

# Humanities Seminars Program

## Spring 2015

### Germany's Roaring Twenties

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**January 26 | February 2 | February 9 | February 16**



Scene from *Metropolis*

Berlin, capital of the Weimar Republic between the two World Wars, was one of the most exciting cities in Europe--the place of the most radical experimentation in the visual and performing arts, in mass entertainment and theater, in literature and architecture. Berlin was a laboratory of modernity. While the cultural stage was vibrant and intoxicating, the celebrated roaring twenties also was haunted by the shell shock of World War I and by economic instability, social upheaval, and political turmoil. This class explores avant-garde movements like Expressionism and Dada, as well as major works like Bertolt Brecht's innovative play *Three Penny Opera* and Fritz Lang's monumental film *Metropolis*. In this seminar we will consider the period's challenges to notions of art, vast social changes, and the impact of mass culture and technological developments on twentieth-century sensibilities. And we will come to see why this period still fascinates us today.

### **Required Reading:**

Bertolt Brecht, *The Three Penny Opera*. Penguin Editon, Paperback. 2007.

The additional readings will be uploaded to HSP password protected website <http://course.hsp.arizona.edu> closer to the beginning of the course.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Edited by Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

➤ **January 26: Introduction: From World War I to Modernity  
The German Avant-gardes: Expressionism and DADA**

#### ***Readings:***

*Berlin: A Short History* (The Roaring Twenties)

Oswald Spengler, "The Decline of the West" (1918)

Raoul Hausmann, "The German Philistine Gets Upset" (1919)

"Overwrought Nerves"

➤ **February 2: Technology and Modernity: Fritz Lang's 1927 film  
*Metropolis***

#### ***Readings:***

Fritz Lang, "The Future of the Feature Film in Germany" (1926)

Willy Haas, "*Metropolis*" (1927)

Stefan Zweig, "The Monotonization of the World" (1925)

➤ **February 9: A New Theater**

#### ***Reading:***

Bertolt Brecht, *Three Penny Opera* (1929)

Friedrich Wolf, "Art is a Weapon" (1928)

➤ **February 16: Visual Culture and the Modern Woman**

#### ***Readings:***

Siegfried Kracauer, "Working Women" (1932)

"The Unemployed"

Vicki Baum, "People of Today"