CCSS 3440 China on Screen

2019-20, Term 2, Wednesdays, 2:30 – 5:15 pm
WMY 502, Wu Huo Man Yuen Building

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Course Description
Many 20th-century Chinese films were concerned with issues of nationhood, identity, trauma, and a national past. In recent years, however, while some directors have continued to focus on the nation’s past, others have chosen to look at the present and the effects of globalization on Chinese society and culture. This course asks that students begin to understand Chinese cinema(s) as transnational, a triangular composite of Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong cinema that has also been influenced by Hollywood, Japanese and Korean cinema, amongst others. Students will be introduced to Chinese film history and criticism via an examination of a number of films directed by some of Greater China’s most skilled directors.

Learning Outcomes
After completing this course, you should:
- exhibit a firm, if basic, grasp of modern Chinese history and be able to discuss its relation to cinema production in Greater China
- be familiar with some of Greater China’s most important film directors and their works
- have a basic understanding of film language and techniques
- be able to view and write about films critically

Learning Activities
Students are required to attend one three-hour lecture session per week during which they will view clips of a film with the instructor and discuss its significance. The course uses the CUHK Blackboard where you can find the course readings, assignments and announcements. Make sure to check it regularly.

Assessment Scheme
The score for participation will be based on students’ contribution to class participation. All students must attend film viewings whether they have previously seen the film or not. There are four short assignments listed at intervals throughout the syllabus. Students are required to complete three of the four. At the end of the term, each student will have to submit a final take-home exam. All assignments together with a signed VeriGuide receipt should be emailed to the teaching assistant in Word format by 11:30 pm of the due date. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.

Course Grading System:
- Participation 10%
- Short assignments 45%
- Final Take-Home Assignment 45%

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.

CCSS 3440 Spring 2020
Course Schedule

The readings given below are tentative and are subject to revision.

WEEK 1 (20200108) Introduction

WEEK 2 (20200115) The Goddess (1934)


WEEK 3 (20200122) Spring in a Small Town (1948)


WEEK 4 (20200129) Chinese New Year, no class

WEEK 5 (20200205) To be announced

***Short Assignment 1 Due, 20200210***

WEEK 6 (20200212) Two Stage Sisters (1964)


WEEK 7 (20200219) Red Sorghum (1987)


WEEK 8 (20200226) Dust in the Wind (1986)


***Short Assignment 2 Due, 20200302***

WEEK 9 (20200304) Hard Boiled (1992)


WEEK 10 (20200311) To be announced

WEEK 11 (20200318) Election (2005)

*** Short Assignment 3 Due, 20200323***

**WEEK 12 (20200325)  A Touch of Sin (2013)**


**WEEK 13 (20200331)  Reading Week, no class**


**WEEK 15 (20200415)  Summation**

*** Final Take Home Exam Due, 20200420***