

FILM 4180 INTERNATIONAL CINEMAS:  
A HISTORY OF CHINESE CINEMA  
SPRING 2014

INSTRUCTOR: Munib Rezaie

SCREENING: M 9:30-11:20 A&H 406

LECTURE: MW 12:00-1:15 GCB 323

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will cover a history of Mainland China and its cinema, from before the introduction of the Cinematographe to the present day surge of blockbusters and comedies. We will discuss important film periods, movements, and figures, including independent cinema, the various “Generations” of Chinese filmmakers, documentaries, and commercial blockbusters. In order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the films, we will also discuss the appropriate historical and political contexts that directly and indirectly influenced them in a variety of ways as well as developments within the film industry. Equal attention will be given to the country’s political and cinematic histories.

Please note: this class will focus entirely on films and the industry as it developed in Mainland China. We will not be exploring the Chinese-language films and industries of Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the greater Chinese diaspora beyond the occasional reference when appropriate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Understand some of the complications of studying a “national” cinema
- Understand some of the complications of studying *a* history
- Attain a historical perspective on the aesthetic, cultural, economic, political, and technological trends related to cinema in China.
- Develop an appreciation of films from different time periods and different countries.
- Attain a historically educated understanding of China as a country, where it’s been, and where it seems to be going.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *The Chinese Cinema Book*, Edited by Song Wee Lim and Julian Ward (CCB)
- Additional Readings Provided Electronically (Desires2Learn)

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Pop Quizzes	(4 x 5 points	= 20 pts)
Weekly Responses	(12 x 1 points	= 12 pts)
Screening Attendance	(14 x 2 points	= 28 pts)
Film Responses	(14 x 3 points	= 42 pts)
Reading Reports	(6 x 3 points	= 18 pts)
Meta Response	(1 x 25 points	= 25 pts)
Participation		= 5 pts
Total		= 150 points

A+	150-145.5	B+	134.9 – 130.5	C+	119.9 – 115.5
A	145.4 – 139.5	B	130.4 – 124.5	C	115.4 – 109.5
A-	139.4 – 135	B-	124.4 – 120	C-	109.4 – 105
D	104.9 – 90	F	Less than 90		

### *Pop Quizzes*

**Unannounced** pop quizzes will occur throughout the semester. These quizzes will be multiple choice or short answer and should not be difficult for any student who has come to class, engaged in discussions, and attended screenings. They will take place in the last 10 minutes of class. There will be **no make-ups**. Regardless of how many we have, your best 4 grades will be calculated into your final grade.

### *Weekly Responses*

At the end of class **every Wednesday**, students will turn in papers with answers to the following questions: 1) What was the most interesting thing you learned this week? 2) What remains unclear/What would you like to know more about?

### *Film Responses*

Students will turn in responses for every film screened. Some questions to consider when writing the response: Was there a moment in the film that stood out to you? Why? Was there something about the lighting, the acting, the editing, the dialogue, the cinematography, etc that made it stand out? Describe it. How are the formal elements being used to get that feeling out of you? Can you relate the movie to issues discussed in class? Does the movie raise any questions for you? Does it inspire any interesting thoughts or insights you hadn't considered before? **This is not a review**. It is a means to grapple with the films themselves and develop your powers of expression. **Do not consult outside sources or provide plot summaries**. These responses will be typed and uploaded to the appropriate Desire2Learn Dropbox **no later than 11:59 PM on Friday** of each week with a screening. No exceptions. I will give you feedback on each one, which I expect to be applied to the following response. More details and examples will be provided in class.

### *Reading Reports*

You will turn in **6** reading reports, each summarizing a reading of your choice. This is a low-stakes writing assignment - no need to be very original, just to report what you understand from the text and what questions it raises for you. The report is a sort of notes-to-self: what have I learned from the reading? What remains unclear? What questions would I like to raise in class about it? Unlike the Film Response, this is more of a summary. **Submitted on Desire2Learn**. The first 3 are due **no later than Friday March 14, 11:59 pm**. The last 3, **no later than April 28, 11:59 pm**, covering readings from the second half of the semester.

### *Meta Film Response*

Begin by reading all of your previous Film responses. As you reread them, take notes,

critically reading them as if they were written by somebody else (or at the very least, recognizing that they were written by a different you at a different time). Compose a short analysis and reflection of your responses. This meta-response is open-ended and the exact content is up to you, although it should be thoughtful and directed. Feel free to quote from your own responses or to refer to specific ideas from the readings we've studied.

Some questions to consider might include: What do you usually write about in your responses? Are there broad themes or specific concerns that reoccur in your writing? Has the nature of your responses changed throughout the semester? What changes do you notice, and how might you account for those changes? What surprised you as you reread your work? What ideas or threads in your responses do you see as worth revisiting? What else do you notice? Do you feel your writing has improved? What aspects of these responses do you value most? It will be at least 500 words in length, **submitted on Desire2Learn. Due May 1<sup>st</sup>**. Revisions based on my feedback can be turned in no later than May 6<sup>th</sup>.

### *Screenings*

The screenings are integral to your success in the class. **Attendance will be taken** at the screenings. Failure to attend will adversely affect your grade. Keep in mind that courses with screenings give you 4 credit hours toward your major (whereas courses without screenings give you only 3 credit hours), making attendance particularly important. Please also note that many of the films are hard to come by and unavailable at either the library or on Netflix. Points may be deducted for late arrivals. No computers/tablets/phone use allowed. If late arrivals become an issue, I reserve the right to deny attendance credit to anyone coming in more than 15-30 minutes late.

### *Attendance*

While I do not have an explicit attendance policy, your consistent attendance will be crucial to your success in the course. I mean, come on. You're in college.

### SOME ADVICE FOR SUCCEEDING IN THIS COURSE:

- Come to class.
- Turn in assignments sooner rather than later.
- Anticipate technological and personal issues.
- Be honest: in your interactions and in your writing.
- Engage in class discussions.
- Take ownership of your own education and learning.
- Don't be afraid to express opinions that are different from that of the material, the instructor, or other students.
- Be respectful: to yourself, your fellow students, and your instructor.
- Try your best every single day. Not just the last week of the semester.
- Take responsibility for your actions. Don't make excuses.

### *Participation*

Share your thoughts, participate in discussions, ask questions, be engaged, and do the work.

#### DROPPING, INCOMPLETES, WITHDRAWALS

It is your responsibility to drop the class if you deem necessary. Incompletes may be given to a student who for nonacademic reasons beyond his or her control is unable to complete the requirements of this course. An incomplete may be assigned for this course if a student has completed most of the major assignments of the course with a passing grade.

All undergraduates are allowed to withdraw with a grade of "W" a maximum of six times in their entire careers at Georgia State. Students who exceed the limit will automatically receive a grade of "WF" which will count as an "F" for GPA calculations. Withdrawals taken before Fall 2006 will not count against the limit and neither will hardship withdrawals, withdrawals at other institutions or withdrawals after the midpoint. Withdrawals after the semester midpoint are automatically given a grade of "WF".

#### ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the *Faculty Affairs Handbook* and the *On Campus: The Undergraduate Co-Curricular Affairs Handbook* and is available to all members of the university community. The policy represents a core value of the university and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community -- students, faculty, and staff -- are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the dean of students, and the office of the provost.

In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic advisors, and other members of the university community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy. In addition, students are encouraged to avail themselves of programs in establishing personal standards and ethics offered through the university's Counseling Center.

#### Definitions and Examples

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which

unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions which also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

B. Cheating on Examinations. Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

C. Unauthorized Collaboration. Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source, or computer-based resource, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

D. Falsification. It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

E. Multiple Submissions. It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the

faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

Plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, falsification, and the submission of work completed for other courses will not be tolerated and punished to the fullest extent allowed by the university.

*The course schedule below provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.*

Week 1: Introductions and National Cinemas

**Screening:** *Shadow Magic* (2000, 116 mins, Ann Hu)

January 13: Syllabus & Overview of Class Scope and Trajectory

January 15: Questions of Historiography

**Reading:** Huang Xuelei and Xiao Zhiwei, “*Shadow Magic* and the Early History of Film Exhibition in China” (CCB)

Week 2: Historiography

**Screening:** No screening due to MLK holiday

January 20: NO CLASS (MLK holiday)

January 22: Approaches to National Cinemas

Week 3: Pre-PRC History and Early Cinema

**Screening:** *Romance of a Fruit Peddler* (1922, 30 mins, Zhang Shichuan)

*Never Weaken* (1921, 22 mins, Harold Lloyd)

January 27: Early Chinese History

January 29: Early Chinese Cinema

**Reading:** Laikwan Pang, “The Making of a National Cinema: Shanghai Films of the 1930s” (CCB)

Week 4: Shanghai Continued and Rise of the PRC

**Screening:** *The Goddess* (1934, 85 mins, Wu Yonggang)

February 3: Shanghai: China’s Hollywood?

February 5: The PRC Rises...

Week 5: 1949-1966 The 17-Year Cinema

**Screening:** *The Red Detachment of Women* (1961, Xie Jin)

February 10: The Founding of a Republic and its Policies

February 12: The Influence of Soviet Cinema

**Reading:** Julian Ward, “The Remodeling of a National Cinema: Chinese films of the Seventeen Years” (CCB)

Week 6: 1966-1977 The Cultural Revolution

**Screening:** *In the Heat of the Sun* (1994, Jiang Wen)

February 17: Guest Lecture

February 19: Guest Lecture

**Reading:** Yomi Braester, “Memory at a Standstill” (D2L)

Week 7: The Fifth Generation: Formal Subversion and Innovation

**Screening:** *Red Sorghum* (1988, Zhang Yimou)

February 24: Historical Context, Goals, and Criticisms

February 26: A Question of Realism(s)

**Reading:** Andre Bazin, “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema”  
(D2L)

Week 8: Commercialization of the Fifth Generation

**Screening:** *Hero* (2002, 99 mins, Zhang Yimou)

March 3: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989 and its Aftermath

March 5: Criticisms

**Reading:** Wendy Larson, “The Fifth Generation: A Reassessment” (CCB)

Week 9: The Sixth/Urban Generation: Chinese Neorealism?

**Screening:** *Still Life* (2006, 111 mins, Jia Zhangke)

March 10: Historical Context and Neorealist Aesthetics

March 12: Major Figures and their Films

**Readings:** James Udden, “On the Shoulders of Giants” (CCB)  
Jason McGrath, “The Urban Generation” (CCB)

**Week 10: SPRING BREAK!!! NO CLASSES**

**March 17: No Class. Woot.**

**March 19: No Class. Werd.**

Week 11: Documentaries and the DV Revolution

**Screening:** *Meishi Street* (2006, 86 mins, Ou Ning)

March 24: The Importance of DV

**Reading:** Wu Wenguang, “DV: Individual Filmmaking” (D2L)

March 26: Independent? Underground? Indie? Undie?

**Reading:** Paul Pickowicz, “Social and Political Dynamics of Underground Filmmaking in China (D2L)

Week 12: Hollywood Films Reenter China and the World Trade Organization

**Screening:** *Waiting Alone* (2004, 107 mins, Wu Shixian)

March 31: WTO and Pressure from the US

April 2: WTO Continued

**Reading:** Ting Wang, “Hollywood’s Pre-WTO Crusade in China”



Week 13: 2000s Rise of Domestic Commercial Cinema

**Screening:** *Inseparable* (2011, Wu Shixian)

April 7: Q&A with Wu Shixian (hopefully)

April 9: WTO

Week 14:

**Screening:** *Silver Medalist/Crazy Racer* (2009, Ning Hao)

April 14: Addressing the Urban Youth of Today

April 16: Addressing the Urban Youth of Today

**Reading:** Yomi Braester, “Contemporary Mainstream PRC Cinema”  
(CCB)

Week 15:

**Screening:** *Super Typhoon* (Feng Xiaoning)

April 21: Main Melody, Costumed Dramas, and New Year Films

April 23: Main Melody, Costumed Dramas, and New Year Films

Week 16: The End

**Screening:** *Journey to the West* (2013, Stephen Chow)

April 28: The End

**Meta Film Report Due: May 1**