Comparative Studies in US & Chinese Film

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: FOST 3501
Number of Credits: 3
Language of Instruction: English
Contact Hours: 45
Instructor: On-Site Faculty

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course compares major issues, theories, and methods in Chinese and American cinema. The course is organized around a series of keywords, comprising a living vocabulary of culture, power, social change, identity, nationhood, and globalization. Through these and related terms, we will analyze the construction of class, gender, politics and other relationships of power central to US and Chinese society. Course materials are interdisciplinary and, in addition to film, also include history, cultural studies, fiction, and popular culture. Assignments include reading, writing, discussion, and a field trip exploring public memory at the China National Film Museum in Beijing. Students analyze similarities and differences between films produced in Hollywood and Beijing, gaining a transnational understanding of film studies and a critical perspective on Chinese and American film traditions. The course also has a strong cultural focus, highlighting the differences in history, economy, social structure, and values systems in the two countries, as seen through the prism of cinema.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will:

- Gain familiarity with film theories and genres, both Chinese and American.
- Understand the basics of film production and technique.
- Demonstrate an understanding of cross-cultural differences in cinema styles, markets, box office and profit aspects, and the star system of both cultures.
Course Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field-based course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to watch all films (preferably in groups with other students) and read all assigned materials before the relevant class session. They should come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments are generally 20–30 pages per class session.

Required Readings/Materials


Films screened in class may include:

*Once Upon A Time in the West, The Birth of A Nation, Citizen Kane, Gone with the Wind, On the Water Front, The Godfather, The Graduate, Medium Cool, Pulp Fiction, Star War, All the King’s Men, I’m Not There, Blood Simple; Street Angels, Crows and Sparrows, A Spring River Flows East, The Song of Youth, Lei Feng, A Small Town Called Lotus, Red Detachment of Women, Once Upon A Time in China, Yellow Earth, Qiu Ju Goes to Court, A Woman, A Gun and A Noodle Shop, Dying to Survive, The Wandering Earth. Fahrenheit 9/11, 1428, Free and Easy*
## Grading

### Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Score or percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93–100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90–92</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83–86</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80–82</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77–79</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73–76</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70–72</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67–69</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60–66</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage of grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response papers</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1
Film Theory

Unit 2
Genre Film

Unit 3
Film Mediums & Art

Unit 4
The Alternative Film

Unit 5
Transnational Cinema

Unit 6
Nationalism Through Film

Unit 7
New Chinese Modernism

Unit 8
Trauma & History in Film
Unit 9

Urban Cinema

POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.