



## ***Stimmung* and Film Aesthetics**      **GERM 880**

In this course, we will trace the history of *Stimmung* (mood, atmosphere, attunement, tonality) as an aesthetic term from the Enlightenment to Romanticism to Realism to Modernity (Kant, Fichte, Nietzsche, Simmel, Hoffmannsthal, Heidegger) and discuss its relevance for and application to literature and art along the way (Stifter, Riegl).

Our main question, however, will be the role of *Stimmung* for moving image aesthetics. Narrative and non-narrative films not only create their own spatiotemporal worlds, but, as a medium that works by means of sensorial impact and immersion, film also imbricates the spectator in unique ways. We will explore the recourse to *Stimmungsästhetik* in early film theory (Hoffmannsthal, Lukács, Balázs, Eisner) and in particular its application to expressionist and *Kammerspiel* films of the 1920s. In a second step, we will look at contemporary global art cinema production (Malick, Arnold, Schanelec, Petzold) and discussions of *Stimmung* and related terms.

Questions we will ask include:

- ◆ What is the relationship between *Stimmung* and narrative?
- ◆ How do elements of *mise-en-scène* (such as performance, décor, or framing), editing, and camerawork (camera movement, position, angle, lenses, focus) contribute to a *Stimmung*?
- ◆ What is the relationship between *Stimmung*, realism, and anthropocentrism?
- ◆ What is our conception of the spectator when we think about *Stimmung*?
- ◆ Finally, how does *Stimmung* help us think critically about past and current stylistic transformations?

***Readings & films in English & German (with translations); class discussions in English.***

**Dr. Inga Pollmann**

**Mondays 4:40 - 7:10 PM**