V55.0750  Expressive Culture: Film
New Chinese Urban Cinemas
Fall 2007
Time: Thursday 12:30-4:30. Place: Cantor Film Center 102.

Professor ZHANG Zhen  (Zhang=family name)
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 4:30-5:30 pm, 719 Broadway, R 311G
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Preceptors:
Julia Browning: Julia.browning@nyu.edu      Office hours:
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Course description:
This course examines contemporary urban films produced in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the
People's Republic of China. The recent geopolitical reconfigurations of the region and
the forces of globalization have exerted great pressure on the disparate yet increasingly
interconnected film industries centered in four Chinese metropolises (Hong Kong, Taipei,
Beijing, Shanghai), as well as unleashed new creative energy. The course will focus on
the innovative cinematic articulations of new urban and cosmopolitan identities as a
result of intensified local, regional and global interactions in the 1990s. A related inquiry
concerns the conversations between the Chinese-language film world with the larger
transnational scene of film production and reception, including the important roles played
by film festivals, trans-Asia popular culture, and diasporic crossings. Screenings include
works by Hou Hsiao-hsien, Ang Lee, Fruit Chan, Jia Zhangke, Ning Ying, and others.

Readings:
Zhang Zhen ed., The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the

Timothy Corrigan, A Short Guide to Writing about Film (New York: Pearson Longman,

Course packet
(available for purchase at New University Copy & Graphics, 11 Waverly Place)

Requirements:
Regular attendance and active participation (including 1 page weekly type-written
viewing response to be graded on  +/- basis): 30%
In-class short writing exercises on readings: 20%
Mid-term take-home essay exam: 20%
Final essay (8-10 pages): 30%
Course policies:

Attendance at all lectures and recitation sections is mandatory. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade. Each student is also required to meet with the professor and the preceptors at least twice during the semester.

All work must be submitted on time except for serious medical reasons. Failure to submit work on time will result in a lowering of your grade.

Academic integrity is of utmost importance. Plagiarism in any form (using others’ ideas or words without proper citation) will result in a grade of “F.”

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Weekly Schedule

[Note: films marked with * are mostly for in class screening, others will be used for clips and discussions during lectures or recitations.]

Part 1 Hong Kong

I. The Postmodern and Postcolonial Condition

9/6


- Corrigan, Chapter 1.

9/13


• Corrigan, Chapter 2.

II. Alternative Spaces and Transculturation

9/20

• Corrigan, Chapter 3.

9/27
Yau Ching: *Let’s Love Hong Kong (2002)

[+ Ann Hui and Clara Law, two other women directors from Hong Kong]

• Corrigan, Chapter 4.

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Part 2 Taiwan

Taipei I: The Dissolution of Time and Space

10/4


• Corrigan, Chapter 5.

10/11


• Corrigan, Chapter 6.

Taipei II: The Transnational Map of Desire and Kinship

10/18

- Corrigan, Chapter 7.

10/25


Ang Lee: *Wedding Banquet* (1993); *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman* (1994)


10/26 Midterm take-home essay exam due at the recitations.

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Part 3 Mainland China

I. Beijing: From Red Capital to Capital of Market Economy

11/1

Zhang Yang: *Shower* (1999)

- Yingjin Zhang, “Rebel without a Cause?” in *The Urban Generation*, pp. 49-80.
- Sheldon Lu, “Tear Down the City,” in *The Urban Generation*, pp. 137-160.

11/8

Zhang Yuan: Beijing Bastards (1993); *East Palace, West Palace (1995); Seventeen Years (1999); Crazy English (1997)

• Yaohua Shi, “Maintaining Law and Order in the City,” in The Urban Generation, pp. 295-316.

11/15

Ning Ying: On the Beat (1995); *I love Beijing (1999); Railroad of Hope (1995)

Feng Xiaogang: Big Shot's Funeral (2001)

• Shuqin Cui, "Ning Ying’s Beijing Trilogy,” in The Urban Generation, pp. 241-263.
• Chris Berry, "Getting Real,” in The Urban Generation, pp. 115-134.

II. Shanghai: The Frenzy of (Re)Cosmopolitanism

11/29

Shi Runjiu: *A Beautiful New World (1998)

Lu Yue: Mr. Zhao (1998)

12/6


- Gary Xu, “‘My Camera Doesn’t Lie’: Cinematic Realism and Chinese Cityscape in *Beijing Bicycle* and *Suzhou River*,” in *Sinascpe*, pp. 67-88.

III. At Home in the World: New Directions

12/11


12/13 Final essay due.