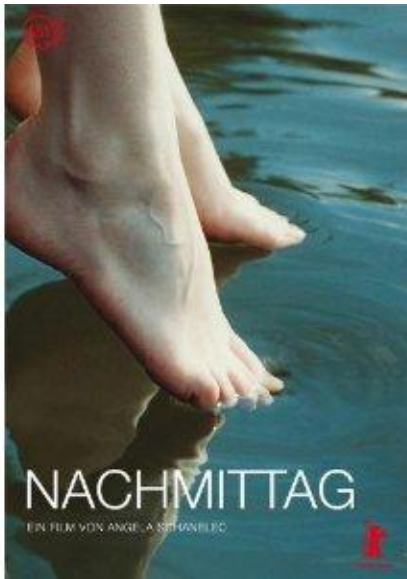


German 8400 • The Berlin School and/in German Film History Seminar in Film, Visual Culture and the Performing Arts

Davidson | 3 credit units | T 4:00-6:48 | Autumn Semester 2012



Over the past decade, German cinema has revived with the emergence of a string of remarkable new filmmakers, beginning with Christian Petzold, Thomas Arslan and Angela Schanelec, and continuing on with the likes of Christoph Hochhäusler and Isabelle Stever. In contrast to the more conventional efforts of Fatih Akin and Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, the works of these directors emphasize formal experimentation over spectacle and show a preference for narrative experimentation over storytelling based on character psychology, whether transparent or ambiguous. This so-called Berlin School has garnered a great deal of critical and scholarly attention, and rightly so; however, this reception tends to view these works in something of a historical bubble, divorced from the broader and

deeper traditions of German cinema, cinema more generally, and, in some cases, German history. This course provides students with the background to understand and improve on this response, as well as the analytical tools to engage with this challenging material. Structured around topics such as urban landscape, industry and economic developments, movement and stasis, surveillance, and the optical unconscious, the course sets works of these contemporary directors in proximity to those from a longer cinematic and critical-intellectual trajectory. In addition to the artists listed about, filmmakers may include Beyer, Dupont, Farocki, Fassbinder, Handke, Grisebach, Klein, Köhler, Lang, Lubitsch, Ruttman, Siodmak, Thiele, Wenders, and Wolf, among others. Secondary readings may include works by Abel, Benjamin, Cowan, Davidson, Deleuze, Elsaesser, Hake, Kracauer, Powell, Rentschler, Rutsky, and Seeßlen, among others.

To the extent possible, materials for this course will be available in English to invite participation from students in other programs (such as those pursuing the GIS in Film Studies).

