

## German 172

### *Jazz, Jezebels and Gigolos: The 1920s in Berlin and New York*

Spring 2008 – Hamilton College

Professor: Mihaela Petrescu

#### TR Class + Film viewings

##### Learning goals:

- ❖ Gain general knowledge of early 20<sup>th</sup> century German and American culture and history through a variety of materials: literature, journalism, feature films, paintings, musicals.
- ❖ Develop an understanding for concepts of class, gender, women's emancipation, race, Americanization, and mass culture.
- ❖ Gain expertise in various film genres such as silent melodramas and comedies, backstage musicals, and race films.
- ❖ Acquire knowledge about the relationship between art and technology, art and society, low and high art.
- ❖ Develop critical thinking through readings, written assignments and discussions.
- ❖ Develop visual media literacy skills, both analytical and creative.

#### Unit 1: Life in the Big City

**Texts:** Georg Simmel – “The Metropolis and Mental Life”  
Adolf Helfeld – “America and the New Objectivity”  
Friedrich Sieburg – “Worshipping Elevators”  
Friedrich von Gottl-Ottlilienfeld – “Fordism”  
Rudolf Kayser – “Americanism”

**Film:** *Sunrise – A Song of Two Humans* (1927), (95 min), director F. W. Murnau

**Film:** *Metropolis* (1927), (117 min), director Fritz Lang

**Film:** *Applause* (1929), (80 minutes), director Rouben Mamoulian

- ❖ **First Assignment due Tuesday, February 12:** Using time code, each of you will post a typed, one-page detailed analysis on Blackboard of a clip from *Asphalt* (1929) by addressing both content and form.

#### Unit 2: I. Femininity

**Texts:** Bruce Bliven – “Flapper Jane”  
Dorothy Parker – “The Flapper”, “A Certain Lady”  
Irmgard Keun - “The Artificial Silk Girl” (sel)

**Film:** *It* (1927), (72 min), director Clarence Badger

**Film:** *Alraune –Mandrake* (1927), (97 min), director Henrik Galeen

- ❖ **Second Assignment due Friday, February 22:** On your own, select one clip from any of the films viewed in class. Create and submit a voice over commentary of the selected clip through the assignment feature in Blackboard.
- ❖ **Third Assignment due Friday, March 7:** Post your media folder (images, text, audio files and notes for discussion) about the representation of the Flapper/ New Woman on Blackboard.

### **Unit 3: II. Masculinity**

**Texts:** Christopher Isherwood – “The Berlin Stories” (sel)

Billy Wilder - “Waiter, A Dancer Please! From the Life of a Dime-A-Dance Man”

Dorothy Parker – “Dusk before fireworks

**Film:** *Cabaret* (1972), (124 min), director Bob Fosse

**Film:** *Just a Gigolo* (1979), (98 min), director David Hemmings

- ❖ **Forth Assignment due Friday, April 11 - Multi-media storyboards:** Submit a one-page, typed synopsis of your topic for the final project on contemporary depictions of the 1920s on Blackboard. Your Professor—with whom you have to discuss your example media assets and their feasibility—must approve this.

### **Unit 3: Black Metropolis**

**Texts:** George S. Schuyler “The Negro-Art Hokum”

Elsie Johnson McDougald “The Task of Negro Womanhood”

Various poems

Peter Jelavich – “The Americanization of Entertainment: Jazz and Black Performers”

**Film:** *Hallelujah!* (1929), (109 min), director King Vidor

**Film:** *The Josephine Baker Story* (1991), (130 min), director Brian Gibson

- ❖ **Fifth Assignment due Friday, 25 April:** Submit your media folder on the representation of race on Blackboard.

### **Unit 4: Contemporary Cultural Artifacts about the 1920s**

- ❖ **Sixth Assignment due Friday, May 2:** Post your media folders about the contemporary fascination with the 1920s on Blackboard.
- ❖ In class presentations