

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Beijing

Course Code / Title: (BJ/FILM 260) Comparative Studies in US and Chinese Film

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Film Studies / East Asian Studies, American Studies, Media Studies, Communications

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

This course compares major issues, theories, and methods in Chinese and American cinema. The course is organized around a series of keywords, comprising a living vocabulary of culture, power, social change, identity, nationhood, and globalization. Through these and related terms, we will analyze the construction of class, gender, politics and other relationships of power central to the U.S. and Chinese society. Course materials are interdisciplinary and, in addition to film, will also include history, cultural studies, fiction, and popular culture. Assignments include reading, writing, discussion, and a field trip exploring public memory at the China National Film Museum in Beijing. Students analyze similarities and differences between films produced in Hollywood and Beijing, gaining a transnational understanding of film studies and a critical perspective on Chinese and American film traditions. The course also has a strong cultural focus, highlighting the differences in history, economy, social structure, and values systems in the two countries, as seen through the prism of cinema.

Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students:

- Gain familiarity with film theories and genres, both Chinese and American.
- Understand the basics of film production and technique.
- demonstrate an understanding of cross-cultural differences in cinema styles, markets, box office and profit aspects, and the star system of both cultures.

Course Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field-based course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to watch all films (preferably in groups with other students) and read all assigned materials before the relevant class session. Students should come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments are generally 20-30 pages per class session.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Response Papers: 20%

Syllabus of Record

- Essay 1: 15%
- Essay 2: 20%
- Presentation: 10%
- Final Paper: 25%

Readings

Leo Braudy & Marshall Cohen. *Film Theory and Criticism*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Thomas Sobchack & Vivian C. Sobchack. *An Introduction to FILM*. Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1998.

Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu. *Transnational Chinese Cinema: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

Xudong Zhang. *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reform: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction and the New Chinese Cinema*. Duke University Press, 1997.

Additional Resources

Films screened in class may include:

Once Upon A Time in the West, The Birth of A Nation, Citizen Kane, Gone with the Wind, On the Water Front, The Godfather, The Graduate, Medium Cool, Pulp Fiction, Star War, All the King's Men, I'm Not There, Blood Simple; Street Angels, Crows and Sparrows, A Spring River Flows East, The Song of Youth, Lei Feng, A Small Town Called Lotus, Red Detachment of Women, Once Upon A Time in China, Yellow Earth, Qiu Ju Goes to Court, A Woman, A Gun and A Noodle Shop, Dying to Survive, The Wandering Earth. Fahrenheit 911, 1428, Free and Easy

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1: Film Theory

Topic 2: Genre Film

Topic 3: Film Mediums and Art

Topic 4: The Alternative Film

Topic 5: Transnational Cinema

Topic 6: Nationalism through Film

Topic 7: New Chinese Modernism

Topic 8: Trauma and History in Film

Topic 9: Urban Cinema

Syllabus of Record

