

## CINEMA IN EASTERN EUROPE

Tim Beasley-Murray

### Description

This course studies the cinema of Eastern Europe from the 1960s to the present day, examining films from Czechoslovakia and its successor states, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia and its successor states.

The cinema of Eastern Europe is rich and diverse. It ranges from the stylish, sexy and subversive playfulness of 1960s Czech film-makers such as Jiří Menzel and Miloš Forman (later to gain fame in Hollywood as the director of 'Amadeus' and other films); the sometimes brutal yet always philosophical film-making of Polish directors such as Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Kieslowski (later to gain fame in France as the director of the 'Three Colours' trilogy); to 1990s responses of directors, such as Emir Kusturica in his lyrical tragi-farce, 'Underground', to the break-up of Yugoslavia – not to mention the maverick Magyars! East European cinema plays out its themes of love, sex, conflict and identity, with extreme inventiveness and energy, against the backdrop of war, changing regimes and ideologies, and the poetry of everyday life.

The approach of the course is thematic. Thus, for example, under the heading of gender and sexuality, we shall discuss the Yugoslav director, Dušan Makavejev's landmark of erotic satire, 'WR: Mysteries of the Organism'; the Slovak, Dušan Hanák's 'Pink Dreams', a surrealist-influenced account of a young man's relationship with a mysterious Romany girl; and the Hungarian, Karoly Makk's 'Another Way', a lesbian love-story set against the background of the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

Other themes include:

- War and memory (in particular the cinematic treatment of the recent Balkan wars)
- Responses to a new, post-communist reality
- Ideology and the individual



*Miloš attempts to kiss Maša in Jiří Menzel's Oscar-winning 'Closely Observed Trains' (1966)*

**Course unit value** 1 cu  
**Open to** Second and fourth year students  
**This course is open to both one- and two-term affiliates.**

**Course Leader** Tim Beasley-Murray, t.beasley-murray@ssees.ucl.ac.uk  
**Other Participants** Daniel Abondolo, Dennis Deletant, Zoran Milutinović, Katarzyna Zechenter,

### **Aims**

- To provide students with an overview of the cinema of Eastern Europe of the post-war period.
- To analyze central themes and their representation in the cinematic history of the period.
- To give students an awareness of approaches to film criticism.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the course you will have acquired:

- A knowledge of a representative range of films, major directors and cinematic trends in the region and period.
- An understanding of central themes in the cinema of Eastern Europe and their cultural, political and historical context.
- Enhanced skills of research, essay-writing, analysis and presentation of ideas in class discussion.

<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>	<b>Number of Hours</b>
Seminars	40
Private Study	160

The group meets Mondays 1-3, room 535.

The teacher will introduce each film, set the work in its cultural and historical context, and outline the main points to be aware of in discussion. This introduction will be followed by students' presentations and discussion. Two students will give presentations each week – separately or jointly. Presentations should be based on the topics given on the course outline, unless otherwise agreed with the teacher. Presentations will be allocated at the beginning of each term.

Each class will be followed by a screening of the film for the following week. This will take place 4-6, room 432. Whilst this screening is not compulsory, it is strongly recommended. Students may also view films at their own leisure in the library.

### **Assessment**

This course will be assessed by a three-hour unseen examination in the Summer, consisting of three essay questions. Students will also be required to write two practice essays of 2000 words. Submission of these is a prerequisite for proceeding to examination.