Chinese Film and Literature

ANS 372 (31785); CL 323 (33720)
Spring 2012

Class Time: TTH 11-12:30 Location: MEZ 1.216
Film screenings: W 4:00 – 7:00 Location: DFA 4.104

Instructor: Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Professor
Office: WCH 4.124 E-mail: yvonne@mail.utexas.edu
Office hours: T 3:30 – 6:30

I. Course Description

Through analyzing selected literary and cinematic texts from China in the last century, this course explores how the Chinese people encounters modernity and copes with its consequences. Forced onto the stage of the modern world by Western imperial powers in the second-half of the nineteenth century, China has since traveled along a convoluted course of modernization, punctuated by war, revolution, and drastic socioeconomic reforms. During this process, Chinese cultural producers have constantly swayed between artistic and political imperatives, tradition and modernity, and resistance and incorporation of foreign (read Western) influences. The central concerns of this course, therefore, reside in not only the literary and the cultural, but also the historical and the ideological domains.

II. Structure, Format, and Procedures

The course is divided into four sections:

1). Republican Era (1911-1949): We will read writings by the canonized May Fourth intellectuals, stories by Sino-liberal and Leftwing writers in the 1930s, and fiction works from the urban and rural areas in the 1940s before the Communist Revolution. We will also view landmark films made between the 1930s and the 1950s (which include films produced before and after 1949; in the case of the latter the films were adapted from literary works of the Republican Era). One exception is a recent movie on the Sino-Japanese war, which was made in the 2000s.

2). Mao Era (1949-1976): We will discuss the state-monitored “socialist” literary system that was in place during the first three decades of the People’s Republic of China (founded in 1949) and watch a representative “model play” from the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976).

3). Early Reform Era (1977- mid-1990s): This section began with China’s adoption of the open-door policy under Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A special focus will be placed on literary and cinematic representations of the collective trauma in the Cultural Revolution.

4). Contemporary Period (late-1990s - present): We will study works produced in response
to the powerful trends of commercialization and globalization that have overtaken the Chinese society in the last two decades and drastically transformed its cultural institutions. These include one popular novel and several celebrated art films as well as entertainment movies with box-office success.

### III. Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete all reading and film viewing assignments listed in the Schedule before coming to class.

Three interpretative papers, of 5-6, 3-4, and 7-8 pages in length respectively, are required. A brief outline of the paper should be turned in a week before the paper is due.

Four pre-scheduled quizzes on background readings will be given. There will also be unannounced quizzes on stories and films assigned for the week at the very beginning of the class. Please try not to be late, as normally no makeups for unannounced quizzes would be given. Makeups for the pre-scheduled background-reading quizzes may be arranged for legitimate reasons, with possible penalties.

Starting in the second week, attendance sheets will be handed out at each class. Please remember to sign your name. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences in the entire semester. Please plan ahead. Excessive absences would significantly lower your final grade.

### IV. Grading Policies

(a) Three papers: \(70\% = 20\%\) (1\(^{\text{st}}\) paper); \(15\%\) (2\(^{\text{nd}}\) paper); \(35\%\) (3\(^{\text{rd}}\) paper)

(b) Quizzes: \(20\% = 12\%\) (4 pre-scheduled quizzes); \(8\%\) (unannounced quizzes; depending on the total number actually given, a few quizzes of the lowest scores may be dropped from the final-grade calculation)

(c) Class participation: \(10\%\). Everyone is given the same initial grade. Points will be added to this initial grade for those who participate actively in class discussions with quality comments, and subtracted for those who do not participate well (especially those who do not respond--or respond with something like “I don’t know”--when called upon to offer comments).

*As a rule, no late turn-ins or electronic submissions of papers will be accepted.

**Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade.

***Absences exceeding the allowed quota (3 absences in the whole semester) may result in automatic dropping of the final grade by one or more levels.

### V. Course Materials

b). Books available at the University Co-op:
   2. Mian Mian, *Candy: A Novel*
   3. Wang Anyi, *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*

c). Either scanned copies or the link information of additional reading materials are posted in “Course Documents” on Blackboard.

**Documented Disability Statement**
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.
Chinese Film and Literature
Schedule
*This schedule is subject to later modifications

Chang
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Abbreviations:
CP = Course packet
BL = attachment to “Course Documents” on Blackboard
Co-op = books available at Co-op
On-line = available online

I. Republican Era (1911-1949)

*Unless specifically marked with (CP), stories for this section can be found in Modern Chinese Stories and Novellas 1919-1949 (Co-op).

Jan 17  The Pre-revolution period (the Republican Era, 1911-1949)
China in Revolution (PBS video) (1st half, shown in class)

*No film screening on Wed., Jan 18.

19  China in Revolution (PBS video) (2nd half, shown in class)


24  May Fourth reexamination of traditional Chinese culture
Preface to Call to Arms (Lu Hsun or Lu Xun, 1923) (CP); "A Madman's Diary" (Lu Hsun or Lu Xun, 1918) (CP); "Medicine" (Lu Hsun or Lu Xun, 1919); “The New Year Sacrifice” (Lu Hsun or Lu Xun, 1924)

26  Communist reinterpretation of the May Fourth criticism
The New Year Sacrifice (Sang Hu, 1956)

31  The ideological split
Chapter IX, “The Ideological and Political Split, 1919-1921” from The May Fourth Movement (Chow, 1967, c1960) (CP)

*1st background-reading quiz (Ch I & IX from The May Fourth Movement).
**No film screening on Wed., Feb 1.

Feb 2  The Sino-liberals and the Leftwing
"Hsiao-hsiao" (Shen Ts’ung-wen or Shen Congwen, 1929); "Quiet" (Shen Ts’ung-wen or Shen Congwen, 1932); “Goats” (Hsiao Chun, 1935)

7 The Sino-liberals and the Leftwing (continued)
"Spring Silkworms" (Mao Tun, or Mao Dun, 1934); "Young Master Gets His Tonic" (Wu Tsu-hsiang, or Wu Zuxiang, 1932); "The Fan Village" (Wu Tsu-hsiang, or Wu Zuxiang, 1935)

9 Communist adaptation of the left-wing writing in the pre-revolution period
The Lin Family Shop (Shui Hua, 1959)

14 Budding feminism in the Republican era
“Miss Sophia’s Diary” (Ding Ling or Ting Ling, 1927) (CP); “Yu Kuan” (Hsu Ti-shan or Xu Dishan, 1939); “Embroidered Pillows” (Ling Shu-hua or Ling Shuhua, 1928)

16 Progressive film studios in pre-revolution Shanghai
New Women (Cai Chusheng, 1935)

21 “Modernist” stories from Shanghai
“One Evening in the Rainy Season” (Shi Zhicun, 1929) (CP); “Shanghai Foxtrot” (Mu Shiying, 1934) (BL); “Sealed Off” (Eileen Chang or Zhang Ailing, 1943) (CP); “Shame, Amah” (Eileen Chang or Zhang Ailing, 1944) (BL)

23 The Sino-Japanese War, a contemporary perspective
City of Life and Death (Lu Chuan, 2009) or Devils on the Doorstep (Jiang Wen, 2000)

*Outline of the First Paper due

28 Urban and rural stories on the eve of the Communist Revolution
“The Golden Cangue” (Eileen Chang or Zhang Ailing, 1943); “Lucky” (Chao Shu-li or Zhao Shuli, 1946)

Mar 1 End of an era
Crows and Sparrows (Zheng Junli, 1950)

* First Paper (5-6 pages) due

II. Mao Era (1949-1976)

6 Literary system in the People’s Republic of China
The Mao’s Years, 1949-76 (PBS video, screening in class)

*2nd background-reading quiz (on “Introduction” to *Roses and Thorns*)

**No film screening on Wed., Mar 7, at the regular venue; please view the film *While Haired Girl* online before the Thursday class (see “Course Documents” on Blackboard for the links).

8 **The “Model Plays”**  
*White Haired Girl* (Sang Hu, 1972)


13 Spring Break

15 Spring Break

### III. Early Reform Era (1977- mid-1990s)

20 **Reflections on the Cultural Revolution**


“Remembering Xiao Shan” (Ba Jin, 1979) (CP); “Living Hell” (Wen Jieruo, 1990) (CP); “Foreword,” *Six Chapters from My Life “Downunder”* (Qian Zhongshu, 1980) (CP)

*3rd background-reading quiz (on all readings assigned under “Reflections on the Cultural Revolution”)

22 *Hibiscus Town* (Xie Jin, 1986)

27 **“Root-seeking” trend and the zhiqing (the “sent-down” educated youths) stories**  
"The King of Chess" (Ahcheng, 1984) (CP); "King of Trees" (Ahcheng, 1984) (CP); “A Story” (Chen Cun, 1986) (CP)

29 *To Live* (Zhang Yimou, 1994)

**Apr** 3 **Modernist and avant-garde writings**

“Hut on the Hill” (Can Xue, 1985) (CP); "Dry River" (Mo Yan, 1985) (CP); “Pa Pa Pa” (Han Shaogong, 1985) (CP); “One Kind of Reality” (Yu Hua, 1988);

5 *The Blue Kite* (Tian Zhuangzhuang, 1993)
10 Cultural Revolution and Nostalgia for the “Old China”
   The Song of Everlasting Sorrow (Wang Anyi, 1996) (Co-op)

12 Farewell My Concubine (Chen Kaige, 1993)

*Topic for Second Paper due

IV. Contemporary Period (late-1990s - present)

17 Burgeoning popular culture
   Candy: A Novel (Mian Mian, 1999) (Co-op)

19 Maturation of the art film institution
   Platform (Jia Zhangke, 2000)

*Second paper (3-4 pages) due

23 *Special screening on Monday, Blind Shaft (Li Yang, 2003)

24 Blind Shaft (Li Yang, 2003)

26 Landmarks of the new mainstream movies
   Assembly (Feng Xiaogang, 2007)

Start reading selections from Shuyu Kong, Consuming Literature: Best Sellers and the Commercialization of Literary Production in Contemporary China (Stanford University Press, 2005) (BL)

May 1 Online public sphere
   “Han Han Digest: China's #1 blogger translated” (On-line)
   http://www.hanhandigest.com/

Complete reading the selections from Shuyu Kong, Consuming Literature: Best Sellers and the Commercialization of Literary Production in Contemporary China.

*4th background-reading quiz (on selections from Consuming Literature)

3 Let the Bullet Fly (Jiang Wen, 2011)

*Course Instructor Survey
**Outline for Third Paper due.

**Third paper (8 pages) due at 4 PM on May 10 in my office (WCH 4.124). No late turn-ins or electronic submissions will be accepted.
# Film List

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Screening Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>*No screening</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>Feb.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>The Lin Family Shop (Shui Hua)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>New Woman (Cai Chusheng)</td>
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<td>City of Life and Death (Lu Chuan) or Devils on the Doorstep (Jiang Wen)</td>
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<td>Mar.</td>
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<td>Crows and Sparrows</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>*No screening</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>To Live (Zhang Yimou)</td>
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<td>Apr.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Blue Kite (Tian Zhuangzhuang)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Farewell My Concubine (Chen Kaige)</td>
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<td>Platform (Jia Zhangke)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>**Special screening on Monday, Blind Shaft (Li Yang) Room: MEZ B0.306</td>
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<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Assembly (Feng Xiaogang)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Let the Bullet Fly (Jiang Wen)</td>
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