*Draft. Subject to change.

CULS5204 Cultural Studies in Film and Video

Term 1, 2025/26

Day and Time: TBA
Venue: TBA
Language: English

Instructor: Prof. TAN Jia 譚佳
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Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Padlet Website:
TBA

Course Description

This course examines a variety of film and video work from a cultural studies perspective. It introduces the basic vocabularies in analyzing film and video works and understanding them as representations in regard to colonialism, class, race, nationality, gender, and sexuality. The course also explores the role of film and video in relation to institutional contexts and audience studies. Upon completion of this subject, students are expected to understand the content and form of film and video as well as the industrial, social, cultural, and technological ramifications.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to 1) identify and understand important concepts in analyzing film and video from a cultural studies perspective; 2) analyze and interpret film and video as a form of creative expression with regard to its multiple genres, means of delivery, and formal methods; 3) critically evaluate relevant aspects of film and video that not only reflect on society but also shape values, meanings, and ideologies; 4) articulate their understanding of film and video works as complex cultural products with industrial, social, and technological ramifications.

Teaching & Learning Activities

Lectures will be given weekly to introduce key concepts and provide film and video analysis. Guided reading and group discussions will enhance students' understanding of the key issues in the course and students will be expected to do group presentations on topics related to the course.

The lectures will be delivered in English. Students may use Cantonese and/or Mandarin for group presentations and general discussions.

Assessment Methods

- 20% - Class participation and weekly discussions.
- 20% - Two-page reflection paper (**Due in class on 22 October)**. Please write a two-page reflection essay that engages film exhibitions in a museum context (e.g., Tai Kwun, M+, Videotage), film festival screenings, or commercial films. **It must engage with a film/video text or phenomena from 2023 or 2024**. It should demonstrate critical thinking skills concerning film/video or the role of film/video in our society. **Points will be deducted if exceed the page limit**.
- 20% - Group presentation   (4-5 students per group, 20 min plus 5 min Q&A)
    the presentation should engage with course-related theoretical concepts or debates with specific case studies. The presentation will need to address key concepts and theories as well as their contemporary relevance.
- 40% (proposal, **for individual and group consultation**) + Final project (**Due on Dec 6 online**)
    The final project should use theoretical concepts or debates to look at one particular film and video text or phenomena (film, television, online video, gaming, etc.)
    It can be **an individual academic paper (English: 4000 words, Chinese: 5,000 – 6,000 words) or a group creative project (Padlet page, video, animation, website, photo essay, etc.) accompanied by a written statement with academic analysis and references (English: 800-1200 words. Chinese: 1,000 – 2,000 words).**
    Group projects can be 3-4 people per group, and they can be developed from the group presentation.
    Sample topics: mapping and commenting on specific short video cultures; analysis of specific aspects of video games or film and video genres; etc.
    Creative projects will be graded for their originality, creative presentation, academic relevance, and critical thinking skills.
    The final project must be relevant to course material and should include at least two class readings as references. The final project should demonstrate academic rigor to engage with cultural texts or thoughts critically.
    Please note that late submissions will be graded one grade down every 3 days. The written part of the final project should be handed in electronically via VeriGuide. For group projects, **only** one upload on VeriGuide is necessary.

Weekly Schedule
Part One   Film and Video as Medium/Text

Week 1   3 September
1. Modernity, medium specificity, and media convergence
Reading: 1. Benjamin, W. (2006). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In M. G. Durham & D. M. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks* (pp. 18–40). Malden, MA: Blackwell. (first printed in 1936)
2. Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2013). Film Glossary. In *Film Art: An Introduction* (pp. 501–505). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
3. Jenkins, H. (2004). The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 7*(1), 33–43.

Screening: excerpts from *Run Rola Run* (Tom Tykwer, 1998); *Melancholia* (Lars von Trier, 2011)

Week 2   10 September
2. Film and video elements: genre, violence, and excess
Reading: 1. Sontag, S. (1975). Fascinating Fascism. *The New York Review of Books.*
2. Williams, L. (1991). Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess. *Film Quarterly*, 44(4), 2–13.
3. Feuer, J. (1993). "Genre Study and Television" in *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled.*
Screening: excerpts from *Kill Bill: Vol. 1 (*Quentin Tarantino, 2003); *Footlight Parade* (Busby Berkeley, 1933)

Week 3   17 September
Guest lecture. Details to be announced later.

Week 4   24 September
4. Film and video style: realism and digital visual effects
Reading: 1. Prince, S. (1996). True lies: Perceptual realism, digital images, and film theory. Film Quarterly, 49(3), 27-37.
2. An Aesthetic of Reality" in Andre Bazin, What is Cinema?
3. Byrnes, C. (2019). Specters of Realism and the Painter's Gaze in Jia Zhangke's *Still Life*, 24(2), 52–93.
Screening: excerpts from *Rome Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945, Italy); *Umberto D* (Vittorio DeSica, 1952, Italy); *Roma* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2018); *Still Life* (Jia Zhangke, 2006)

Week 5   1 October
PUBLIC HOLIDAY. NO CLASS.

Part Two   Film and Video as Representation

Week 6   8 October
6. Racism and colonialism
Reading: 1. Stam, R., & Spence, L. (2004). Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction. In L. Braudy & M. Cohen (Eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism* (6th ed., pp. 877–891). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. (first printed in 1983)
2. Armes, R. (1987). Third Cinema. In *Third World Film making and the West* (pp. 87–100). Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
3. **Castillo, R**. (2020). "Race" and "racism" in contemporary Africa-China relations research: approaches, controversies and reflections. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 21(3), 310-336.
Screening: excerpts from *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1965); *The Rainbow Warrior/* 賽德克巴萊 (魏德聖, 2012)

Week 7   15 October
7. Marxism, class, and stereotype

Reading: 1. Williams, R. (2005). Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory. In *Culture and Materialism* (pp. 31–49). London: Verso. (first printed in 1980)

2. Gibson-Graham, Julie Katherine. (2006). "Introduction to the New Edition" and "strategies" in "The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy."

3. Deppman, H.-C. (2009). Made in Taiwan: An Analysis of Meteor Garden as an East Asian Idol Drama. In Y. Zhu & C. Berry (Eds.), *TV China* (pp. 91–110). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Screening: excerpts from *Boys Over Flowers/花樣男子* (2009), *Echoes of the Rainbow/歲月神偷* (Mabel Cheung/張婉婷,2009)

Week 8   22 October
Reflection paper due in class
8. Gender, male gaze, and visual pleasure
Reading: 1. Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen, 16*(3), 6–18.

2. Foucault, M. (1995). Panopticism. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (pp. 195–228). New York: Vintage.

3. Neville, L. (2015). Male gays in the female gaze: Women who watch m/m pornography. *Porn Studies, 2*(2–3), 192–207.

Screening: excerpts from *If These Walls Could Talk* (1996); *Summer Snow/女人四十* (Ann Hui/許鞍華, 1995)

9. Sexuality and queer media
Reading: 1. Gayle S. Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality"

2. Yue, A. (2014). Queer Asian Cinema and Media Studies: From Hybridity to Critical Regionality. *Cinema Journal, 53*(2), 145–151.

3. Wang, S., & Zhou, O. T. (2022). Being recognized in an algorithmic system: Cruel optimism in gay visibility on Douyin and Zhihu. *Sexualities.*

Screening: excerpts from *Laurence Anyways* (Xavier Dolan, 2012)

Week 9   29 October
PUBLIC HOLIDAY. NO CLASS.
A field trip or a guest lecture will be arranged instead.

Part Three   Film and Video Institutions

Week 10   5 November
10. Globalization, gaming, and empire
Reading: 1. selection in Dyer-Witheford, Nick, and Greig De Peuter. *Games of empire: Global capitalism and video games.* University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

2. Appadurai, A. (1990). Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. *Theory, Culture & Society, 7*, 295–310.

3. Jagoda, P. (2013). Gamification and other forms of play. *boundary 2, 40*(2), 113-144.

<u>Screening</u>: excerpts from *Transpotting* (Danny Boyle, 1996); excerpts from *Transformer film series*

Week 11   12 November
11. Film and video censorship and content moderation online
<u>Reading</u>: 1. Xiao, Z. (2013). Prohibition, politics, and nation-building: A history of film censorship in China. In *Silencing Cinema* (pp. 109-130). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
2. Pang, L. (2011). The state against ghosts: a genealogy of China's film censorship policy. *Screen*, *52*(4), 461-476.
3. chapter 2 in Roberts, S. T. (2019). *Behind the screen: Content moderation in the shadows of social media*. Yale University Press, 33-61.

Week 12   19 November
12. Eco-cinema, eco-criticism, and media infrastructure
<u>Reading</u>: 1. Kiu-wai Chu, "Ecocinema", Journal of Chinese Cinema 10(1). 2016, pp.11-13.
2. Karen Warren, "The power and the promise of ecological feminism"
3. Parks, L., & Starosielski, N. (2015). Introduction. In *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures*. University of Illinois Press.
4. GreenPeace reports: Guide to Greener Electronics 2017
<u>Screening</u>: excerpts from *Beijing Besieged by Waste 垃圾圍城* (2011)

Week 13   26 November
13. Audience studies, Otaku culture and the beautiful fighting girl
<u>Reading</u>: 1. Selections in Jenkins, H. (1992). *Textual poachers: Television fans and participatory culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
2. Ang, I. (2007). Television Fictions around the World: Melodrama and Irony in Global Perspective, *Critical Studies in Television*, 2(2): 18-30.
3. "translator' introduction" in Saitō, Tamaki. *Beautiful fighting girl*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Individual or group consultation sessions will be arranged

*weekly screenings may change.

Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide to Students
The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. All student assignments in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes should be submitted via VeriGuide with effect from September 2008:https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUSCS.jspx

Although cases of cheating or plagiarism are rare at the University, everyone should make himself/herself familiar with the content of this website and thereby help avoid any practice that would not be acceptable.

Section 1 What is plagiarism
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p01.htm
Section 2 Proper use of source material
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p02.htm
Section 3 Citation styles
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p03.htm
Section 4 Plagiarism and copyright violation
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p04.htm
Section 5 CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p05.htm
Section 6 CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p06.htm
Section 7 Guide for teachers and departments
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p07.htm
Section 8 Recommended material to be included in course outlines
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p08.htm
Section 9 Electronic submission of assignments via VeriGuide
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p09.htm
Section 10 Declaration to be included in assignments
https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p10.htm

Use of Generative AI tools

All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks

For assignments and assessment tasks that count towards the final course grades, students are not allowed to submit work which is produced with the collaboration of or supported by the use of any generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT)*.

Any breach of the regulations will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the University's *Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty.*

In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher.