

**Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus**

Course Code: HUMA 1210
Course Title: Chinese Women on Screen
Course Offered in: Fall 2026
Course Instructor: Professor Daisy Yan Du

Course Description: This course approaches Chinese women as both historical and fictional figures to unravel the complicated relationship between history and visual representation. Each week revolves around a special topic and a film about Chinese women located in a specific socio-historical period. This course is in chronological order, beginning from Republican women to contemporary female immigrants in the age of globalization. The changing images of women on screen went hand in hand with major cinematic movements in history, including the left turn in the 1930s, the rise of animation, socialist filmmaking, model opera film, underground/independent filmmaking, and the cinematic globalization. The purpose of this course is to build a foundation for students from different academic backgrounds who may have little or no knowledge of Chinese culture and history. Proficiency in Chinese is a plus but not required because all reading materials and class discussion are in English.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

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

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

**Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus**

Course Outline:

Week	Topic
1	Introduction Film Screening: • <i>Chinese Women: The Great Step Forward—From Confucius to Mao</i> (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2003) (54 minutes) Secondary: • Tani Barlow, "Theorizing Woman: Funü, Guojia, Jiating (Chinese Women, Chinese State, Chinese Family), <i>Genders</i> 10:132-160 • Zhang Zhen, "Introduction," <i>An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema, 1896-1937</i> • "History of China," MCLC Resource Center, <http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/toc.html>
2	Prostitutes and Nation in Republican China Film Screening: • <i>The Goddess</i> (Wu Yonggang, 1932) Secondary: • Zhang Yingjing, "Prostitution and Urban Imagination: Negotiating the Public and the Private in Chinese Films of the 1930s" in <i>Cinema and Urban Culture</i>, 160-182.
3	Progressive New Women in Republican China Film Screening: • <i>New Women</i> (Cai Chusheng, 1935) Secondary: • Kristine Harris, "The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai," <i>Transnational Chinese Cinemas</i> (University of Hawaii press, Honolulu, 1997), 277-302.

**Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus**

4	Women, War, and Animated Film in Occupied Shanghai Film Screening: • <i>Princess Iron Fan</i> (Wan Brothers, 1941) Secondary: • Poshek Fu, "The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-Occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945," <i>Cinema Journal</i> No. 1 (Autumn 1997): 66-84.
5	Women, Machines, and Revolution: Tractor Girls in Socialist China Film Screening: • <i>The Sparkle of Life</i> (Dong Fang, 1962) Secondary: • Chen, Tina Mai. "Female Icons, Feminist Iconography? Socialist Rhetoric and Women's Agency in 1950s China." <i>Gender & History</i> 15 (2), 2003: 268-95.
6	Women, Children, and Animals Film Screening: • <i>Heroic Little Sisters of the Grassland</i> (Qian Yunda, 1965) • <i>Sons and Daughters of the Grassland</i>, 1975 Secondary: • Hélène Cixous, "Birds, Women and Writing," <i>Animal Philosophy</i>, 167-173 • Akira Lippit, "Remembering Animals," <i>Electric Animal: Toward A Rhetoric of Wildlife</i>, 1-26.

Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus

7	Women and the Cultural Revolution Film Screening: • <i>Red Detachment of Women</i> (Fu Jie and Pan Wenzhan, 1970) Secondary: • Kristine Harris, "Re-makes/Re-models: The Red Detachment of Women between Stage and Screen," <i>Opera Quarterly</i> 26 (2010): 316-342. • Wendy Larson, "Never This Wild: Sexing the Cultural Revolution." <i>Modern China</i> 25. 4 (1999): 423-50.
8	Midterm Exam
9	Women Filmmakers Film Screening: • <i>Ren, gui, qing</i> (Human, Demon, Love, Huang Shuqin, 1987) Secondary: • Haiyan Lee, "Woman, Demon, Human: The Spectral Journey Home," <i>Chinese Films in Focus II</i>, ed. Chris Berry. 2nd edition (BFI Publishing), 243-249.
10	Ethnic Girls and Internal Orientalism Film Screening: • <i>Sacrificed Youth</i> (Zhou Xiaowen, 1994) Secondary: • Paul Clark, "Ethnic Minorities in Chinese Films: Cinema and the Exotic," <i>East-West Film Journal</i> 1.2 (1987): 15-32. • Louisa Schein, "Gender and Internal Orientalism" in <i>Modern China</i>, 23(1): 60-98.

**Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus**

11	Female Migrant Workers Film Screening: • <i>Ermo</i> (Zhou Xiaowen, 1994) Secondary: • Ping Fu, "Ermo: (Tele) Visualizing Urban/ Rural Transformation," <i>Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes</i>
12	Gender and Forced Migration Film Screening: • <i>Bingai</i> (Feng Yan, 2007) Secondary: • Paul Pickowicz, "Social and Political Dynamics of Underground Filmmaking in China," <i>From Underground to Independent: Alternative Film Culture in Contemporary China</i>, 1-21.
13	Female Diaspora and Transnational Feminism Film Screening: • <i>Farewell China</i> (Clara Law, 1990) Secondary: • Susan Stanford Friedman, "Bodies on the Move: A Poetics of Home and Diaspora," <i>Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature</i> 23.2 (Fall 2004): 1-24

Planned Assessment Tasks:

* Attendance:	10%
* Mid-term Exam:	40%
* Final Exam:	50%