

FILM 4180 INTERNATIONAL CINEMAS:
A HISTORY OF CHINESE CINEMA

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 cinema in Mainland China, from the introduction of the Cinematographe to the present day development of a big-budget commercial cinema. We will discuss important film periods, movements, and figures, including the various “Generations” of Chinese filmmakers as well as Chinese documentaries and commercial blockbusters. In order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the films, we will also cover 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.

Please note: this class will focus entirely on films and the industry as it developed in Mainland China. In other words, 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 the complications of studying a “national” cinema
- 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.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

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

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Pop Quizzes	(5 x 10 points	= 50 pts)
Weekly Responses (W)	(12 x 1.5 points	= 16 pts)
Screening Attendance	(14 x 2 points	= 28 pts)
Film Responses	(7 x 3 points	= 21 pts)
Reading Reports	(7 x 3 points	= 21 pts)
Meta Response	(1 x 10 points	= 10 pts)
Participation		= 4 pts
Total		= 150 points

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

Pop Quizzes

There will be **open-note pop quizzes** 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 and engaged in discussions and screenings. There will be **no make-ups**. The five highest grades will count towards your final grade.

Weekly Responses

Once a week (**on Wednesdays**) at the end class, 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 **7** critical responses, each on a different film we watch in class. These responses will be at least 200 words in length, typed, 12-pt font and **submitted on Desire2Learn no later than** the Monday after the film of your choice has been screened. More details will be provided in class.

Reading Reports

Students will turn in **7** reading reports, each summarizing a reading of your choice. You cannot turn in more than one for any given week. What does a reading report consist of? It's 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? These reports will be at least 200 words in length, and **submitted on Desire2Learn before the class meeting for which they are scheduled**.

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 briefly 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? What aspects of these responses do you value most, and how does it show up in your writing? It will be at least 400 words in length, **submitted on Desire2Learn. Due No later than May 6th, 1:00 PM. Failure to turn in will result in drop of 20 points in final grade.**

Screenings

The screenings are integral to our 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 some films shown in screenings are not available either at the library or on Netflix.

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 14: Syllabus & Overview of Class Scope and Trajectory

January 16: Approaches to National Cinemas

Week 2: Historiography

Screening: No screening due to MLK holiday :(

January 21: NO CLASS (MLK holiday) :)

January 23: Questions of Historiography

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

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 28: Early Chinese History

January 30: 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 4: Shanghai: China’s Hollywood?

February 6: The PRC Rises...

Week 5: 1949-1966 The 17-Year Cinema

Screening: *An Orphan on the Streets* (1949, 74 mins)

February 11: The Founding of a Republic and its Policies

February 13: 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: *Morning Sun* (2003, 117 mins) or *The Red Detachment of Women* (1961, 92 mins, Xie Jin)

February 18: Historical Context

February 20: Cultural Revolution and the Movies

Reading: Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (D2L)

Week 7: 1977-1986 Resurgence in the “Era of Transformation”

Screening: *Bicycle Thieves* (1948, 93 mins, Vittorio De Sica)

February 25: Deng Xiaoping and the Open-Door Policy

February 27: A Question of Realism(s)

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

Week 8: The Fifth Generation: Formal Subversion and Innovation

Screening: *Yellow Earth* (1985, 89 mins, Chen Kaige)

March 4: Historical Context, Goals, and Criticisms

March 6: Major Figures and their Films

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

Week 9: The Fourth Generation: New Approaches to Realism

Screening: *Black Snow* (1990, 107 mins, Xie Fei)

March 11: Historical Context and Goals

March 13: Major Figures and their Films

Reading: TBA

Week 10: SPRING BREAK!!! NO CLASSES

March 18: No Class. Woot.

March 20: No Class. Werd.

Week 11: June 4th 1989 and International Film Festivals

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

March 25: June 4th, 1989 and its Aftermath

March 27: The Role of Film Festivals

Reading: TBA

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

Screening: TBA

April 1: WTO and Pressure from the US

April 2: WTO Continued

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

Week 13: The Digital Revolution and New Documentaries

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

April 8: The Importance of DV

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

April 10: Independent? Underground? Indie? Undie?

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

Week 14: The Sixth/Urban Generation: Chinese Neorealism?

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

April 15: Historical Context and Neorealist Aesthetics

April 17: Major Figures and their Films

Readings: James Udden, “On the Shoulders of Giants” (CCB)

Jason McGrath, “The Urban Generation” (CCB)

Week 15: 2000s Rise of Domestic Commercial Cinema

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

April 22: Main Melody, Costumed Dramas, and New Year Films

April 24: Addressing the Urban Youth of Today

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

Week 16: The End

Screening: *Aftershock* (2010, 134 mins, Feng Xiaogang)

April 29: Chinese Mega-blockbusters

Meta Film Report Due: May 6 (Monday) by 1:00 PM.