HUMA 1210: Chinese Women on Screen

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Time & Classroom:
Time: 9am-11:50am, Monday, Fall 2020
Room: Zoom

Required Readings:
• All available online at “Modules,” Canvas

Course Description:
This course examines Chinese women as both historical and fictional figures to unravel the convoluted relationship between history and visual representations. It follows a chronological order, beginning with women in Republican China and ending with contemporary female immigrants in the age of globalization. The changing images of women on screen go hand in hand with major cinematic movements in history, including the leftist turn in the 1930s, the rise of “Solitary Island” cinema in wartime Shanghai, socialist realism during the Seventeen Years (1949-1966), model opera film during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), post-1989 underground/independent filmmaking, and the globalization of cinema in contemporary China. Approaches of film analyses and gender/sexuality theories will be introduced throughout the course. All reading materials, lectures, classroom discussions, and exams are in English.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this semester students should be able to:
• track the changing images of women in history
• track the changing images of women on screen
• summarize major cinematic movements in film history
• explore the nuanced relationship between women on and off screen (women as representations on film and women as real people in socio-historical context)
• sharpen critical thinking and use gender/sexuality theories to analyze women on screen
• analyze films with a professional film vocabulary
Assignments:
- Watch all required films every week
- Read all required articles and/or book chapters every week
- Quiz about required films every week
- Mid-term and final papers

Grading Criteria:
- Attendance: 10% or F
- Participation: 5%
- Weekly quiz: 5%
- Mid-term paper (1000 words): 25%
- A film analysis (500 words): 5%
- Final paper (2000 words): 50%

Requirements for Papers:
- Word file
- Use your name for the file name, capitalize your family name (MUI Ka Yee)
- Double spaced
- Chicago Citation Style (with footnotes and a bibliography)

Sample Papers:
- Look for various sample film analyses in Film Art: An Introduction, edited by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, available at HKUST library
- “Frustrated Communication in Ex Machina’s Opening Sequence,” with comments, Purdue Online Writing Lab, link
- “The Killer Bean,” link
- “From Local to Translocal: Story of McDull Series,” available at Modules, Canvas

Technical Issues:
- Reading Materials: All available online at “Modules,” Canvas.
- Audiovisual Materials: Films for this course are available at the Library Circulation Counter on G/F. You can also find some films online through youtube and youku.
- Discussions Forum: Students can post questions and comments about the contents of this course for open discussion at “Discussions,” Canvas. The instructor will check the forum on a regular basis to address your postings. Your postings will be counted as classroom participation.
- E-mail: E-mail will be used frequently in this course. The instructor will use it to make announcements relevant to the course. You can also use it to ask questions or express your concerns to the instructor. The instructor will reply your emails within 48 hours. Please check your campus email account on a daily basis.
- Contact:
Classroom Etiquette

- **Attendance** is mandatory. It is your responsibility to sign up and track your attendance. If you forget to sign up an attendance, your TA will not make up for it. If you have to miss a class for a legitimate reason, please inform your TA at least three days in advance and present relevant documents to your TA within one week after the absence. Being 5 minutes late for class three times will be counted as one unexcused absence. Four or more unexcused absences will automatically lower your final grade to F.
- **No Make-up Papers** are allowed. The instructor will grant a make-up paper only for absolute necessities (e.g., medical reason, family crisis) and not because you have too much work and have run out of time. Please inform the instructor in advance if you believe you have a legitimate reason for a make-up paper. You are expected to present convincing documents to the instructor. The make-up paper will be graded more strictly than the regular ones.
- **No Late Submission** will be accepted. Please be on time.
- **Preparation:** You are expected to be well prepared before each class begins. Please read related course materials and watch the required films of the week before you come to class. In this way, you can better make the most of classroom discussions.
- **Electronic Devices:** Please turn off your cell phones in class. Laptops, iPad, and other electronic devices are allowed only for taking notes in class. Please do not use them to check emails and browse irrelevant websites. If a student is found violating the rules, it means 5 points off his/her final score.
- **Notification in Advance:** Always inform the instructor at least three days in advance for absence and other issues that need special attention and accommodation.
- **Religious Holiday Accommodation:** If you wish to claim accommodation for a religious holiday, you should talk to your instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. You need to provide supporting documents.
- **Learning Disability Accommodation:** If you wish to claim accommodation for any kind of learning disability, you should talk to your instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. Please provide supporting documents.
- **Academic Integrity:** Any academic dishonesty of any kind will be officially processed in accordance with the policies of the university.
Week 1 (Sept 7): Introduction: Chinese Women on and off Screen

Film Screening:
- *Chinese Women: The Great Step Forward—From Confucius to Mao* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2001) (54 minutes)

Readings:

References:
- David Bordwell, “Glossary,” *Film Art: An Introduction*

Week 2 (Sept 14): Prostitutes and the Nation in Republican China

Film Screening:
- *The Goddess* (Wu Yonggang, 1934) Shanghai: Lianhua, 74 minutes

Readings:

Week 3 (Sept 21): New Women in Republican China

Film Screening:
- *New Women* (Cai Chusheng, 1934) Shanghai: Lianhua, 114 minutes
- *Center Stage* (Stanley Kwan, 1992). Recommended.

Readings:
• Film Synopsis of New Women: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Women
• Nora in A Doll’s House (Ibsen): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Doll%27s_House

Week 4 (Sept 28): Women, Wartime Nationalism, and Animation

Film Screening:
• Princess Iron Fan (Wan Brothers, 1941) Shanghai: Xinhua/Lianhe Studio, 73 minutes
• Mulan (Disney, 1998). Recommended.

Readings:

References:
• Journey to the West: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journey_to_the_West
• Film Synopsis of Princess Iron Fan: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Iron_Fan_%281941_film%29
• Hua Mulan: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hua_Mulan

Week 5 (Oct 5): Female Voices from the Ruins of War

Film Screening:
• Spring in a Small Town (Fei Mu, 1948) Xi’an: Xi’an Studio, 91 minutes
• Spring Cannot Be Locked (Wang Weiyi, 1948). Recommended.
• Dreaming to be Emperor (puppet, Chen Bo’er, 1947). Recommended.

Readings:
• Jie Li, “Home and Nation Amid the Rubble: Fei Mu’s Spring in a Small Town and Jia Zhangke’s Still Life,” Modern Chinese Literature and Culture 21 no. 2 (Fall 2009): 86-125.
Week 6 (Oct 12): Ethnic Girls and Socialist Comedy

Film Screening:
- *Five Golden Flowers* (Wang Jiayi, 1959) Changchun: Changchun Film Studio, 90 minutes
- *From Mao Towards Full Equality* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2001) (55 minutes)

Readings:

Week 7 (Oct 19): Women and Machines: Tractor Girls and Socialist Modernity

Film Screening:
- *Spark of Life* (Dong Fang, 1962) Xi’an: Xi’an Studio, 91 minutes

Readings:
- Film Synopsis of *Spark of Life* in PDF format

Week 8 (Oct 26): Midterm Paper (due in class on Nov 2)

Week 9 (Nov 2): Masculinization of Women during the Cultural Revolution

Film Screening:
- *Red Detachment of Women* (Fu Jie and Pan Wenzhan, 1971) Beijing: Beijing Studio, 100 minutes

Readings:

**Week 10 (Nov 9): Women Directors**

Film Screening:
- *Woman, Demon, Human* (Huang Shuqin, 1987) Shanghai: Shanghai Studio, 102 minutes

Readings:
- Film Synopsis of *Woman, Demon, Human* in PDF format

**Week 11 (Nov 16): Gender, Forced Migration, and Independent Filmmaking**

Film Screening:
- *Bingai* (Feng Yan, 2007) 117 minutes

Readings:
- Daisy Yan Du, “*Documenting Three Gorges Migrants: Gendered Voices of Dis/placement and Citizenship in Rediscovering the Yangtze River and Bingai,*” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 38.1&2 (Spring/Summer 2010): 27-47.

**Film Analysis: Queering Independent Cinema (due in class on Nov 23)**
- *Fish and Elephant* (Li Yu, 2001)
Week 12 (Nov 23): Female Migrant Workers

Film Screening:
- *Ermo* (Zhou Xiaowen, 1994) Shanghai: Shanghai Studio, 95 minutes

Readings:

Week 13 (Nov 30): Gender, Diaspora and Transnational Feminism

Film Screening:
- *Farewell China* (Clara Law, 1990) Hong Kong: Youhe Film, 111 minutes

Readings:

**Final Papers due between 9am and 11:50am on Dec 14**