



## CHES3101/CCSS3440/CHES5126 China on Screen

2021-22, Term 1, Tuesdays 2:30pm-6:15pm  
NAH 213 (Humanities Building)

**Lecturer:** Prof. Kristof VAN DEN TROOST (k.vandentroost@cuhk.edu.hk)

**Teaching Assistant:** Mr. Chen Siyu

### 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 twelve 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 technique
- be able to view and write about films critically

### Learning Activities

Students are required to attend one three-hour class session per week during which they will view a film with the instructor and discuss its significance. *When the film is long, class time may be extended until 6:15pm: attendance during the extra time is optional.* This course uses the CUHK Blackboard, which can be found at <https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk>. You can find the course readings, assignments and announcements on this platform. Make sure to check it regularly.

### Assessment Scheme

The score for participation (10%) will be based on students' contribution to class discussions. All students must attend film viewings whether they have previously seen the film or not. There are four short assignments (50%) listed at intervals throughout the syllabus. **CHES3101/CCSS3440 students** are required to complete three of the four. **CHES5126 students** are expected to complete all four. **The first assignment is required of all students.** At the end of the term, each student will have to submit the final take-home assignment (40%). Send a Word copy of your assignment and a soft copy of the signed VeriGuide receipt to the TA's e-mail address by **6:00pm of the due date**. VeriGuide can be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide>. **Late submission of assignments will be penalized.**

*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.*

**Course Grading System:**

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Participation              | 10% |
| Short assignments          | 50% |
| Final Take-Home Assignment | 40% |

**Grade Descriptors (CHES3101/CCSS3440)**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| A  | Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.  |
| A- | Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.  |
| B+ | Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. |
| B  |  |
| B- |  |
| C+ | Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.   |
| C  |  |
| C- |  |
| D  | Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.  |
| F  | Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.   |

**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 for this course. Readings marked with an asterisk are optional for CHES3101 and CCSS3440 students.]

**Week 1 (7/9): Introduction**

Berry, Chris. "Transnational Chinese Cinema Studies." In *The Chinese Cinema Book*, edited by Song Hwee Lim and Julian Ward, 9-16.

**Week 2 (14/9): *The Goddess (1934)***

Harris, Kristine. "The Goddess: Fallen Woman of Shanghai." In *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, edited by Chris Berry, 111-19. London: British Film Institute, 2003.

\*Hansen, Miriam Bratu. "Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism." *Film Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Autumn 2000): 10-22.

**Week 3 (21/9): *Spring in a Small Town (1948)***

Daruvala, Susan. "The Aesthetics and Moral Politics of Fei Mu's *Spring in a Small Town*." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 3 (2007): 171-187.

\*Pickowicz, Paul G. "Chinese Film-making on the Eve of the Communist Revolution." In *The Chinese Cinema Book*, edited by Song Hwee Lim and Julian Ward, 76-84. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

\*FitzGerald, Carolyn. "Spring in a Small Town: Gazing at Ruins." In *Chinese Films in Focus II*, edited by Chris Berry, 205-11. Basingstoke/New York: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

**Week 4 (28/9): *Two Stage Sisters (1964)***

Marchetti, Gina. "Two Stage Sisters: The Blossoming of a Revolutionary Aesthetic." In *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, edited by Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, 59-80. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1997.

\*Clark, Paul. "Artists, Cadres, and Audiences: Chinese Socialist Cinema, 1949-1978." In *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, edited by Yingjin Zhang, 42-56. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

**\*\*\*Thursday 30 September Assignment 1 Due (REQUIRED)\*\*\***

Week 5 (5/10):           ***Air Hostess (1959)***

Tan, Jessica. "Vehicles of Modernity: Gender, Mobility and Music in Evan Yang's MP&GI Films." In *The Cold War and Asian Cinemas*, edited by Poshek Fu and Man-Fung Yip, 139-157. New York: Routledge, 2020.

\*Fu, Poshek. "Entertainment and Propaganda: Hong Kong Cinema and Asia's Cold War." In *The Cold War and Asian Cinemas*, edited by Poshek Fu and Man-Fung Yip, 238-262. New York: Routledge, 2020.

Week 6 (12/10):           ***Dangerous Encounter of the First Kind (1980)***

Tan, See Kam. "Ban(g)! Ban(g)! *Dangerous Encounter – 1<sup>st</sup> Kind*: Writing with Censorship." *Asian Cinema* 8, no. 1 (1996): 83-108.

\*Law, Kar (2001). "An Overview of Hong Kong's New Wave Cinema." In *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*, edited by Esther C.M. Yau, 31-52. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

**\*\*\*Friday 15 October           Assignment 2 Due\*\*\***

Week 7 (19/10):           ***A Better Tomorrow (1986)***

Sandell, Jillian. "Reinventing Masculinity: The Spectacle of Male Intimacy in the Films of John Woo." *Film Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (1996): 23-34.

\*Bordwell, David. *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Madison: Irvington Way Institute Press, 2011. 60-71.

Week 8 (26/10):           ***Dust in the Wind (1986)***

Lupke, Christopher. *The Sinophone Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien: Culture, Style, Voice and Motion*. Amherst: Cambria Press, 2016. 153-67.

\*Bordwell, David. *Figures Traced in Light: On Cinematic Staging*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 186-214.

**\*\*\*Friday 29 October           Assignment 3 Due\*\*\***

Week 9 (2/11):           ***Red Sorghum (1987)***

Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng. "National Cinema, Cultural Critique, Transnational Capital: The Films of Zhang Yimou." In *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, edited by Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, 105-36. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1997.

\*Jameson, Fredric. "World Literature in an Age of Multinational Capitalism." In *The Current in Criticism: Essays on the Present and Future of Literary Theory*, edited by Clayton Koelb and Virgil Lokke, 139-58. West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 1987.

Week 10 (9/11):           ***Days of Being Wild (1990)***

Teo, Stephen. *Wong Kar-wai*. London: British Film Institute, 2005. 31-46.

\*Abbas, Ackbar. *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. 1-15; 48-62.

**\*\*\*Friday 12 November           Short Assignment 4 Due\*\*\***

Week 11 (16/11):           ***Devils on the Doorstep (2000)***

Ward, Julian. "Filming the Anti-Japanese War: The Devils and Buffoons of Jiang Wen's *Guizi Laile*." *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 2, no. 2 (2004): 107-118.

Week 12 (23/11):           ***Drug War (2012)***

Fan, Victor. "Cultural Extraterritoriality: Intra-Regional Politics in Contemporary Hong Kong Cinema." *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture* 1, no. 3 (2015): 389-402.

\*Bordwell, David. *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Madison: Irvington Way Institute Press, 2011. 251-64.

Week 13 (30/11):        **Yi Yi (2000)**

Chen, Leo Chanjen. "The Frustrated Architect: The Cinema of Edward Yang." *New Left Review* 11 (Sep 2001): 115-28.

\*Davis, Darrell William. "Second Coming: The Legacy of Taiwan New Cinema." In *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, edited by Yingjin Zhang, 133-150. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

**\*\*\*Tuesday 7 December        Final Assignment Due\*\*\***