

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

**Title:** Film and/as Literature

**Code:** ENGL/ INGL 4055

**Credit hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Description:** A study of the close relationship between film and literature. Examination of literary texts followed by viewing of screen versions and discussion of technique, differences between mediums, changes in the film interpretation and effectiveness. Writers who are influenced by film or write screenplays will be included.

**\*During the January 2023 semester, the course will be offered with a focus on pan-Asian filmic and literary production.**

**Course Theme Description:** The course examines pan-Asian cinema, literature, and works of cinematic adaptation in their aesthetic, thematic, historical, sociopolitical, and cultural contexts. Assigned and recommended films and literature are from (listed in alphabetical order) Britain, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Other issues most relevant to film studies, cultural studies, and current events will arise in our discussions when the films or literary texts address issues such as traditional beliefs, occupation by another country, national division, war, modernization, military coups and dictatorship, civilian protests, democratic governance, social class tensions, U.S. neocolonialism, globalization, minority populations, and social equity. Literary works selected relate to the films studied.

\*Although most of the films are in Asian languages, they 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 films and literature that are produced by Asian film makers or writers of 16 countries.
2. Apply basic knowledge of Asian 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, documentary, and popular genres, such as action, 3-D adventure action, suspense, revenge narratives, detective mysteries, neo-Noir, sci fi, horror, coming-of-age, comedy, romance, family dramas, surreal road trips, historical dramas, thrillers, fantasy, and sociopolitical dramas or satires.
5. Interpret short stories, poetry, novels, and films to understand complex interplay between narrative strategies, individual agency, political and societal organization and norms, historical events and trauma, and cultural, economic, religious, gender/ sexual identity and class-related forces on depicted characters.
6. Use appropriate terminology from literary and cinematic studies in verbal and written analyses and in written response papers and a research analysis paper assignment, demonstrating knowledge of and ability to use available bibliographic research sources in the field.
7. Present the results of his/ her/ their research in a creative, written, or oral form.
8. Acquire an inquisitive and thoughtful attitude regarding international film, literary studies, and other cultures.

## Course Content and Time Distribution (45 hrs.)

### I. Course Introduction and Overview 3 hours

Background on pan-Asian cinema from the 1950's to the 2020's. Twentieth-century histories of WWII, national division, military engagement and war, political transition, coups, occupation by other countries, dictatorship, censorship and repressive policing, civil war, public protest and resistance, democratization, modernization, cosmopolitanism, class relations, ethnic and other discrimination, and globalized film, music, and literature distribution. Overview of countries, film makers, genres, literary authors, and themes to be studied. In addition to the films and literary works listed in the overview, brief video clips and brief articles will occasionally be assigned weekly to contextualize and theorize the texts.

### II. (week 2) **The Philippines under the Marcos Years of Dictatorship: family drama, activism, dissidence, and historical critique 3 hrs**

**Film screening: Dekada '70** (Dir. Chito S. Roño, 2003). The film is an adaptation of the novel Dekada '70, written in Tagalog, by Lualhati Bautista. It tells the story of a middle class family living through the martial law era of the rule of Dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

III. (week 3) **Korea under Japanese occupation; the division of Korea into North and South; South Korean New Wave Cinema; auteur film makers; border tensions; personal and societal repression, autonomy, and attempted liberation 3 hrs**

**Film screenings:** *The Handmaiden* Film is adapted from the Welsh writer Sarah Waters' novel *Fingersmith*. *Burning* Film is adapted from Haruki Murakami's short story "Barn Burning." **JSA - Joint Security Area** Film is adapted from the novel *DMZ*, by Park Sang-yeon.

**Readings:** Short story "Barn Burning," by Haruki Murakami; Lee Chang-dong's short story "On Destiny"; and film analysis articles and biographical overviews of the work of the two auteur film makers.

IV. (weeks 4-6) **Japan, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan: Feudal society; 20<sup>th</sup> Century war; Ethnic strife and civil war; social revolution; gender and gender relations; sexual identity; mangas; short fiction, and children's books adapted to film 9 hours**

**Film screenings (Japan):** *The Burmese Harp*, *Rashomon*, *Drive my Car*, and episodes of the series *He's Expecting*; (Sri Lanka) *Funny Boy*; (Taiwan) *Your Name Engraved Herein*

**Readings:** End of novel *Funny Boy*, by Shyam Selvadura; *Malcochon*, by Derek Wacott; chapters of *Hiyama Kentarou no Ninshin* by Eri Sakai

V. (week 7-9) **Thailand and Vietnam: Family dramas; family care and norms; culture; Muslim-majority populations; religion; regional poverty and its effect on children; childhood and youth; old age and recollections of youth; education; social class; oppressive forces on the poor and exploitative economic necessities of employment for the young; mining companies; comfort women 9 hours**

**Film screenings:** (Thailand) *Butterfly and Flowers*; (Vietnam) *Father and Son*; (Indonesia) *The Rainbow Troops*; (Malaysia) *The Garden of Evening Mists*

**Readings:** excerpts of the novel *Butterfly and Flowers*, by Nippan, and the biographical novel *The Garden of Evening Mists*, by Tan Twan Eng.

VI. (week 10) **Laos and Cambodia: Mixing of folklore, religious beliefs, and narratives of children that include near future societies, past lives, dreaming; time travel, Buddhist sci fi, horror, fantasy, detective mystery, and ghosts 3 hours**

**Film screenings:** (Laos) *The Long Walk*; (Cambodia) *Karmalink*

VII. (week 11) **China: the Chinese Cultural Revolution; communism; cultural traditions; Chinese Opera; sexual identity; soldiering and fantasy narratives; monsters 3 hours**

**Film screenings:** *Farewell my Concubine*, *Chronicles of the Ghostly Tribe*

VIII. (week 12-13) **India, the Indian Diaspora in the US, and Pakistan: Child marriage, misogyny, life in an ashram, prostitution, rural widowhood of the 1940s in India; a Bollywood coming-of-age story; pressures of the educational system; the immigrant experience; assimilation; return to the ancestral country and culture 6 hours**

**Film Screenings:** (India) *Water, 3 Idiots*; (The Indian Diaspora in the US) *The Namesake*; (Pakistan) *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

**Readings:** short story by Jhumpa Lahiri; short story “A Focus on Fundamentals,” by Mohsin Hamid

**IX. (week 14-15) Singapore and Myanmar: surreal road trip; neo-Noir police mystery thriller; Post War story of Mi, a dying night woman, man-eater; testimonials of Myanmar’s military coup of 2021 6 hours**

**Film screenings:** (Singapore-Thai) *Pop Aye*; (Singapore) *A Land Imagined*; (Myanmar) *Mi, Myanmar Diaries*

**Reading:** Poem by Ko Ko Thett (Myanmar)

**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 in asynchronous class activities (25%)

Attendance and participation in synchronous classes online (25%)

Short response papers to films and literary texts (30%)

Final internet-based research project (20%)

TOTAL

(100%)

- Students will also be asked to learn the phrases for “hello,” “thank you,” and “goodbye” in each of the Asian languages of the assigned films.

**Grades:** A, B, C, D, F

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

**UPR Policies:**

(Division for Persons with Disabilities), students who are clients of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester in order to make arrangements for reasonable accommodations and for any necessary auxiliary equipment. Other students with special needs who require any kind of assistance or reasonable accommodations should also contact the professor. Alternative evaluation methods will be provided to students with identified special needs.

“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, 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.

Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con la profesora al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tip de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a.

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.

#### PLAN DE CONTINGENCIA EN CASO DE UNA EMERGENCIA

En caso de surgir una emergencia o interrupción de clases, el profesor continuará ofreciendo el curso utilizando la modalidad a distancia o en línea, según establecidas en este prontuario oficial. De acuerdo a la información oficial y las directrices institucionales, el profesor realizará esfuerzos para comunicarse con los estudiantes vía correo electrónico institucional u otros medios alternos disponibles para coordinar la continuidad del ofrecimiento.

*If an emergency or an interruption of courses occurs, course offerings will take place with the support of distance learning modalities, as established in the official syllabus. In compliance with official communications and institutional guidelines, the professor will make efforts to communicate with students via institutional email or other available communication outlets to coordinate the continuity of course work.*

Bibliography available on course platform