

University of Puerto Rico
Río Piedras Campus
College of Humanities
Department of English
Undergraduate Program

Title: Themes in Literature and Film

Code: ENGL/ INGL 4029

Credit hours: 3

Prerequisites: None

Course Description: A specialized topics course reflecting formal trends and critical issues in the study of literature and film. Topics vary per semester. The course may be taken up to three times with different themes.

During the January 2021 semester, the course will be offered with the subtitle: South Korean New Wave Cinema and Literature

Subtopic Description: The course examines South Korean cinema and literature in their historical, sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Background on Golden Age cinema and the melodramas of the 1950's and 60's, as well as developments in genre and art films of the 70's and 80s are briefly covered, but the primary focus vis-à-vis film is on New Wave cinema of the 1990's, and the rise of Korean cinema throughout the 21st century contemporary era of Hallyu. Attention is paid to both film aesthetics and post-colonial South Korean issues most relevant to film studies such as traditional beliefs, Japanese occupation, national division, the Korean war, modernization, military dictatorship, civilian protests, democratic governance, social class tensions, U.S. neocolonialism, and globalization. Moreover, representative films of auteur film makers are studied. In the portion of the course devoted to literature, the emphasis is on South Korean short stories, novels, and poetry of the 21st century. Literary works selected relate to the films studied.

*All films have English subtitles, and all literary works are written in or translated into English. Some of the films assigned in the class may contain explicit (but not X-rated) sexual scenes or graphic violence.

* Our class will meet in synchronous time by Zoom or Google Meets every Friday during our scheduled class time unless unforeseen circumstances prevent us from meeting on a given date.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Comprehend fundamental aspects of a variety of literary texts and films that are produced by South Korean film makers or writers.
2. Apply basic knowledge of South Korean historical, sociopolitical and cultural contexts in order to begin to be able to critically assess cinematic and literary representations.
3. Identify how literary texts and films represent social change.
4. Examine film according to a critical study of art house aesthetics, Joseon era historical dramas and popular South Korean genres, such as revenge narratives, gangster and spy films, westerns, horror, comedy, and sociopolitical dramas or satires.
5. Interpret an autobiography, short stories, poetry, novels, and films to understand complex interplay between individual agency, historical trauma, and cultural, societal, economic, and class-related forces on depicted characters.
6. Use appropriate terminology from literary and cinematic studies in verbal and written analyses and in written essay and research paper assignments, demonstrating knowledge of and ability to use available bibliographic research sources in the field.
7. Present the results of his/ her research in a creative, written, or oral form.
8. Acquire an inquisitive and thoughtful attitude regarding international film and literary studies and other cultures.

Course Content and Time Distribution (45 hrs.)

I. Course Introduction and Overview

3 hrs.

Background on Golden Age cinema and the melodramas of the 1950's and 60's, as well as developments in genre and art films of the 70's and 80s. Twentieth-century South Korean history of Japanese occupation, WWII, national division, civil war, military dictatorship, protest, modernization, cosmopolitanism, class relations, and globalized film, music, and literature distribution. Overview of auteur film makers, genres, literary authors, and themes to be studied.

Screenings related to Korean language and history: *The King's Letters*, (Dir. Cho Chul-hyun, 2019); *The Secret Mission*, (Dir. Eom Yu-na, 2019)

Reading assignment: Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, Chapter 5

II. South Korean film 1945-1990 Melodramas

3 hrs.

Screening and discussion of the film *The Housemaid* (Dir. Kim Ki-young, 1960)

Reading assignments: McHugh; Kim, Kyung Hyung

III. New Wave Cinema of the 90s, independent films and studios, realism, experimentalism, censorship, military dictatorship, the Kwangju Uprising, and student protests

6 hrs.

Directors Park Kwang-su, Jang sun-woo, Chung Ji-Young, Lee Myung-se, and Im Kwon-taek
Screening and discussion of the films *Chilsu and Mansu* (Dir. Park Kwang-su, 1988); *A Petal* (Dir. Jang Sun-woo, 1996); *North Korean Partisan in South Korea*, (Dir. Chung Ji-Young, 1989); *Nowhere to Hide*, Lee Myung-se, 1999); *Seopyeonje* (Dir. Im Kwon-taek, 1993)

Reading assignment: Hae Joang Cho, “Sopyonje: Its Cultural and Historical Meaning”

IV. Auteur film maker Park Chan-wook; genre and genre-bending, visual language, cultural themes, division of North and South Korea; vengeance narratives and horror **6 hrs.**
Screening and discussion of films *Joint Security Area* (2000); *Old Boy* (2003); *Thirst* (2009); and *Handmaiden* (2016)

Reading assignment: Bevan; Kim, Suk-Young

V. Auteur Kim Ki-duk; and other art-house cinema (by directors Jeon Yun-su and Lee Song Hee-il); the uses of silence; extremism; reworking traditional cultural elements in a contemporary era **6 hrs.**
Screening and discussion of films: *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring* (2003); *3 Iron* (2004); and *The Bow* (2005); *Portrait of a Beauty* (Dir. Jeon Yun-su, 2008); *No Regret* (Dir. Lee Song Hee-il, 2006).

Reading Assignment: Seung-Chung Hye

VI. Auteur Hong Sangsoo; story-telling through multiple versions of a narrative within one film; minimalism; the use of mundane dialogue; filming the city; the use of single and long shots **3 hrs**

Screening and discussion of the films *Woman on the Beach* (2006); *Oki’s Movie* (2010); *Hill of Freedom* (2014); *Grass* (2018)

VII. Auteur Lee Chang-dong **3 hrs.**

Screening and discussion of films *Peppermint Candy* (1999); *Poetry* (2010); *Burning* (2018)

Reading assignments: Chung and Diffrient

Anxiety of Words: Contemporary Poetry by Korean Women, Choe Sung-ja, Kim Hyesoon, and Yi Yon-ju

VIII. Auteurs Kim Jee-woon; Jang Hoon; Cho Min-ho; Jun Ji-woo **6 hrs.**

The Good, The Bad, The Weird (Dir. Kim Jee-woon) and *The Quiet Family* (Dir. Kim Jee-woon); *A Taxi Driver* (Dir. Jang Hoon, 2017); *A Resistance* (Dir. Cho Min-ho, 2019); *Modern Boy* (Dir. Jun Ji-woo, 2008)

IX. Auteur Bong Joon-h **3 hrs.**

Screening and discussion of films *The Host* (2006); *Parasite* (2019)

X. Literary Works **6 hrs.**

Film screening and discussion *A Girl at my Door* (Dir. July Jung, 2014)

Reading assignments: Cho, Nam-joo. *Kim J Young, Born 1982*. Liveright, 2020.

Han Kang, *Human Acts* (selected short stories)

E. J. Koh, *The Magical Language of Others: A Memoir*.

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Presentation of Research Projects

TOTAL HOURS **45 hrs.**

Teaching Strategies

Lecture and discussion in synchronous and asynchronous online classrooms; Film screenings; Reading and Written assignments

Resources and Equipment Required

Students need to subscribe to Amazon Prime Video. Other streaming service subscriptions, such as Netflix or Hulu, could be necessary, as well, depending on the availability of the films at the time the course takes place.

Students need to have access to their university email account and the online platform of the course. Students must also have a computer with a word processor and editor of presentations, integrated or external speakers, web camera or a mobile device with camera and microphone, and access to a high-velocity internet or a mobile WIFI hotspot.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation asynchronous class activities	(25%)
Attendance and participation in synchronous classes online	(25%)
Short response papers to films and literary texts	(30%)
<u>Final internet-based research project</u>	<u>(20%)</u>
TOTAL	(100%)

- Students will also be asked to learn the Korean (Hangul) alphabet and Korean phrases for “hello” and “thank you”

Grades: A, B, C, D, F

*** A differential grading system will be applied for students with special needs.

UPR Policies: The University of Puerto Rico prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in any of its forms including that of sexual harassment. According to the Institutional Policy Against Harassment at the University of Puerto Rico, Certification Num. 130, 2014-2015 from the Board of Governors, any student subjected to acts constituting sexual harassment, must turn to the Office of the Student Ombudsperson (procuradora), the Office of the Dean of Students, and/or the Coordinator of the Office of Compliance with Title IX for an orientation and/or a formal complaint.

Acomodo razonable: Según la Ley de Servicios Educativos Integrales para Personas con Impedimentos, Ley 51, todo estudiante que requiera acomodo razonable deberá notificarlo al profesor el primer día de clase. Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el (la) profesor(a) al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y el equipo de asistencia necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Servicios a Estudiantes con impedimentos (OSEI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el (la) profesor(a). Si un alumno tiene una discapacidad documentada (ya sea física, psicológica, de aprendizaje o de otro tipo, que afecte su desempeño académico) y le gustaría solicitar disposiciones académicas especiales, éste debe comunicarse con la Oficina de Servicios a Estudiantes con Impedimentos (OSEI) del Decanato de Estudiantes, a fin de fijar una cita para dar inicio a los servicios pertinentes.

Integridad académica: La Universidad de Puerto Rico promueve los más altos estándares de integridad académica y científica. El Artículo 6.2 del Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la UPR (Certificación Núm. 13, 2009-2010, de la Junta de Síndicos) establece que “la deshonestidad académica incluye, pero no se limita a: acciones fraudulentas, la obtención de notas o grados académicos valiéndose de falsas o fraudulentas simulaciones, copiar total o parcialmente la labor académica de otra persona, plagiar total o parcialmente el trabajo de otra persona, copiar total o parcialmente las respuestas de otra persona a las preguntas de un examen, haciendo o consiguiendo que otro tome en su nombre cualquier prueba o examen oral o escrito, así como la ayuda o facilitación para que otra persona incurra en la referida conducta”. Cualquiera de estas acciones estará sujeta a sanciones disciplinarias en conformidad con el procedimiento disciplinario establecido en el Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la UPR vigente.

Selected Bibliography

An, Jinsoo. *Parameters of Disavowal: Colonial Representation in South Korean Cinema*. University of California Press, 2018.

Bevan, Jake. "Welcome to Panmunjeom: encounters with the north in contemporary South Korean cinema," *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 8, no. 1 (August 2010): 45-57.

Cho, Hae Joang. "Sopyonje: Its Cultural and Historical Meaning" in David E. James and Kyung Hyun Kim, *Im Kwon-taek: the Making of a Korean National Cinema*. Wayne State University Press, 2002.

Cho, Michelle. "Genre, Translation, and Transnational Cinema: Kim Jee-woon's *The Good, the Bad, the Weird*." *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 3 (2015): 44-68.

Cho, Nam-joo. *Kim J Young, Born 1982*. Liveright, 2020.

Cho, Se-hui. *The Dwarf*. University of Hawaii. 2006.

Choe, Steve. *Sovereign Violence: Ethics and South Korean Cinema in the New Millennium*. Amsterdam University Press, 2016.

Choi, Jinhee, "Seoul, Busan and Somewhere Near: Korean Gangster Cinema and Urban Space." In *Global Cinematic Cities: New Landscapes of Film and Media*, ed. Johan Andersson, Lawrence X. Webb, 220-236. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Chung, H.S. and D.S. Diffrient. "Forgetting to Remember, Remember to Forget: The Politics of Memory and Modernity in the Fractured Films of Lee Chang-dong and Hong Sang-soo," in *Seoul Searching*, 115-140.

Cumings, Bruce, ed. *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, Updated Ed. W.W. Norton, 2005.

Dal, Yong Jin. *Transnational Korean Cinema: Cultural Politics, Film Genres, and Digital Technologies*. Rutgers University, 2019.

Han Joon Magnan-Park, Aaron. "Peppermint Candy: The Will Not to Forget" in *New Korean Cinema*. Eds. Chi-Yun Shin & Julian Stringer. NYU Press, 2005: 159-169.

Hye, Seung-Chung. "Beyond Extreme: Rereading Kim Ki-duk's Cinema of Ressentiment." *Journal of Film and Video* 62, No.1 (2010): 96-111.

James, David E., Kyung Hyun Kim, Choi, et al. *Im Kwon-taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema*. Wayne State University Press, 2002.

Kang, Han. *Human Acts*. Original pub date 2014. Hogarth, 2017.

Kim, Kyung Hyung. "Lethal Work: Domestic Space and Gender Troubles in Happy End and the Housemaid" in *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre and National Cinema*, ed. K. McHugh and N. Ablemann, 201-228.

Kim, Suk-Young. "Crossing the Border to the Other Side: Dynamics of Interaction between North and South Korean in Spy Li-Cheol-jin and Joint Security Area," in *Seoul Searching: Contemporary Korean Cinema and Society*, eds. Frances Gateward, (SUNY Press, 2007): 219-242.

Klein, Christina. *Cold War Cosmopolitanism: Period Style in 1950s Korean Cinema*. University of California, 2020.

----- "Why American Studies Needs to Think about Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-ho," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (December 2008): 871-898.

Koh, E.J. *The Magical Language of Other: A Memoir*. Tin House Books, 2020.

Kwon, Heonik. 'Korean War Traumas,' *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 38-2-10, September 20, 2010.<http://japanfocus.org/-Heonik-Kwon/3413/article.html>

Lee, Nam. *The Films of Bong Joon Ho*. Rutgers University Press, 2020.

Lee, Sangjoon. *Rediscovering Korean Cinema*. University of Michigan Press, 2019.

McHugh, Kathleen, Nancy Abelmann, et al. *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre and National Cinema*. Wayne State University Press, 2005.

Paquet, Darcy. *New Korean Cinema: Breaking the Waves*. Wallflower Press, 2009: 92-115.

Standish, Isolde, "Korean Cinema and the New Realism: Text and Context," in *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, ed. W. Dissanayake, 65-89. Indiana University Press, 1994.

Yecies, Brian and Aegyun Shin. *The Changing Face of Korean Cinema*. Rutgers University Press, 2018.

Electronic Resources:

[Korean Film Archive YouTube Channel](#)

[Korean Film Council \(영화진흥위원회\)](#)

[KMDB \(한국영화데이터베이스\)](#)

[KMDB VOD](#)

[HanCinema](#)