
Master Narratives of Korean Cinema: Version and Subversion

01:574:230

Spring 2017

Tuesday 9:50-12:50

Murray Hall MU-204

Instructor: Jenny Wang Medina

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Office Hours: Thur 2-3, Scott Hall 237 and by appointment

What do film narratives tell us about how a society processes its own history? What are the stories that resonate within a culture over time, and how do their interpretations reflect changes in contemporary society as well as engagement with the rest of the world? In this course we will examine Korean cinema from the 1930s to the present to reflect on past and present uses of history, tradition, and technology through the mass medium of film. We will look at films and the stories that continue to have powerful meanings for contemporary Koreans as well as look at the development of Korean cinema over the 20th century and into the 21st century. Cinema as a public medium is subject to regulation by the government and we will look at how political and social history affected the production of Korean cinema. We will also examine the influence of international cinematic genres and styles that have become particularly important to Korean cinema. There is no language requirements for this course and no prior knowledge of Korean history is required. Our class meetings will usually start with a film screening, then a short (5 minute) break, followed by a discussion period. Film screenings will be supplemented with relevant literary texts, historical background, and critical film theory.

Course Requirements

Weekly writing assignment: 30%

Each student will write a 2-3 paragraph (approx. 1-pg, single spaced) written response and post it to the blog section of the course Sakai page **by 10pm** the night **before** our class meeting.

Choose one of the following options for the weekly writing assignment:

1. Discussion questions/points: Write your own analysis of the previous week's screening or the assigned readings. **DO NOT SUMMARIZE** the film or texts. Rather, you should share your own thoughts, reactions, or critiques of the course material. Use specific examples

from the films or texts to back up your arguments, and feel free to compare/contrast with other films or texts from the class.

2. Propose one or two questions or issues that you would like to raise for discussion. Each question should consist of 1-2 paragraphs and can be analytical questions that problematize issues in the materials, or that identify terms or concepts that you did not understand and would like to discuss further in class.
3. Find and post outside material related to the week's reading and write 1-2 paragraphs explaining their significance to the week's theme.. These can include short film clips, music, photos, newspaper clippings, or other visual media that help to expand our discussion of the period or theme of the week.

Attendance and Participation: 10%

1. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and more than two unexcused absences will impact your final grade. Each subsequent absence will reduce your grade for the course by 2%. Being on time to class also counts as part of your attendance.

Presentation: 5%

Each student will choose a session to lead class discussion.

Midterm Essay (4-6 double-spaced pages, 12 pt. font): 25%

Take-home Final Exam (10-12 double-spaced pages, 12 pt. font): 30%

All reading materials will be available on the Syllabus section of the course Sakai page for the class date they will be used.

Recommended texts for background reading in Korean history

Michael Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth Century Odyssey: A Short History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007)

Charles Armstrong, *The Koreas* (New York: Routledge, 2007)

Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who are seeking consideration for services or accommodations should immediately contact the Office of Disability Services.

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/contact-ods/inquiry-form>

Statement on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

All students are expected to abide by the Rutgers University principles of academic integrity as outlined here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>. Instances of plagiarism, cheating, or other types of academic dishonesty will result in severe penalties, including failing grades on either a particular assignment or for the entire course based on my discretion. All assignments should be produced specifically for this class and reflect your original thoughts and writing. If you are uncertain about how to reference sources that you have used for an assignment, feel free to ask me.

Final Note

This syllabus is subject to modifications over the course of the semester. Each student is responsible for keeping up to date with all announcements made in class.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

All readings will be available on Sakai. All films, unless otherwise noted, will be screened in class.

Wk 1 Introduction: National and International Film Cultures and Ghosts of the Past

1/17 Introduction

Film: *The Public Cemetery of Wol-ha (Kisaeng Wŏlhyang ŭi kongdong myoji)*, dir. Kwon Chol-hui, 1967

Wk 2 Female Subjectivity and the Horrors of History

1/24 READ BEFORE CLASS: A Cinema of Girlhood : Sonyeo Sensibility and the Decorative Impulse in the Korean Horror Cinema / Jinhee Choi

Film: *The Silenced (Kyŏngsŏng hakyŏ: sarajin sonyŏdŭl)*, dir. Lee Hae-Young, 2015

Koreans at War: Vietnam

Wk 3

1/31 Theodore Hughes, "Korean Memories of the Vietnam and Korean Wars: A Counter-History" (Japan Focus, 2007)

Film: *R-Point*, dir. Kong Su-chang, 2006

Wk 4

2/7 Reading: Hwang Sok-yong, "Pagoda", "Camel's Eye"

Film: *White Badge*, dir. Chung Ji Young, 1992

Grey Areas: Camptown (Kijich'on) films

Wk 5

2/14 Reading: Katherine Moon, "Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations"

Film: *Flower in Hell*, dir. Shin Sang-ok, 1958

Wk 6

2/21 Reading: "South Korea's Cinema of Cruelty," excerpts

Film: *Address Unknown*, dir. Kim Ki-duk, 2001

Modern Family and Changing Social Norms

Wk 7

2/28 Reading: Kelly Jeong, *Gender and the Nation in Crisis in Korean Literature and Film*, excerpt

Film: *Unni is a Tomboy*, dir. Han Hyŏng-mo, 1961

Wk 8

- 3/7 Reading: DY Jin, "Cultural politics in Korea's contemporary films under neoliberal globalization"
Watch BEFORE CLASS: *My Sassy Girl*, dir. Kwak Jae-yong, 2001
IN-CLASS FILM: *My New Sassy Girl*, dir. Jo Geun-shik

3/10 FRIDAY: MIDTERM ESSAY DUE BY 11PM VIA EMAIL

3/14 Wk 9 SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS

"Classical" Korea and National Cinema

Wk 10

- 3/21 Reading: Korean Film Archive, "Korea's Classical 'Chunhyangjeon' (The Story of Chunhyang) Made into Film"
Film: *Chunhyang*, dir. Im Kwon-taek, 1961

Wk 11

- 3/28 Reading: Chung-moo Choi, "The Politics of Gender, Aestheticism, and Cultural Nationalism in *Sopyonje* and *The Genealogy*"
Film: *Chunhyang*, dir. Im Kwon-taek, 2000

Wk 12

- 4/4 Reading: Justine Kemlo, "Beyond our Control? A Systemic-Functional perspective on adaptation and *Dangerous Liaisons*"
Film: *Untold Scandal*, dir. E J-yong, 2003

Mythic Pasts in the Present

Wk 13

- 4/11 Reading: Stephen Chung, *Split Screen: Shin Sang-ok and Postwar Cinema*, excerpts
Film: *Madame White Snake*, dir. Shin Sang-ok, 1960

Wk 14

- 4/18 Film: *Woo-chi: The Demon Slayer*, dir. Choi Dong-hoon, 2009

Co-Prosperity in the 21st Century?: Joint Productions in Asia

Wk 15

- 4/25 Film: *Dangerous Liaisons*, dir. Hur Jin-ho, 2012

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE 5/12 VIA EMAIL