#### MEDIA 743 Chinese Film Genres

**(Semester 2, 2020)**

**Lectures: Friday 09:00 -12:00 (206-302)**

**Convenor: Xuelin Zhou**

**Human Sciences Building, Room 518**

**Office Hour: Wednesday 12:00-13:00**

**Friday 13:00-14:00**

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**MEDIA 743 Chinese Film Genres will be taught face-to-face in Semester 2, 2020.**

**In this course you may be asked to submit your coursework assessments digitally. The University reserves the right to conduct scheduled tests and examinations for this course online or through the use of computers or other electronic devices. Where tests or examinations are conducted online remote invigilation arrangements may be used. The final decision on the completion mode for a test or examination, and remote invigilation arrangements where applicable, will be advised to you at least 21 days prior to the scheduled date of the assessment, or in the case of an examination when the examination timetable is published.**

**Course Overview**

Genre is an important approach in film studies, providing ways to group together films that are marked by similar characters, subjects, settings, styles and/or themes. This course investigates some major genres in the dynamic and proliferating Chinese-language cinema. The course comprises three sections. Section One focuses on youth film, a genre that began to draw attention from academia only in recent years. Section Two centres a best established genre of Chinese cinema, martial arts film. Section Three examines art film, the genre that has played a pivotal role in facilitating “dialogues” between Chinese cinema(s) and the cinemas in other parts of the world. In exploring these genres, the course pays close attention to the following aspects: generic conventions and inventions, aesthetic legacy and breakthrough, and implications of the wider context.

The course has a strong comparative perspective, covering three major film cultures in Chinese-language cinemas, i.e. Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China.

**Lecture Program**

**Week 1 (31 July):** Introduction: Genre and Chinese Cinema(s)

**Required Reading:**

“Genre”, in Pam Cook (ed.), *The Cinema Book*, London: British Film Institute, 1985, pp. 58-63.

Stephen Teo, “Film genre and Chinese cinema: A discourse of film and nation”, in Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 284-298.

**Week 2 (7 August):** Youth Film (1)

## **Required Reading:**

## Stuart Hall & Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 3-57.

Haomin Gong, “Commerce and the critical edge: The politics of postsocialist film and the case of Feng Xiaogang”, in *Uneven Modernity: Literature, Film, and Intellectual Discourse of Postsocialist China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012, pp. 85-107.

**Film-in-Focus:** *Youth* 芳华 (dir. Feng Xiaogang, 2017)

**Week 3 (14 August):** Youth Film (II)

**Required Reading:**

Lee, Leo Ou-fan (1980), “‘Modernism’ and ‘romanticism’ in Taiwan literature”, in Jeannette L. Faurot (ed.), *Chinese Fiction from Taiwan, Critical Perspectives*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 6-30.

Wenchi Lin, “More than Escapist Romantic Fantasies: Revisiting Qiong Yao Films of the 1970s”, *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, 4(1) (January 2010), pp. 45-50.

**Film in Focus:** *The Young Ones* 彩云飞 (dir. Lee Hsing, 1973)

**Week 4 (21 August):** Youth Film (III)

**Required Reading:**

## Natalie Sui-hung Chan, “Cinematic neorealism: Hong Kong cinema and Fruit Chan’s 1997 trilogy”, in Laura Ruberto & Kristi Wilson (eds.), Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007, pp. 207-225.

Esther M.K. Cheung, “The city that haunts: The uncanny in Fruit Chan’s Made in Hong Kong”, in Esther M.K. Cheung & Chu Yiu‐wai (eds.), *Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 353‐368.

**Film-in-Focus:** *Made in Hong Kong* 香港制造 (dir. Fruit Chan, 1997)

**Week 5 (28 August):** Art Film (I)

**Required Reading:**

David Bordwell, “The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice”, *Film Criticism*, 4(1) (Fall 1979), pp. 56-64.

Esther Yau, “*Yellow Earth*: Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text,” in Chris Berry, (ed.) *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*, London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1991, 1993, 63-79.

**Film in Focus:** *Yellow Earth* 黄土地 (dir. Chen Kaige, 1984)

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| Research Proposal Due: Friday 28 August, 4 PM |

**Week 6 (4 September):** Art Film (II)

**Required Reading:**

June Yip, *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, 49-68.

Udden, James, “Hou Hsiao-hsien and the Question of a Chinese Style”, *Asian Cinema*, 13 (2) (September 2002), 54-71.

**Film in Focus:** *The Time to Live, The Time to Die* 童年往事 (dir. Hou Hsiao Hsien, 1985)

# Mid-Semester Break

# Monday 7 September - Friday 18 September

**Week 7: (25 September):** Art Film (III)

**Required Reading:**

Paul Schrader, “Notes on Film Noir”, *Film Comment*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1972, pp. 8-13.

Eddie Bertozzi, “The uncertainty principle: Reframing independent film in twenty-first century Chinese cinema”, in Felicia Chan & Andrew Willis (eds.) *Chinese Cinemas: International Perspective*, Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 71-83.

**Film in Focus:** *Black Coal, Thin Ice* 白日焰火 (dir. Diao Yinan, 2014)

## **Week 8 (2 October):** Class Presentation & Individual Supervision

**Week 9 (9 October):** Martial Arts Film (I)

**Required Reading:**

Héctor Rodríguez, “Questions of Chinese Aesthetics: Film Form and Narrative Space in the Cinema of King Hu, Cinema Journal, 38 (1) (Autumn 1998), pp. 73-97.

Stephen Teo, *King Hu’s* A Touch of Zen, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007, pp. 78-105.

**Film in Focus:** *A Touch of Zen* 侠女 (dir. King Hu, 1970)

**Week 10 (16 October):** Martial Arts Film (II)

**Required Reading:**

Kenneth Chan, “The Global Return of the *Wuxiapian* (Chinese Sword-Fighting Movie): Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*”, *Cinema Journal*, 43(4) (Summer 2004), pp. 3-17.

Sheldon H. Lu, “*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Bouncing Angels: Hollywood, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Transnational Cinema”, in Chris Berry (ed.), *Chinese Cinema: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies, Volume III*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 46-57.

**Films in Focus:** *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* 卧虎藏龙 (dir. Ang Lee, 2000)

**Week 11 (23 October):** Martial Arts Film (III)

**Reading:** Christina Klein, “Martial Arts and the Globalization of US and Asian Film Industries”, *Comparative American Studies*, 2(3) (August, 2004), pp. 360-384.

Anthony Fung & Joseph Chan, “Towards a Global Blockbuster: The Political Economy of *Hero*’s Nationalism,” in Gary Rawnsley & Ming-Yeh Rawnsley, (eds.) *Global Chinese Cinema: The Culture and Politics of Hero*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010, 198-211.

**Film in Focus:** *Hero* 英雄 (Zhang Yimou, 2002)

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| Research Essay Due: Friday 30 October, 4 PM |

**Week 12 (30 October):** Course Wrap-Up; Genre and Society



**MEDIA 743 Chinese Film Genres**

**Assessment 2020**

There are three components of assessment for this course: a research proposal, an oral presentation and a full research essay.

# Research proposal

Length: 2,000 words (approximately)

Weighting: 25% of final mark

# Deadline: 4pm, Friday 28 August

**Class presentation** (week 8, 2 October)

Minimum 1,500 words (approximately 20 minutes long)

Weighting: 15%

# Research essay

Length: 6,500 words (approximately)

Weighting: 60% of final mark

# Deadline: 4pm, Friday 30 October

**Submission of written work**

Your written work must be submitted electronically to Canvas by the due date. Due dates for assessment have the force of examination dates. Extensions must be applied for before the due date of the assessment. Requests for extensions must be made in writing and must be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. medical certificate). **A mark will be deducted for every day that work is late.**

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# Research Proposal

The research essay proposal will consist of an essay topic that you devise, drawing explicitly on the topics and concepts covered in seminars; a project summary; a statement of aims and methodology and a partially annotated bibliography.

**• essay topic**

A clear statement of the essay’s thesis or the critical question it addresses

**• project summary**

A brief 100-word summary of the essay in clear, plain English using the minimum of terminology unique to the area of study

**• statement of aims, research plan and methodology**

A detailed description of what the essay will achieve and how it will accomplish this

(This is the more detailed part of the proposal. In articulating the aims of your essay, you should describe what you hope to achieve, discover or explore, and how your essay is related to other studies in the field. You might find it useful to pose the questions you are seeking to answer in your essay. As opposed to the project summary, in this section you are writing for people familiar with the field, so you can use more specialized vocabulary, and dispense with the need to explain basic assumptions and background. In articulating the research plan and methodology of your essay, you should describe the key terms of your inquiry and explain how you define them. How many sections do you anticipate? What will happen in each section? What kind of critical approach will you take? What primary and secondary texts will be most important to your essay? What conceptual frameworks will you be adopting and why? What are the scope and limits of your inquiry?)

**• partially annotated bibliography**

A bibliography with 3 to 4 of the most important items annotated. (This won't necessarily represent your final bibliography for the essay.)

"Annotation" in this context does not mean an abstract or summary: rather, it means a brief description of the article or book and an indication of how and why you think it will be useful in your own essay.

**Class Presentation**

All students enrolled in MEDIA 743 Chinese Film Genres in Semester 2, 2020 are required to make a class presentation in Week 8. This presentation is worth 15% of your overall mark for the course. Your presentation mark will depend on your preparation before and performance in class. Your presentation should be twenty minutes in length and will be followed by a Q & A session. The following five aspects of your presentation will be assessed:

* Clear statement of conceptual issues
* Organization of ideas
* Clarity of communication
* Audience engagement
* Handling of questions (from audiences)
* You are required to prepare a pager to highlight the key points of your presentation. The handout can be emailed to the lecturer as an attached document in advance to be photocopied for circulation in class.
* You can use power point slides to illustrate your ideas but you are not allowed to use audio-visual material during your presentation.

**Research essay**

**Central Argument**

State clearly what is the central argument of your research project; give close attention to formulating an appropriate perspective (i.e. neither too broad nor too narrow) into the research project; expand your discussion of the argument and support it with concrete evidence; demonstrate familiarity with the norms and terms of the genre and show skills to use knowledge of film language (cinematography, editing and mise-en-scene, etc.) to carry out research work; evidence of independent and original critical thinking is of particular relevance and significance

**Structure**

Include a relevant introduction, literature review and conclusion; show evidence of logic and coherence between paragraphs; make the transition of ideas smooth; use “signposts” to build up links

**Terms of writing**

Write a coherent and concise research essay; watch for a balance between description and discussion, between contextual study and textual reading, between theoretical application and independent critical observations; write in a formal/academic tone and avoid colloquial and slang terms; watch for generalization and hyperbole; avoid reliance on non-scholarly internet materials

**References**

Correctly identify and present academic sources cited in the writing; integrate the references into the writing and avoid using quotes for the sake of quoting; be consistent in citing in MLA style

**Proofreading and Plagiarism**

Thoroughly proofread your research essay and, ideally, have it professionally proofread before submission to reduce amount of grammatical and typographical errors to a minimum; always properly reference the sources from which you have taken ideas, arguments and/or quotations to avoid plagiarism

**Marking Criteria**

Your essay will be assessed by referring to the following four aspects:

* Relevance of argument
* Coherence of argument and analysis
* Support of argument
* Presentation (writing style, citation and grammar)

Please note that these four aspects will be considered from a holistic perspective. Your final grade will be based on the predominant character of the essay – i.e. the four aspects do not have to all meet the standard of a grade classification and evidence of strength in certain aspects may make up for weaknesses in other aspects.