Korean Cinema in a Global Context
Fall 2015

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Thursday 2:00-5:00 p.m.
International Studies Hall 436

Course Description
This course offers a broad overview of South Korean cinema. We will examine historical, political, cultural, and aesthetic issues, from both local and transnational perspectives. We will also investigate how changes in geo-cultural politics at the local, national, regional, and global levels have influenced the making and remaking of South Korean cinema in terms of both textual and contextual practices. Special attention will be given to the various ways in which contemporary South Korean cinema manifests the complex dynamics and processes of transnationalization and globalization through intraregional and transregional cultural interactions.

The course is divided into two parts. The first is largely devoted to an exploration of Korean film history; the second will train students to analyze individual contemporary Korean films in terms of both their aesthetic qualities and the broader cultural and social issues they embody. Weekly screenings will give students 1) exposure to a representative range of film-making traditions, such as Golden Age, Im Kwon-taek, New Wave, and New Korean Cinema, and 2) a sampling of popular genres and important topics within contemporary South Korean cinema, such as melodrama, North Korea-themed blockbuster, reimagining colonial Korea, transnational auteur, transnational co-production and remake, and transnationalism and hybridity. Throughout the semester, we will also consider how Korean cinema has created and sustained local specificity of culture while drawing on the widely shared consumer language of cinema. At the end of this course, students will have a better understanding of current Korean society and culture, as well as the history and characteristics of Korean cinema. Students are not expected to have any prior knowledge of Korea or of the Korean language.

Classes will consist of mini-lectures, student presentations, discussions, and film screenings.

Required Text
Course Reader (All the readings will be distributed via Blackboard.)

Requirements/Grading
Attendance/participation (including weekly film responses) 25%
2 position papers (one page, single-spaced; 400-500 words) 10%
Presentation and facilitation 10%
Final research paper (approx. 3000-4000 words) 55%
(preliminary bibliographical project-5%; final paper, 10-12 pages-50%)
Attendance/participation (25%):
Attendance at all class meetings and screenings is mandatory. More than one unexcused absence will negatively affect your grade, and four will result in a failing grade for the course. Unavoidable absences must be carefully documented, preferably in advance. Furthermore, three late arrivals, or missing more than sixty minutes of class time, will count as one absence. Students should come to class prepared to discuss all the readings and the films assigned for that week. The course will combine mini lectures, student presentations, discussions, and screenings. Although I will occasionally give short lectures to provide background information not covered in the readings, the class will focus on discussions and student presentations of course materials and students will be responsible for leading this seminar through active participation. Part of the final grade will be based on your participation, which involves not only presence and preparation, but also frequent and significant contributions to class discussions.

Each week students will also post a short (200 to 250-word) response to the assigned film, briefly commenting on certain aspects of the film that are related to the weekly topic and to the assigned readings. Occasionally, students will be asked to respond to specific questions that will be given ahead by the instructor. The grade on response papers will be based on the efforts you show as well as the quality of your comments and ideas: missed entries will lower your grade.

Class presentation (10%):
Beginning in Week 3, students will be asked to give a presentation (20 min) on the readings and the film assigned for the week. Along with a brief summary of the main arguments of the assigned readings, the student should identify important issues they raise and pose questions for class discussion. Sign-up sheets for the dates of presentation will be provided during the second week.

Two position papers (10%):
You will write two short (400-500 words) critical essays responding to two of the readings for the assigned week. In these essays, you should 1) identify major arguments in the readings, 2) speculate on the authors’ contributions to the field, and 3) critique the arguments by locating their limitations and problems.

Research paper (55%) – Preliminary bibliographic project (5%)/final paper (50%):
Students will write a research paper of 3000-4000 words on a topic relevant to this course. Seven weeks before the final research paper is due, each student will submit a proposal of his/her research project, and four weeks before the due date, a bibliographic project must be submitted. You may expand on one of the lecture topics or choose your own topic. Each student will also be asked to present to the class her/his own research paper in progress, in order to get as much feedback as possible from classmates.

Assignment schedules will be available in Week 2, and more detailed guidelines for each assignment will be given in class ahead of time.
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
(Subject to change as necessary)

Part I. Korean Film History

Week 1 (September 3)
Introduction
Introduction to the course; Korean history timeline
In-class viewing: Excerpts from Piagol (Yi Kangch’ŏn, 1955) and Snowpiercer (Pong Junho, 2013)

Week 2 (September 10)
Early Korean Cinema
In-class viewing: Spring of Korean Peninsula (Yi Pyŏngil, 1941; 87 min.)
Required readings:

Week 3 (September 17)
Post-war South Korean Cinema
Film: Madame Freedom (Han Hyŏngmo, 1956; 125 min.)
Required readings:
Kathleen McHugh, “South Korean Film Melodrama: State, Nation, Woman, and the Transnational Familiar” South Korean Golden Age Melodrama, 17-42.

Week 4 (September 24)
Golden Age of South Korean Cinema I
Film: The Housemaid (Hanyŏ, Kim Kiyŏng, 1960; 111 min.)
Required readings:
Soyoung Kim, “Questions of Woman’s Film: The Maid, Madame Freedom, and Women” South Korean Golden Age Melodrama, 185-200.
Week 5 (October 1)
Golden Age of South Korean Cinema II
Film: Aimless Bullet (Obalt’an, Yu Hyŏnmok, 1961; 110 min.)
In-class viewing: Excerpts from A Coachman (Mabu, Kang Taejin, 1961)
Required readings:

Week 6 (October 8)
Dictatorship and Censorship; Transition to Democracy and New Wave
Film: Black Republic (Pak Kwangsu, 1990; 102 min.)
In-class viewing: Excerpts from Chilsu and Mansu (Pak Kwangsu, 1989)
Required readings:

Week 7 (October 15)
Im Kwon-taek and the Making of a National Cinema
Film: Sopyonje (Im Kwŏntaek, 1993; 112 min.)
In-class viewing: Excerpts from General’s Son (IM Kwŏntaek, 1990)
Required readings:
CHO HAN, Hae-Joang, “Sopyonje: Its Cultural and Historical Meaning” Im Kwon-Taek, 134-156.

Week 8 (October 22)
Midterm Exam Week

*Final Paper Proposal Due: October 23, 5PM via Email

Part II. Globalization and New Korean Cinema

Week 9 (October 29)
The Rise of New Korean Cinema
Film: Tell Me Something (Chang Yunhyŏn, 1999; 118 min.)
In-class viewing: Excerpts from Beat (Kim Sŏngsu, 1997)
Required readings:

Week 10 (November 5)
Melodrama in New Korean Cinema
Film: Christmas in August (Hŏ Jinho, 1998; 97 min)
Required readings:

Week 11 (November 12)
The Theme of North Korea and Korean Blockbuster
Film: JSA (Pak Ch’anuk, 2000; 110 min.)
In-class viewing: Excerpts from Welcome to Dongmakgol (Pak Kwanghyŏn, 2005)
Required readings:

Week 12 (November 19)
Reimagining Colonial Korea
Film: Blue Swallow (Yun Chongch’an, 2005)
In-class viewing: Excerpts from YMCA Baseball Team (Kim Hyŏnsŏk, 2002)
Required readings:
*Preliminary Bibliographic Project Due: November 23, 5PM via Email

**Week 13 (November 26)**

**Transnational Auteur: PARK Chan-wook**

Film: *Old Boy* (Park Chan-wook, 2003; 120 min.)

Required readings:


**Week 14 (December 3)**

**Transnational Co-productions and Remakes**

Film: *Daisy* (Andrew Lau, 2006; 110 min.)


Required readings:


*Presentation on final research paper in progress

**Week 15 (December 10)**

**Transnationalism and Hybridity in New Korean Cinema**

In-class viewing: Excerpts from *The Berlin File* (Ryu Sùngwan, 2013)

*Presentation of final research paper in progress

* Final Research Paper Due: Thursday, December 17, 5PM via Email