

# Introduction to East Asian Cinema

FILM S190E / EALL S270E

**Meeting Times:** Remote

Session B, July 1-August 2 T/TH 9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.(EST)

**Instructor:** Eugene Kwon

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**Office Hours:** by appointment

## **Course Description:**

This introductory course explores canonical works in East Asian cinema. It explores films and TV series produced in all but not limited to the following regions: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The goal is double-folds: learning how to analyze visual works (film, TV series) and situating them historically in their local and global contexts. Excerpts from global cinema will be shown alongside films chosen for the course. Each week proceeds with a specific theme and sets of questions. Students should expect to watch at least two major films each week.

Familiarity with an East Asian language is **not required**.

Some of the film selections may change according to their online availability.

## **Format:**

Seminars and in-class presentations will be conducted via ZOOM.

All required readings and PowerPoint slides and film clips will be available on Canvas.

**\* Important note:**

**As an instructor, I take seriously the sense of *communitas* in class.  
Your camera must be turned on -- there is no exception to this.  
This is an interactive seminar, not a top-down format.**

**Requirements & Grading:**

Attendance & Participation: 20%  
Discussion Posts: 20%  
Close Analysis (Midterm): 25%  
Creative Film Essay OR Film Project: 35%

***Assignments must be submitted by the due date. Late submissions will not be accepted.***

**1) Attendance & Participation:**

Attendance is not only mandatory but crucial for this course. With only ten sessions, one unexcused absence will lead to a failing grade. (There are, of course, exceptions to this, including family emergency and sickness).

**Most importantly, it is absolutely crucial that you watch all the assigned films.**

If a student cannot attend a particular session due to an emergency or serious illness, the student should let the instructor know ahead of time if possible. A student who, in the opinion of the instructor and the Dean of Summer Session, has been absent from a course to an excessive degree and without excuse may at any time be placed on Cut Restriction in that course or in all courses. A student on Cut Restriction who continues to be absent from a course may be excluded from it without credit.

**2) Canvas discussion posts:**

Questions will be posted for each session.

**3) Close Analysis**

This is a four page paper on a select scene/sequence from an assigned film. More details will be explained in Session 1.

**4) Final Project**

You may be thinking: 'I'm much better off writing a paper. I've always hated creative projects.' Please rest assured. Thanks to our blessed media environment, literally anyone can make a video or movie now. This final project requires you to put all the theory and knowledge you've learned in class into practice with some creativity into the mix.

You have two options:

- (1) Film essay
- (2) Film project

(1) What exactly is a film essay? For a solid example, please see the following video by **Kogonada**: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1FR\\_SEOm9U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1FR_SEOm9U)

Here's another favorite of mine (Every Frame a Painting):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2THVvshvq0Q>

Students will make a cogent video (10-15 min) that makes an argument concerning a concept or media text explored in the class. The film essay must be accompanied by a brief text with a bibliography.

(2) For your film project, make a fiction film (10-15 min; no more than 15 min) that is stylistically inspired by one of the periods/directors/styles covered in class. This film can be taken with your smartphone. I am not looking for an elegant, polished product. Rather, I am looking for your understanding of the class material and your creative take on it.

For both of these, I highly recommend either Adobe Pro (which is free for download through a Yale account) or, if you have access to it, Final Cut Pro. Any other editing tools would also work.

Details on the final project will be covered in Session 1.

Grading Rubric

A= Excellent

B= Good

C= Satisfactory

D= Passing

F= Fail

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

My version: In short, no plagiarism. And no ChatGPT on any of the written assignments. You can rest assured that I can check in various ways if you've used AI.

What is plagiarism? Citing, wittingly or unwittingly, any outside information and owning it as your own. This means that you need to learn proper citation (MLA or Chicago Style). Learn how to do this before the class begins so that you'll have time to focus on the class material.

The official version (take a breath here): Academic integrity and honesty are central components of a student's education, and the strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be treated lightly. You must document all of your source material. If you take any text from somebody else, you must make it clear the text is being quoted and where the text comes from. You must also cite any sources from which you obtain numbers, ideas, or other material. If you have any questions about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, ask! Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely. The most common penalty is suspension from the university, but students caught plagiarizing are also subject to lowered or failing grades as well as the possibility of expulsion. Please be sure to review Yale's Academic Integrity Policy: <http://catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/policies/definitions-plagiarism-cheating/>

## **Week 1: Film Analysis/The Discovery of East Asia**

### **Session 1: The Discovery of Japanese/East Asian Cinema**

#### **READING:**

1. Yoshimitsu Mitsuhiro. *Kurosawa*. 51-68.
2. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. "Chapter Two: The Significance of Film Form." *Film Art*. 54-73.

#### **SCREENING:**

- *Ikiru* (Kurosawa Akira)
- *Living* (Oliver Hermanus 2022)

## **Session 2: An Alternative Cinema to Hollywood**

### READING:

1. "Content" and "Technique" from *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (Donald Richie and Anderson), 315-345.

## **Week 2: Gender in East Asian Cinema**

### **Session 3: Women on screen**

### READING:

1. "The Après Girl," *Cold War Cosmopolitanism* (Christina Klein), 85-107.

### SCREENING:

- *Madame Freedom* (Hyeonmok Yu, 1960)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkAbVQhfpmw&t=5009s>

- *The Goddess* (Wu Yonggang, 1934)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWo470hfB5A>

- TBD (Mizoguchi Kenji or Ozu)

## **Section 4: Gender in South Korea and Hong Kong**

### READING:

1. "The Goddess: Fallen Woman of Shanghai" (Kristin Harris), *Chinese Films in Focus*, 111-119.

## **Week 3: Coping with History and Modernity**

#### **Session 4: The Case of Taiwan**

READING:

1. "Remapping Taipei" (Fredric Jameson), *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, 114-157.

SCREENING:

- *The Terrorizer* (Edward Yang 1986)
- *Peppermint Candy* (박하사탕 Lee Chang-dong, 1999)

#### **Session 5: The case of South Korea**

Reading:

1. "Affirmation of the Lost Object" (Todd Mcgowan), *Symploke*, 170-189.

### **Week 4: The New Wave and Auteurism**

#### **Session 5: The New Wave**

READING:

1. Park Chan-wook, "Out for Revenge," <https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound/features/out-revenge-park-chanwook-oldboy>
2. Steve Choe, "Love Your Enemies," *Korean Studies*, 29-51.

SCREENING:

- TBD (Kitano Takeshi AKA Beat Takeshi)
- *The Assassin* (Hou Hsia-Hsien)

#### **Session 6: Case Study: Hou Hsiao-Hsien**

READING

1. "Hidden History, Modern Hedonism," Robert Skylar, 11-12.

### **Week 5: Digital Age**

#### **Session 9: Streaming Platforms**

READING:

1. Jeong, Seunghoon, "The Convoluted Cinematic Experience in the Age of Netflix," *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, <https://nrftsjournal.org/cinematic-experience-in-the-age-of-netflix/>

**SCREENING:**

*Squid Game* (Hwang Dong-hyeok)  
*Drive My Car* (Hamaguchi Ryusuke)

**Session 10: The Local and the Global**

**READING:**

1. Kwon, Eugene. "Impure Cinema: An Interview with Hamaguchi Ryusuke." *Cineaste*.
2. Kwon, Eugene. "Korean Cinema Now." *Sight and Sound*.

**FINAL PAPER DUE**