HUMA 1210: Chinese Women on Screen

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Office hours: 16:00-18:00 Monday

Time & Classroom:

Time: 12-14:50pm, Thursday
Room: LTJ

Required Textbooks:
- All available online at “Files,” 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 animation in wartime Shanghai, socialist filmmaking during the Seventeen Years (1949-1966), the birth of model opera film during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), post-1989 underground/independent filmmaking, and the globalization of cinema in contemporary China. Gender and sexuality theories will also be introduced throughout the course. This course aims to establish a foundation for undergraduate students and beginning graduate students from different academic backgrounds who are interested in the topic. Proficiency in Chinese is a plus but is not required because 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 reality
• sharpen critical thinking and use gender/sexuality theories to analyze women
• analyze the aesthetic qualities of films

Assignments:
• Watch all required films and read required articles and book chapters every week
• Mid-term exam (closed book)
• Final exam (closed book)

Grading Criteria:
• Attendance: 10% or F
• Mid-term Exam: 30%
• Final Exam: 60%
• Participation: 5% (extra credit)

Technical Issues:
• Reading Materials: All available at “Files,” Canvas. Also available at “Course Reserve,” HKUST Library
• Audiovisual Materials: Films for this course are available at the Media Reserve counter in the Library, LG1. You can also find some films online through youtube and youku.
• Discussions Forum: Students can post questions and comments about 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:
  - Canvas: cei@ust.hk  Hotline: 2358-6318
  - Library Reserve: lbreserv@ust.hk  Hotline: 2358-6776
  - Classroom Facility: Hotline: 2358-6815

Classroom Etiquette
• Attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to sign up and track your attendance. If you forget to sign up an attendance, the instructor will not make up for it. If you have to miss a class for a legitimate reason, please inform your instructor at least three days in advance and present relevant documents to the instructor within one week after the absence. Being 5 minutes late for class three times will count as one unexcused absence. One unexcused absence means 5 points off your final score. Four or more unexcused absences will automatically lower your final grade to F.
• No Make-up Exams are allowed. The instructor will grant a make-up exam 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 exam. You are expected to present convincing documents to the instructor. The make-up exam will be different from the regular one and will be more difficult.

- **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 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 not allowed in class. Please put them in your bags.
- **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 (Feb 6): Introduction:

Film Screening:
- *Chinese Women: The Great Step Forward—From Confucius to Mao* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2001) (54 minutes)
- *From Mao Towards Full Equality* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2001) (55 minutes)

Secondary:

Week 2 (Feb 13): Prostitutes and the Nation in Republican China

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

Secondary:

Week 3 (Feb 20): New Women in Republican China

Film Screening:
- *New Women* (Cai Chusheng, 1934) Shanghai: Lianhua, 114 minutes

Secondary:
- Kristine Harris, “The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai,” *Transnational Chinese Cinemas* (University of Hawaii press, Honolulu,
1997), 277-302.


**Week 4 (Feb 27): Women, War, and Animated Film**

Film Screening:

- *Princess Iron Fan* (Wan Brothers, 1941) Shanghai: Xinhua/Lianhe Studio, 73 minutes
- *Havoc in Heaven* (Wan Laiming, 1961-1964). Recommended. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_sYUuz49Fs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_sYUuz49Fs)

Secondary:


**Week 5 (March 6): Women and Machines: Tractor Girls in Socialist China**

Film Screening:

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

Secondary:

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

**Week 6 (March 13): Ethnic Girls, Animals, and Revolution**

Film Screening:
• Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland (Qian Yunda, 1965) Shanghai: Shanghai Animation Film Studio, 40 minutes
• Sons and Daughters of the Grassland (Fu Jie 1975) Beijing: Beijing Studio, 71 minutes

Secondary:
• Hélène Cixous, “Birds, Women and Writing,” Animal Philosophy, 167-173
• Film Synopsis of Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland in PDF format

Week 7 (March 20): Midterm Exam in Class

Week 8 (March 27): Women and the Cultural Revolution

Film Screening:
• Red Detachment of Women (Fu Jie and Pan Wenzhan, 1971) Beijing: Beijing Studio, 100 minutes
• Morning Sun (Carma Hinton and Geremie Barmae, 2003). Watch this film by yourself. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4npclceseEA

Secondary:
• Film Synopsis of Red Detachment of Women

Week 9 (April 3): Women Filmmakers

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

Secondary:
• Film Synopsis of *Woman, Demon, Human* in PDF format

**Week 10 (April 10): Female Migrant Workers**

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

Secondary:

**Week 11 (April 17): Midterm Break**

**Week 11 (April 24): Gender, Forced Migration, and Independent Filmmaking**

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

Secondary:
• Chris Berry, “Getting Real: Chinese Documentary, Chinese Postsocialism,” *The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century*, 115-134.

**Week 12 (May 1): Labor Day**

**Week 13 (May 8): Gender, Diaspora and Transnational Feminism**

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

Secondary:
