SEMINAR SYLLABUS: CITY, URBAN CULTURE AND CINEMA IN CONTEMPORARY ASIA

Lecturer: MA Ran (maran@lit.nagoya-u.ac.jp)
Class: Thursday 5th Period, 16:30~18:00
Place: School of Letters, Room 131
Office/Hours: School of Letters Rm 224, appointment via email

SEMINAR BLOG: 2016NUCITY.BLOGSPOT.JP
[readings and other course-related materials, notifications would be updated at the course blog]

Description & Objectives:
In this fast-changing, ever globalizing world, the life and existence of human beings are to great extent defined by the urban condition they are enmeshed within and struggling with. This graduate-level seminar attempts to survey major urban issues and cultural topics in modern societies by engaging with a wide spectrum of cultural texts drawn from films, literary works as well as architecture; in case studies, particular attention is paid to the social context and cities in Asia. City will not only be simply explored as the theme or ambience featured in these texts, following our adventure of "entering" the city, with the socio-historical dimensions of urban space theoretically surveyed, we shall direct our attention to the urbanites and their mental life. A critical journey of wandering in the city as flâneur and encountering other strangers would lead us into the "invisible city" as interwoven with fear, desire, memory, and dream. Finally, the seminar will position the study of urban culture within the heated discourses and debates on globalization. Departing from observations upon Asian metropolises, students are expected to debate and discuss cinematic texts in relation to the urban condition of local, regional and global scales. Through the seminar, students will learn to approach and critique the cultural space of cities by utilising key concepts drawn from various theoretical perspectives such as cultural studies, visual culture and sociology.

Course Approach:
✚ Lectures, screenings, discussions/presentations and oral/written analyses. Under the academic guidance and facilitation of the lecturer, students are expected to critically evaluate theories and arguments from their readings and learn to apply the concepts and theories in film analysis. It is also expected that the students could communicate (not mechanically reciting) their ideas effectively via discussions and presentations as well as in writing assignments.
Film-viewing underlines your study flow of the seminar. Screenings will 1) take place as part of the weekly class, or 2) the lecturer will book the classroom for film-viewing as extra to the weekly course plan; 3) assigned to the students for self-study. For students who cannot make the scheduled group screenings for good reasons, they are urged to loan the DVDs from the lecturer or at the local video-shops.

**Evaluation:**
10% Attendance
20% Contribution to class discussion/presentation
20% Reading Journal Assignment (x2)
10% In-class Quiz/Take-home Essay
30% Final Paper

**NOTE:** Three absences, including in-class screenings, **without proper evidence provided** equals FAIL

**Course Assignments:**
**Reading Journal Assignment:** Due on Nov.30th (Wed)/Dec 27th (Tue) 5pm, via email
For November and December, students are expected to submit one reading journal assignment reflecting upon their reading progress in the previous month (till the date of the submission). They are required to review, evaluate and even critique concepts and arguments by referring to both the required and reference readings (from the previous month) and write a 500-word journal. Details will be offered later in class.

**Final Paper:** Due Date & other details TBA

**Take Home Project:** Due Date & other details TBA

**Note on Plagiarism:**
*Plagiarism: A writer who presents the ideas of words of another as if they were the writer’s own (that is, without proper citation) commits plagiarism.* Plagiarism is not tolerable in this course or at Nagoya University. You should avoid making quotes or drawing on figures from nowhere—you must provide sources of reference for quotation and/or citations you use in the paper. This applies to images and media clips as well. Failure to observe this would risk being charged of plagiarism.

[All assignments/papers will be checked with professional software]
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK 1/OCT 6TH INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVES; TOPICS; APPROACH; ASSIGNMENTS

Screening (part): Sans Soleil, Dir. Chris Marker, 1983


WEEK 2/OCT 13TH READING SESSION: CITY AS CULTURAL TEXT

Required Reading

Roland Barthes, “the Eiffel Tower”

Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century”, 1935

WEEK 3/OCT 20TH ARRIVING IN THE CITY: SPACE, EVENT AND CINEMA

Required Reading
Yomi Braester, “Arriving in the City; Touring the City; Watching the City”, Cinema at the City's Edge: Film and Urban Networks in East Asia. Yomi Braester, James Tweedie, eds., Hong Kong University Press: 2010.

Mark Shiel. “Cinema and the City in History and Theory”, Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context, ed. Tony Fitzmaurice and Mark Shiel, 2001

Reference Reading

Film for discussion: Sans Soleil, Dir. Chris Marker, 1983
(also refer to Tokyo-ga, Dir. Wim Wenders, 1985)

THE DISAPPEARING CITY: RUINS & MONUMENTS I
Week 4/Oct 27th Screening: Hiroshima Mon Amour, Dir. Alain Resnais, 1959

Week 5 NOV 3 National Holiday: No Class

Week 6/Nov 10th Seminar Session
Required Readings
Mercken-Spaas, Godelieve “Destruction and Reconstruction in Hiroshima, Mon Amour”, Literature/Film Quarterly, 1980 Vol. 8, No. 4, p244-250


SCREENING
Shower, Dir. Zhang Yang, 1999
Nov 14th (Monday), Venue: Rm 131, Time: 4:30pm~

WEEK 7/NOV 17TH THE DISAPPEARING CITY: RUINS & MONUMENTS II
Required Reading


Film for discussion: 100 Flowers Hidden Deep, Dir.:Chen Kaige (available at YouTube); Shower, Dir. Zhang Yang, 1999

Reference Reading

**INVISIBLE CITY: DREAM, DESIRE & MEMORY I**

**WEEK 8/NOV 24**

Screening *Goodbye Dragon Inn*, Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, 2003, 82min

**WEEK 9/DEC 1**

SEMINAR SESSION: CASE STUDY OF TSAI MINGLIANG’S FILMS

Required Reading:


**SCREENING**

*2046*, Dir. Wong Kar-wai, 2004

Dec 5th (Monday), Venue: Rm. 131, Time: 4:30pm~

**WEEK 10/DEC 8**

INVISIBLE CITY: DREAM, DESIRE & MEMORY II

Required Reading:

Georg Simmel: “The Metropolis and Mental Life”, 1903


**SCREENING**

*Double Vision*, Dir. Chen Kuofu, 2002, 113min

Dec 12th (Monday), Venue: Rm 131, Time: 4:30pm~
WEEK 11/DEC 15TH  HAUNTING CITIES: THE UNCANNY AND THE GHOSTLY

**Required Readings**

Freud, “Uncanny”, 1919

Tweedie, James. in “Morning In The New Metropolis: Taipei And The Globalization Of City Film,” *Cinema Taiwan: Politics, Popularity And State Of The Arts*, edited by Darrell William Davis and Ru-shou Robert Chen, Routledge, 2007,p116-130

Film for discussion: *Double Vision*, Dir. Chen Kuo-fu, 2002, 113min

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II. ENCOUNTERS: FLÂNEUR AND STRANGER

WEEK 12/DEC 22ND  FLÂNEUR AND DÉRIVE: ROAMING IN THE CITY

**Required Readings**
Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs on Baudelaire”


**Reference Reading**
Marshall Berman, “Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets”

Thomas, McDonough. “the derive and Situationist Paris”, Situacionistas/Situationists: Arte, Politica, Urbanismo/Art, Politics, Urbanism

**Homework Viewing**: *Suzhou River*, Dir. Lou Ye, 2000

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Dec 28th-Jan 7th Winter Break

WEEK 13/JAN 12TH  STRANGERHOOD IN THE METROPOLIS
Required Readings
Georg Simmel, “the Stranger”
Also available online at:
http://midiacidadada.org/img/O_Estrangeiro_SIMMEL.pdf

Homework Viewing: *Stranger than Paradise*, Dir. Jim Jarmusch, 1984

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**BORDER TRANSGRESSED: MINORITY, DIASPORA AND REFUGEE**

**Week 14/Jan 19th**  
Screening: *Old Dog*, dir. Pema Tseden, 2013

**Week 15/Jan 26th**  
Lecture + Seminar Session:

**Required Readings**


**FILMOGRAPHY:**

*100 Flowers Hidden Deep*, Dir.:Chen Kaige (available at YouTube)

*2046*, Dir. Wong Kar-wai, 2004

*Goodbye Dragon Inn*, Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, 2003

*Hiroshima Mon Amour*, Dir. Alain Resnais, 1959

*Old Dog*, dir. Pema Tseden, 2013

*Sans Soleil*, Dir. Chris Marker, 1983

*Shower*, Dir. Zhang Yang, 1999

*Stranger than Paradise*, Dir. Jim Jarmusch, 1984

*Suzhou River*, Dir. Lou Ye, 2000

**READING LIST**

Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*.

Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*.

Tony Fitzmaurice and Mark Shiel, eds. *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, 2001
Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire, A Lyrical Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*.

**FURTHER READINGS**
Roland Barthes, *The Empire of Signs*. 