

Mere Anarchy?

The Films and Short Stories of Woody Allen

Lecturer: PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt, Guest Professor

Basic information: Hauptseminar, 2 SWS, ECTS-Studium, ECTS-Credits: 7; application at KOS.

Room and time: AR-K 122/123, Tuesdays, 16-18.

First session: April 1, 2008.

Modules: LCM-MA-M5.3 (Literatur-, Kultur-, und Mediensoziologie) ab 4; Medienkultur-MA-2.2 (Medienanalyse Ton Audiovision) ab 4; Medien und Gesellschaft-MA-2.2 (Medienanalyse Ton Audiovision) ab 4; M-PEB-Diplom-A3 (Medienanalyse AV) (ab 4); AmL-5 (Medien: Theorie, Geschichte, Praxis) ab 4; ENG-GHR-M5.2 (Texte und Medien) ab 4; ENG-GYM- M9a.8 (Textsorten und Medien) ab 4; ENG-BK-M6.1 (Texte und Medien) ab 4.

Maximum number of participants: 50

Short description: »It's not that I'm afraid to die,« Woody Allen once told a journalist, »I just don't want to be there when it happens«. This statement, quizzical and absurd as usual, ties in with another aphorism, reportedly the first Allen joke to be published: »I am two with Nature.« Until this very day, Woody Allen is one of the most prolific and renowned artists that America has generated in the 20th century. Receiving his first Emmy Award for a script for the Ed Sullivan Show as early as 1957, Allen has since won four Oscars, the O. Henry Award for the best short story in 1977, as well as numerous other prizes in the U.S. and Europe. What makes Allen's work, which encompasses comedies, dramas, expressionist films and acting roles as well as literary works, so unique and so influential? This course will deal with the central themes and motifs negotiated in Allen's oeuvre – black humor, psychology, Jewishness, New York City, human relationships, and the absurdities of (post)modern life. What role do these traits play in Allen's literary and cinematic works? What narrative and aesthetic techniques are deployed in his texts, and with which purpose? In addition to his short stories (»The Kugelmass Episode« and sketches from his recent work *Mere Anarchy*), we will examine his films *Bananas* (1971), *Annie Hall* (1977), *Manhattan* (1979), *Zelig* (1983), *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985), *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1988), *Alice* (1990), *Deconstructing Harry* (1997) and *Match Point* (2005). This class is designed as a joint effort. It will be your task to read/watch the texts for each session carefully and participate actively in class discussions and expert groups.

Credit requirements:

For 5 or 7 credit points: regular attendance, lively participation in class discussions, and at least 9 entries in the discussion forum before the session (1/3), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (1/3), and a final paper (10-12 pp. / 17-20 pp.) (1/3). For 2 credit points: attendance, participation in class discussions, and 8 entries in the discussion forum before the session (50%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (50%).

Deadline for Final Papers: Thursday, July 31, 2008. Note: There is no (!) extension of this deadline.

Syllabus

01. Apr. Introduction: Why Study Woody Allen?
Sander H. Lee, from: *Woody Allen's Angst* (1997), 1-10.

- 08. Apr.** **Allen's Sophomoric Comedy**
Bananas (1971)
- 15. Apr.** **A Therapeutic Autobiography**
Annie Hall (1977)
- 22. Apr.** **Fantasy and Reality**
»The Kugelmass Episode« (1977), from: *Complete Prose* (1997), 228-241.
- 29. Apr.** **Themes of Redemption**
Manhattan (1979)
- 06. May** **Sickness and Salvation**
Zelig (1983)
- 13. May** **Pentecost Holiday (Pfingsten)**
Relax and enjoy!
- 20. May** **Betrayal and Despair**
The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985)
- 27. May** **Morality and Truth**
Crimes and Misdemeanours (1988)
- 03. June** **Through the Looking Glass**
Alice (1990)
- 10. June** **Magic and Illusion**
Shadows and Fog (1991/92)
- 17. June** **A Musical Comedy**
Everyone Says ›I Love You‹ (1996)
- 24. June** **Postmodernity and Authorship**
Deconstructing Harry (1997)
- 01. July** **Fate and Disenchantment**
Match Point (2005)
- 08. July** **The Pitfalls of Progress**
»Sam, You Made the Pants Too Fragrant«, from *Mere Anarchy* (2007), pp.25-34.