

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:

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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 Twenty-first Century (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

Timothy Corrigan, A Short Guide to Writing about Film (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007, 6th edition).

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."

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

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Peter Chan: *Comrades, Almost a Love Story (1996)

- Kwai-cheung Lo, "Transnationalization of the Local in Hong Kong Cinema of the 1990s." In At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Bordless World. Ed. Esther Yau. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2001: 261-276.
- Corrigan, Chapter 1.

9/13

Wong Kar-wai: *Chungking Express (1994); Happy Together (1997); 2046 (2004)

- Leung Ping-kwan, "Urban Cinema and the Cultural Identity of Hong Kong." In The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity. Eds., Poshek Fu and David Desser (Cambridge UP, 2000), pp. 227-251.
- Gina Marchetti, "Buying America, Consuming Hong Kong: Cultural Commerce, Fantasies of Identity, and the Cinema." In The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity. Eds., Poshek Fu and David Desser (Cambridge UP, 2000), pp. 289-313.
- Evans Chan, "Postmodern and Hong Kong Cinema." In Postmodernism & China. Eds. Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), pp. 294-322.

- Ackbar Abbas, "Cinema, the City and the Cinematic" in Linda Krause and Patrice Petro (eds.) Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in a Digital Age (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), pp. 142-156.
- Corrigan, Chapter 2.

II. Alternative Spaces and Transculturation

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Fruit Chan: *Made in Hong Kong (1997); The Longest Summer (1998); Hollywood Hong Kong (2001).

- Esther Cheung, "The City That Haunts: The Uncanny in Fruit Chan's Made in Hong Kong," in Esther Cheung and Chu Yiu-wai eds., Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema (Hong Kong: Oxford UP, 2004). 352-368.
- Gina Marchetti, "Transnational Exchanges, Questions of Culture, and Global Cinema: Defining the Dynamics of Changing Relationships." In At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Bordless World. Ed. Esther Yau. (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2001), pp. 251-260.
- Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong, "Cities, Cultures and Cassettes: Hong Kong Cinema and Transnational Audiences" Post Script 19:1 (Fall 1999), pp 87 –106.
- David Desser, "Diaspora and National Identity: Exporting 'China' Through the Hong Kong Cinema." Post Script 20:2&3 (Winter/Spring & Summer 2001): 124-136.
- Corrigan, Chapter 3.

9/27

Yau Ching: *Lets's Love Hong Kong (2002)

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

- Chris Berry, "A Haunting Presence: Let's Love Let's Love Hong Kong" in Yau Ching (ed) Hok Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong – Script and Critical Essays, Hong Kong: Yau Ching, 2003, 33-37.
- Fran Martin, "Floating City, Floating Selves: Lets' Love Hong Kong." in Yau Ching (ed) Hok Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong – Script and Critical Essays, Hong Kong: Yau Ching, 2003, 43-49.
- Hector Rodriguez, "The Fragmented Commonplace: Alternative Arts and Cosmopolitanism in Hong Kong," in Jenny Kwok Wah Lau (ed.) Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 128-148.
- Desmond Hui, "The Architecture of Necessity: On City Form and Space in Hong Kong," in Sylvia ng ed., The Metropolis: Visual Research into Contemporary Hong Kong 1990-1996 (Hong Kong: Photo Pictorial Publishers and Hong Kong Arts Center), pp. 32-35.

- Corrigan, Chapter 4.

Part 2 Taiwan

Taipei I: The Dissolution of Time and Space

10/4

Hou Hsiao-hsien: *Millennium Mambo (2001); Goodbye South, Goodbye (1996); Cafe Lumiere (2004)

- Ban Wang, "Black Holes of Globalization: Critique of the New Millennium in Taiwan Cinema," Modern Chinese Literature and Culture 15:1 (Spring 2003): 99-119.
- Gary Xu, "The Smell of the City: Memory and Hou Hsiao-hsien's Millennium Mambo," in his Sinascapes: Contemporary Chinese Cinema (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), pp. 111-132.
- Gina Marchetti, "Gangland Taiwan in the Transnational Imagination: Mahjong and Goodbye South, Goodbye," and "Interview with Edward Yang," in her From Tian'anmen to Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screens, 1898-1997 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), pp. 94-123.
- Corrigan, Chapter 5.

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Chen Guo-fu: The Personals (1999); *Double Vision (2004)

- Shu-mei Shih, "Globalization and the (In)significance of Taiwan," in Postcolonial Studies 6:2 (July 2003): 143-153.
- Yu-fen Ko, "Hello Kitty and the Identity Crisis in Taiwan." Postcolonial Studies 6:2 (July 2003): 175-189.
- Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh, "Taiwan: Popular Cinema's Disappearing Act," in Anne Ciecko ed., Contemporary Asian Cinema (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2006), pp. 156-168.
- Nick Kaldis, "Monogamorphous Desires, Faltering Forms: Structure, Content, and Contradiction in The Personals (Zhenghun Qishi) (Taiwan, 1998)," Asian Cinema Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring/Summer 2004: 37-56.
- Corrigan, Chapter 6.

Taipei II: The Transnational Map of Desire and Kinship

10/18

Tsai Ming-liang: Vive l'amour (1994); *What Time Is It There? (2001); Goodbye, Dragon Inn (2003); Tonight I Don't Want to Sleep Alone (2006).

- Yomi Braester, "If We Remember Everything, We Would Be Able to Fly: Taipei's Cinematic Poetics of Demolition." Modern Chinese Literature and Culture 15:1 (Spring 2003): 29-62.
- Lim, Song Hwee. "Celluloid Comrades: Male Homosexuality in Chinese Cinemas of the 1990s." China Information 16: 1 (2002): 68 –88.
- Meiling Wu, "Postsadness Taiwan New Cinema: Eat, Drink, Everyman, Everywoman," in Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yeh eds., Chinese Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics (Honolulu: U of Hawaii UP, 2005), pp. 76-95.
- Corrigan, Chapter 7.

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Sylvia Chan: *Twenty, Thirty, Forty (2004), Siao Yu (1995)

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

- Shiao-ying Shen, "Locating Feminine Writing in Taiwan Cinema: A Study of Yang Hui-shan's Body and Sylvia Chan's Siao Yu," in Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh eds., Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics (Honolulu: U of Hawaii UP, 2005), pp. 267-279.
- Chris Berry, "Wedding Banquet: A Family (Melodrama) Affair," in Chris Berry ed., Chinese Film In Focus (London: BFI, 2004), pp. 183-190.
- Wei Ming Datrotis and Eileen Fung, "Breaking the Soy Source Jar: Diaspora and Displacement in the Films of Ang Lee." In Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender. Ed. Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1997), pp. 187-220.

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

Part 3 Mainland China

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

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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.
- Yomi Braester, "Tracing the City's Scars," in The Urban Generation, pp. 161-180.

- Lin, Xiaoping. "Discourse and Displacement: Contemplating Beijing's Urban Landscape," Art AsiaPacific no. 25 (2000): 76-81.

11/8

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

- Lau, Jenny Kwok Wah. "Globalization and Youthful Subculture: The Chinese Sixth-Generation Films at the Dawn of the New Century," in Lau, Jenny Kwok Wah (ed.) Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 13-27.
- Dai, Jinhua. "Immediacy, Parody, and Image in the Mirror: Is there a Postmodern Scene in Beijing?" in Jenny Kwok Wah Lau (ed.) Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 151-166.
- Berenice Reynaud, "Zhang Yuan's Imaginary Cities and the Theatricalization of the Chinese 'Barsdarts,'" in The Urban Generation, pp. 264-294.
- Yaohua Shi, "Maintaining Law and Order in the City," in The Urban Generation, pp. 295-316.

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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.
- Yomi Braester, "Chinese Cinema in the Age of Advertisement: The Filmmaker as a Cultural Broker," China Quarterly, 2005: 549-564.
- Anthony King and Abidin Kusno, "On Be(ij)ing in the World: 'Postmodernism,' 'Globalization,' and the Making of Transnational Space in China." In Postmodernism & China. Eds. Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), pp. 41-67.
- Shuyu Kong, "Big Shot from Beijing: Feng Xiaogang's He Sui Pian and Contemporary Chinese Commercial Film," Asian Cinema Vol 14, No. 1 (Spring Summer 2003): 175-187.

II. Shanghai: The Frenzy of (Re)Cosmopolitanism

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Shi Runjiu: *A Beautiful New World (1998)

Lu Yue: Mr. Zhao (1998)

- Augusta Palmer, "Scaling Skyscraper," in The Urban Generation, pp. 181-204.
- Xueping Zhong, "Male Desire and Its Discontent," in The Urban Generation, pp. 295-315.
- Mayfair Yang, "Mass Media and Transnational Subjectivity in Shanghai: Notes on (Re)Cosmopolitanism in a Chinese City," in Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism. Eds. Donald M. Nonini and Aihwa Ong (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 287-319.
- Dai Jinhua. "Imagined Nostalgia." In Postmodernism & China. Eds. Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), pp. 205-221.

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Lou Ye: *Suzhou River (1999)

Chen Yusu: Shanghai Panic (2000); Destination Shanghai(2003)

- Zhang Zhen, "Urban Dreamscape, Phantom Sisters, and the Identity of an Emergent Art Cinema," in The Urban Generation, pp. 344-387.
- Gary Xu, " 'My Camera Doesn't Lie': Cinematic Realism and Chinese Cityscape in Beijing Bicycle and Suzhou River," in his Sinascape, pp. 67-88.
- Wang Ban, "Remembering Realism: The Material Turn in Chinese Cinema and Street Scenes of Globalization," in his Illuminations from the Past: Trauma, Memory, and History in Modern China (Stanford UP, 2004), pp. 235-276.
- Liu Kang, "Popular Culture and the Culture of the Masses in Contemporary China." In Postmodernism & China. Eds. Arif Dirlik and Xudong Zhang. (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), pp. 123-144.

III. At Home in the World: New Directions

12/11

Jia Zhangke: *Unknown Pleasures (2000); The World (2004); Still Life (2007)

- Lin Xiaoping, "Jia Zhangke's Cinematic Trilogy: A Journey across the Ruins of Post-Mao China," in Sheldon Lu and Emilie Yeh eds., Chinese Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics (Honolulu: U of Hawaii UP, 2005), pp. 186-209.
- Jason McGrath, "The Independent Cinema of Jia Zhangke," in The Urban Generation, pp. 81-114.
- Wu Wenguan. "Just on the Road: A Description of the Individual Way of Recording Images in the 1990s," in Wu Hung with Wang Huangsheng & Feng Boyi, The First Guangzhou Triennial Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art (1990 – 2000) (Guangzhou Museum of Art, 2002), pp. 132 –138.

12/13 Final essay due.