

# HUMA 1210: Chinese Women on Screen

**Instructor:** Daisy Yan Du  
Associate Professor  
Division of Humanities  
Office: Room 2369 (Lift 13-15), Academic Bldg  
Office phone: (852) 2358-7792  
E-mail: [daisyandu@ust.hk](mailto:daisyandu@ust.hk)  
Office hours: by appointment only

**Teaching Assistant:** TBA  
E-mail: TBA  
Office: Room 3001 (Lift 4), Academic Bldg  
Office hours: by appointment only

**Time & Classroom:**  
Time: 15-17:50pm, Friday, Fall 2019  
Room: LTH

**Required Readings:**

- All available online at “Modules,” Canvas

## **Course Description:**

This course examines Chinese women as both historical and fictional figures to unravel the convoluted relationship between history and visual representations. It follows a chronological order, beginning with women in Republican China and ending with contemporary female immigrants in the age of globalization. The changing images of women on screen go hand in hand with major cinematic movements in history, including the leftist turn in the 1930s, the rise of “Solitary Island” cinema in wartime Shanghai, socialist realism during the Seventeen Years (1949-1966), model opera film during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), post-1989 underground/independent filmmaking, and the globalization of cinema in contemporary China. Approaches of film analyses and gender/sexuality theories will be introduced throughout the course. All reading materials, lectures, classroom discussions, and exams are in English.

## **Course Objectives:**

By the end of this semester students should be able to:

- track the changing images of women in history
- track the changing images of women on screen
- summarize major cinematic movements in film history
- explore the nuanced relationship between women on and off screen (women as representations on film and women as real people in socio-historical context)
- sharpen critical thinking and use gender/sexuality theories to analyze women on



believe you have a legitimate reason for a make-up exam. You are expected to present convincing documents to the instructor. The make-up exam will be completely different from the regular one and will be more difficult.

- **No Late Submission** will be accepted. Please be on time.
- **Preparation:** You are expected to be well prepared before each class begins. Please read related course materials and watch the required films of the week before you come to class. In this way, you can better make the most of classroom discussions.
- **Electronic Devices:** Please turn off your cell phones in class. Laptops, iPad, and other electronic devices are allowed only for taking notes in class. Please do not use them to check emails and browse irrelevant websites. If a student is found violating the rules, it means 5 points off his/her final score.
- **Notification in Advance:** Always inform the instructor at least three days in advance for absence and other issues that need special attention and accommodation.
- **Religious Holiday Accommodation:** If you wish to claim accommodation for a religious holiday, you should talk to your instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. You need to provide supporting documents.
- **Learning Disability Accommodation:** If you wish to claim accommodation for any kind of learning disability, you should talk to your instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. Please provide supporting documents.
- **Academic Integrity:** Any academic dishonesty of any kind will be officially processed in accordance with the policies of the university.

## **Week 1 (Sept 6): Introduction: Chinese Women on and off Screen**

### Film Screening:

- *Chinese Women: The Great Step Forward—From Confucius to Mao* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2001) (54 minutes)
- *From Mao Towards Full Equality* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2001) (55 minutes)

### Readings:

- Tani Barlow, “Theorizing Woman: Funü, Guojia, Jiating (Chinese Women, Chinese State, Chinese Family),” *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*, 173-196.
- Zhang Zhen, “Introduction,” *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema*, xiii-xxxiii
- David Bordwell, “Glossary,” *Film Art: An Introduction*
- “History of China,” MCLC Resource Center, <<http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/toc.html>>

## **Week 2 (Sept 13): Prostitutes and the Nation in Republican China**

### Film Screening:

- *The Goddess* (Wu Yonggang, 1934) Shanghai: Lianhua, 74 minutes
- *The Flowers of War* (Zhang Yimou, 2011). Recommended.

### Readings:

- Rey Chow, “Visuality, Modernity, and Primitive Passions,” *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, 4-26.
- Zhang Yingjing, “Prostitution and Urban Imagination: Negotiating the Public and the Private in Chinese Films of the 1930s” in *Cinema and Urban Culture*, 160-182.
- Film Synopsis of *The Goddess*:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Goddess\\_%281934\\_film%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Goddess_%281934_film%29)

## **Week 3 (Sept 20): New Women in Republican China**

### Film Screening:

- *New Women* (Cai Chusheng, 1934) Shanghai: Lianhua, 114 minutes
- *Center Stage* (Stanley Kwan, 1992). Recommended.

### Readings:

- Kristine Harris, “The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai,” *Transnational Chinese Cinemas* (University of Hawaii press, Honolulu, 1997), 277-302.

- Laikwan Pang, “The Left-wing Cinema Movement,” *Building a New China in Cinema: The Chinese Left-Wing Cinema Movement, 1932-1937*, 37-72.
- Film Synopsis of *New Women*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Women](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Women)
- Nora in *A Doll’s House* (Ibsen): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Doll%27s\\_House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Doll%27s_House)

#### **Week 4 (Sept 27): Women, Wartime Nationalism, and Animated Film**

##### Film Screening:

- *Princess Iron Fan* (Wan Brothers, 1941) Shanghai: Xinhua/Lianhe Studio, 73 minutes
- *Havoc in Heaven* (Wan Laiming, 1961-1964). Recommended.
- *Mulan* (Disney, 1998). Recommended.

##### Readings:

- Poshek Fu, “The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-Occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945,” *Cinema Journal* No. 1 (Autumn 1997): 66-84.
- Hung Chang-tai, “Female Symbols of Resistance in Chinese Wartime Spoken Drama,” *Modern China* 15:2 (April 1989): 149-177.
- *Journey to the West*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journey\\_to\\_the\\_West](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journey_to_the_West)
- Film Synopsis of *Princess Iron Fan*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess\\_Iron\\_Fan\\_%281941\\_film%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Iron_Fan_%281941_film%29)
- Hua Mulan: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hua\\_Mulan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hua_Mulan)

#### **Week 5 (Oct 4): Female Voice-over and Male Director**

##### Film Screening:

- *Spring in a Small Town* (Fei Mu, 1948) Xi’an: Xi’an Studio, 91 minutes

##### Readings:

- Jie Li, “Home and Nation Amid the Rubble: Fei Mu’s *Spring in a Small Town* and Jia Zhangke’s *Still Life*,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 21 no. 2 (Fall 2009): 86-125.
- Mary Ann Doane, “The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space,” *Yale French Studies* 60 (1980): 33-50.

#### **Week 6 (Oct 11): Women and Machines: Tractor Girls and Socialist Modernity**

##### Film Screening:

- *Spark of Life* (Dong Fang, 1962) Xi’an: Xi’an Studio, 91 minutes

##### Readings:

- Daisy Yan Du, “Socialist Modernity in the Wasteland: Changing Representations of

the Female Tractor Driver in China, 1949-1964,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* (Spring 2017): 55-94.

- Tina Mai Chen, “Female Icons, Feminist Iconography? Socialist Rhetoric and Women’s Agency in 1950s China,” *Gender & History* 15 (2), 2003: 268-95.
- Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), 149-181.
- Film Synopsis of *Spark of Life* in PDF format

### **Week 7 (Oct 18): Ethnic Girls and Socialism**

Film Screening:

- *Five Golden Flowers* (Wang Jiayi, 1959) Changchun: Chuangchun Film Studio, 90 minutes

Readings:

- Ling Zhang, “Navigating Gender, Ethnicity and Space: *Five Golden Flowers* as a Socialist Road Movie,” in *The Global Road Movie*, 150-171.
- Paul Clark, “Ethnic Minorities in Chinese Films: Cinema and the Exotic,” *East-West Film Journal* 1.2 (1987): 15-32.

### **Week 8 (Oct 25): Midterm Exam (Closed Book) in Class**

### **Week 9 (Nov 1): Women and Masculinity during the Cultural Revolution**

Film Screening:

- *Red Detachment of Women* (Fu Jie and Pan Wenzhan, 1971) Beijing: Beijing Studio, 100 minutes
- *Red Detachment of Women* (Xie Jin, 1961). Recommended.

Readings:

- Kristine Harris, “Re-makes/Re-models: The Red Detachment of Women between Stage and Screen,” *Opera Quarterly* 26 (2010): 316-342.
- Paul Clark, “Introduction: A Revolution in Culture,” *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History*, 1-9.
- Cultural Revolution: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution)
- Film Synopsis of *Red Detachment of Women*  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_Detachment\\_of\\_Women\\_%28ballet%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Detachment_of_Women_%28ballet%29)

## **Week 10 (Nov 8): Women Directors**

### Film Screening:

- *Woman, Demon, Human* (Huang Shuqin, 1987) Shanghai: Shanghai Studio, 102 minutes

### Readings:

- Haiyan Lee, “*Woman, Demon, Human: The Spectral Journey Home*,” *Chinese Films in Focus II*, edited by Chris Berry. 2nd edition, 243-249.
- Dai Jinhua, “Invisible Women: Contemporary Chinese Cinema and Women’s Film,” *Positions* 3:1 (Spring 1995): 255-280.
- Film Synopsis of *Woman, Demon, Human* in PDF format

## **Week 11 (Nov 15): Female Migrant Workers**

### Film Screening:

- *Ermo* (Zhou Xiaowen, 1994) Shanghai: Shanghai Studio, 95 minutes

### Readings:

- Judith Farquhar, “Technologies of Everyday Life: The Economy of Impotence in Reform China,” *Cultural Anthropology* 14:2 (May, 1999): 155-179.
- Janet Wolff, “On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism,” *Cultural Studies* 7.2 (1993): 224–39.
- Film Synopsis: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ermo>

## **Week 12 (Nov 22): Gender, Forced Migration, and Independent Filmmaking**

### Film Screening:

- *Bingai* (Feng Yan, 2007) 117 minutes
- *Bumming in Beijing: The Last Dreamers* (Wu Wenguang, 1990). Recommended.

### Readings:

- Daisy Yan Du, “Documenting Three Gorges Migrants: Gendered Voices of Dis/placement and Citizenship in Rediscovering the Yangtze River and Bingai,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 38.1&2 (Spring/Summer 2010): 27-47.
- Paul Pickowicz, “Social and Political Dynamics of Underground Filmmaking in China,” *From Underground to Independent: Alternative Film Culture in Contemporary China*, 1-21.
- Three Gorges Dam: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Gorges\\_Dam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Gorges_Dam)

## **Week 13 (Nov 29): Gender, Diaspora and Transnational Feminism**

### Film Screening:

- *Farewell China* (Clara Law, 1990) Hong Kong: Youhe Film, 111 minutes

### Readings:

- Gina Marchetti, "Gender and Generation in Clara Law's Migration Trilogy: Farewell China, Autumn Moon, and Floating Life," *From Tiananmen to Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screens: 1989-1997*.
- Rosi Braidotti, "The Exile, the Nomad, and the Migrant: Reflections on International Feminism," *Women's Studies International Forum* 15 (1992): 7–10.