

SM5327: CHINESE CINEMA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Chinese Cinema

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5327

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

During the past two decades, many films from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong have not only reached the world audience, but also become trend-setters in world cinema. This course aims to first present a brief history of Chinese cinema

from 1905 to present time and then examine narrative and documentary features produced since 1990. By covering major ideas, movements and trends in Chinese language cinema, the course will enhance your knowledge on Chinese culture in general and provide you with a vocabulary, with which you can explore related topics and issues further. By contextualizing Chinese language cinema in world cinema, this course will meanwhile introduce fundamental terminology and critical methods that are essential for you to read and understand other cinema and moving images in general. In this sense, this course offers you examples of case studies to show you how a film can be read from different perspectives-social, economic, aesthetic, cultural, historical, gender or narrative.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Describe the terminologies of film in general, explain special terminologies in Chinese film history, and identify filmmakers emerged from various film movements and trends;		x	x	x
2	Identify special characteristics of Chinese (independent) cinema in the large context of Chinese and world film histories;		x	x	x
3	Analyse selected motifs used in a film with a small group of students and make a short video to offer commentaries.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Reading film	Define terms in film narrative and production with the aid of visual-audio materials in-class and invite students to identify learned terms through in-class discussions	1	
2	Discussion	Present representative film texts from various eras and invite students to discuss their characteristics through on-line discussions	2	

3	Group project	Invite students to form groups of 3-4 students and make a short commentary video on a film selected from a list provided by the instructor. This project needs both creative and critical skills.	3	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Group Presentation	1	30	-	No
2	Film Journal	2	30	-	No
3	Final Quiz	3	40	This is open-book and online quiz does not need an offline examination arrangement.	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Examination Duration (Hours)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class Participation and Performance (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points

- In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate
- Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points
- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret opinions effectively

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing
- Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Fair ability in interpreting opinions

Marginal

- (D) - Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views
- Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Poor ability in interpreting opinions

Failure

- (F) - Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher
- No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Minimal ability in interpreting opinions

Assessment Task

Film Journal (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition
- Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature
- Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion
- Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition
- Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
- Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
- Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

Marginal

- (D) - Weak content, limited use of resources
- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources

- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
 - Fail to respond to other comments
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Assessment Task

Final Quiz (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/ his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
- Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
- Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions

- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts

- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
- Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

(D) - Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts

- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

(F) - Poor grasp of materials

- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
 - Irrelevant bibliography
-

Assessment Task

Class Participation and Performance (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points

- In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate
- Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues

Good

(B+, B) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points

- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret opinions effectively

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing

- Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Fair ability in interpreting opinions

Failure

(F) - Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher

- No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Minimal ability in interpreting opinions

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Film Journal (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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(A+, A, A-) - Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources

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(B-, C+, C) - Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand

- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
- Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
- Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources

- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
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(B-, C+, C) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts

- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
- Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Failure

(F) - Poor grasp of materials

- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
- Irrelevant bibliography

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

1. Introduction to the Course; Overview of 100 Years of Chinese Language Cinema; and The Cradle Period (1905-1921)
2. The Early Years (1923-1930s): Stars, Scandals, Shanghai Modern and Left-wing Films and the Realist Tradition
3. Early Taiwanese Cinema (1940s-1950s), Early Hong Kong Cinema (1920s-1950s), and the Era of Studio Productions
4. Hong Kong New Wave, Taiwan New Cinema, and The Fifth Generation Film Movement
5. The Sixth Generation Directors in Mainland China and Their Works
6. Mainland China's New Documentary Movement and Representative Works
7. Second Hong Kong New Wave, and Hong Kong Cinema before and after 1997
8. Second Wave of New Taiwan Cinema, and Important Independent Directors after 1990

9. Gender Issues in Independent Chinese Cinema
10. Documentary Films Produced after 2000 in Taiwan and Hong Kong
11. Documentary Films Produced after 2000 in Mainland China
12. Scholarly Approaches to the Study of Independent Chinese Cinema

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Berry, Michael. Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers. NY: Columbia University Press, 2005.
2	Bordwell, David. Planet Hong Kong: popular cinema and the art of entertainment. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.
3	Clark, Paul. Reinventing China: a Generation and Its Films. HK: The Chinese UP, 2005.
4	Wang, Linzhen. Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts. 2012.
5	Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng ed. Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, c1997.
6	Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh. Eds. Chinese-language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Zhang Yingjin and Xiao Zhiwei. Encyclopaedia of Chinese Film, New York: Routledge, 1998.
2	Zhang Yingjin. Chinese National Cinema. New York: Routledge, 2004.
3	Zhang Yingjin. Ed. A Companion to Chinese Cinema. Malden, Mass. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
4	Zhang Zhen. Ed. The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
5	Poshek Fu and David Desser The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity.
6	Huang, Ren. 60 Years of Film Critique in Taiwan [In Chinese.] Taipei: Asia Pacific Press, 2004.
7	Pickowicz, Paul G. and Yingjin Zhang. Eds. From Underground to Independent: Alternative Film Culture in Contemporary China. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
8	Yeh, Emilie Yueh-yu. Taiwan Film Directors: a Treasure Island. New York: Columbia UP, 2005.
9	James Udden. No Man an Island The Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009.
10	Browne, Nick. et al, New Chinese cinemas: forms, identities, politics Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 1994.