. Has translated several books and written film reviews and filmhistorical articles in periodicals both in Denmark and abroad. Has lectured at The European Film College in Ebeltoft, Denmark and at universities abroad. Lectures in Film and Television History and Theory at the Department of Film and Media Studies at The University of Copenhagen as well as at Hamburg Media School. With DIS since 1987.

Anne Jespersen

Tel.: 33 25 27 24

e-mail: annejesp@gmail.com

DIS contacts:

Jakob Lorentzen, European Humanities Program Director, jlo@dis.dk

Hope Rehak, European Humanities Program Assistant, hr@dis.dk

Content

The course offers a study of contemporary European film from the 1960s to the present, focusing on important themes and dominating trends of the medium in relation to the changing attitudes in social, political, and artistic issues like Family Structure, the Woman's Role, The Artist in Society, The Outsider and Society, World War II and its Moral and Political Consequences, Tolerance and Aggression, Sanity and Insanity as reflected in representative films by directors like Pedro Almodóvar, Mike Leigh, Lars von Trier, Susanne Bier, Thomas Vinterberg, Lukas Moodysson, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wolfgang Becker, Ingmar Bergman, Roman Polanski, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Stephen Daldry, Nicolas Winding Refn, and others. The main emphasis will be on seeing and understanding the films in relation to their historical, social, and political background, partly through film examples, partly through reading material. The course will include lectures, discussions of films and required readings, and separate film screenings.

Objectives

By the end of the course, each student will have gained the ability to:

- develop an appreciation and understanding of major themes in contemporary European film.
- analyze and compare the course material in relation to the changing attitudes in social, political, and artistic issues in Europe.
- relate the course material to its European context.
- produce an academic research paper illustrating the ability to interpret and discuss course material

Film Viewings

Please note: it is imperative that you view each required film before class (see page 5 for film viewing schedule). **A short test relating to each film will take place in class.**

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all scheduled classes is required, and each student is responsible for all material covered or assigned in class. Included in the computation of the final grade in the course is participation. Participation extends to all class sessions, film screenings, as well as activity in class discussion and a general contribution to the progress of the class.

Laptop Computer Policy

While most students find that taking notes by hand in class is quite sufficient for review purposes, you are allowed to use a computer in class for writing lecture/discussion notes. However, you are asked not to use your computer in class to write emails, connect to social media, surf the internet or other such activities as this is quite disrespectful and distracting for both the teacher and your fellow students. Failure to show this courtesy will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

Grades & Evaluation

The grades used by DIS instructors are as follows:

- A = Excellent = 4
- B = Well above average = 3
- C = Average = 2
- D = Below average but passing = 1
- F = Failure or failure to complete = 0

Plus (+) and minus (-) grades are used for examinations and home assignments as well as for final grades. The "+" is equal to .3 and the "-" is equal to minus .3.

Evaluation:

Short Paper	10 %	Final exam	25 %
Midterm	20 %	In-class film tests	10%
Research paper (incl. synopsis)	25 %	Class Participation	10 %

Midterm & Final

The tests consist of questions of relatively simple facts (like: Who made this or that film?), questions of more complex character (like: mention the characteristics of this or that director), and questions to be answered with a short essay (like: Comment on the typical trends in modern Bulgarian cinema and their relation to the country's recent history). The answers will be weighted differently.

Short Paper

The topic for the Short Paper will be given on **Feb. 3** and the answer - an essay of 2-3 pages - must be handed in on **Feb. 17**.

In-Class Film Tests

It is very important that you view each required film before class (see page 5 for film viewing schedule). A short test relating to each film will take place in class.

For each film screening, you will be asked to answer a few simple questions to demonstrate that you have viewed the film scheduled to be discussed.

Research Paper Synopsis

On **March 28**, you are to hand in a synopsis of your Research Paper. The synopsis should give a detailed outline of your paper, including the sources you intend to use. When grading the research paper, the synopsis will be taken into consideration.

Research Paper

The topics for the research paper are decided by the student and the instructor together. Normally, it would be on (or relate to) subjects and films dealt with in the course. It is possible to write about other topics by agreement with the instructor.

Suggested structure of the paper:

1. Table of contents.
2. Introduction: Presentation of the subject to be investigated.
An overview of the contents.
A comment on the methodology.
3. Description: Summaries, observations, references.
4. Analysis: Comments, discussions, comparisons.
5. Summary and conclusion.
6. Notes & Bibliography.

The paper should be based on the required reading, the additional reading found in the DIS library, the Danish Film Institute library, and the films seen in class, the class lectures and discussions.

In the Introduction and Description, the factual material is presented. The main emphasis, though, should be on the **analysis** - that is: your **personal discussion** of the material. It is necessary to present the substance of the topic through paraphrasing and quotations (remember, always to footnote sources of direct quotations), but it is **not sufficient** only to paraphrase. The **analysis** of the material - **your** personal understanding and interpretation - is the important part of the paper. The paper should normally include a relatively detailed analysis of one of the films you have seen within the subject.

Length: Approx. 12 type written pages.

You can choose between **two deadlines** for the handing in of the Research Paper:

- 1) **not later than May 1** (in class), and the paper will be returned to you before the Final exams.
- 2) **not later than May 11** (in class), and the paper will *not* be returned to you before the Final exams.

Note: On **March 28**, you are to hand in a Research Paper Synopsis.

The Danish Film Institute Library

The Library at The Danish Film Institute is located at the Film House, "**Filmhuset**" or "**Cinematket**", Gothersgade 55 (close to Nørreport Station). **The Library** has a large collection of books, periodicals, stills and other film-related material. The Film House also has a book store, a café, plus three cinemas that show films every day.

When writing your research paper, **it is highly recommended** that you do some of your research at the library, and/or take out material from their collections.

The Danish Film Institute Film Library is open:

- Mon.: Closed
- Tues. & Thur.: 12 noon - 7 p.m.
- Wed. & Fri: 12 noon - 4 p.m.

Film Viewings

Please note that it is mandatory to watch each film before the relevant class. Below you will find a schedule of film viewings that allows you the opportunity to view the films together as a class. If, for some reason, you are unable to attend a viewing or would like to see a particular film again, it will be available on reserve in the Library.

Keep in mind that these films act as the texts of this course and it is therefore necessary to watch each film attentively (i.e. take notes) before the class sessions in which it will be discussed.

All films will be screened in Bio 1 (DIS Cinema)

Films will be screened on Mondays and Thursdays at 4 pm.

Day	Film
Thursday, February 2	<i>The Celebration/Festen</i>
Monday, February 6	<i>Secrets and Lies</i>
Monday, February 13	<i>The Five Obstructions</i>
Tuesday, February 14	<i>Melancholia (Screened at Husets Biograf at 7pm)</i>
Thursday, February 16	<i>Mammoth</i>
Monday, February 20	<i>In a Better World</i>
Thursday, February 23	<i>tba</i>
Monday, February 27	<i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i>
Monday, March 12	<i>Persona</i>
Thursday, March 15	<i>All about My Mother</i>
Monday, March 19	<i>The Hours</i>
Thursday, March 22	<i>The Great Dictator</i>
Monday, March 26	<i>Life is Beautiful</i>
Wednesday, March 28	<i>Girls in Uniform (this film will be watched in class)</i>
Monday, April 16	<i>The Marriage of Maria Braun</i>
Thursday April 19	<i>Death and the Maiden</i>
Monday, April 23	<i>Drive</i>
Thursday, April 26	<i>The Hate</i>
Monday, April 30	<i>Oslo, August 31st</i>
Monday, May 7	<i>Dekalog</i>
Thursday, May 10	<i>Goodbye, Lenin!</i>

Reading List

Anne Jespersen (ed.):

Contemporary European Film Binder. Copenhagen: DIS, 2011/12. (In Schedule: **Binder**)

Gerald Mast:

A Short History of the Movies. 11th ed. Macmillan, NY & Toronto, 2011. (In Schedule: **Mast**)

Peter Schepelern (ed.):

A Reader on European Film History, vol. 1-2. Copenhagen: DIS, 1986. (In Schedule: **EFH-Reader**)

Before March 16: Viewing of *All about My Mother* (100 min)

March 16 **Film:** *All About My Mother* by Pedro Almodóvar (1999)
Friday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 101-105.

Before March 20: Viewing of *The Hours* (110 min)

March 20 **Film:** *The Hours* by Stephen Daldry (2003)
Tuesday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 63-100.

7. Serious Humor

Before March 23: Viewing of *The Great Dictator* (120 min)

March 23 **Film:** *The Great Dictator* by Charles Chaplin (1940)
Friday **Reading:** Mast, pp. 106-115, 272-275.

Before March 27: Viewing of *Life Is Beautiful* (110 min)

March 27 **Film:** *Life is Beautiful (La vita è bella)* by Roberto Benigni (1998).
Tuesday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 181-187.

8. Coming to terms with the Past

March 28 **Film:** *Girls in Uniform (Mädchen in Uniform)* by Leontine Sagan (1931).
Wednesday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 138-159.
1 pm – 4 pm **Note:** *The film will be watched in class!*
Please note date and time* **Note: Research Paper Synopsis to be handed in today

March 30 **No class**
Friday

STUDY TOURS *March 31st – April 15th*

Before April 17: Viewing of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (115 min)

April 17 **Film:** *The Marriage of Maria Braun (Die Ehe der Maria Braun)*
 Tuesday by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1978)
Reading: Mast, pp. 530-532.
 EFH-Reader (Vol.2), p. 216
 Binder, pp. 160-180.

Before April 20 : Viewing of *Death and the Maiden (100 min)*

April 20 **Film:** *Death and the Maiden* by Roman Polanski (1994)
 Friday **Reading:** Mast, pp. 440-443.
 EFH-Reader (Vol. 2), pp. 219-220.
 Binder, pp. 121-137

9. In Search of an identity

Before April 24: Viewing of *Drive (100 min)*

April 24 **Film:** *Drive* by Nicolas Winding Refn (2011)
 Tuesday **Reading:** To be handed out.

Before April 27: Viewing of *The Hate (95 min)*

April 27 **Film:** *The Hate (La Haine)* by Matthieu Kassovitz (1995)
 Friday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 205-217.

Before May 1: Viewing of *Oslo, August 31st (95 min)*

May 1 **Film:** *Oslo, August 31st* by Joachim Trier (2011)
 Tuesday **Reading:** To be handed out.
 Note: Research Paper to be handed in today to get the grade before Finals!

10. Postmodernism and After

May 2 **Film:** *Postmodernism. A Selection of shorter films*
 Wednesday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 218-233.
 1 pm – 4 pm
 *Please note date and time

May 4 **No Class**

Before May 8: Viewing of *Dekalog* (60 min)

May 8 **Film:** *Dekalog 6* by Krzysztof Kieslowski (1988)
Tuesday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 234-246.

Before May 11: Viewing of *Goodbye, Lenin!* (115 min)

May 11 **Film:** *Goodbye, Lenin!* by Wolfgang Becker (2003)
Friday **Reading:** Binder, pp. 247-253.
 + **CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY**
Note: Last day to hand in Research Paper!

May 18 **Final Exam** from 9-11 am.
Friday Please note that final exams cannot be re-scheduled except in
 the case of documented illness or family crisis.