

ENGL 427-M70 (CRN 12112)  
Advanced Studies in Film and Digital Media  
**Hong Kong: Cinematic City** (3 credits)  
Summer term 2008

Intensive course, 7/7 – 7/31/2008  
MTWTh, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Instructors: Jacob Kaltenbach ([jacobak@nmsu.edu](mailto:jacobak@nmsu.edu))  
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Incorporating brief weekly chronological histories of eras in Hong Kong film industry, and screenings documenting the twists, turns, successes and interesting failures of Hong Kong's popular film genres, this course will map cinematic portrayals of Hong Kong's urban centers in Victoria and Kowloon. Our subjects include how Hong Kong projects and understands itself through its cinema and other screen-based media, how directors and cinematographers have framed the cityscape, street life, architecture, construction, commerce, finance, technology, transportation and human flows of the territory, and how multiple 'real' and 'imagined' versions of Hong Kong have accumulated in the popular mind and cinema archives. We will concern ourselves with Hong Kong as studio, subject, and character. We may also examine the cultural and practical impact of the 1997 transition from British to mainland Chinese rule, the industry's conversations and talent exchanges with Hollywood, and the aesthetic contributions of Hong Kong films to global film culture (especially in editing and action sequences). Classroom study, reading, and viewing will be supported by visits to institutions such as the Hong Kong Film Archive, shooting locations for major films, and possibly film studios. Film screenings will be held in class on Tuesdays, one or two evenings per week at a venue to be determined, at the Hong Kong Film Archive, and informally in the dormitory.

### Reading

\*\*\* The following textbook is available for purchase at the NMSU Bookstore and should ideally be read in full before arrival in Hong Kong:

Bordwell, David. *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment*.  
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Excerpts from *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (Abbas), *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (Corrigan) and other selected short readings will also be provided by instructors.

### Preparatory Viewing

Please view (or review) the following films before arrival in Hong Kong. All are readily available from mainstream video outlets (Blockbuster, Netflix, etc), and several will be shown at arranged times in the CMI Theater prior to departure.

*Enter the Dragon* (1973)  
*Police Story* (1983)  
*The Killer* (1989)  
*Chungking Express* (1994)  
*Infernal Affairs* (2004)  
*Kung Fu Hustle* (2004)

### Pre-departure response paper

Write a 2-3 page paper (12 pt., double-spaced) commenting on any **one** of the films listed under Preparatory Viewing. What did you think about the film? What stands out to you as interesting, important, or simply entertaining? How does it differ from Hollywood films you have seen? What would you like to learn about the film, director, stars, locations, or genre? Try to comment on how the film exploits its locations and shooting environments, and on the lighting, editing, stunts (if any) and cinematography. We'll contrast these initial impressions against what you feel at the end of the program. You may cite Bordwell's *Planet Hong Kong*, but this is not required. Otherwise please do not consult additional outside sources regarding the film itself. We're interested in **your** response!

The following website provides some valuable tips for writing about film: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/departments/film.html>. See especially the sections on "Writing a Film Paper" and "Film Analysis".

E-mail your paper as an attachment to [jacobak@nmsu.edu](mailto:jacobak@nmsu.edu) no later than Friday, June 27, 2008. Pre-departure response papers will NOT be accepted after your departure!

### Assessment

Pre-departure response paper	15%
Four short weekly response papers	15% each
Attendance and participation (including one class presentation)	25%

### Schedule

Week 1: Social, spatial, and historical contexts of Hong Kong film

Monday: Historical overview, origins through 1966  
Tuesday: Film screening and discussion  
Wednesday: Social, spatial, and historical contexts of Hong Kong film  
Thursday: Seminar presentations and discussion

To be screened in full: *The Orphan* (1960, special screening at the Hong Kong Film Archive), *House of 72 Tenants* (1972), *Made in Hong Kong* (1997) or *Hollywood Hong Kong, Mr. Cinema* (2007) or *Ce'st la vie, mon cheri* (1994), *Going Home*, episode from *Below the Lion Rock*

Excerpts from the following, among other films: *Hong Kong Nocturne* (1966), *Brothers from the Walled City* (1982), *In the Mood for Love*, *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004), *'92 The Legendary La Rose Noire* (1992), *Ordinary Heroes* (1999), *Bullet in the Head* (1990).

Week 2: Innovations in action, sequencing, and editing

Monday: Historical overview, 1966 through 1983  
Week 1 Response Paper due  
Tuesday: Film screening and discussion  
Wednesday: Innovations in action, sequencing, and editing  
Thursday: Seminar presentations and discussion

To be screened in full: *A Better Tomorrow* (1988), *Project A* (1983), *Breaking News* (2004), *Young and Dangerous* (1996), episode from *Below the Lion Rock*

Excerpts from the following, among other films: *Hard Boiled*, *The Teahouse* (1974), *The Eight Diagram Pole Fighter* (1983)

### Week 3: The city as set and subject

Monday: Historical overview, 1984 through 1996  
Week 2 Response Paper Due

Tuesday: Film screening and discussion

Wednesday: The city as set and subject

Thursday: Seminar presentations and discussion

To be screened in full: *The Delinquent* AKA *Gangs of Hong Kong*, *My Life as McDull* (2001, special screening at the Hong Kong Film Archive), *One Night in Mongkok* (2004), *Visible Secret* (2001), *Dumplings*, episode from *Below the Lion Rock*

Excerpts from the following, among other films: *Chungking Express* (2004), *Comrades*, *Almost a Love Story* (1996), *Infernal Affairs* (2004), *Escape from Hong Kong Island*, *Victim* (1999), *Love in a Fallen City* (1984)

### Week 4: Transformation, disappearance, and rebirth

Monday: Historical overview, 1997 through the present  
Week 3 Response Paper due

Tuesday: Film screening and discussion

Wednesday: Transformation, disappearance, and rebirth

Thursday: Seminar presentations and discussion

To be screened in full: *Election* (2005), *Wicked City* (1992), *City of Glass* (1988), *2046* (2005), episode from *Below the Lion Rock*

Excerpts from the following, among other films: *Who's the Woman, Who's the Man?* (1996)

9:00 a.m., Monday, August 4: Week 4 Response Paper due

*Please see your syllabus for CMI 318-M70 for important guidelines concerning **professionalism**. These apply across the CMI Summer in Hong Kong program.*