

## Transnational East Asian Cinemas

Daisuke Miyao

Monday 2-3:50pm (Screening)

Monday 4-4:50pm (Lecture)

Tuesday 11-11:50am (Discussion)

### Course Description:

This course comparatively examines contemporary Asian cinemas from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, in the context of the immense political and cultural transformations in Asia from the late 1990s till now. The recent socio-political and economic transformation of these regions has enabled the circulation, mutual influence, appropriation, and translation of popular culture in the form of cinema, music, television, and the celebrity culture among them. The specificity of each cultural sphere is linked to global media culture, with which they form an increasingly cosmopolitan dialogue. Stylistically, many of the films made in Asia have drawn on the shared cosmopolitan consumer language of cinema (*global*). Despite these stylistic convergences, each regional cinema has often created or sustained local specificity of language and culture (*local*). As the assumption of national identity has been questioned, the viability of the concept of “national cinema,” which has framed work on films from various countries over decades, has come into question. The goal of this course is to examine shifting representations of nationalism and cultural identity in contemporary Asian cinemas in the context of globalization and transnationalism.

### Textbook:

All documented texts are available online or in the “Course Documents” section of Blackboard.

### Course Requirements:

1. Attendance & Participation (9 lectures, screenings, and discussions): 18 points.
2. 9 Weekly Journals (400-500 words): 18 points. Notes of your own thoughts on lectures, films (in-class screenings and assigned viewings), and assigned readings. Prepare 2 or 3 questions that you want to discuss in Discussion Sections. Briefly articulate your ideas/answers to those questions in words readable to other people. Need to bring a printed out hard copy to Discussion section each week. You can use your notes as the bases for your final essay.
3. One Discussion Leading: 20 points. Each student will also be expected to help lead one class discussion. Each discussion leader is expected to prepare 2-3 discussion questions by the day s/he is to lead discussion. Discussion questions should be on assigned reading, film, and/or clips of the week. During the first week of classes, discussion section will meet to go over discussion section policies and to sign up discussion leaders.
4. Attending one “Film on Film: Border-Crossings” screening: 4 points. (If you go twice, one will be counted as extra). If you go to Prof. Dudley Andrew’s lecture, which is related to the “Film on Film” screenings, you will earn another extra credits. If you cannot make any of them because of your schedule, please let me know.
5. Final Essay (1,800-2,000 words): 40 points. Due on **Tuesday, June 5 (Discussion Section of Week 10)**. Please submit a hard copy.

Students will be expected to attend all lectures and screenings and do the reading assignments on time. Students are also expected to attend the discussion section for which they are registered and be prepared to discuss the readings and films. Active participation on the part of every student is expected during discussion sections. Excessive unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's grade and may result in FAILURE of the course. Please be punctual, as lateness to class will be penalized. In the case of illness or emergencies, you must provide appropriate documentation and notify the professor in advance.

Final Essay: Pick one film made in East Asia. You can choose a film that is not screened in class. Discuss any issue(s) on borders and border-crossings in the film, based on assigned readings, lectures, classroom discussions, and your own viewing of the film. For instance, think about the following questions:

- How are nation, race, gender, and/or class represented in the film that you choose and why?
- Does the film have any relationship with other contemporaneous, foreign, or past films, in terms of its motif, theme, aesthetic style, technique, etc? Are there any mutual influences (political, economic, technical, technological, or aesthetic) between them?
- Does the film that you are interested in have any relationship with other cultural forms, such as traditional art forms, novels, classical music, etc?

Late work will not be accepted and will negatively affect your final grade. Incompletes will be only considered in cases of sickness or other dire circumstances, for which you must provide documented evidence.

Plagiarism is a serious offence and can lead to an F for the course and further disciplinary action. Students should acknowledge all research and reading sources in their assignments (be they from books, magazines, journal articles, Internet sources, DVD commentaries, etc.) with proper footnote and bibliographic citations. Remember to keep a copy of submitted assignments until your final grade is posted.

### Schedule:

#### Week 1 (April 2&3): Introduction

Screening: *Go* (Yukisada Isao, Japan, 2001)

Readings (after the class):

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "The Difficulty of Being Radical: The Discipline of Film Studies and the Post Colonial World Order," *Japan in the World*, eds. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunin (Durham: Duke UP, 1993): 338-53.

#### Week 2 (April 9&10): National Border

Screening: *JSA* (Park Chan-wook, South Korea, 2000)

Viewing Assignment: *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945)

Reading Assignment: Lise Holdnes, "Does Film Noir Mirror the Culture of Contemporary America?" (1998) (<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/E/noir/noirxx.htm>)

#### Week 3 (April 16&17): Nation as Narration

Screening: *Hero* (Zhang Yimou, Hong Kong/China, 2002)

Viewing Assignment: *Rashomon* (Kurosawa Akira, Japan, 1950)  
Reading Assignment: Homi Bhabha, "Introduction" from Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990) (<http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bhabha/nation.html>)  
Optional Readings: Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, "Hero: China's Response to Hollywood Globalization" (<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/Lau-Hero/index.html>)  
Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, "Historical Introduction: Chinese Cinemas (1896-1996) and Transnational Film Studies," *Transnational Chinese Cinemas*: 1-31.

#### Week 4 (April 23&24): Colonialism

Screening: *Flowers of Shanghai* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, Taiwan, 1998)  
Viewing Assignment: *Shanghai Gesture* (Josef von Sternberg, USA, 1941)  
Reading Assignment: Dai Jinhua, "Hou Hsiao-Hsien's Films: Pursuing and Escaping History," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 9.2 (2003): 239-250.  
([www.forumdesalternatives.org/docs/bruselas/Dai\\_Hou\\_Hsiao-Hsien.pdf](http://www.forumdesalternatives.org/docs/bruselas/Dai_Hou_Hsiao-Hsien.pdf))  
June Yip, "Constructing a Nation: Taiwanese History and the Films of Hou Hsiao-hsien," in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, ed. Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1997), 139-68.  
Optional Reading: Leo Ou-fan Lee, "The Urban Milieu of Shanghai Cinema, 1930-40: Some Explorations of Film Audience, Film Culture, and Narrative Conventions," *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*, ed. Yingjin Zhang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999): 74-96.

#### Week 5 (April 30 & May 1): Postcolonialism

Screening: *Chungking Express* (Wong Kar-wai, Hong Kong, 1995)  
Viewing Assignment: *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* (Peter Chang, Hong Kong, 1996)  
Reading Assignment: Masao Miyoshi, "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State," *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds., Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 78-106.  
Optional Reading: Marc Siegel, "The Intimate Spaces of Wong Karwai," in *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*, ed. Esther Yau (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001): 277-94.

#### **Thursday, May 3, 6pm: Film on Film I**

***City of Sadness* (Hou Hsiao-hsein, Taiwan, 1989) New 35mm Print @ Bijou Art Cinema Free Screening!**

#### **Friday, May 4, 2pm: Special Lecture by Prof. Dudley Andrew @ 115 Lawrence**

#### Week 6 (May 7&8): Realism

Screening: *Take Care of My Cat* (Jae-eun Jeong, South Korea, 2001)  
Reading Assignment: Chi-Yun Shin, "Two of a Kind: Gender and Friendship in *Friend and Take Care of My Cat*," *New Korean Cinema*, ed. Chi-Yun Shin and Julian Stringer (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 117-31.  
Optional Reading: Doobo Shim, "Hybridity and the Rise of Korean Popular Culture in Asia," *Media, Culture & Society* 28.1 (2006): 25-44.

**Friday, May 18, 7pm: Film on Film II**

***Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, USA, 1958) 16mm Print @ 180 PLC**

**Free Screening!**

Week 7 (May 14&15): Nation and Gender

Screening: *Kamome Diner* (Ogigami Naoko, Japan, 2006)

Reading Assignment: Mikako Iwatake, "Cultural Translation and the Dialectics of Otherness" ([http://www.helsinki.fi/genderstudies/3rdchristinaconference/pdf/Iwatake\\_doc.pdf](http://www.helsinki.fi/genderstudies/3rdchristinaconference/pdf/Iwatake_doc.pdf))

Optional reading: Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "National/International/Transnational: The Concept of Trans-Asian Cinema and the Cultural Politics of Film Criticism," in *Theorising National Cinema*, ed. Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (London: BFI, 2006), 254-261.

Week 8 (May 21&22): Global Hollywood

Screening: *Infernal Affairs* (Wai-keung Lau and Siu Fai Mak, Hong Kong, 2002)

Viewing Assignment: *The Departed* (Martin Scorsese, USA, 2006)

Reading Assignment: Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "National/International/Transnational: The Concept of Trans-Asian Cinema and the Cultural Politics of Film Criticism," in *Theorising National Cinema*, ed. Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (London: BFI, 2006), 254-261.

Week 9 (Memorial Day, **No Class, No Discussion Section**)

Week 10 (June 4&5): Filmed in East Asia

**!!!Final Essay Due on June 5!!!**

Screening: *Lost in Translation* (Sophia Coppola, 2003)

Reading Assignment: Douglas McGray, "Japan's Gross National Cool," *Foreign Policy* 130 (May-June 2002): 44-54.

Stephen Crofts, "Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s," in *Film and Nationalism*, ed. Alan Williams (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press), 25-51.