

CHES5134 East Asian Film Genres in a Globalizing World

2020-21, Term 1

Screening: Wednesdays 6:30 pm - 8:15 pm &

Lecture: Fridays 6:30 pm - 9:15 pm

Lecturer: Dr. Wayne Wong (wwaynekt@gmail.com)

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Mavis SIU (mavissiu@cuhk.edu.hk)

Course Description

In this course the connections between different cinemas within East Asia and between East Asia and the rest of the world will be explored from a genre perspective. Hong Kong and Korean film noir, Chinese swordplay and Japanese samurai films, and horror films from Hong Kong and Japan: all are examples of the transnational circulation of genres, involving processes of both localization and globalization. Students will be invited to explore genre theory, trace complex webs of creative influences, and appreciate the sameness and difference that characterize both genre films and our globalizing world. They will also have a chance to apply this new knowledge in practice, by making a short “genre film” for screening at the end of the term.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you should:

- have a firm grasp of basic theories of genre
- be familiar with the major East Asian film industries and some of their directors
- be able to use genre as a critical tool to analyze and make films
- have a basic understanding of film language and film production

Learning Activities

Students are required to attend one two-hour lecture session per week. Separately, they are expected to attend a screening of each week’s film before class. This course uses the CUHK Blackboard, which can be found at <https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk>. You can find the course readings, assignments and recent announcements on this platform. Make sure to check it regularly.

Teaching and Screening Arrangement

To ensure the health and well-being of the students and staff during the pandemic, all lectures and screenings will be conducted online. The films will be uploaded to Microsoft OneDrive, and the links will be posted on the CUHK Blackboard 15 minutes before the screening begins. If you have any difficulty accessing OneDrive or encounter other technical issues during lessons, please contact your lecturer via email.

Recommended General Reading

You will be expected to understand and apply film terminology accurately in this course. While the instructor will explain some terms in class, the following book—especially Part 3 on film style—will be of great help to those who want to get a more solid understanding of film language:

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. 10th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013.

Assessment Scheme

Students are required to attend and participate in class. Before class, students have to submit a reading reflection based on one or several of that week’s course readings. A Word copy of the reading reflection should be sent to the course TA via e-mail before midnight of the Tuesday before class. The maximum score for one reading reflection is 3%. Students taking CHES5134 also have to submit one short assignment in the middle of the term. All students will form groups to produce a short genre film, which will be screened at the end of term. The accompanying essay allows groups to explain their film in terms of genre theory. The short assignment and the accompanying essay should be e-mailed in Word format to the Teaching Assistant by 12:00nn of the due date. A signed VeriGuide receipt for these assignments should be submitted in hard copy to the Teaching Assistant’s mailbox. VeriGuide can be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide>. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

CHES5134 Course Grading System:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Reading Reflections	25%
Short assignment	10%
Individual Video Essay	55%

To save paper and protect the environment, more detailed grade descriptors for MA students have been uploaded to Blackboard. Undergraduate students taking this course may want to take a look at them as well for reference. The level at which you are taking this course will be taken into account during grading!

Course Schedule

[PDF versions of all readings and assignments can be found on the CUHK Blackboard. Registered students may access the CHES5134 page by using their Student ID and OnePass password]

Week 1: 11 September Introduction

Schatz, Thomas. *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System*. New York: Random House, 1981. 3-41.

Week 2: 18 September *Yojimbo* (1961)

Kitses, Jim. *Horizons West: Directing the Western from John Ford to Clint Eastwood*. New ed. London: BFI, 2004. 1-25.

Desser, David. "Toward a Structural Analysis of the Postwar Samurai Film." *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 25-41.

Week 3: 25 September *Let the Bullets Fly* (2010)

Altman, Rick. "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre." In *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 27-41. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris. "Spaghetti Western, Genre Criticism and National Cinema: Re-defining the Frame of Reference." In *Action and Adventure Cinema*, edited by Yvonne Tasker, 309-27. London: Routledge, 2004.

Van den Troost, Kristof. "Chinese National Allegory Goes West: *Let the Bullets Fly*." *Asian Cinema* 27, no. 1 (2016): 13-28.

Week 4: 2 October NO CLASS— The day following Mid-Autumn Festival

Week 5: 9 October *Vengeance!* (1970)

Adorno, Theodor W. *Essays on Music*. Edited by Richard Leppert. Translated by Susan H. Gillespie. Berkeley: U of California P, 2002. 437-69.

Yip, Man-Fung. *Martial Arts Cinema and Hong Kong Modernity: Aesthetics, Representation, Circulation*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017. 85-114.

Week 6: 16 October *Once Upon a Time in China 2* (1991)

Grindon, Leger. "Cycles and Clusters: The Shape of Film Genre History." In *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 42-59. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.

Rodriguez, Hector. "Hong Kong Popular Culture as an Interpretive Arena: The Huang Feihong Film Series." *Screen* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 1-24.

Week 7: 23 October *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004)

Staiger, Janet. "Hybrid or Inbred: The Purity Hypothesis and Hollywood Genre History." In *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 203-17. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.

Deleyto, Celestino. "Film Genres at the Crossroads: What Genres and Films Do to Each Other." In *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 218-36. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.

Szeto, Kin-Yan. "The Politics of Historiography in Stephen Chow's Kung Fu Hustle." *Jump Cut* 49 (2007). <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/Szeto/text.html>.

Week 8: 30 October *A Chinese Ghost Story* (1987)

Williams, Linda. "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." In *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 159-177. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.

Chan, Felicia. "Performing (Comic) Abjection in the Hong Kong Ghost Story." In *Hong Kong Horror Cinema*, edited by Gary Bettinson and Daniel Martin, 97-109. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

*****Friday 30 October Short Assignment due*****

Week 9: 6 November *Ringu* (1998)

Carroll, Noel. *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York: Routledge, 1990. 1-58.

Blake, Linnie. *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008. 44-68.

Week 10: 13 November *Branded to Kill* (1967) (+ Essay Consultations)

Miyao, Daisuke. "Dark Visions of Japanese Film Noir: Suzuki Seijun's *Branded to Kill* (1967)." In *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*, edited by Alastair Phillips and Julian Stringer, 193-204. London/New York: Routledge, 2007.

Naremore, James. *More than Night: Film Noir in Its Contexts*. Berkeley: University of California, 1998. 1-39.

Langford, Barry. *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. 13-22.

Week 11: 20 November NO CLASS—87th Congregation

Week 12: 27 November *The Killer* (1989) (+ Essay Consultations)

Stringer, Julian. "'Your Tender Smiles Give Me Strength': Paradigms of Masculinity in John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow* and *The Killer*." *Screen* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 25-41.

Williams, Linda. "Melodrama Revised." In *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory*, edited by Nick Browne, 42-88. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Week 13: 4 December *Oldboy* (2003)

Thanouli, Eleftheria. "Looking for Access in Narrative Complexity. The New and the Old in *Oldboy*." In *Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema*, edited by Warren Buckland, 217-32. Chichester/Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Young, Alison. *The Scene of Violence: Cinema, Crime, Affect*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010. 21-42.

***** Friday 11 December Individual Video Essay Due *****