

SYLLABUS

LIT 3382.002

China in Film and Fiction

Thursday 4:00-6:45pm Room AH.1.204

Professor:

Dr. Ming Dong Gu

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Office Hours: Tu/Th 11: 30-12: 30 or by appointment

Course Description

As an introduction to contemporary Chinese cinema, this course is also an introduction to contemporary Chinese culture and society through film viewing and fiction reading. Chinese films produced in the period from the 1980s to the beginning of the twenty-first century are based on fictional works. The adaptation of fictional works into films does not simply show a change in media; it reveals an array of cultural and aesthetic issues that range from producers' motives and the tastes of cinema-goers to the changes in Chinese society and the geopolitical changes in the larger context of the world-wide globalization. By viewing a series of Chinese films in relation to some fictional works from which films were adapted, the course aims to provide a window for students to glimpse the gigantic scale of transformations in contemporary Chinese culture and society and to contemplate the interrelations of such issues as tradition and modernity, high culture and popular art, nation and community, individual passions and social constraints, gender and sexuality, identity and ethnicity, censorship and freedom of expression, national cinematic style and transnational capitalism, and most important, the commodification of filmmaking itself. All the Chinese films have English sub-titles and all readings are in English. No prior knowledge of Chinese language and culture is required although students who have taken courses of film studies are encouraged to bring their knowledge to bear on the study of this course.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcome

Students are required to view a dozen Chinese films and read some fictional works from which some films are adapted and to which other films are related. In addition, they will read some selected theoretical and critical materials on Chinese cinema. At the end of the course, each student should have an overview of the historical and aesthetic development of Chinese cinema and substantial knowledge of contemporary Chinese culture and society in the context of globalization.

Required Reading and Viewing Materials

1. Mo Yan, *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China* (Penguin, 1994).
2. Yu Hua, *To Live: A Novel* (Anchor, 2003).
3. Su Tong, *Raise the Red Lantern: Three Novellas*. (Penguin, 1996).
4. Liu Heng, *The Obsessed* (Chinese Literature Press 1991).
5. Eileen Chang, *Lust, Caution: The Story* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007).
6. A Course Pack containing handouts of shorter fictional works and some theoretical and critical articles. The course pack will be reserved at the library.
7. Fourteen Chinese films (provided by the instructor and to be shown in class).

Recommended readings:

1. Christopher J. Berry and Mary Ann Farquhar, *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
2. Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
3. Yingjin Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema* (Routledge; illustrated edition, 2004)
4. Chris Berry, ed., *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema* (London: BFI Publishing, 1991).
5. Sheldon H. Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).
6. Xudong Zhang, *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997).
7. Yingjin Zhang, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender* (Stanford University Press, 1996).
8. Ni Zhen, *Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy: The Genesis of China's Fifth Generation*, translated by Chris Berry (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).

Course Activities and Grading

The course will be conducted through a mixture of lectures, instructor-led discussions, and film viewing. Regular attendance and participation in the classroom activities are required of all students. Students are expected to read the assigned materials before coming to class, take a series of brief in-class quizzes (5-6 minutes) which cover the reading assignments, hand in a mid-term paper and a final paper. The grading is based on the following:

1. 6 brief in-class quizzes	30%
2. One mid-term paper:	25%
3. One final exam	35%
4. Attendance and Participation	10%
Total: 100%	

Note: Three absences without documented reasons will lower the final grade.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Chinese cinema and modern Chinese history and society

Film Viewing: Xie Jin's *The Legend of Tianyun Mountain*

Week 2: Read Handouts: Historical Introduction of Chinese Cinema: Part 1

Film Viewing: Cheng Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984)

Week 3: Read Handouts: Historical Introduction of Chinese Cinema: Part 2

Film Viewing: Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* (1987)

Week 4: Read Mo Yan, *Red Sorghum*, pp. 1-112

Discussion

Week 5: Read Mo Yan, *Red Sorghum*, pp. 112-236.

Discussion

Week 6: Read Mo Yan, *Red Sorghum*, pp. 237-359.

Film Viewing: Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991)

Week 7: Read Su Tong's novella *Raise the Red Lantern*, pp. 11-99.

Film Viewing: Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* (1993)

Week 8: Read Yu Hua's novel *To Live*, pp. 3-125.

Film Viewing: Zhang Yimou's *To Live* (1994)

Mid-term paper due

Week 9: Read Yu Hua's novel *To Live*, pp. 126-250

Film Viewing: Zhang Yimou's film *Judou* (1990)

Week 10: Read Liu Heng's novella, *The Obsessed*.

Film Viewing: He Ping's *Red Firecracker Green Firecracker* (1994)

Week 11:

Film Viewing: Chen Kaige's *The Emperor and the Assassin*

Week 12: Read Handout "The Prince Tan of Yen"

Film Viewing: Zhang Yimou's film *Hero*

Week 13: Read Su Tong's novella *Opium Family*, pp. 180-267.

Film Viewing: Li Shaohong's *Blush* (1996)

Discussion

Week 14: Read Handout: Berry 155-165: "The Distinct Taiwan and Hong Kong Cinemas,"

Film Viewing: Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet* (1993)

Discussion

Week 15: Read Eileen Chang, *Lust, Caution: The Story*
Film Viewing: Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution*

Week 16: Berry 166-174: "A Cultural Interpretation of the Popular Cinema of China and Hong Kong";
Film Viewing: John Woo's film *A Better Tomorrow* (1986)

December 10: Final Exam

Course Policies

Students are expected to attend each session and complete all of the required work. Absences are excused ONLY with appropriate documentation from a doctor or other health professional, by an authorized UTD official for school events, or by official policy as disclosed below.

This course will be conducted according to strict codes of academic honesty. All cases of plagiarism will be investigated and the deliberate instances reported to the Dean of Students. Penalties for deliberate cheating may include failing the assignment in question, failing the course, or suspension and expulsion from the University. Students are expected to know the University's policies and procedures on such matters, as well as those governing student services, conduct, and obligations.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. Each student and student organization is responsible for knowing the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

UTD administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents; Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

UTD recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's UTD email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at UTD provides a method for students to have their UTD mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

UTD has set deadlines for withdrawal from any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per UTD policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is: The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688. Richardson, Texas 75083-0688. (972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

UTD will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.