

A background image of a James Bond movie poster. It features a man in a tuxedo holding a gun, with a woman in a red dress behind him. Text on the poster includes 'JAMES BOND IS BACK!' and 'IAN FLEMING'S'.

›On Her Majesty's Secret Service‹

Cold War Imperialism and the Spectacle of Gender in James Bond Movies and Novels

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

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

Room and time: PB B-013, Tuesdays, 16:00-18:00.

First session: October 16, 2007.

Modules: LCMS-BA-M7.2 (Gender Studies) ab 4; LCM-MA-M2.3 (Mythologie und Medien-geschichte) ab 2; EL-5 (Medien: Theorie, Geschichte, Praxis) ab 4; ENG-GYM-M7.2 (Texte und Medien) ab 4; ENG-BK-M6.1 (Texte und Medien) ab 4; AL4 (Institutionen und Medien der literarischen Vermittlung und ihre Geschichte) ab 4.

Short description:

For the past fifty-four years, James Bond has been a brand name in British spy fiction. Making his first performance in Ian Fleming's 1953 novel *Casino Royale*, special agent 007 has appeared in 14 books written by Fleming and 22 movies as well as in countless parodies and spin-offs. Right from the beginning, literary critics have attacked James Bond as a trivial character – a ›cold warrior‹ with a reactionary frame of mind and an insatiable sexual appetite inspired by the *Playboy* philosophy of the Fifties. As early as 1962, the first satire of the Bond theme appeared, triggering a wave of sneering imitations, from the 1969 spoof *Casino Royale* to the Austin Powers flicks from the 1990s and 2000s. Despite this comical potential, the Bond figure has also been interpreted as a symbol of cultural self-fashioning during the Cold War and, what is more, as a vital role model for male consumers. This seminar traces the ambivalent construction of the Bond myth throughout the decades.

We will start with early Bond texts such as *Casino Royale* (the book version from 1953) and *Dr. No* (the first Bond film from 1962) and pave our way to the Moore and Brosnan phase (*Live and Let Die*, 1973, and *Golden Eye*, 1995) and the most recent version of *Casino Royale* (2006). Our main focus will be placed on three related aspects: a.) the mythological structure of the Bond narratives, b.) the geo-political re-mapping of the world in the Bond texts, and c.) the ironic formation of gender identity, exemplified by the invention of the ›Bond girl.‹ Interpretations will be based on conventional as well as subversive and ›queer‹ readings of the novels and films.

Credit requirements:

For 5 or 7 credit points: regular attendance, lively participation in class discussions, and at least 10 entries in the discussion forum before the session (30%), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (30%), and a final paper (10-12 pgs. / 17-20 pgs.) (40%). For 2 credit points: attendance, participation in class discussions, and 10 entries in the discussion forum before the session (50%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (50%).

Deadline for Final Papers: Friday, February 29, 2008. Note: There is no (!) extension of this deadline.

Syllabus:

- 16. Oct. Introduction**
- 23. Oct. The Bond Formula (1st theory session)**
Umberto Eco, »Narrative structures in Fleming«, pp. 34-55; available online (BSCW server)
- 30. Oct. The Secret Agent**
Excerpts from *Casino Royale* (1953); [chapters 1 »The Secret Agent«; 2, »Dossier for M«; 3, »Number 007«; 12, »The Deadly Tube«; 20, »The Nature of Evil«; 26, »Sleep Well, My Darling«; 27, »The Bleeding Heart«]; available online (BSCW server)
- 06. Nov. The First Cinematic Bond**
Dr. No (1962) *
- 13. Nov. The Cult Movie**
Goldfinger (1964) *
- 20. Nov. Gender in Bond (2nd theory session)**
Christine Bold, »»Under the very skirts of Britannia«: Re-reading women in the James Bond novels«, pp. 169-183; Elisabeth Ladenson, »Pussy Galore«, pp. 184-201; available online (BSCW server)
- 27. Nov. A Different Bond**
On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969) *
- 04. Dec. Bond and Camp**
Diamonds Are Forever (1971) *
- 11. Dec. Bond and the Race Question**
Live and Let Die (1972) *
- 18. Dec. Bond and Geopolitics (3rd theory session)**
Klaus Dodds, »Screening Geopolitics: James Bond and the Early Cold War Films«, pp. 266-89; Paul Stock, »Dial »M« for Metonym: Universal Exports, M's Office Space and Empire«, pp. 215-231; available online (BSCW server)
- Christmas break!**
- 08. Jan. Bond and Postcolonialism**
Octopussy (1983) *
- 15. Jan. A Divided World**
The Living Daylights (1987) *
- 22. Jan. After the Cold War**
Golden Eye (1995) *
- 29. Jan. The Bond Parody**
The Spy Who Shagged Me (1999) *
- 05. Feb. Back to the Roots?**
Casino Royale (2006) *

* These films are available on DVD. They can be checked out from our Sekretariat, Room AR-H 213.
Please note: Make sure you return the movie by 10 in the morning the next weekday!