

CLIT 2084 “New” Cinemas across National Boundaries: Beyond the New Waves

Comparative Literature
University of Hong Kong

Instructor: Dr. YAU Ching

Semester: Spring 2016

Class meeting times/location: Mondays, 12:30-2:20

Tutor: LIZADA, Miguel Antonio Nograles

E-mail: mlizada@connect.hku.hk

Course Description

Cinema has concerned itself with modernity—notions of the “new”—since its birth but the increasing dominance of technological reproducibility has called into question what can be claimed as “new” in global film culture. The end of World War II brought about a world of ruins, ideological oppositions, reconstituted gender roles and new nations. While Italian Neorealism influenced post-war Hollywood and the French Nouvelle Vague, both the French and German new waves were fueled by the German émigré Douglas Sirk’s auteuristic achievements in post-war Hollywood. Since then, “new” cinemas have appeared in places as diverse as Japan, Poland, Senegal, Brazil, Iran and China. Interventions coming from post-classical Hollywood, postcolonial cinemas, diasporic and transnational film cultures, feminist and queer considerations, neoliberalized economies and ever-changing technological innovations, have further complicated the notion of the “new” in world cinema. This course examines diverse notions of the “new” through different socio-cultural-historical contexts, genres, film movements, formal and ideological debates in regional and global cinema in recent decades. In the last few weeks we aim to use Hong Kong cinema as a case in point to understand how one of the earlier Asian new waves—under the influence of the European new waves—has responded to local socio-political demands, continues to produce inter-local consumption while seeking transnational/translocal co-production possibilities.

Course Objectives

- To develop a familiarity with current trends in world cinema—from changing modes of film production to new developments in film theory
- To examine how key ways of understanding film culture (e.g., aesthetics, authorship, genre, film movements, national cinema) have been reexamined in light of current changes in world cinema
- To explore the various ways in which films can be considered “new” against the backdrop of global film history
- To appreciate the ways in which films cross various “borders”—including ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural, as well as national borders
- To become acquainted with new terms that have influenced the ways in which scholars understand contemporary films (e.g., “postmodern,” “post-colonial,” “queer,” “diasporic”)
- To understand why many of the most influential critical theorists of our era have turned to the film medium as a way of exploring broader philosophical, social, or cultural issues

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of key developments in contemporary film culture from the mid-1980s to the present
- Show an appreciation of ethnic, racial, national, gender, and other differences that shape contemporary film culture
- Understand film aesthetics against the backdrop of film as industry and ideology
- Acquire the critical tools needed to analyze current films against the backdrop of film's long history
- Draw on a range of theoretical perspectives in order to determine an approach to unfamiliar films
- Be able to define a research topic, develop an argument, support findings with evidence, evaluate primary and secondary sources, and articulate findings
- Communicate effectively about contemporary film culture in oral and written forms

Course Schedule

Week 1 Jan. 16 What's "new" about cinema

Screening: *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936)

Excerpts from early Lumière films (Lumière Brothers, 1895)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nj0vEO4Q6s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH5NZo8Mm0M>

Un Chien Andalou (An Andalusian Dog) (Luis Buñuel, 1928)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=054OIVlmjUM>

Tutorial 1—Explanation of tutorial requirements and assignment of discussion topics.

Week 2 Jan. 23 What's "new" about realisms

Screening: *I Was Born, But...* (生れてはみたけれど) (Yasujiro Ozu, 1932)

Readings:

Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn, "Memory and History: Early Film, Colonialism and the French Civilising Mission in Indochina," *French History and Civilization* 4 (2011), pp. 223-236.

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (Third Version), in *Selected Writings: 1938-1940*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, (1939) 2003, pp. 251-283.

David Bordwell, "Chapter 5: Towards Intrinsic Norms," in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 73-98.

Tutorial 2—What's "new" about cinema and realisms?

Week 3 Jan. 30 LUNAR NEW YEAR

Time to catch up on all screenings and readings!

Week 4 Feb. 6 Classical Hollywood and its Discontent

Screening: *All That Heaven Allows* (Douglas Sirk, 1955)

Excerpt from *Imitation of Life* (Douglas Sirk, 1959)

Readings:

Laura Mulvey, "All That Heaven Allows: An Articulate Screen."

<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/96-all-that-heaven-allows-an-articulate-screen>

Laura Mulvey, "Douglas Sirk and Melodrama." *Australian Journal of Screen Theory* 3 (1977): 26-30.

Recommended reading:

Barbara Klinger, "Chapter 5: Mass Camp and the Old Hollywood Melodrama Today," *Melodrama and Meaning: History, Culture, and the Films of Douglas Sirk*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994, pp. 132-156.

Tutorial 3—Post-war Hollywood melodrama

Week 5 Feb. 13 New German Cinema

Screening: *Ali: Fear Eats The Soul* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1974)

Excerpt from *I don't Just Want You to Love Me* (Hans Günther Pflaum, 1993)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBlm8ys1Pj4&t=2742s>

Readings:

Thomas Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996, pp. 7-18.

Laura Cottingham, "Fear Eats the Soul," in *Fear Eats the Soul (Angst Essen Seele Auf)*. London: BFI, 2005, pp. 45-84.

Week 6 Feb. 20 Post-Classical Hollywood and New Queer Cinema

Screening: *Far From Heaven* (Todd Haynes, 2002)

Excerpts from *Superstar: Karen Carpenter Story* (Todd Haynes, 1987)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdcN-1M1fSs>

The Barbie Liberation Organization (@TMark/The Yes Men, 1993)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzTWF1jVwH4>

Readings:

Anneke Smelik, "Gay and Lesbian Criticism," and Alexander Doty, "Queer Theory," in John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson eds., *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 96-105, 135-52.

Dana Luciano, "Coming Around Again: The Queer Momentum of *Far From Heaven*," *GLQ* 13:2-3, pp. 249-272.

Recommended reading:

B. Ruby Rich, "Chapter 1," in *New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013, pp. 3-15.

<http://www.indiewire.com/2013/06/read-the-first-chapter-of-b-ruby-richs-new-queer-cinema-the-directors-cut-a-must-read-for-anyone-even-remotely-interested-in-lgbt-cinema-37457/>

Tutorial 4— What's "new" about queer and what's queer about "New Queer cinema"?

Week 7 Feb. 27 (Queer) Looks and Spectatorship

Screening: *She Must Be Seeing Things* (Sheila McLaughlin, 1987) (AVC 791.43 S539)

Excerpts from *Go Fish* (Rose Troche, 1994)

Foundational Moments of New Queer Cinema with B. Ruby Rich (Columbia University, 2013)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff7wLKKpIkE>

Readings:

Teresa de Lauretis, "Film and the Visible," in Bad Object-Choices ed., *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*. Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 223-263.

Alison Butler, "She Must Be Seeing Things: An Interview with Sheila McLaughlin," in Martha Gever, John Greyson and Pratibha Parmar eds, *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*. Toronto: Between the Lines, pp. 368-376.

Week 8 March 6 Reading Week

It's time to do second-time viewings and re-readings!

Week 9 March 13 New (Forms of) Histories

Screenings: *Sans Soleil* (Chris Marker, 1983) and *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (Rea Tajiri, 1991)

Excerpts from *La Jetee* (Chris Marker, 1962)

Films of William Kentridge (1990s-2010)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaTnchoukdY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1oK5LMJ3zY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpamsEdCbX8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxGrazdl9WY>

Readings:

Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006, pp. 16-20, 103-110.

David Montero, "Film Also Ages: Time and Images in Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*," *Studies in French Cinema* 6:2 (2006), pp. 107-115.

Deirdre Boyle, "History and Memory: On Visual Media and the Collective Memory of the Japanese American Internment." Unpublished paper.

Recommended readings:

Holmes, B.C. "The Deleuzian Memory of *Sans Soleil*."

<http://www.bcholmes.org/film/sansoleil.html>

Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, "Film Theory and Spectatorship in the Age of the 'Posts'," in Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams eds., *Reinventing Film Studies*. London: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 8-17.

Tutorial 5—Post-colonialism and Diasporic Cinemas

Week 10 March 20 Identity Politics and its Limitations

Screening: *Septet* (Yasmin Ahmad, 2004)

Excerpts from Petronas ads (Yasmin Ahmad, 1998-2009) and *Mukhsin* (Yasmin Ahmad, 2006)

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMnt_dF1-s5VsRDFNKc0c6Ow1f3cW4uYe

http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzExMTU2MjUy.html

Readings:

Amir Muhammad, "Septet," in *Yasmin Ahmad's Films*, Petaling Java: Metahari Books, 2009, pp. 45-76.

Ari Larissa Heinrich, "Desire against the grain: transgender consciousness and Sinophonicity in the films of Yasmin Ahmad," in Howard Chiang and Ari Larissa Heinrich eds., *Queer Sinophone Cultures*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 179-200.

Week 11 March 27 Neoliberalism and East Asian Cinemas

Screening: *Ilo Ilo* (Anthony Chen, 2014)

Excerpts from *Money No Enough* (Jack Neo, 1998)

Singapore Gaga (Tan Pin Pin, 2006)

Capitalism: A Love Story (Michael Moore, 2009)

When Hainan Meets Teochow (Han Yew Kwang, 2010)

Readings:

Michelle H. S. Ho, "Desiring the Singapore story: affective attachments and national identities in Anthony Chen's *Ilo Ilo*," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 9.2 (2015), pp. 173-186.

Annalee Newitz, "Introduction: Capitalist Monsters," in *Pretend We're Dead: Capitalist Monsters in American Pop Culture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 1-12.

Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim, "Concepts of transnational cinema: towards a critical transnationalism in film studies," *Transnational Cinemas* 1:1 (2010), pp. 7-21.

Recommended reading:

Olivia Khoo, "Slang images: on the 'foreignness' of contemporary Singaporean films," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7.1 (2006), pp. 81-98.

Tutorial 6—New Asian Cinemas

Week 12 April 3 Hong Kong New Wave and its Aftermath

Screening: *Made in Hong Kong* (Fruit Chan, 1997)

Excerpts from *Father and Son* (Allen Fong, 1981)

Nomad (Patrick Tam, 1982)

Boat People (Ann Hui, 1982)

Love Unto Wastes (Stanley Kwan, 1986)

Readings:

Jenny Lau, "Besides Fists and Blood: Michael Hui and Cantonese Comedy," in Poshek Fu and David Desser eds., *The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 158-175.

Andrew Jackson, Vivian Lee and Dave White, "Introduction," in Andrew Jackson, Michael Gibb, and Dave White eds., *How East Asian Films Are Reshaping National Identities: Essays on the Cinemas of China, Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006, pp. v-xvi.

Recommended reading:

Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, "Towards a Third Cinema,"

<http://documentaryisneverneutral.com/words/camasgun.html>

Week 13 April 10 Inter-local Knowledges

Term paper proposals due. Proposal presentations and discussions.

Screening: *King of Comedy* (Stephen Chow and Lee Lik-chi, 1999)

Excerpts from *Kung Fu Hustle* (Stephen Chow, 2004)

Readings: S. V. Srinivas, "Kung Fu Hustle: a note on the local," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6.2 (2005), pp. 289-295.

Benjamin K. P. Leung, "Chapters 2 and 3," *Perspectives on Hong Kong Society*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 29-74.

Recommended reading:

Graeme Turner, "Film, culture and ideology," in *Film as social practice*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993 (2nd Edition), pp. 131-138.

Tutorial 7—Hong Kong Cinema and its Glocalization

Week 14 April 17 EASTER MONDAY

Week 15 April 24 The End of Cinema?

Readings: Valentina Vitali, "Why study cinema? Serial visions of the culture industry and the future of film studies," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6:2, 2005, pp. 282-288.

Susan Sontag, "The Decay of Cinema," *New York Times*, 25 February 1996,

<http://partners.nytimes.com/books/00/03/12/specials/sontag-cinema.html>

Thomas Elsaesser, "Cinephilia or the Uses of Enchantment," in Marijke De Valck and Malte Hagener eds., *Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005, pp. 27-43.

Tutorial 8—New Cinemas or The End of Cinema?

Term papers are due on Monday, April 24, 12:30pm in class. No extensions are allowed.

Course Requirements

Tutorial Attendance/Class Participation

Students are required to attend all class sessions and participate fully in class discussions. (If you miss a class due to illness or other emergency, please be certain to obtain notes from a fellow classmate and check in with the instructor with any questions you may have.) You must be prepared to discuss each reading assignment on the day indicated on the syllabus. All readings are available on moodle. Recommended readings are optional.

While students are encouraged to think and speak their minds freely and honestly, this does not include mindless and careless dismissal of reading and screening materials. Students are expected to constantly challenge their own preconceptions and/or biases and be ready to be challenged in order to learn.

Screening

You are required to see one film per lecture except for week 9, when one feature film and one short should be screened. You may screen these films on your own in the library or other venue. You are also encouraged to watch the excerpted films in their entirety outside class.

Questions for Tutorials and Discussion

Please come with a list of at least two questions (typed) for seven tutorial sessions (tutorials 2-8). Your questions may arise from the lectures/readings/screenings you have done for the week or other issues related to the course. Be prepared to draw on these questions during tutorial discussion. You are expected to participate actively in tutorial discussion.

Term Paper

Detailed requirements for the term paper will be handed out during lectures in March. One-page proposals for the term paper are due in the lecture of April 10. Your proposal should include the title of your paper, a brief description of your topic, issues/questions concerned and/or key arguments, and a bibliography of the sources you plan to consult.

You must provide references for quotations and/or citations you use in all your work. This applies to images, sound clips and video clips as well. Refer to the MLA guidelines in your course packet. In this university, plagiarism is a disciplinary offence. Any student who commits the offence is liable to disciplinary action. For more information on plagiarism, see David Gardner, "Plagiarism and How to Avoid It," <http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism/>

Grading

Tutorial attendance, written questions, and class participation—40%
Term paper proposal—15%
Term paper—45%

You cannot pass this course without doing ALL major assignments. Assessment for this class is 100% coursework. There is no final examination.

Please note: This syllabus is subject to change. Note any alterations immediately.