Syllabus

This course is a general introduction to East Asian cinema. This course presumes no prior knowledge of East Asia or cinema. The goal of the course is to view and discuss, as a class, six films, emphasizing an understanding of their cultural background and an appreciation of their aesthetic merits as films. This semester the course will focus on relatively recent films from Taiwan, China, Japan, and Korea.

Please note this is a quarter course: the mid-term is Feb. 5th; the final will take place March 10th and March 12th. The films are not available in the library or from the instructor, and there can be no provisions for missed classes or missed exams. It is therefore essential that you plan to attend all meetings of this class. Do not come to class late. Wandering in and out of class is extremely distracting to the instructor and to other students in a class of this nature. Talking during the viewing of the films, or during class discussion, is disrespectful to classmates, to the instructor, and ultimately to the makers of the film. This is a college class, and our goal is to view quality East Asian films critically. It is not entertainment; and the classroom is not a cinema.

Grading will be determined as follows: 20% -- class attendance, preparation, and contribution; 25% mid-term exam; 25% final exam; 30% (three reaction papers at 10% each). Attendance will be taken at each class, beginning on Jan. 27. There will be only one opportunity to sign the sign-up sheet: at the beginning of each class. No unexcused absences are allowed. Two points (2%) will be deducted for each such absence. Numerical scores will be converted to course grades according to the following scale: A=96-100; A-=92-95; B+=89-91; B=86-88; B-=83-85; C+=80-82; C=77-79; C-=74-76; D+=71-73; D=68-70; D-=65-67; E=64-. Three one-page reaction papers will be due at the beginning of class on the dates assigned. They will not be accepted late: if the paper is not submitted on-time, you lose 10% of your grade. Guidelines for these papers are attached. Generally, if you tend to miss classes and hand in assignments late, you should think about dropping this class NOW.

Also, there is no eating or drinking in class. This is a film class, but HU-124 is not Crossgates. We don't make money on concessions.

The discovery of any cheating (including plagiarism or shared work of any kind) on an exam or written assignment will result in 1) expulsion from this class with a failing grade, 2) a referral of the matter to appropriate university officials. Note that copying of any material from the Internet without citation is plagiarism. There is material concerning these films on many Internet sites, but if you take this material without citation, it's cheating, and you fail.
EAS 140 Course Schedule, 3rd quarter 2009

1/22 -- Introduction. View "The Wedding Banquet" (Taiwan -- Lee Ang, 1993)

1/27 -- View "Shall We Dance?" (Japan -- Masayuki Suo, 1997).

1/29 -- Discussion.

2/3 -- View "Tampopo" (Japan -- Itami Juzo, 1986). First "Reaction Paper" due

2/5 -- Discussion. Mid-term: Feb. 5.

2/10 -- View "Raise the Red Lantern" (China -- Zhang Yimou, 1991).

2/12 -- Discussion.

2/24 -- View "The Blue Kite" (China -- Tian Zhuangzhuang, 1992). Second "Reaction Paper"

2/26 -- Discussion.

3/3 -- View "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring" (Korea -- Kim Ki-duk, 2004)

3/5 -- Discussion.

3/10 -- View unnamed movie for final exam.

3/12 -- Third "Reaction Paper" due. FINAL EXAM

NB Titles of films for viewing on a specific date are subject to change without notice!
"Reaction Paper"

Guidelines

The purpose of these short papers is NOT to summarize the plot of the film, but rather for you to articulate your own intellectual and aesthetic reactions to the film. The paper is NOT to be a simple catalogue of your impressions but rather a coherent series of observations supported by specific examples drawn from the film.

* papers are limited to one double-spaced typed page (12 point type face)
* use standard 8.5 x 11 inch white paper
* handwritten papers will not be accepted
* no cover sheet is necessary
* place your name at the top of the page
* check carefully for spelling and grammar mistakes (run a spell-check program)
* if English is not your native language, go to the Writing Center for assistance
* plan the paper before your write
* write short clear sentences
* organize paragraphs logically
* plan transitions between paragraphs

* watch the film carefully and take detailed notes on plot, etc.
* try to determine the main "point," "argument," or "theme" of the film
* avoid meaningless clichés and jargon. Example:

    I feel...
    I think...
    At this point in time...