

HUMA 2205 Asian Cinema, Global Cinema

Course Information	Instructor Information
Fall 2026	Name: Zhiwen Hu
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Classroom: LG5202	Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course will examine contemporary films from East and Southeast Asia with a particular attention to their place in a system of global flows of cultural commodities and capital. Our point of departure will be an unpacking of the category of “Asian Cinema” (and its constituent national cinemas) by highlighting how it always already bears within its sign a trans-national dimension. Beginning with an accounting of the interlinked history of cinema (and the schema of visibility into which it emerged) and the nation-state form, we will discuss such issues as the production of nostalgia, diasporic translingual practices, the orientalist gaze, and the cinematic mode of production to articulate the stakes of the practices of looking we enact in the present when the idea of “Asian cinema” is invoked.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze key issues surrounding such topics as diasporic migration, colonial history, and globalization
2. Perform formal and stylistic analyses of films to become an active rather than passive viewer of cinema
3. Describe how contemporary Asian cinema has been shaped by the historical force of imperialism, which continues to shape their narratives in the present
4. Analyze key works of film, their cinematic techniques, and their thematic concerns in contemporary East and Southeast Asia

Course Materials

Most of the reading materials will be provided by the instructor, so you are not required to purchase textbooks.* However, you will need to rent or purchase movies on YouTube or other streaming platforms. The instructor will notify you about which movies to obtain.

*All copy-righted materials have been made available **for informational and educational purposes only**. Please delete them after this course ends. Students are not allowed to use these materials for other purposes during this course.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Each student can have up to 4 unpenalized absences, no explanation needed, in the whole semester. From the 5th to the 8th absence, each will result in a 2-point deduction from your final overall score. If you have 9 or more absences, you will get an F in this class. Significant extended illness or other legitimate excuses* are rare; such instances would be handled on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the university policies. Attendance will be taken after the drop/add period. If students are late and not present at the time of the attendance check, it is their responsibility to come to the instructor after the class to have the attendance record changed. Otherwise, it will be recorded as an absence.

*An absence with a legitimate excuse means that the student's nonattendance at a particular class can be justified with authorized proof, such as a doctor's note attesting the student's illness or a medical emergency, or an official document verifying a university-related event, i.e., a conference, a competition, or a tournament, that s/he misses the class for.

Grading

01. Participation (10%)

Discussions in class and small groups are crucial for the students' understanding of the course materials and for inspiring new ideas. Students are encouraged to ask diverse questions while the whole class can contribute to looking for answers to these questions and furthering discussions on important issues. The primary goal in this class is not to get perfect answers but to actively participate in class discussions and make efforts to articulate ideas. Refusal to participate in class discussions or engaging in activities irrelevant to the class will negatively impact your participation grade.

02. Group Presentation (20%)

Throughout the semester, you will complete one group presentation in class. Each group will deliver a 15–20-minute presentation on an assigned topic, and every member is expected to make a meaningful contribution to both the preparation and the presentation. Presentations should demonstrate effective collaboration, clear organization, and thoughtful engagement with the course materials, while also showcasing each student's individual effort and understanding. Groups are encouraged to use multimedia to support their analysis and discussion. Detailed presentation guidelines and the grading rubric will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

03. Reading Journal (20%)

Throughout the semester, students are required to keep a reading journal. You need to complete a total of **10 entries**, each about **300–400 words long**. Each entry accounts for 2% of your final grade. The journal will be submitted twice during the semester, with 5 entries included in each submission. The deadlines will be provided on the course schedule.

Reading journals should focus on your own understanding and interpretation of the assigned materials rather than simply summarizing the content. Strong entries should demonstrate personal engagement with the readings and films by raising questions, making connections, offering critical reflections, or explaining how your perspective has developed through the course. The goal is to showcase your individual thinking and analytical voice—qualities that distinguish thoughtful human interpretation from AI-generated summaries or descriptions.

04. Midterm Exam: Three Short Essay Questions (25%)

For the Midterm Exam, you will answer three short essay questions during class time based on the films, readings, and theories covered in the first half of the course. Your responses should demonstrate a clear understanding of the course materials by developing focused arguments supported with specific examples from the assigned readings and films.

The Midterm Exam is an individual, closed-book, in-class assessment. The use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI tools is strictly prohibited. Students are expected to complete the examination independently without outside assistance.

Responses will be evaluated based on the quality of the argument, the effective use of textual and visual evidence, critical engagement with the course materials, and the clarity and organization of the writing. Further details regarding the examination format and grading criteria will be announced on Canvas before the examination.

05. Final Paper Project (25%)

At the end of the semester, you will complete a Final Paper Project in groups of five. Your final paper should be about 35 pages long, excluding the title page, references, and the Generative AI Usage Report. There are no specific formatting requirements, but your paper should maintain a consistent and professional style throughout (such as MLA/APA). The deadline will be announced in the course schedule.

This project is designed as a human–AI co-creation assignment. Each group is expected to collaborate with generative AI throughout the research and writing process while demonstrating meaningful human contribution. The final paper should present a clear thesis, provide sufficient evidence to support its argument, and engage with relevant academic sources. Course materials may also be cited where appropriate.

A key component of this project is collaboration. Each group must demonstrate a clear division of labor, active cooperation among members, and the successful integration of individual contributions into a coherent final paper. In addition, every group is required to submit a Generative AI Usage Report that clearly documents how generative AI was used throughout the project, including the stages at which it was employed, the purposes it served, representative prompts, and how its outputs were evaluated, revised, or incorporated into the final submission. The purpose of this report is to promote transparency and responsible AI use.

The detailed grading rubric and submission guidelines for the Final Paper Project will be published on Canvas near the end of the semester.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessment	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Participation	ILO1, ILO2	Assesses students' engagement with course topics and their ability to participate in discussions using critical film analysis.
Presentation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO4	Evaluates students' ability to analyze historical issues, cinematic techniques, and thematic concerns through oral

		presentation.
Reading Journal	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Assesses students' understanding of course readings, film analysis, and the historical contexts of Asian cinema.
Midterm Exam	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Evaluates students' understanding of key concepts, historical contexts, and methods of film analysis.
Final Paper	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	Assesses students' ability to conduct independent research, develop a coherent argument, and apply historical and cinematic analysis in a collaborative AI-assisted project.

Schedule*

Week	Topic
Week 1 (09.01 & 09.03)	Introduction and Crazy Rich Asians (2019)
Week 2 (09.08 & 09.10)	Tiong Bahru Social Club (2020) and Black Mirror (S03 E01)
Week 3 (09.15 & 09.17)	Karmalink (2021)
Week 4 (09.22 & 09.24)	Two Version of SinoFuturism: Wandering Earth (2019) and Legend of the Ancient Sword (2018)
Week 5 (09.29 & 10.01)	Wukong and International Wukong
Week 6 (10.06 & 10.08)	Journey to the West (宇宙探索编辑部 2021)
Week 7 (10.13 & 10.15)	Parasite (2019) and Black Mirror (S07 E01)
Week 8 (10.20 & 10.22)	The Host (2006) and Alien (1979)
Week 9 (10.27 & 10.29)	Air Doll (2009) and Black Mirror (S05 E01)
Week 10 (11.03 & 11.05)	Spirited Away (2001) and K-pop Demon Hunter (2025)
Week 11 (11.10 & 11.12)	Ghost in the Shell (1995) & Pantheon (2022)

Week 12 (11.17 & 11.19)	Digital Parenting and Parenting the Digits
Week 13 (11.24 & 11.26)	<i>Prometheus (2012)</i> & “Taking Care of God”

*A more detailed course schedule, including weekly topics, assigned readings and films, assessment deadlines, and submission instructions, will be made available on Canvas at the beginning of the semester. Any updates or adjustments to the schedule will be announced in advance through Canvas.

Grade Scale

A: 93.00-100.00	A-: 90.00-92.99
B+: 86.00-89.99	B: 83.00-85.99
B-: 80.00-82.99	C+: 76.00-79.99
C: 73.00-75.99	C-: 70.00-72.99
D: 60.00-69.99	F: 0.00-59.99

Late submission Policy

To ensure fairness for students who submit assignments on time, a penalty for late submission is listed as follows:

- Late submission within 12 hours, 25% penalty will be applied.
- Late submission between 12 to 24 hours, 50% penalty will be applied.
- Late submission for more than 24 hours will not be accepted.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Students who have further questions should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Course AI Policy

The use of Generative AI is permitted and requested to assist students with brainstorming, drafting, and writing their papers.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST - Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Course Assessment Rubrics

01. Participation (10%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
Attendance & Preparation	Always prepared, completes all readings, and consistently demonstrates initiative.	Usually prepared with only minor omissions.	Generally prepared but occasionally misses required preparation.	Frequently underprepared and relies on others.	Rarely prepared and shows little evidence of completing assigned work.
Discussion & Engagement	Leads discussions with insightful comments, thoughtful questions, and constructive responses.	Participates regularly with relevant contributions.	Participates occasionally but contributions are mostly descriptive.	Speaks infrequently and contributes little to discussion.	Rarely participates or remains disengaged.

Critical Thinking	Consistently offers original interpretations, evaluates multiple perspectives, and supports ideas with evidence.	Demonstrates clear analytical thinking with occasional originality.	Shows basic understanding with limited analysis.	Primarily summarizes ideas with little interpretation.	Demonstrates little understanding or critical engagement.
Professionalism	Always respectful, attentive, and contributes positively to the learning environment.	Generally professional with only minor lapses.	Usually respectful but occasionally distracted.	Frequently distracted or inattentive.	Disruptive or unprofessional behavior negatively affects the class.

02. Presentation (20%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
Content & Research	Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge supported by high-quality	Shows strong understanding with appropriate supporting evidence.	Covers the main ideas accurately but lacks depth or breadth.	Content is incomplete or contains noticeable inaccuracies.	Content is largely inaccurate or insufficient.

	academic sources and accurate evidence.				
Critical Analysis	Develops original, insightful analysis that synthesizes multiple perspectives .	Provides clear analysis beyond summary with some original insights.	Includes basic analysis but relies heavily on description.	Limited analysis with minimal interpretation .	Primarily descriptive with little or no analysis.
Organization	Presentation is exceptionally well organized with a logical, engaging structure and smooth transitions.	Well organized and easy to follow.	Generally organized despite occasional lapses.	Organization is inconsistent and sometimes difficult to follow.	Poorly organized and difficult to understand.
Collaboration	Group demonstrates seamless teamwork, balanced participation	Members collaborate effectively with only minor imbalance.	Most members contribute adequately.	Collaboration is uneven and coordination is limited.	Little evidence of teamwork or collaboration.

	, and excellent coordination.				
Individual Contribution	Each member demonstrates clear expertise, preparation, and meaningful contribution.	All members contribute with minor differences in quality.	Most members contribute satisfactorily.	Some members contribute very little.	Individual contributions are missing or unclear.
Delivery	Confident, engaging delivery with effective multimedia and excellent response to questions.	Clear and professional delivery with appropriate visual support.	Understandable delivery with adequate presentation skills.	Frequent reading from slides or weak communication.	Presentation is unclear, unprepared, or ineffective.

03. Reading Journal (20%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
Personal Engagement	Demonstrates deep personal engagement through thoughtful reflections, meaningful questions, and genuine intellectual curiosity rather than simply recounting the reading.	Shows clear personal engagement with thoughtful reflections and reactions.	Includes some personal response but remains partly descriptive.	Personal engagement is limited and largely superficial.	Primarily summarizes the reading with little or no personal response.
Critical Thinking	Develops insightful interpretations, evaluates ideas critically,	Provides thoughtful analysis that goes beyond summary.	Shows basic interpretation with limited critical analysis.	Relies mainly on description with minimal interpretation	Shows little evidence of critical thinking or understanding.

	and considers alternative perspectives with supporting reasoning.			on.	
Connections	Makes sophisticated connections among readings, films, theories, class discussions, or broader social and cultural issues.	Makes several relevant and well-developed connections.	Makes some appropriate connections with limited development.	Connections are weak, isolated, or only loosely relevant.	Fails to connect the journal to other course materials.
Originality & Individual Voice	Demonstrates a distinctive analytical voice and independent thinking that clearly	Shows originality and an identifiable personal perspective.	Some independent ideas are present but not consistently developed.	Limited originality; observations are predictable or derivative.	No clear individual voice; writing resembles summary or generic AI-style

	differs from AI-generated summaries or generic observations.				responses.
Writing Quality	Writing is exceptionally clear, coherent, well organized, and virtually free of language errors.	Writing is clear and well organized with only minor errors.	Writing is generally understandable despite some organizational or language issues.	Writing lacks coherence and contains frequent language problems.	Writing is difficult to follow because of serious organizational or language errors.

04. Midterm Exam (25%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactor y	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfact ory
Understanding of Course Materials	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding	Demonstrates strong understanding with only minor	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the major	Shows partial understanding with noticeable misunderstandings or gaps.	Demonstrates little understanding of the course

	ng of the assigned readings, films, and theories, accurately integrating key concepts throughout the response.	omissions or inaccuracies.	concepts but lacks depth or precision.		materials.
Argument & Critical Analysis	Develops a clear, original, and persuasive argument supported by sophisticated critical analysis and multiple perspectives.	Presents a clear argument with thoughtful analysis and relevant interpretation.	Presents a recognizable argument but relies on description more than analysis.	Argument is weak, inconsistent, or insufficiently developed.	Lacks a coherent argument or critical analysis.
Use of Evidence	Selects highly relevant	Uses appropriate evidence to	Includes relevant evidence	Uses limited or weak evidence that only	Provides little, inappropriate

	examples from the readings and films, integrating them effectively to support the argument.	support most claims.	but explanation or integration is limited.	partially supports the discussion.	te, or no supporting evidence.
Organization & Academic Writing	Writing is exceptionally well organized, coherent, and academically appropriate, with virtually no language errors.	Writing is well organized with only minor language or structural issues.	Writing is generally clear despite occasional organizational or language problems.	Organization is inconsistent and language problems sometimes hinder clarity.	Writing is poorly organized and difficult to understand due to frequent language or structural errors.

05. Final Paper Project (25%)

Criteria	90–100	80–89	70–79	60–69	0–59
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	Excellent	Good	Satisfactor y	Limited	Unsatisfact ory
Research & Academic Sources	Integrates a wide range of high-quality academic sources effectively, demonstrating excellent research skills and accurate citation throughout.	Uses appropriate scholarly sources with only minor gaps in breadth or integration.	Uses an adequate range of sources but with limited depth or uneven integration.	Relies on a limited range of sources or inconsistent citation practices.	Uses few, inappropriate, or insufficient academic sources.
Critical Argument	Develops a sophisticated, original, and persuasive argument that is consistently supported by evidence and critical analysis.	Presents a clear and well-developed argument with effective analysis.	Presents a recognizable argument but analysis is uneven or descriptive.	Argument is weak, underdeveloped, or lacks analytical depth.	No coherent argument or critical engagement is demonstrated.
Human–	Demonstrate	Uses AI	Shows an	Relies	Shows

AI Co-Creation	s thoughtful and responsible collaboration with AI while maintaining substantial human authorship, independent judgment, and original insights.	appropriately while clearly demonstrating meaningful human contribution.	acceptable balance between AI assistance and personal contribution, though independent thinking could be stronger.	heavily on AI with limited evidence of independent contribution or critical evaluation.	inappropriate AI use or little evidence of meaningful human contribution.
Team Collaboration	All members contribute substantially, responsibilities are clearly divided, and the final paper reflects seamless collaboration.	Team works effectively with clear responsibilities and balanced contributions.	Most members contribute appropriately, although collaboration is occasionally uneven.	Collaboration is inconsistent, with unequal participation or unclear responsibilities.	Little evidence of effective teamwork or coordinated effort.

Generative AI Usage Report	Provides a comprehensive, transparent report documenting prompts, workflow, revisions, evaluation of AI outputs, and the group's rationale for AI use.	Provides a clear and well-documented report with only minor omissions.	Documents the main stages of AI use but lacks detail or reflection.	Provides incomplete or unclear documentation of AI use.	Report is missing or provides insufficient information.
Writing, Organization & Citation	Writing is exceptionally clear, coherent, professionally organized, and consistently follows academic citation conventions.	Writing is well organized with only minor language or citation issues.	Writing is generally clear but contains occasional organizational or citation problems.	Writing lacks coherence or contains frequent language and citation errors.	Writing is poorly organized and fails to meet basic academic writing standards.

