

## Huron Brief Course Outlines

Fall/Winter 2023-2024

**Course Title:** Chinese Film and Visual Culture

**Course Number and Section**

CHINESE

3658F - 550

**Instructor Name(s):** Sean Macdonald

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

### Course Description:

This course is an introduction to Chinese film and visual culture from the earliest days until the present. Chinese film and media studies are rich fields with links to literature, theater and opera, and visual art. This class invites students to watch, read, and discuss films from several periods and traditions, including auteur films (films by famous directors), genre films (for example, martial arts films), and animated films. This is a film and media studies course. Students will be graded on in-class participation in writing and oral presentations, a short response paper, and one final written essay.

### Learning Outcomes:

Communicate clearly and persuasively in written and spoken English

Read and analyze film, media and non-print sources carefully and critically

Use film, media, and primary and secondary sources to develop original arguments and analyses—including Chinese film sources.

Analyze how specific historical developments, cultural norms, socioeconomic and geographic contexts, etc. have shaped perceptions, practices of Sinophone film production, including amongst the Chinese diaspora in southeast Asia and the United States

Articulate connections and differences among the countries and peoples of Asia with a focus on China

Compare and contrast historical developments, philosophical traditions, cultural practices, and social and economic structures and norms of Sinophone film production.

Understand the terminology and methodologies of different disciplinary approaches to the study of Chinese film and visual culture.

Appreciate the value of greater cultural exposure to one's intellectual, professional, and personal development

### Textbooks and Course Materials:

Chronological Bibliography

Barthes, Roland 1986. "Diderot, Brecht, and Eisenstein," trans. Stephen Heath, in Philip Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: a Film Theory Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 172-178.

Burch, Noël 1986. "Primitivism and the Avant-Gardes: A Dialectical Approach" in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, pp. 483- 506.

Zhang Zhen 1999. "Teahouse, Shadowplay, Bricolage: Laborer's Love and the Question of Early Chinese Cinema," in *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922*: 27-50.

Hayward, Susan. *Cinema Studies the key concepts* (4th ed.). Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

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Dyer, Richard, & Paul McDonald. *Stars*. London: BFI Pub, 1998.

Hjort, Mette. "Ruan Lingyu: Reflections on an individual performance. in *Chinese Film Stars*. Eds. Mary Farquhar and Yingjin Zhang. Oxon: Routledge, 2010, 32-49.

Berry, Chris. "The Sublimative Text: Sex and Revolution in *Big Road* [The Highway]." *East-West Film Journal* 2, 2 (June 1988): 66-86.

Berry, Chris 1989. "Chinese Left Cinema in the 1930s: Poisonous Weeds or National Treasures." *Jump Cut*, no. 34, (March), pp. 87-94.

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC34folder/30sLeftChinaFilms.html>  
Macdonald, Sean. "Li Lili: Acting the Lively, Jianmei Type." in *Chinese Film Stars*. Eds. Mary Farquhar and Yingjin Zhang. Oxon: Routledge, 2010, 50-66.

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Pang, Laikwan 2002. *Building a New China in Cinema: The Chinese Left-Wing Cinema Movement, 1932-1937*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Beus, Yifen. "On Becoming Nora: Transforming the Voice and Place of the Singsong Girl Through Zhou Xuan," in *Vamping the Stage: Female Voices of Asian Modernity*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.

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Pang, Laikwan. *Walking into and out of the spectacle: China's earliest film scene* *Screen* 47:1 (Spring 2006): 66-80.

Macdonald, Sean. *Animation in China: history, aesthetics, media*, Abingdon, Oxon: 2016, 49-75.

[https://www.academia.edu/45234670/Macdonald\\_Animation\\_in\\_China\\_Chapter\\_2](https://www.academia.edu/45234670/Macdonald_Animation_in_China_Chapter_2)  
Bao, Weihong. "Baptism by Fire: Atmospheric War, Agitation, and a Tale of Three Cities." *Fiery Cinema: The Emergence of an Affective Medium in China, 1915–1945*, University of Minnesota Press, 2015: 317–374.

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(accessed Dec. 5, 2022).

Olga Bobrowska, "Maoist Remoulding of the Legend of Monkey King, or Analyzing Ideological Implications of Wan Laiming's *Havoc in Heaven*," in *Twisted Dreams of History. V4 Perspective on Propaganda, Ideology and Animation*, Kraków: Wydawnictwa AGH (AGH University of Science and Technology Press): 2019: 83-104.

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Teo, Stephen. *Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Wuxia Tradition*. NED - New edition, 2 ed., Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

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Vibeke Børdahl 2007. "The Man-Hunting Tiger: From 'Wu Song Fights the Tiger' in Chinese Traditions." Asian Folklore Studies, Vol. 66, No. 1/2, Narratives and Rituals in Asian Folk Religion and Culture (2007), pp. 141-163.

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030454>

Xu, Gary G. Sinascape: Contemporary Chinese Cinema. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007.

Lu, Tonglin. "Red Sorghum: Limits of Transgression." In Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China: Theoretical Interventions and Cultural Critique, Kang Liu and Xiaobing Tang (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press, 1993: 188-208.

Wilson, Flannery. "Viewing Sinophone Cinema Through a French Theoretical Lens: Wong Kar-wai's 'In the Mood For Love' and 2046 and Deleuze's 'Cinema,'" Modern Chinese Literature and Culture, Vol. 21, No. 1 (spring 2009): 141-173.

## Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Participation (including leading discussion of readings and films and note assignments)	Throughout the semester	30%
Response (2 double-spaced pages, <750 words)	Oct. 16	20%
Abstract	Nov. 6	10%
Final paper	Last day of class & negotiable	40%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.