The Hong Kong Institute of Education
Department of English

Postgraduate Diploma in English Studies
ENG 5219 Introduction to Film Studies

Lecturer: Mr. Nicholas Wong
Email: nybwong@ied.edu.hk
Office hours: by appointment

Course synopsis
This course introduces participants to contemporary film culture and cinematic trends through a number films made by directions around the world. A number of films will be discussed in focus for participants’ exposure to basic knowledge and skills in doing film studies, for the improvement of their analytical and critical thinking skills, and for exploring ways of using films in their future teaching.

Course content
1. Generic features that define film as an art form, comparing filmic storytelling with literary narration through consideration of mise-en-scene, setting, cinematography, narrative point of view, editing, sounds.
2. Basic elements of film analysis and film critique through engagement with published critical literatures.

Course schedule
Venue: D2-LP-09

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>0930-1120</th>
<th>1330-1520</th>
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<tr>
<td>19/6</td>
<td><strong>Editing and shot types</strong> Sam Mendes, <em>American Beauty</em> (1999); Sophia Coppola, <em>Lost in...</em></td>
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<td>Translation (2003); Wong Kar-wai, Chungking Express (1994)</td>
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<td><strong>26/6</strong> Mise-en-scene</td>
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<td><strong>2/7</strong> Genres and sounds</td>
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Students in this course should devote another 10 hours after 2 July to work on their assignments and re-viewing the films studied in class to familiarize themselves more with the texts.

**Assessments**

1. A key term quiz (40%) that requires students to explain a number of technical terms common in studying films and make use of a section of a film discussed in class to illustrate the concepts. Short answers are allowed. You will be given **FOUR** terms in week 5 of the course. Visit the section “Teaching Blog” in my homepage: [http://nicholasybwong.weebly.com](http://nicholasybwong.weebly.com) and post your answers as ‘comments’ to the related entry. Remember to state your full name and student number clearly in the message, or else you will bear the risk of non-submission. You have to make your responses before 7 July 2010, 11:59pm online. Each answer should be written in around 200-250 words.

   In each of your answers, there should be two components: an explanation of the term and mentioning a clip of a film in the syllabus to illustrate the answers. You will be given readings that would help you with the first components. Some films will be screened in class to assist the lecturer’s explanation of certain concepts.

2. A film analysis (60%) in 1,200 words that shows a critical reading of a film in terms of its techniques, structure and theme(s). You will be given three choices to choose from. Remember, this is not a casual post-reviewing reflection. Try not to argue if a film is meaningful (please de-educate yourself that all arts have morals and messages!). You have to give a sophisticated reading of a chosen film based on the concepts mentioned in class. You are strongly recommended to consult a number of relevant secondary resources and cite them properly. Submit the hardcopy to the General Office of Department of English on/before 14 July 2010, 5pm.
ANY LATE SUBMISSION WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED.

Please follow the style guides below when you are working on assignment #2. (source: http://astro.temple.edu/~jlent/asiancinema/style.html)

References: Alphabetically listed. Use author’s full first name, not initials, unless parents named him/her only by initials. Examples of different types of entries are:

- Book, single author:

- Book, article, or presentation, multiple authors:

- Chapter in book:

- Article in journal:

- Article in periodical:

- Article in newspaper:

- Article in newspaper, anonymous:

- Paper presentation:

- Interview:
  - Rani, Devika. 1980. Interview with John A. Lent, Bangalore, India, July 16.

- Website:
Questions

1. Examine how the narrative structure of a film you have studied in this course reflects its themes. Also mention how the filming techniques can achieve particular purposes.

2. Make use of a film you have studied in this course to illustrate how space and *mise-en-scene* work to deliver meanings.

3. Analyze the use of visual symbols in a film you have studied in the course.

Recommended readings

**On Elephant and American independent films:**

**On Slumdog Millionaire**

**On road movies:**

**On terrorism and American films:**

**On Wong Kar-wai:**

**Further readings on film studies**