

ANS 301M (31350) Everybody is Kung-fu Fighting: East Asian Martial Arts Films

Instructor: Chien-hsin Tsai Office: WCH 5.104A Office Hour: TTH 2:00-3:30 pm
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Class location: BUR 134 Class time: TTH 3:30-5:00 followed by screening

Course Description:

At the turn of the twentieth century, one notices the fast-growing popularity of Asian films outside Asia. What used to be high-brow, academic, or even “cultish” has now, in the twenty-first century, become a popular if not entirely routine part of visual experience in the US. Seemingly, everything Asian becomes the “It,” ever in trend and ever showcasing the awareness and sensitivities of foreign culture. Certainly, things are always more complex than one would like to imagine. For instance: How do we understand Asian, geographically or ethnically or both?

This undergraduate class is designed to reconsider the notion of “East Asian” from the cinematic perspective. To get the minimal specificity of the issue at stake, we are to focus on the specific genre of martial arts film. Through weekly screenings, we are to rethink the following issues: What are the possible significances of the choreography of martial arts? How does the choreograph of actors in East Asian martial art films correspond to heroism, self-discipline, and routine training? How does the expressiveness of body correspond to cultural, ideological, and economic transactions, or even political confrontations, either inside or outside the East Asia proper? What influence do East Asian martial arts films have on its western counterparts?

Requirements and Grading:

Attendance (10%) and Participation (15%)	25%
11 Quizzes	10%
Midterm	10%
Presentation (10%)/Final Project (20%)	30%
Final exam	25%

- Attend lectures and discussions, actively and consistently engage in dialogues in class. By dialogues, you are expected to raise questions/comments and respond to those from your classmates or the instructor. **Two undocumented absences will reduce your grade of participation to ¼, and three to ZERO.**
- Weekly quizzes contain 5 to 10 multiple choice questions on assigned films.
 - You are expected to know about the basics (title, directors, etc), the plot and details that pertain to the storyline.
 - No make up quiz. Lowest quiz score will be dropped.**
- You are encouraged but not required to take notes during screen (and of course lecture) for future use. Notes will be extremely helpful for both the quiz and final exam.
- Midterm: A 2-3 page outline/proposal of your final project.

5. Final project.
 - a. Make a 5-7-minute clip (think Youtube or the like) as a team of three. It should contain critical information about the film(s) and your interpretation of the film(s) in voice-over narration. Think paper in video format. The clip should be carefully edited.
 - b. Towards the end of the semester, you will be given approximately 8-10 minutes (length subject to change depending on final enrollment) to present your final project. Please use your time wisely.
 - c. **Final project due: December 5 (12:00pm)**

6. Final exam: December 8
 - a. 10 multiple choices questions 50 pts
 - b. 10 short answer (term definition) questions 100 pts
 - c. 2 long answer (essay) questions 100 pts

Week 1: Introduction

Aug 25: General introduction/logistics

Week 2: The Small Dragon of China: Bruce Lee

Aug 30: Lecture and Screening.

Film: *Fist of Fury (aka The Chinese Connection)*

Sept 1: Quiz# 1, Discussion

Reading:

David Desser, "The Martial Arts Film in the 1990s"

Week 3: The Complex Network of "Jianghu"

Sept 6: Lecture and Screening.

Film: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Sept 8: Quiz# 2 and Discussion.

Reading:

Cai, Rong. "Gender Imaginations in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon and the Wuxia World."

Week 4: Martial Art, Identity, and the Art of Storytelling

Sept 13: Lecture and Screening.

Film: *Hero*

Sept 15: Quiz #3 and Discussion.

Reading:

Feng Lan. "Zhang Yimou's Hero: Reclaiming the Martial Arts Film for 'All under Heaven'"

Week 5: The Ninjas and Loyalty

Sept 20: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *Shinobi*

Sept 22: Quiz #4 and Discussion:

Reading:

Stephen Hayes. "Perspective" in *The Ninja and Their Secret Fighting Art*

Week 6: Last Samurais

Sept 27: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *The Twilight Samurai*.

Sept 29: Quiz #5 and Discussion

Reading:

Ken Belson, "Japan's Samurai Past Thunders into the Present," New York Times, December 7, 2003.

Alain Silver. "Chapter One: General Introduction" in *The Samurai Film*

Week 7: Midterm Week

October 4 and 6

No screening and lecture. Individual/Group final project consultation. Final-project proposal-as-midterm due.

Week 8: Korean Warrior of Virtue

Oct 11: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *A Frozen Flower*

Oct 13: Quiz #6 and Discussion

Reading:

Eungjun Min, Jinsook Joo, and Han Ju Kwak eds. "Korean Cinema: Philosophical Foundations and Theoretical Frameworks"

Week 9: The Korean Genre blending

Oct 18: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *Dachimawa Lee: The Orient Espionage*.

Oct 20: Quiz #7 and Discussion:

Reading:

Darcy Paquet. "Genre Blending in Contemporary Korean Cinema"

Eungjun Min, Jinsook Joo, and Han Ju Kwak eds. "Contemporary Korean Cinema: A Boom or a Renaissance?"

Week 10: Stephen Chow and Kung Fu Comedy

Oct 25: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *Kung Fu Hustle*

Oct 27: Quiz #8 and Discussion.

Reading:

Kin-Yan Szeto, "The Politics of Historiography in Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle*"

Gary Xu, "The Gongfu of Kung-fu Hustle"

Week 11: Technologizing Kung Fu

Nov 1: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *The Matrix 1*.

Nov 3: Quiz #9 and Discussion.

Reading:

Meaghan Morris. "Transnational imagination in action cinema: Hong Kong and the making of a global popular culture"

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, "Style and Substance in *The Matrix*"

Week 12: Kung Fu, Film Noir, Femme Fatale

Nov 8: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *Kill Bill 1*

Nov 10: Quiz #10 and Discussion

Reading:

Sean Tierney, "Themes of Whiteness in *Bulletproof Monk*, *Kill Bill*, and *The Last Samurai*"

Week 13: Reimagining Kung Fu

Nov 15: Lecture and Screening:

Film: *Kung Fu Panda*

Nov 17: Quiz #11 and Discussion

Reading:

Edward Said. "Introduction" in *Orientalism*.

Week 14: Presentations I

Nov 22: Presentations
Nov 24: Thanksgiving. No class.

Week 15: Presentations II

Nov 29: Presentations
Dec 1: Presentations

Final project due: Monday, December 5 (1:00pm)

Official Policies

- Academic integrity: You are expected to adhere to university requirements on academic honesty and integrity. Behaviors, **such as plagiarism, copying of another student's work**, are serious offenses that will result in the grade of an "F" for the course and will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Services, where further disciplinary action may be taken. Please refer to the following website for information on how to avoid plagiarism in your work and/or discuss this with the instructor:
http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php
- University Electronic Notification Mail Policy: In this course, e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class announcements and assignments. As per the University Electronic Notification Policy (please see <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>), it is your responsibility to update your email address and to check your e-mail regularly.
- Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities: Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6529 voice or 471-4641 TTY). This letter should be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made at that time. For more information, please see: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>
- Use of Blackboard in Class: **Most of our readings are available on blackboard.** You should print out and bring your readings to class. Please allow yourself enough time before an assignment is due. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 during business hours on weekdays.
- Religious Holidays: If you will need to miss class, tests, or other assignments due to the observance of a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the work you have missed provided you notify me **at least one week prior** to the absence.

Letter-Numeric grade correspondence

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	Below 60