

CURE2007/UGEC2245

Celebrity, Star, and Hong Kong Popular Culture

Lecturer: Dr LI Mei-Ting (李薇婷)

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Time: Lecture - 14:30 – 16:15 (Thu) | Tutorial – 16:30 – 17:15 (Thu)

Venue: TBC

Course Description

Celebrity culture is generally understood as a cult full of short-lived trends and inconsequential fan behaviour. We seldom consider, however, the powerful influence it has over our cultural identities. This course examines how the interplay between celebrity culture and the cultural industry shapes cultural identity with case studies from Hong Kong as the major scope of study. Starting with a brief history of Hong Kong celebrity culture from the 1980s to the present day, the course offers an entry point for students to understand the intricate relationship between the media and celebrity culture, encompassing a wide range of cultural icons and phenomena such as action film actors, cross-media megastars, and YouTube micro-celebrities. Each case study will engage with key concepts in celebrity culture, such as star-text, commodification, authenticity, extratextual reading, and participatory reading. The course proceeds by introducing the critical perspective of cultural studies in making sense of representation politics, public culture, fandom studies, and the diverse modes of intimacy in the digital age. Overall, students will gain an understanding of celebrity culture and how identities are thus produced, promoted, and commodified in the wider arena of media and popular culture.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:

- **Define and explain** the connotation of celebrity culture, stardom, and popular culture in contemporary society, and the genealogy of discourses development of Hong Kong popular culture over time.
- **Understand** on how cultural identities are shaped by the interplay between celebrity culture and the popular culture industry.
- **Employ** a selected range of methods to study the development and formation of celebrity culture and infer the meaning of such process in the Hong Kong context.
- **Reflect** on the impact of celebrity culture on the formation of cultural identities.
- **Demonstrate** the intersectionality of celebrity culture and the formation of cultural identities locally and globally.

Teaching activities: Lecture and Tutorial

Content (tentative)

Class 1 Introduction: Why Does Celebrity Culture Matter?

- Introducing the basics of celebrity culture and the importance of studying celebrity and stardom
- Outlining the development timeline of Hong Kong celebrity culture from the 1980s to the 2020s

Required readings:

- P. David Marshall ed., *The Celebrity Culture Reader*. Routledge, 2006. pp 1-15.
- Chu, Yiu-Wai. "The Rise of Cantopop: The Mid- to Late 1970s." *Hong Kong Cantopop: A Concise History*. Hong Kong University Press, 2017. pp 40-68.

Class 2 Star Image and Star Text: Bruce Lee

- Analysing the production and consumption of film stars and their star image
- Synthesizing the critical concepts of 'star-text' in celebrity studies and 'textual analysis' in cultural studies
- Assessing Bruce Lee as a star text in relation to the concept of 'representation'
- Integrating the case of Bruce Lee with the identity formation of Hong Kongers as modern citizens

Required readings:

- Sean Redmond & Su Holmes, "Introduction to Section Five: Made in Culture: Star and Celebrity Representation" in *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2007. pp 257-260.

Class 3 The Social Phenomenon of Stars: Leslie Cheung

- Discussing the critical concept of 'extratextual reading' in celebrity studies
- Assessing Leslie Cheung as a
- Integrating the case of Leslie Cheung with the identity formation of Hong Kongers as cosmopolitan

Required readings:

- Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall, London: Sage, 1997, 15-64.

Further readings on Case study:

Bruce Lee

- Chiao, Hsiung Ping. "Bruce Lee: His Influence on the Evolution of the Kung Fu Genre." *The journal of popular film and television* 9.1 (1981): 30–42.
- 葉曼丰：〈身體符號學（節錄）〉，《武俠電影與香港現代性》，香港：手民出版社，頁 37–54。

Leslie Cheung

- Helen Hok-Sze Leung "In Queer Memory: Leslie Cheung (1956-2003)," *Undercurrents: Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong*, HKU Press, 2008. pp. 85-105.
- Yu, Sabrina Qiong. "Forever Gor Gor, Changing Fans: Leslie Cheung Posthumous Fandom Revisited." *Celebrity studies* 12.2 (2021): 186–201.

Class 4 Discussion Panel (I) (10%)

- Students will work in groups to create a presentation about their favourite Hong Kong film star. Presentations should be submitted online via Blackboard.
- Each group will then be assigned to review another group's presentation. They will analyze the assigned work and apply one concept from Class 1-3 in their critique.

Class 5 Cross-media Megastar (I): Anita Mui

- Interpreting the concept of 'commodification' in cultural studies in relation to Anita Mui's on-screen persona.
- Demonstrating the influence of popular music on stardom and celebrity culture

Required readings

- Guy Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle," *The Society of the Spectacle*, Black & Red, 1977, p.13–20.
- Lai, Josephine Y. Y. "Bad Girl, Femme Fatale, and the Androgynous Body: Cantopop Queen Anita Mui's Gender Game." *Visual anthropology (Journal)* 34.2 (2021): 163–177.

Class 6 Cross-media Megastar (2): Twins

- Theorizing 'celebrity-commodity' in celebrity studies and mapping the culture industry in the 2000s
- Examining how the industry of popular culture in Hong Kong gives rise to cross-media megastars

- Evaluating ways in which the stardom of the cross-media megastar influences the formation of Hong Kong cultural identity

Required readings:

- Graeme Turner, 'The Economy of Celebrity,' in Sean Redmond & Su Holmes eds., *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*. London: Sage. 2007. pp193-205.
- Klavier J. Wang & Stephanie Ng, "Our Little Twins Stars: Conglomerate-Catalysed Cross-Media Stardom in the New Millennium" in Anthony Fong and Alice Chik ed., *Made in Hong Kong: Studies in Popular Music*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 157–167.

Class 7 On the Politics of Authenticity: 'Real' Celebrity and Reality Shows

- Discussing the concept of 'authenticity' in celebrity studies and media studies.
- Critiquing how television channels have produced stars and singers via talent shows and reality shows from 2000s to 2010s
- Comparing two local TV shows, Minutes to Fame (殘酷一叮) and Good Night Show – King Maker (全民造星) in their creation of 'ordinary celebrities'

Required readings:

- Laura Grindstaff, "DI(t)Y, Reality-Style: The Cultural Work of Ordinary Celebrity," in Laurie Ouellette ed., *A Companion to Reality Television*, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp 324–344.

Class 8 Discussion Panel (II) (10%)

- Students will work in groups to create a presentation about their favourite Hong Kong singer. Presentations should be submitted online via Blackboard.
- Each group will then be assigned to review another group's presentation. They will analyze the assigned work and apply one concept from Class 5-7 in their critique.

Class 9 Stars, Consumption, and Public Culture (I): Anthony Wong, Anson Lo, and Jeremy Lee

- Discussing the concepts of 'celebrity consumption' and 'participatory reading'
- Examining the 'campness' of the star image of Anthony Wong, Anson Lo, and Jeremy Lee
- Integrating the practice of 'queer reading' to complicate concepts of celebrity culture

Required Readings:

- Chow, Y.F., de Kloet, J., Schmidt, L. “Forbidden Love, Forgetting Gender,” *It’s My Party. Contemporary East Asian Visual Cultures, Societies and Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2024.

Class 10 Stars, Consumption, and Public Culture (2): Denise Ho, Kay Tse, and Charmaine Fong

- Demonstrating celebrity consumption as a fundamental part of public culture
- Exploring how celebrities engage with fans in the public arena
- Assessing the star text and fandom of Denise Ho, Kay Tse, and Charmaine Fong in relation to the identity formation of Hong Kongers from 2010s to 2020s.

Required Readings:

- Li, Cheuk Yin. “Absence of Fan Activism in the Queer Fandom of Ho Denise Wan See (HOCC) in Hong Kong.” *Transformative works and cultures* 10 (2012). Web.
- Dorothy Lau, “Reframing Celebrities in Post-Handover Hong Kong: Political Advocacy, Social Media, and the Performance of Denise Ho” *Hong Kong Studies*, 1:1(Spring 2018). Pp 51-65.

Class 11 Stars in the Era of Platform Culture

- Examining the availability of media platforms (e.g. Instagram, YouTube) and convergence media culture
- Evaluating changes in the celebrity culture alongside convergence culture
- Reflect on how convergence culture influences the formation of Hong Kong identity
- Case study: Serrin/ Leung Ka-yan (梁嘉茵) and Trial & Error (試當真)

Required readings

- Henry Jenkins, “Introduction: “Worship at the Altar of Convergence: A New Paradigm for Understanding Media Change,” in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York: New York University Press. 2006. pp 1-24.
- Alice E. Marwick, “You May Know Me from YouTube: (Micro-) Celebrity in Social Media,” *A Companion to Celebrity*, First Edition. Edited by P. David Marshall and Sean Redmond. John Wiley & Sons, 2016, pp.333-350.

Class 12 Discussion Panel (III) (10%)

- Students will work in groups to create a presentation about their favourite Hong Kong micro-celebrity. Presentations should be submitted online via Blackboard.

- Each group will then be assigned to review another group's presentation. They will analyze the assigned work and apply one concept from Class 9-11 in their critique.

Class 13 The Trans-Asian Influence of J-pop and K-pop Culture to Hong Kong

- Evaluating the trans-Asian influence of J-pop and K-pop on Hong Kong celebrity culture in terms of industry, star images, and styles.
- Case study: Cookies and Mirror

Required Readings

- Nissim Otmazgin (2014) "A regional gateway: Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong, 1990–2005," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 15:2, 323-335.
- Doobo Shim, "The Growth of Korean Cultural Industries and the Korean Wave," in Chua Beng Huat & Koichi Iwabuchi ed., *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave*, Hong Kong University Press, 2008, pp. 15–32.

Assessments (100%)

Class participation	10%	Including attendance, in-class and tutorial participation, such as responding to questions from instructor and contributing to class discussions, giving constructive feedback to classmates' presentation.
Group reflection	30%	A case study on the branding tactic, construction of star-texts, and the context of local entertainment industry. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge on relevant concepts of celebrity and star culture under Hong Kong and transnational context.
Discussion panels	30%	A group project and an in-class oral presentation (with slideshows and discussion) on relevant topic and suggested readings provided.
Term paper	30%	A critical review with a specific research focus that is aligned with this course in either no more than 10 pages in English (double-line spacing) OR no more than 4000 words in Chinese (excluding references and appendices)

Reference and supplementary learning materials

Popular Culture

- Adorno, Theodor W., and J. M. Bernstein. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Chua, B. H., & Iwabuchi, K. ed., *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean wave*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 2008.
- Driver, Susan. *Queer Girls and Popular Culture: Reading, Resisting, and Creating Media*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.
- Grossberg, Lawrence. *Mediamaking: Mass Media in a Popular Culture*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2006.
- Iwabuchi, K. ed., *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 2004.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: University Press, 2008.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Mukerji, C., & Schudson, M. *Rethinking Popular Culture*. University of California Press, 1991.
- Peele, Thomas. *Queer Popular Culture Literature, Media, Film and Television*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Syvetsen, Trine. *Media Resistance: Protest, Dislike, Abstention*. Cham: Springer Open, 2017.
- Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, 2010.

Celebrity Culture

- Jian Xu, Glen Donnar, and Divya Garg ed., *Asian Celebrity Cultures in the Digital Age*. HK: HKU Press. 2025
- Lau, Dorothy. *Reorienting Chinese Stars in Global Polyphonic Networks: Voice, Ethnicity, Power*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Lau, Dorothy Wai Sim. *Chinese Stardom in Participatory Cyberculture*. Edinburgh University Press, 2021.

- Lau, Dorothy. *Celebrity Activism and Philanthropy in Asia: Toward a Cosmopolitical Imaginary*. Amsterdam University Press, 2024.
- P. David Marshall and Sean Redmond ed., *A Companion to Celebrity*, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016.
- P. David Marshall ed., *The Celebrity Culture Reader*. Routledge, 2006.*
- Redmond, Sean, and Su. Holmes. *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2007.
- Tomlinson, John. *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Cashmore, Ernest. *Celebrity/Culture*. Routledge, 2006.
- 楊玲、陶東風編：《名人文化研究讀本》（第1版），北京大學出版社，2013年。*

Hong Kong Popular Culture

- Chow, Yiu Fai & Jeroen de. Kloet. *Sonic Multiplicities: Hong Kong Pop and the Global Circulation of Sound and Image*. Bristol, U.K.: Intellect, 2013.
- Chow, Yiu Fai, et al. *It's My Party: Tat Ming Pair and the Postcolonial Politics of Popular Music in Hong Kong*. 1st ed. 2024., Springer Nature Singapore, 2024.
- Chu, Yiu Wai, *Lost in Transition: Hong Kong Culture in the Age of China*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013.
- Chu, Yiu-wai, *Found in Transition: Hong Kong Studies in the Age of China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018.
- Chu, Yiu-wai. *Hong Kong Cantopop: A Concise History*. Hong Kong University Press, 2017.
- Fung, F. and Chik, A. ed., *Made in Hong Kong: Studies in Popular Music*, Routledge, 2020.
- Keane, M., Fung, A., & Moran, A., *New Television, Globalization, and the East Asian Cultural Imagination*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 2007.
- Wang, Klavier J. *Hong Kong Popular Culture: Worlding Film, Television, and Pop Music*. Springer Nature Singapore, 2020.
- Wang, Klavier J. *Hong Kong Popular Culture: Worlding Film, Television, and Pop Music*. 1st ed. 2020. Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2020.
- 朱耀偉：《香港流行文化的（後）青春歲月》，香港：中華書局，2019年。
- 吳俊雄，張志偉編著：《閱讀香港普及文化 1970-2000》，牛津大學出版社，2001年版。
- 洛楓：《世紀末城市：香港的流行文化》，香港：牛津大學出版社，1995年。
- 馬傑偉、吳俊雄、張志偉及曾仲堅編：《普普香港：閱讀香港普及文化 2000-2010（一）》，香港教育圖書公司，2012年。
- 馬傑偉、吳俊雄、張志偉及曾仲堅編：《普普香港：閱讀香港普及文化 2000-2010（一）》，香港教育圖書公司，2015年。

馬傑偉、曾仲堅：《影視香港：身份認同的時代變奏》，香港：香港中文大學亞太研究所，2010 年。

陳嘉銘、吳子瑜、海邊欄著：《給下一輪廣東歌盛世備忘錄：香港樂壇變奏》，香港：突破出版社，2022 年。

陳嘉銘、吳子瑜、海邊欄著：《給香港樂壇寫笑忘書》，香港：突破出版社，2024 年。

馮應謙：《香港流行音樂文化：文化研究讀本》，香港：麥穗出版社，2004 年。

潘毅、余麗文編：《書寫城市：香港的身份與文化》，香港：牛津大學出版社，2003 年。

羅貴祥、文潔華編：《雜嘜時代：文化身份、性別、日常生活實踐與香港電影 1970s》，香港：牛津大學出版社，2005 年。

標記*號為中譯本

Grade Descriptors

Grade	Overall course
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B *	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C*	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D*	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

學術誠信 Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to university policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed [declaration](#) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.
- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.
- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case,

agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

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.