

Course Outline: Family Fictions: Narrating the Family in German Cinema

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND LINGUISTICS

Course Code

AP/GER 3794 3.0 | FA/CMA 3794 3.0 | AP/HUMA 3983 3.0

Course Description

In political, social, and cultural discourses, the family has always been the site of emotionally charged ideological battles. Regardless of whether the focus is on the traditional multigenerational or the nuclear parent-child family model, often the family is seen as the core of social cohesion and as the fundamental basis for a 'healthy' society.

In cinema, almost all conventional narrative texts relate to some extent to the social sphere of family life and reflect on the role of the family as a site of gender construction, the socialization of children, and the formation of social hierarchies. This course will examine popular and 'canonical' German-language films and explore ways in which these texts construct the social unit of the family. Our analysis of the cinematic (de)construction of the 'ideal family' in a variety of films (taken from different genres, e.g., comedy, road movie, melodrama, historical drama, and from different periods of German film history) will illuminate ideological struggles and further students' understanding of the connections between social mechanisms, political processes and cultural production.

There is no prerequisite, no knowledge of German is required.

Course Delivery

Delivery Mode: SEMR

This is an **in-person course in seminar format**; we will meet in-person for class every Tuesday, 2:30-5:20pm, for a 3-hour seminar. You should reserve at least 4 additional hours per week for film viewing, class preparation, reading and follow-up activities after class.

Course Materials

Each week, there will be a film on the syllabus together with additional materials, e.g., reviews, scholarly analyses, interviews. All materials will be available through eClass or the library.

Tentative Grade Breakdown and Deadlines

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %
Contribution to class discussions	weekly	10
In-class and online activities	weekly	20
Midterm test	In class	20
Term project	In March, includes collaborative components	20
Final exam	Exam period	30
		100%