

FILM GENRES: THE MARTIAL ARTS FILM  
(3 CREDITS)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will cover the history and development of the martial arts genre in China and Hong Kong, as well as the effects these films have had and continue to have on Hollywood today. We will begin with the genre's origins in opera and literature and see it through to the present, with its growing popularity across the globe.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Attain a historical perspective on the aesthetic, cultural, political, and technological trends of the genre
- Learn the names and contributions of key figures and institutions that helped develop the genre
- To be exposed to new films
- Understand why “everybody was kung-fu fighting.”
- Understand how these films continue to reflect the rich history of the genre
- Understand the ongoing conversations between martial arts films and Hollywood action films
- To learn to transcribe our thoughts about the films we watch into writing

TEXTS

The weekly readings will be provided electronically and will consist of chapters/sections from the following sources:

- *Hong Kong Connections: Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema* – Eds. Meaghan Morris, Siu Leung Li, and Stephen Chan Ching-kiu
- *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* – by Stephen Teo
- *Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Wuxia Tradition* – by Stephen Teo
- *China Forever: The Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema* – Ed. Poshek Fu
- Stand-alone articles

GRADING BREAKDOWN

- Attendance/Participation – 10%
- Film Response Papers – 15%
- Short (5-page) Paper – 15%
- Pop Quizzes – 10%
- Exam 1 – 25%
- Exam 2 – 25%

Attendance/Participation – 10%

This includes being to class on time, prepared for that day's work, and participating in discussions respectfully and civilly. **Rudeness will not be tolerated.** Please turn off all communication devices (cell phone, pager, computers, etc.)

This grade will also include 1-minute papers at the end of **each class period** asking two simple questions: 1) What was the most interesting thing you learned?; and 2) What part of that day's lecture remains unclear? There will be no make-ups for these papers.

Film Response Papers – 15%

Each week that a film is screened, you will be responsible for turning in a 1-page response to that film. This is your own personal perception of the film. The objective is to encourage a deeper contemplation about the film and your understanding/reading of it. These will be typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Short Paper (5 Pages) – 15%

**Due: week 10**

You will be responsible for a short paper focusing on a particular figure from the martial arts genre not specifically covered in class. You will select this figure **with the instructor's approval.** The paper will cover a bio, an overview of their key films, as well as overviews of their influence and popularity. We will discuss this paper more thoroughly in class. This paper will be typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Pop Quizzes – 10%

There will be at least 10 **unannounced** pop quizzes, with questions coming from the readings, screenings, lectures, and class discussions. There will be no make-ups for these quizzes.

Two (2) Exams – 25% + 25% = 50%

The exams will be **non-cumulative** and will cover materials from the readings, screenings, lectures, and class discussions. They will feature multiple-choice and short (3-4 sentences) answers.

Extra Credit

Each week we have a screening, you will have the opportunity to watch **one additional** relevant film with the instructor's approval and turn in a corresponding response paper for extra credit. Every two of these extra response papers will potentially add one percentage point to your final grade.

Grading Scale

A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%

B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%

D	60-69%
F	< 59%

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2 – ORIGINS

- Chinese opera and Literature
- **Reading:** *Hong Kong Connections*: Chapter 1

WEEK 3 – KING HU AND THE FEMALE KNIGHT-ERRANT

- Screening: *Come Drink With Me* (1966)
- **Reading:** “The Wuxia Films of King Hu” in *Wuxia* – Pgs 115-134

WEEK 4 – ZHANG CHE AND MASCULINITY

- Screening: *The One-Armed Swordsman* (1971)
- **Reading:** “Zhang Che’s Macho Self-Fashioning” in *Wuxia* – Pages 93-107

WEEK 5 – THE SHAW BROTHERS EXPLOSION

- Screening: *The 36<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Shaolin* (1978)
- **Reading:** “Shaw Bros and Hip-Hop” in *China Forever* – pgs 224-241

WEEK 6 – BRUCE LEE AND ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENTS

- Screening: *Fist of Fury* (aka *The Chinese Connection*) (1972)
- **Reading:** *Hong Kong: The Extra Dimensions* – pgs 110-121

WEEK 7 – EXAM 1

WEEK 8 – JACKIE CHAN REINVENTS THE GENRE

- Screening: *Drunken Master* (1978)
- **Reading:** *Hong Kong: The Extra Dimensions* – pgs 122-134

WEEK 9 – TSUI HARK AND JET LI

- Screening: *Once Upon a Time in China* (1991)
- **Reading:** *Hong Kong: The Extra Dimensions* – Pgs 162-174

WEEK 10 – GLOBALIZATION OF MARTIAL ARTS

- Screening: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000)
- **Reading:** “Hollywood Domination of the Chinese Kung Fu Market” PDF
- **Short Paper Due**

WEEK 11 – EFFECTS ON HOLLYWOOD

- Screening: *The Matrix* (1999) or *Kill Bill Vol. 2* (2004)
- **Reading:** TBA

WEEK 12 – MARTIAL ARTS TODAY

- Screening: *Ip Man* or *Flash Point*
- **Reading:** TBA

WEEK 13 – EXAM 2

MAKE-UP TESTS

Make-up tests will only be given to students who have an excused absence on the original day of the exam. Speak with the instructor in advance to make the necessary arrangements.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

You must contact and make an appointment with me during the first week of class for us to arrange testing conditions and/or other concerns with the Disability Services Office.

DROPPING, WITHDRAWALS, INCOMPLETES:

It is your responsibility to drop the class if you deem it necessary. Withdrawals must occur before the midpoint of the semester, or it will be recorded as a grade of WF. Incompletes may be given to a student for nonacademic reasons beyond her or his control is unable to complete the requirements for 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.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY (Section 409)

The policy is available for viewing at <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html>. We follow this policy **completely**. Feel free to approach the instructor with any questions or concerns.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the class; deviations may be necessary. Revisions will be announced in class.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.