

EAST 454: Reinventing Cinema and Media in Post-Mao China

Class: Wednesday 2:35-5:25

Instructor: Prof. LIU, Xiao

Email: xiao.liu6@mcgill.ca

Office hours: Friday 2:25-4:25

Course Description:

This course focuses on cinematic production and media culture in the mainland China since the late 1970s. How was cinema reinvented beyond the conventions of socialist realism? In what ways did cinema transform itself under the pressure of commercialization, and as a result of its competition and dynamic with other media, such as television, cassette tapes, videotapes, and video games as well as the internet? Taking the constantly changing notion and practices of “cinema” as a contested site, this course frames key issues of cinematic aesthetics within the socio-economic and political changes of contemporary China. The materials examined in this class range from 1980s experimental and entertainment films to documentary films, as well as gaming and internet culture-inspired video art.

Objectives:

Students will be able to obtain a good understanding of film and media culture in contemporary China. Students will also acquire skills to analyze film and media culture, and learn critical approaches to intermedial and crossmedia phenomena. Students are also expected to think critically about the relationship between media and society, especially key issues concerning the postsocialist transformations and socialist legacies.

Readings and Course Texts:

Readings will be made available in pdf form on *mycourses*.

Course Requirements:

1) *Regular attendance* at all classes and *active participation* in class discussion.

2) *Weekly Posts* (400-500 words):

From the third week, by 6pm on Tuesday evenings, you are required to post a reflection on some aspect of the readings and film assigned for the week on *mycourses*. Your posting should summarize the arguments of the reading materials, and center on a particular scene or element of the week’s film, relating it to the issues raised in course readings. Make sure to read the posts before coming to class. Late posts will negatively affect your grade.

3) *Individual Presentation:*

Each student is expected to sign up for one class presentation of 10-15 minutes length. You will be responsible for coming up with a list of discussion questions related to the reading. You can also choose a clip from the film, and do a close reading of the clip.

4) *Group presentation of Soundtrack Analysis:*

Choose one or two clips from one of Jia Zhangke’s films, and analyze the soundtrack with the methods as demonstrated in Michel Chion’s *Audio-Vision*. Present your analysis in class on

Feb 24th. Ideally each group is made of 3-4 people. The script/PPT used for the presentation should be uploaded to *mycourses* before the class. No weekly post for the week of Feb 24th.

5) *Final Paper*: (5-8 pages): due Wednesday, April 21 midnight.

The paper must be submitted in the following format: double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font, 1" margins, numbered pages. Follow MLA format for citation. **Late papers will not be accepted without documentation of extenuating circumstances.**

Evaluation:

Weekly Posts	20%
Individual Presentation	20%
Final Paper	35%
Soundtrack Analysis	25%

Delivery Method:

Live class sessions will be delivered on Zoom, supplemented with some pre-recorded lectures, in-class activities, and off-line assignments. Recordings of live sessions can be shared with enrolled students who cannot participate in the live sessions. For students who cannot participate in the live session, their oral presentations can pre-recorded and shared with the class.

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information). L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest).

Disability Accommodation:

Students who require disability accommodations should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at McGill, to discuss the OSD Student Services may provide assistance: <http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>. The OSD will then contact Professor Liu, to discuss disability accommodations.

* *In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the*

right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

***In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.*
