

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
CHINESE CULTURE THROUGH FILMS
Instructor: Dr. Maurizio Marinelli

Course Description:

This course is intended to offer much more than a survey course on the history of modern China. The central idea is to use a selection of films from the internationally acclaimed “new Chinese cinema” as a way to help students better understand the history, politics, society and economy of China in different decades of the twentieth century.

We will place each film in historical context, considering both the aesthetic form and the socio-political content of the films. During our discussions, we will examine the stylistic characteristics of the films, including the photography and the attachment to melodrama, and we will analyze how traditional Asian visual arts and centuries-old cultural traditions, as well as the Mao’s Communist revolution, influenced the filmmakers in their choice of themes and techniques.

We will use each film as a starting point to engage a larger topic. In some cases, the selected movies will be linked to literary works, including “The True Story of Ah Q” written by Lu Xun, “Xiao Xiao (A Girl from Hunan)” by Shen Congwen and “Red Sorghum” written by Su Tong.

Rationale:

The fundamental question of the continuity between the cultural tradition and socio-economic organization of the past and the elements of change and “modernity” in the present will accompany us during the course. This theme will be developed in the context of the different historical periods. The main concerns of our discussions and the proposed topics for research will be:

- the role of female gender in Chinese society,
- the use of allegory in Chinese historical literature,
- the strategies of filmmakers in coping with state censorship,
- the translation of Chinese novels into films, and
- the cinematic critiques of Maoism and post-Maoist Chinese culture.

About a dozen films will be shown (primarily on video cassette) in their entirety subtitled in English. On Tuesdays, films will be shown during a 2-hour session, usually followed by a 1-hour discussion. On Thursdays, there will be 1 hour of critical analysis. Moreover, some historical documentaries will be used during lecture/discussion. Students will also read at least one novel, as well as excerpts of critically screen cinematic adaptations of novels.

Readings:

Robert E. Gamer, *Understanding Contemporary China*, Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 2003

Perry E. Link, Richard P. Madsen, Paul G. Pickowicz (eds.) *Popular China*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

As for film theory and terminology, please choose one of the two following books:

James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: The World of Movies, Media and Multimedia*, Oxford U.P., 2000

Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, Routledge, 2000

Reference book:

McDougall, Bonnie and Kam Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (Columbia U.P., 1998) (available at the Library)

Supplementary material:

In several instances we will draw on outside readings as noted in the schedule below. Some of the additional readings will be available on blackboard (see below). Two copies of the reader containing all the supplementary sources will be available on reserve at Reed Library.

You are expected to do all the assigned reading **prior** to all classes, and do it in a way that will allow you to raise critical questions and actively participate in the discussions. You should also bring your reading material to class, since we will discuss the readings.

Social Studies Education Objectives:

Students who are planning a career as social studies teachers also should master the basic narrative and important themes of a region outside the required U.S. history area. This course will allow prospective teachers to impart to their own students the basic outline, narrative, and topics of Chinese history, as well as guide their students in the development of critical reading, writing, and analytical skills. To nurture and sustain these skills and attitudes in their students, prospective social studies teachers will develop and sharpen a wide-range of abilities and competencies.

This course is designed to increase teacher candidates' knowledge base within their discipline (NCATE Standard I: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions) and to enhance teacher candidates' understanding of the historical experiences and perspectives of the diverse members of American society (NCATE Standard IV: Diversity). The course is designed to enhance teacher candidates' ability to master the content knowledge necessary to meet the ten interdisciplinary thematic standards developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS):

Culture and Cultural Diversity
Time, Continuity and Change
People, Places, and Environment
Individual Development and Identity
Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
Power, Authority, and Governance
Production, Distribution, and Consumption
Science, Technology, and Society
Global Connections
Civic Ideals and Practices

Please log-on to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/teachers/vol2/home.shtml> for more detailed information about these standards. A copy of National Standards for Social Studies Teachers is located in the History Department Office (Thompson E332).

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

This course is designed to enable prospective social studies teachers to:

- Analyze and explain the ways in which societies and cultures other than their own address human needs and concerns (NCSS 1.1; NYSL 2) *All weeks.*
- Apply an understanding of a non-Western culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, the arts, traditions, beliefs, and values (NCSS 1.1, 1.9; NYSL 2) *All weeks.*
- Interpret patterns of behavior reflecting values and attitudes that contribute or pose obstacles to cross-cultural responses to persistent human issues (NCSS 1.1; NYSL 2) *All weeks.*
- Understand that historical knowledge and the concept of time are social constructs that fashion the kinds of questions that historians ask of their data. Moreover, prospective social studies teachers will be able to identify and apply key historical concepts such as periodization, change, continuity, conflict, and complexity to explain major historical processes (NCSS 1.2; NYSL 2) *All weeks.*
- Demonstrate a keen sensitivity to the diverse geography and environment of China, in particular how different physical environments shaped and continue to shape various societies, cultures, and economies within the region (NCSS 1.2, 1.3, 1.7, 1.9; NYSL 2, 3, 4) *Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.*

- Reveal their understanding of the ways in which culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and class affect individual and collective identities, experiences, and interpretations of experiences (NCSS 1.1, 1.4; NYSLs 1, 2) *All weeks.*
- Express their knowledge and appreciation of the evolution of pre-modern and modern Chinese political ideals, institutions, personalities, and civic practices. Moreover, prospective social studies teachers will demonstrate an understanding of the struggles and conflicts within China and how these conflicts continue to influence daily life (NCSS 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.10; NYSLs 2, 5) *Weeks 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15.*
- Demonstrate their understanding of the political, economic, social, and cultural institutions and organizations that Chinese peoples have created as a result of the forging a nation-state (NCSS 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10; NYSLs 2, 4, 5) *Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- Express their knowledge of the beliefs, sentiments, values, and issues that unite as well as divide Chinese people in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Moreover, prospective social studies teachers will demonstrate their appreciation of the ways in which race, ethnicity, class, and gender help to explain historical divisions within the region (NCSS 1.2, 1.6, 1.9; NYSLs 2, 4, 5) *All weeks.*
- Articulate their understanding of the complex relationships between the working poor, middle class society, and the elite, as well as the role of Chinese government in the evolution of those complex social relationships (NCSS 1.2, 1.6, 1.9; NYSLs 2, 3, 4) *Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15.*
- Develop and nurture their critical reading, writing, speaking, and collaborative learning skills. *All weeks.*

Course Topics include (but are not limited to):

This course provides a history of China and covers, although not exclusively, the following topics:

Chinese intellectual and cultural history
 Gender relations in Chinese society
 the strategies of filmmakers in coping with state censorship
 the translation of Chinese novels into films
 the cinematic critiques of maoism and post-Maoist Chinese culture
 Orientalism and Occidentalism

Instructional Methods and Activities:

Those facilitated by the professor: lecture; class discussion; videos; audio; Internet.
 Those facilitated by students: oral presentations; small group discussion; review sessions; formal writing assignments; Internet; personal assessment opportunities during the professor's office hours.

Requirements:

Regular attendance and discussion questions. Each student is expected to write two papers (8-9 pages for midterm due on **March 2**, and 10-11 pages for final, due on **May 6**).
 The grades of late papers will be reduced by 5 points (out of 100) for every day after the due date.

Journals:

As you watch the films and do your readings you are expected to make your own notes/summary in a journal and add to them notes taken in class from our lectures and discussions. After our class discussion of the films you are expected to answer the journal question. You can keep revising the journal throughout the semester if you like. The journaling is the backbone of the course — it will not be possible for you to complete them together at the end of the semester, so keep up. Keep your copy of the journal on disk. The idea behind the journals is that you will come to class confidently informed and have reflected on the reading carefully so we may have a substantial discussion. You must bring your journal to every class. You will be often asked at random to read out your response. You will be submitting the hard copy to me once in the semester and again at the end of the semester. Anyone who wants feedback early is invited to send in a copy of your first journal entry. Email is fine for this.

Presentations:

As a way to draw all students into the debates each week 2 students will be responsible to lead the discussion around the journal question on that topic. It is expected that you will help each other by discussing the issues by yourselves in advance and sharing your questions, problems, and directions of your thought. These notes can be revised later for your journal. A sign up sheet will be circulated the first week. You may change your date if you find somebody with whom you can swap dates.

Class Attendance & Discussion

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend class as well as participate in lectures, discussions, and review sessions. Class participation will constitute 25% of the final grade. Each student is allowed a maximum of two (2) and no more than two (2) unexcused absences during the semester. For each unexcused absence thereafter, five (5) points are deducted from your final grade. You are responsible for keeping the professor informed of any situation that prevents you from attending class. **Students who have more than 5 unexcused absences will not pass the course.**

Summary of grading:

Midterm Paper 25%	Class Presentation 25%
Journal 20%	Final Paper 30%

Grading Scale

A	94-100	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	E	Below 60

NOTE! ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS THE COURSE.

Blackboard

At the earliest opportunity, please go to the blackboard Web site (www.fredonia.edu/blackboard), and enroll in your course **2004SPHIST363 Chinese Culture through Films**. I will use the blackboard to distribute class announcements and weekly discussion questions. If students feel so inclined, it can also be used to discuss course materials, but I do not have plans to use it for formal discussion purposes at this time.

World Wide Web Site

You can find links to sites relevant to Asian studies, some of which will be useful for term papers at Prof. Marinelli's web site. In addition to links to news, historical information, bibliographies, museums, etc., it also includes sites specifically aimed at providing materials for K-12 teachers.

Web site: <http://www.fredonia.edu/departement/history/marinelli.htm>

Note

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge that you contact the staff in the Disabled Student Support Services (DSSS) at the Learning Center, 673-3550. DSSS will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1

01/20: Introduction to the course: syllabus, readings and textbook. Chinese Language, Geography, & Periodizing Modern Chinese History.

Week 2

01/25: Historical Video/s on Modern China: **China in Revolution.**

Readings: Gamer 2003: 1-9, Chapter 2 (Geography), Chapter 3 (History).

Question for discussion: What are the main characteristics of this historical documentary? Contrast and compare this documentary with other documentaries that you have seen.

01/27: **SHADOW MAGIC**, Ann Hu, 2001, (115')

Set in the Beijing of 1902, this comedy is built around the conflict that the assistant of a portrait artist finds himself in as he becomes a follower of the Westerner who has recently opened "Shadow Magic", the first movie theater in China.

Readings: Synopsis of the movie (course packet); E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, 1- 28; Chen Xiaomei, *Occidentalism*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 1- 22 (course packet)

Question for discussion: What can be considered the major characteristics of the "East" and "West" encounter at the turn of the XX century?

Week 3

02/1: Presentation of Lu Xun (video).

Readings: Gamer 2003: Chapter 4 (65-109). Lu Xun, "The True Story of Ah Q", "A Madman's Diary," & "Kong Yiji" from *Lu Xun: Selected Works*, Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang, trans. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980), pp. 39-57, pp. 102-152. Download from: <http://www.eluxun.com/english/n10.html> <http://www.eluxun.com/english/n3.html> <http://www.eluxun.com/english/n4.html> respectively.

Questions for discussion: The narrator of a fictional story is not necessarily identical with its real author. How many narrators are there in each of these short stories? What can we infer about each of them? How do the narrators feel about the stories they are telling, and how do they feel about themselves?

02/3: **THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q**, Cen Fan, 1981 (115 min.)

"Ah Q is the leading character in *The True Story of Ah Q* the famous novel by the great Chinese writer Lu Xun. Ah Q typifies all those who compensate themselves for their failures and setbacks in real life by regarding them as moral or spiritual victories."

Question for discussion: Do you agree with this quote? What can you say about the symbolism of Ah Q and its significance in relation to the 1911 Republican Revolution?

Week 4

02/8: **RAISE THE RED LANTERN** (*Dahong denglong gaogao gua*; 1991), Zhang Yimou, in Chinese with subtitles. 125 min.

"In a sweeping and magnificent tale of passion, aspiration, dreams, and desire set in 1920s China, 19-year-old Songlian has become Fourth Wife to the wealthy Chen. Yet she must share her husband with his three existing wives. Each wife has her own house on the estate, and each must wait until dusk for the arrival of a red lantern. Where the lantern is carried signifies which wife the master will sleep with that night. The lantern brings with its privileges none of the wives will sacrifice without a fight. When Songlian discovers that the other wives manipulate and cheat their way to win the red lantern, she decides to join in the fight for Chen's attention. A battle of wills commences that can only bring misfortune to all concerned."

Readings: Zhang, Xudong, "The Discourse of Modern Cinema", from Zhang Xudong, *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke U.P., 1997), 215-265; Rey Chow, "The force of surfaces: Defiance in Zhang Yimou's Films", from Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions* (Columbia U. P.: 1995), 143-171; Claire Huot, "Colorful Folk in the landscape: Fifth generation Filmmakers and Roots-Searchers", from *China's New Cultural Scene* (Duke U.P.: 2001), 91-125 (course packet).

Supplementary Readings: Su Tong, *Raise the Red Lantern: Three Novellas* (Penguin USA: 1996) * **Reed Library***

02/10: Critical analysis.

Reading: Gamer 2003: Chapter 10 (281-308), Chapter 11 (309-338), Chapter 12 (339-376).

Questions for discussion: What can we learn about feudal nobleman's life in China in 1920s (and before)? What can we learn about gender and family relations in traditional China?

What are the signs of "Chineseness" in *Raise the Red Lantern* and how can we analyze them in a context which is international, cross-cultural, and therefore *beyond* "Chinese"?

Week 5

02/15: **A GIRL FROM HUNAN** (*Xiang nu Xiao Xiao*; 1986), Xie Fei/U Lan, in Chinese with subtitles. 99 min.

Presentation of the writer Shen Congwen. Analysis of the text "Xiao Xiao". The movie "Xiao Xiao." "Freed from the constraints of the Cultural Revolution and fueled by an adventurous new generation of film makers, this film attests to the vigor and maturity of the New Chinese Cinema. At the turn of the century, a pampered and lively twelve-year-old girl is whisked off to a remote village and straight into an arranged marriage with a two-year-old boy. As she ripens into womanhood, she develops a sisterly affection for her toddling husband but finds more substantial companionship in a furtive love affair with a young farmer --- which places her in danger from the village's severe restrictions against adultery."

Reading: Introduction to Shen Congwen (course packet).

Supplementary Reading: Shen Congwen, *Imperfect Paradise : Stories by Shen Congwen* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1995) * **Reed Library***

02/17: Critical analysis.

Questions for discussion: What can we learn from this movie about the following topics: Life in the countryside, gender issues, making films in China (Xie Fei is a director of the older generation who was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution).

Week 6

02/22: **RED SORGHUM** (*Hong gaoliang*; 1987), Zhang Yimou, in Chinese with English subtitles, 91 min.. "The most popular of the acclaimed Chinese New Wave, this film is one of the most beautiful films of recent years. Beginning as a lusty romantic comedy about a nervous young bride's arrival and ensuing seduction at a remote winery, and ending as a heroic and harrowing drama of partisan resistance during the Japanese occupation, the film builds to a spell-binding, explosive climax. This film is a gorgeous fable that will sweep you along with its mixture of violent action, epic lyricism, and tongue-in-cheek swagger reminiscent of Leone and Kurosawa."

Readings: Zhang, Xudong, "Ideology and Utopia in Zhang Yimou's Red Sorghum", from Zhang Xudong, *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke U.P., 1997), 307-327; Zhang Yingjin, "Ideology of the Body in Red Sorghum", from Dissanayake, Wimal, *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, Indiana U.P., 1994), 30-41; Wang Yuejin, Red Sorghum, "Mixing Memory and Desire," Chris Berry (ed.), *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. London: British Film Institute, 1991, 81-103 (course packet).

Supplementary Readings: Mo Yan (Howard Goldblatt, trans.), *Red Sorghum* (Penguin:1994)

02/24: Critical analysis.

Week 7

******First paper is due******

03/01: **YELLOW EARTH** (*Huang tudi*; 1984), Chen Kaige, in Chinese with English subtitles. 89 min.

"One of the debut films of the "Chinese New Wave" of cinema, this film is a haunting, evocative film set in the barren wilderness of Northern Shaanxi Province in Spring 1939. The life of a fourteen-year-old peasant girl is changed forever by the arrival of Gu Qing, a communist soldier who has been sent out to collect folk songs for the use of revolutionary armies. As the young Cui Qiao slowly falls in love with this soldier, she learns from him that she does not have to remain bound to her lonely, traditional life. Inspired to action, she flees from her arranged marriage and escapes across the great Yellow River. This film was created by two of China's most celebrated young film makers, Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou."

Readings: Esther C. M. Yau, "Yellow Earth Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text," from Chris Berry (ed.), *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. London: British Film Institute, 1991, 62-79 (course

packet, read also the introductory part); Jerome Silbergeld, "Drowning on Dry Land: Yellow Earth and the Traditionalism of the 'Avant-garde'", from *China into Film: Frames of Reference in Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 14-52 (course packet); Chris Berry and Mary Ann Farquhar, "Post-socialist Strategies: An Analysis of Yellow Earth and Black Cannon Incident," 81-115 (course packet).

03/03: Critical analysis and discussion.

Questions for discussion: What can we learn about the CCP and the PLA? What can we learn about the life in the countryside? Analyze the cinematic technique of this movie.

Readings: Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on literature and art (*Zai Yan'an Wenyi Zuotanhuishangde jianghua*)", 1942 (on blackboard). Presentation and contextualization of the document. Analysis of the text. The influence of Mao's Talk on the CCP's policy towards the intellectuals after 1949; Zhao Shuli, *Hsiao erh-hei's marriage*, 1943 ([handout](#))

Week 8

03/8: **TO LIVE** (*Huozhe*; 1994), Zhang Yimou, in Chinese with English subtitles, 132 min.

"This movie is about the life of a married couple: their fortunes, rise and fall. The film has powerful symbolic and metaphoric connotations. In a smoky gambling den in 1940s China, a drunken young man runs through his family's fortune, losing their ancestral home and all their possessions. This staggering loss proves to be their salvation...and the first step in a thrilling odyssey of survival that will take them through war and revolution, love and loss, tragedy...and triumph. Through the terrors of China's civil war, the passions of the communist takeover, the betrayals of Chairman Mao's Great Leap Forward, and the tragic mistakes of the Cultural Revolution, their lives unfold across four decades of momentous change...bound by love, driven by strength of the human spirit, and touched more than once by the hand of fate. "

03/10: Critical analysis.

Questions for discussion: To Live juxtaposes macrohistory (civil war, the Cultural revolution, etc.) with microhistory (marriage, school, job, family life, etc.). Which do you think is more important in the film? What does this juxtaposition demonstrate about history, master narratives, fiction, and non-fiction?

Week 9

03/15: **THE BLUE KITE** (*Lan fengzheng*; 1993), Tian Zhuangzhuang, in Chinese with subtitles. 138 min.

"Banned in China, where the director was under close government scrutiny for making the film "without permission," this film is the most acclaimed and controversial of all of the films to come out of the new Chinese cinema. Told from the perspective of a young boy, Tietou, it traces the fate of a Beijing family and their neighbors as they experience the political and social upheavals in 1950s and 1960s China. Tietou's parents, a librarian and school teacher, both loyal communist party members, soon learn that even the most innocent criticisms can be interpreted by the Party as imperialist propaganda. Over the next 15 years, Tietou observes the adverse effects of party policy on various members of his family. The only image of hope and freedom offered in the film is a blue kite given to Tietou by his father which he later passes on to the next generation."

Topic: Verbal and Visual Rhetoric of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1969)

Readings: Stephanie Donald, "Childhood and Public Discourse" (excerpt in course packet); Material for Week 9 (interview with Tian Zhuangzhuang in course packet).

03/17: Critical analysis. Question for discussion: The Blue Kite shows the social and political upheavals during the Cultural Revolution seen through the life of the main character (Tietou), his family and his friends. Do you agree with this statement?

******March 21-28: Spring Break******

Week 11

03/29: **FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE** (*Bawang bieji*: 1993), Chen Kaige. In Chinese with subtitles. 157 min. "Critically acclaimed as one of the best films of the year, this seductive, award-winning triumph captivated moviegoers the world over. It is the compelling tale of two lifelong friends unexpectedly caught in

a passionate love triangle with the woman who comes between them! Nominated in 1993 for Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award, this film earned the Golden Globe as best foreign film in addition to claiming Best Picture honors at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. Packed with vivid, provocative imagery throughout, this sensual story of love and betrayal is the must-see movie of the year.”

Readings: Gamer 2003: Chapter 13 (377-413).

Jerome Silbergeld, “Drowning on Dry Land: Yellow Earth and the Traditionalism of the ‘Avant-garde’”, from *China into Film: Frames of Reference in Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 96-131; E. Ann Kaplan, “Reading Formations and Chen Kaige’s *Farewell My Concubine*”, from Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997) 265-275; Wendy Larson, “The Concubine and the Figure of History Chen Kaige’s *Farewell My Concubine*”, from Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, 331-345 (course packet).

Supplementary Readings: Lilian Lee (Bihua Li), *Farewell my Concubine: A Novel* (HarperCollins, 1994)

Clips from **Fleeing by Night**, Xu Likong and Yin Chi, 2003

Set primarily in the 1930s, the film tells of the unrequited passion of a theatre owner’s daughter and the cellist who would have been her fiancé for a mesmerizing Chinese opera star who is kept by a wealthy, controlling, yet oddly sympathetic lover.

Clips from **East Palace, West Palace**, Zhang Yuan, 1999

Set in a park of the Forbidden City in Beijing the film deals directly with gay themes using a sort of Foucaudian perspective, and emphasizing the shifting power between the victim and the victimizer as a metaphor for the dynamics of an authoritarian regime. This movie was adapted to the stage in the year 2000.

03/31: Critical analysis.

Questions for discussion: Can “Farewell my Concubine” be considered as an historical epic of China in the XX century? Why this interest in Beijing Opera? What can we learn about education in China? Gender and power: homosexuality in “traditional” vs. “modern” China.

Week 12

04/05: **THE STORY OF QIU JU** (*Qiu Ju da guansi*; 1993), Zhang Yimou, in Chinese with English subtitles, 100 min. “Chinese star Gong Li gives a luminous performance as Qiu Ju, a stoic peasant woman who demands an apology when her husband is kicked in the groin by the village chief. But the chief is a proud man who refuses to apologize, sending Qiu Ju on a futile trek through the complicated Chinese court system. From her small village to a nearby city and finally to the large and impersonal district court, hers is a universal battle against bureaucracy and indifference. Winner of Best Picture and Best Actress at the Venice Film Festival.”

Readings: Gamer 2003: Chapter 5 (111-154) and 8 (227-254).

Questions for discussion: What are the differences between “Rule by man”, “Rule by law” or “Rule by virtue”? What can we learn about the life in the Chinese countryside in the Eighties? Discuss the gender issues.

04/07: Clips from **NOT ONE LESS**, Zhang Yimou, 1999 (106 min.)

Historical setting: 1990s. Topics for discussion: Chinese education in the countryside. Propaganda

Critical analysis.

Reading: Chris Betty, “If China Can say No, can China Make Movies? Or, Do Movies Make China? Rethinking National Cinema and National Agency” (course packet)

Week 13

04/12: The “Sixth Generation:” Social themes and Chinese avant-garde.

Clips from the following two movies:

SO CLOSE TO PARADISE, Wang Xiaoshuai, 1998 (90 min.)

FROZEN, Wu Ming, 1996 (95’)

04/14: Critical Analysis and discussion.

Week 14

04/19: Taiwan and Hong Kong cinema.

Taiwanese Cultural and social themes through the eyes of two very different film-makers

Clips from **THE PUPPETMASTER**, Hou hsiaohsien, 1993 (142 min.)

FLOWERS OF SHANGHAI, Hou hsiaohsien, 1998 (113 min.)

WHAT TIME IS IT THERE? Tsai Mingliang, 2001 (116 min.)

Clips from **IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE**, Wong Kar-Wai, 2000 (98 min.)

Readings: Gamer 2003: Chapter 6 (155-194); Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng, "Chinese Cinema (1896-1996) and Transnational Film Studies," Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng, ed., *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, 1-30 (course packet)

04/21: Critical analysis and discussion.

Week 15

04/26: **THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE**, Carma Hinton, 1995 (188 min.).

Readings: Gamer 2003: Chapter 7 (195-226), and 14 (415-424).

04/28: Critical analysis and discussion.

Week 16

05/3: **SHOOT FOR THE CONTENTS**, Trinh Min ha, 1991 (101 min.)

Readings: Handouts/blackboard

05/05: Critical analysis and review. *** **Final Paper is Due!*****

*****May 11, 8:30-10:30 A.M.: Final exam*****

**SUNY COLLEGE AT FREDONIA
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

CHINESE CULTURE THROUGH FILMS

Supplementary Bibliography

- Berry, Chris, ed. *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. London: British Film Institute, 1991.
- Browne, Nick, et al., eds. *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge U. P., 1994.
- Chen, Kaige, Wan Zhi, and Tony Rayns. *King of the Children and The New Chinese Cinema: An Introduction*. London: Faber & Faber, 1989.
- Chen, Xiao-mei, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China*, Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2000.
- Clark, Paul, *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge U. P., 1987
- Chow, Rey, *Primitive Passions*. New York: Columbia University, 1995.
- Cornelius, Sheila, *New Chinese Cinema : Challenging Representations*. London: Wallflower Press, 2002.
- Dissanayake, Wimal, *Colonialism Nationalism in Asian Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1994.
- Ehrlich, Linda C., Desser, David, *Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan*. Austin: Texas U. P., 1994.
- Giannetti, Louis, *Understanding Movies*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*. Cambridge MA: Harvard U. P., 1999.
- Leyda, Jay, *Dianying: An Account of films and the Film Audience in China*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972.
- Li, Pihua, Lee Lilian, *Farewell My Concubine : A Novel*. HarperCollins, 1994.
- Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng, ed. *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. Honolulu: Hawaii U. P., 1997.
- Marion, Donald J., *The Chinese Filmography : The 2444 Feature Films Produced by Studios in the People's Republic of China from 1949 through 1995*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., c1997.
- McDougall, Bonnie and Louie, Kam, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Columbia U.P. 1998.
- Semsel, George Stephen, ed. *Chinese Film: The State of the Art in the People's Republic*. New York: Praeger, 1987.
- , Xia Hong, and Hou Jianping, eds. *Chinese Film Theory: A Guide to the New Era*. New York: Praeger, 1990.
- Shen, Congwen and Kinkley, Jeffrey, eds. *Imperfect Paradise : Stories by Shen Congwen*. Hawaii U.P., 1995.
- Silbergeld, Jerome, *China into Film: Frames of Reference in Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. Reaktion Books, 2000.
- Su Tong, Duke, Michael S. (Translator), *Raise the Red Lantern : Three Novellas*. Penguin USA, 1996.
- Tam, Kwok-Kan, Dissanayake, Wimal, *New Chinese Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1998.
- Widmer, Ellen and Wang, David Der-wei, eds. *From May Fourth to June Fourth: Fiction and Film in Twentieth-Century China*. Cambridge MA: Harvard U. P., 1993.
- Zhang, Xudong, *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms: Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema*. Durham, NC: Duke U. P., 1997.
- Zhang, Yingjin, Xiao Zhiwei, eds. *Encyclopedia of Chinese Film*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Journals

East West Film Journal
Film Quarterly
Modern Chinese Literature
Screen
Sight and Sound
Wide Angle

Filmography

Yellow Earth, Chen Kaige (1984)
Red Sorghum, Zhang Yimou (1987)
Woman, Demon, Human (1987)
King of Children (1987)
A Girl from Hunan, (1986) Xie Fei/U Lan
A Mongolian Tale, Xie Fei-
Blush (1996), Li Shaohong
Farewell my Concubine (1993), Chen Kaige
In the mood for love, Wong Kar-Wai, 2000
Happy Together, Wong Kar-Wai,
Ju-Dou (1991), Zhang Yimou
Not one less (1999), Zhang Yimou
Raise the Red Lantern (1992), Zhang Yimou
Red Sorghum (1989), Zhang Yimou
The Blue Kite (1994), Tian Zhuangzhuang
The Last Emperor, Bernardo Bertolucci
The Story of Qiu Ju (1993), Zhang Yimou
The True Story of AH Q, Lu Xun
To Live (1994), Zhang Yimou
Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl (1999), Joan Chen

Online Resources

The following is a selective list of scholarly online resources related to the study of modern Chinese film and culture.

[Chinese Cinema](#) (University of Southern California) contains "history, news, and visual materials about Chinese cinema, as well as a bibliography of selected publications in English on Chinese cinema (mainland China and Hong Kong only)."

[Asian Film Connections](#) (Asia Pacific Media Center, USC) seeks to promote contemporary, culturally significant feature films from China, India, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan through on-line video clips, press kits, filmographies, and critical analyses contributed by film scholars and critics from Asia as well as internationally. **Key features of the Website** include: A list of all films made in China, India, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan from 1998 on, including basic information such as synopses, filmmakers, cast, length, format, and availability of prints; eight to fifteen highlighted films and directors from each country, with detailed information and video clips; a list of all internationally awarded films of each country from 1988 on; reviews, essays, interviews and filmographies, plus reprints from Asia's leading film journals, such as Cinemaya and Movie/TV Marketing; press kits and contact information; links to other relevant websites.

[MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE AND CULTURE](#) (Ohio State University) "Modern Chinese Literature and Culture (MCLC), formerly Modern Chinese Literature (1984-1998), is a scholarly journal devoted to the literature and culture of twentieth century China, with China understood not in the narrow, political sense. The journal publishes on literature of all genres, film and television, popular culture, performance and visual art, print and material culture, etc. The [Resource Center](#) contains, among other things, bibliographies of mostly English-language materials on modern Chinese literature, [film](#), art, and culture, . . ."

[AsiaSource](#) AsiaSource is an online resource developed by the Asia Society to meet the need for timely, reliable, unbiased information and assistance regarding the cultural, economic, social, historical, and political dimensions of Asia. The site contains scores of links to [bibliographies](#) on Asian arts and culture.

[Bibliography of Asian Studies](#) This on-line version of the Bibliography of Asian Studies (BAS) contains more than 410,000 records on all subjects (especially humanities and social sciences) pertaining to East, Southeast, and South Asia published worldwide from 1971 to the present. **Please note:** Accessible to U of T community only.

[Chinese Cinema Page](#) contains reviews from 1995-present organized by place (People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong).

[Hong Kong Film Critics Society](#) contains reviews and short essays from 1995-present.

[Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema](#) - an essay by Evans Chan in [Postmodern Culture](#)

[Farewell My Concubine](#) - a bibliography of film reviews (UC Berkeley)

[City of Sadness](#) by Abe Mark Nornes and Yeh Yueh-yuA (UC-Berkeley) is a multi-media (incl. video & audio clips) close analysis of Hou Hsiao-Hsien's 1989 film. Incl. bibliography.

[The Internet Movie Database](#) - credits, synopses, biographical details, filmographies.

[Chinese Movie Database](#)

[Reviews of recent Chinese films](#)

IMPORTANT WEB RESOURCES (GENERAL BACKGROUND ON CHINA)

OFFICIAL SITES (government, economic, politics, environment, human rights)

[Chinese Embassy](#)

[US Embassy in China](#)

[Chinese Constitution](#)

[White Papers](#)
(Official Documents PRC)

[Chinese Law Network](#)

[Asian Economic Crisis](#)

[Law Society of Hong Kong](#)

[Environment in China](#)

[Shanghai Environment](#)

[Human Rights in China](#)

[Falun gong](#)

CULTURE SITES
(history, art, literature, cinema, popular culture, education)

[Library of Congress, PRC](#)

[China Resource, U. Michigan](#)

[Chinese Academic Journals](#)

[Chinese Art](#)

[Picturing Power, Visual Art](#)

[China Traveling Exhibit](#)

[Transnational China](#)

[Historical Society 20th Cent. China](#)

[Education in China, H.K. Univ.](#)

* [History of China](#)

[Chinoiserie](#)
(Shanghai Tang)

MEDIA SITES
(media online from PRC, Taiwan, HK; China in non-Chinese media)

[China media online:](#)
[People's Daily](#)

[China media online:](#)
[China Daily \(PRC\)](#)

[China media online:](#)
[SCMP \(Hong Kong\)](#)

[China Internet Information Center \(PRC\)](#)

[China News Digest](#)

[China media online:](#)
[Xinhua News Agency](#)

[sina \(PRC\)](#)

[Taiwan Media:](#)
[Official Site](#)

[Time Online:](#)
[Asia 50 Year Special Edition](#)

[Time Online:](#)
[Hong Kong Countdown](#)

[Legacy of Asians](#)
[in America \(PBS\)](#)

Glossary of Film Terms

http://allmovie.com/avg_glossary.html