



Study Center in Shanghai, China

Course name:	Chinese Film and Society: “Temporalization”
Course number:	EAST 3201/CINE 3201 SCGC
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3 semester/4.5 quarter hours
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2017

Course Description

An introduction to contemporary Chinese film from the so-called “New Era” onward, this course will examine some exemplary cinematic works of contemporary Chinese filmmakers. Instead of tracing the historical unfolding of contemporary Chinese film in line with a familiar, all too familiar *generational* narrative, however, this course will read the films through a critical engagement in the problematic of what might be called “*temporalization*” in and for contemporary China.

All the cinematic works under close reading in the class, then, will be read historically as well as allegorically in order to explore the complicated ways in which “film” as a product of cultural industry (to borrow Theodor Adorno’s phrase) may give rise to a transcoding of different socio-political discourses, revealing that which underlies the seemingly “ahistorical” self-unfolding of mass culture in contemporary China. Therefore, besides contemporary Chinese films, several films in Hong Kong, Taiwan, as well as several Japanese films, due to the close relationships between China and these areas in terms of geopolitical proximity as well as cultural influence, will also be addressed either as crucial texts for understanding the related Chinese films, or as a cultural background against which the twists and turns in the development of contemporary Chinese film can be illustrated. Unpacking the mediating term “*and*” in the title of the course through our reading of the films, this course will try and disclose 1) how the historical problematic of contemporary China manifests itself *symptomatically* in cinematic variations; and 2) the complex relationship between cultural work and socio-political discourses that is neither representational nor confrontational.

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this recitation class is 1) to help the students understand the crucial historical moments in contemporary China in the last three decades; 2) to read the films closely and critically; and 3) to cultivate in the students a critical thinking for reading cultural texts.

Course Prerequisites

No prior knowledge of Chinese cinema/culture/history is required. All films carry English subtitles. All works are read in English.

Methods of Instruction

This course will be conducted by introductory lectures, in-class screenings and following discussions. Field trips will be scheduled as well.



Assessment and Final Grade

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| 1. Attendance and weekly response: | 25% |
| 2. Mid-term paper: | 25% |
| 3. Final paper: | 50% |

Course Requirements

Attendance and Readings

Class attendance is mandatory. Because the class meets only once a week, CIEE has a strict policy about course attendance that allows no unexcused absences. All absences due to illness require a signed doctor's note from a local facility as proof that you have been ill and have sought treatment for that illness. Other absences must be discussed prior to the date(s) in question. If your absence is not excusable, missing a class will be detrimental to your grade. **IF YOU ARE ABSENT (UNEXCUSED), YOUR PARTICIPATION SCORE WILL ALSO BE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED.**

Students are expected to arrive to class promptly both at the start of class and after breaks. Arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 10 minutes early will be considered an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. Please note that the attendance policy also applies for classes involving a field trip or other off-campus visit. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at the agreed meeting point on time.

Submission of Late Work

Written work due in class must be submitted during class time.

Work submitted more than five days after the due date without an agreed extension will be given a zero. Please note that final paper must be submitted on time.

Please keep in mind that CIEE policy stipulates that all assignments must be submitted on or before the last day of class. Therefore, **NO LATE ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE LAST DAY OF THE COURSE.**

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work until final grades are posted. They must be prepared to supply an electronic copy if requested. Not submitting a copy of their work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Weekly Schedule

- Week 1** **Orientation week**
No class
- Week 2** Introduction: Contemporary Chinese Film and Its Temporalities
The Animalist Origins of Contemporary Chinese Film: Anticipating a Global Time
Screening: Xie Jin, “The Hibiscus Town” (1986)
Readings: Dai Jinhua, “After the Post-Cold War” (required)
 Wang Hui, “The Politics of Depoliticization” (recommended)
- Week 3** Cultural Trauma *contra* Political Disorientations: the Fifth Generation
Screening: Zhang Yimou, “Story of Qiu Ju” (1992)
Readings: excerpts from Xudong Zhang, *Postsocialism and Cultural Politics* (required)
 Hegel, *The Right of the Philosophy of Right*, Chapter on “the State” (recommended)
- Week 4** Mark etization and Its Discont ent s: China’s New L eg it
im at ion Screening: Zhang Yimou, “Hero” (2002)
Readings: excerpts from Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (required)
 Chen Kaige, “The Emperor and the Assassin” (1998) (recommended)
- Week 5** The Pasion for the Real, or, the Sixth Generation
Screening: Jia Zhangke, “Still Life” (2007)
Readings: Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (required)
 Slavoj Žižek, “The Sublime Object of Ideology” (recommended)
 Jia Zhangke, “Xiao Wu” (1998) (recommended)
- Week 6** The Spectres with(out) Marx: Contemporary Cinematic Narratives on Revolution
Screening: Jiang Wen, “Let the Bullet Fly” (2010)
Readings: Jacques Derrida, “Prologue” of *The Spectres of Marx* (required) Jiang Wen, “The Sun Rises as Usual” (2007) (recommended) Zhang Yimou, “Survival” (1994) (recommended)
- Week 7** How *Not* to Have the Nostalgia for the Socialist China Screening: Zhang Meng, “The Iron Piano” (2011)
Readings: Xudong Zhang, “Poetics of Vanishing” (required)
 Wu Xiaobo, “The Sadness of the Chinese Working Class” (“Zhongguo gongren jieji de youshang”) (recommended)
- Mid-term paper due**
- Week 8** Weeklong Field trip
No class

- Week 9** Depoliticized War and the Temporalities of Nation-State
 Screening: Lu Chuan, “Nanking! Nanking!”/“The City of Life and Death” (2009)
 Readings: Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (required)
 Feng Xiaogang, “Assembly” (2007) (recommended)
- Week 10** **Weeklong Spring break**
 No class
- Week 11** The Remnants of World War II in Wake of the Cold War
 Screening: Takahata Isao, “Grave of the Fireflies” (1988)
 Readings: Takeuchi Yoshimi, “What Is Modernity?” (required)
 Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity* (recommended)
 John Dower, *Embracing Defeat* (recommended)
- Week 12** Trauma and the Return of the Political: the Case of Post-War Japan
 Screening: Anno Hideaki, “Neon Genesis Evangelion” (1995)
 Readings: excerpts from Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku* (required)
 Saito Tamaki, *Beautiful Fighting Girl* (recommended)
- Week 13** Freedom without Form: beyond the Sixth Generation
 Screening: Guan Hu, “Lao Pao’er” (2015)
 Readings: excerpts from Hegel’s *Aesthetics* (required)
 Wang Shuo, “Animals are Brutal” (“Dongwu xiongmeng”) (recommended)
 Wang Anyi, “The Age of Enlightenment” (“Qimeng shidai”) (recommended)
- Week 14** Towards an Inoperative Politics: Contemporary Japanese Subculture
 Screening: Nakamura Kenji, “Ayakashi” (2007)
 Readings: excerpts from Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku* (required)
 Walter Benjamin, “Artwork in the Age of Reproducibility” (required)
- Week 15** Police Narrative in the Age of Post-Police Society
 Screening: Liu Weiqiang and Mai Zhaohui, “Infernal Affairs” (2002)
 Readings: excerpts from Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (required)
 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (recommended)
Final-paper due
No electronic submission is accepted; No late paper is accepted. Please submit your paper before or at the end of the class.

Field trip: Site visit at Shanghai Film Museum.



ENGAGE. EXPERIENCE. EMBRACE. EDUCATE.

General Bibliography

Chris Berry, *Chinese Films in Focus II* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) Dai Jinhua

Cinema and Desire (London & New York: Verso, 2002)

Zhang Yingjin, *Chinese National Cinema* (Routledge, 2004)

(Required and recommended readings not included; required readings will be sent to the students beforehand.)