CET Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Shanghai
Course Code / Title: (SH/FILM 370) Contemporary Chinese Cinema
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Film Studies / East Asian Studies, Chinese Language, Chinese Literature, History
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
This course offers insights into the political, social, and cultural changes in contemporary China--and the impact of modernization and globalization on its cultural redefinition and identity reforming—through film. Using a selection of films directed by internationally-acclaimed Chinese Fifth and Sixth Generation directors, the course invites students to exercise their critical thinking skills in appraising the cultural narratives of each selected film and the aesthetic presentation produced by each film director.

Objectives
At the end of the course students will be able to:
- demonstrate knowledge of the political, social, and cultural changes in reflected in Chinese film over the past four decades;
- identify key characteristics of Chinese cultural and aesthetic traditions;
- develop informed comparative approaches between Chinese and U.S. film traditions; and
- evaluate the representation and criticism of the cultural tradition and value in contemporary Chinese cinema.

Course Requirements
Each week, students view a film outside of class and read assigned materials according to the weekly class topic and subject of the lecture and class discussion. Readings range between 50-80 pages per week. Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to participate during class lectures and in discussions, as this is a key to success in this course. The course includes a field study class at the Shanghai Film Museum.

Students are required to take a midterm exam, give a presentation in class, and prepare an end-of-term ten-page paper. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be distributed in class.

Grading
The final grade is determined as follows:
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Midterm exam 30%
In-class presentation 20%
Participation/contribution to class 10%
Final term paper 40%

Readings


Gong, Haomin. “Commerce and the Critical Edge: Negotiating the Politics of Postsocialist Film, the Case of Feng Xiaogang.” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, 2009; 3 (3).


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Yau, Esther C. M. “Yellow Earth: Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text.” Film Quarterly: (1987-88) 41.2: 22-33.


Films
*A World without Thieves* (Tianxia wu zei, dir. Feng Xiaogang, 2004), 120 min.
*Beijing Bastards* (Beijing zazhong, dir. Zhang Yuan, 1993), 88 min.
*Centre Stage* (Ruan Lingyu, dir. Stanley Kwan, 1992), 126 min.
*Ermo* (Ermo, dir. Zhou Xiaowen, 1994), 95 min.
*I Wish I Knew* (Hai shang chuan qi, dir. Jia Zhangke, 2010), 125min.
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Shower (Xizao, dir. Zhang Yang, 1999), 92 min.
Suzhou River (Suzhou He, dir. Lou Ye, 2000), 83 min.
The World (Shijie, dir. Jia Zhangke, 2005), 110 min.
Tiny Times 1.0 (Xiao shidai, dir. Guo Jingming, 2013), 116 min.
Woman Sesame Oil Maker (Xianghunnü, dir. Xie Fei, 1993), 105 min.
Yellow Earth (Huang tudi; dir. Chen Kaige 1984), 89 min.

Supplementary Texts


Outline of Course Content

Topic 1: An Introduction to Mainland Chinese Cinema
- The Beginning (1896-1929).
- The Two Golden Periods (1930-1949)
  - Accompanying film is Centre Stage (Ruan Lingyu, dir. Stanley Kwan, 1992), 126 min.
- Socialist cinema (1949-1978)
  - Accompanying film is Raise the Red Lantern (Dahong denglong gaogao gua, dir. Zhang Yimou, 1991), 125 min.

Topic 2: The Signs of “Chineseness” in Raise the Red Lantern

Yellow Earth (Huang tudi; dir. Chen Kaige 1984), 89 min.

Topic 3: Cultural Introspection and Artistic Innovation

Woman Sesame Oil Maker (Xianghunnü, dir. Xie Fei, 1993), 105 min.

Topic 4: Gender and Modernity in the Reform Era

Ermo (Ermo, dir. Zhou Xiaowen, 1994), 95 min.
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Topic 5: Victims of Consumerism
   Beijing Bastards (Beijing zazhong, dir. Zhang Yuan, 1993), 88 min.

Topic 6: A Distant Cry of Forsaken Children
   Suzhou River (Suzhou He, dir. Lou Ye, 2000), 83 min.

Topic 7: A Contemporary Tale of the Strange: Emergence of Chinese Independent Art Cinema
   The World (Shijie, dir. Jia Zhangke, 2005), 110 min.

Topic 8: Negotiating Local/Global Identities: China in the 21st Century
   Shower (Xizao, dir. Zhang Yang, 1999), 92 min.

Topic 9: Changes of Urban Landscape in the Era of Globalization
   A World without Thieves (Tianxia wu zei, dir. Feng Xiaogang, 2004), 120 min.

Topic 10: The Chinese-Style Blockbuster: Feng Xiaogang’s New Year’s Film (He Sui Plan)
   I Wish I Knew (Hai shang chuan qi, dir. Jia Zhangke, 2010), 125 min.

Topic 11: The Past and Present of Shanghai in Chinese Film
   Tiny Times 1.0 (Xiao shidai, dir. Guo Jingming, 2013), 116 min.

Topic 12: Rethinking Globalization and Chinese Youth Culture

Topic 13: The Future of Chinese Cinema