

Freshman Seminar, Spring 2007

**Korean Cinema: History and Cultural Identity in the Global Age**



\* Director Ryoo Seung-wan and Martial Arts Coordinator Jeong Doo-hong, at the *City of Violence* press screening.

**Time and Place:** Olson 109, Tuesday 5:10-7:00 pm  
(In some weeks, we meet 5:10-6:00 pm)

**Film Showing:** Art 204, Tuesday 7:00-9:00 pm  
(A short discussion will follow the film presentation)

**Instructor:** Kyu Hyun Kim  
Associate Professor of Japanese History, UC Davis

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:00-2:50 pm, Thursday 12:40-2:50 pm

**Description:** This seminar examines contemporary Korean cinema in the global context. Korean cinema has been widely recognized in the global cultural market as one of the most surprising and baffling “success stories,” not only resisting the global hegemony of the Hollywood films in the domestic market, but also generating a transnational network of fans, collaborators and consumers in East Asia as well as in Europe and North America. This is a drastic turnaround from only fifteen years ago, when Korean cinema were regarded by Koreans themselves as low-rent, insignificant and unworthy of scholarly

attention. It has now become one of the most important cultural media through which Korea is recognized globally.

The seminar will introduce the freshmen/sophomore participants to a select number of award-winning and artistically praised Korean films and explore modern Korean history and cultural identities as reflected in these works of art. It will be an appropriate course for any student with an interest in East Asian history, East Asian culture, film studies, international relations and media studies.

The content of the course and the films to be shown are **flexible** and **are subject to revision** according to the student's interests.

All reading materials will be available as a sourcebook to be purchased at **Copyland** (231 G St., 530-753-8727) after April 4. There is no textbook to be purchased.

**Requirements:** The students will write two five-page reflection papers and will also contribute an essay on webpage, [www.koreanfilm.org](http://www.koreanfilm.org) (recommended to be registered as a member), to be made in arrangement with Mr. Darcy Paquet. They will attend film screenings and read assigned texts and discuss these works during class sessions. Both reflection papers will be based on topics/questions to be handed out during the class. The first reflection paper is due on **May 8**, during class. The second reflection paper is due on **June 1**, Friday, 5:00 pm, at the History Department Office.

Grade breakdown is as follows:

Reflection papers: 50 points each x 2= 100

Discussion evaluation: 50 points

Online essay: 50 points

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Total: 200 points

Field trip reflection: 20 points each (Optional)

Students also must attend bi-weekly screenings of the select Korean films, and class discussions. Failure to do so will reflect negatively on their final grades.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Part 1: Why is Korean Cinema So Popular?**

##### **Week 1: Introduction—April 3**

\* Possible Field Trip: *The Host* (Berkeley California Theater)

##### **Week 2: Industrial Aspects & Creative Forces—April 10**

Darcy Paquet. "The Korean Film Industry: 1992 to Present." In Julian Stringer, Chi-Yun Shin, eds. *New Korean Cinema*. pp. 32-50.

Jeeyoung Shin. "Globalisation and New Korean Cinema." In Julian Stringer, Chi-Yun Shin, eds. *New Korean Cinema*. pp. 51-62.

Kim Young-jin. "Tightrope." *Film Comment*. vol. 40, no. 6. November/December 2004. pp. 12-14.

## **Part 2: Classics of Korean Cinema**

### **Week 3: 'Golden Age' Melodrama—April 17**

Eunsun Cho. "The Stray Bullet and the Crisis of South Korean Masculinity." In Nancy Abelmann, et al. eds. *The South Korean Golden Age Melodrama*. pp. 99-117.

**Film to be shown:** *Obaltan/ Stray Bullet*

### **Week 4: Im Kwon-t'aek and "National Cinema"—April 24**

Cho Hae Joang. "Sopyonje: Its Cultural and Historical Meaning." In David E. James, Kyung Hyun Kim, eds. *Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema*. pp. 134-156.

**Film to be shown:** *Sop'yonje*

## **Part 3: History and National Identity**

### **Week 5: Nationalism & Colonial Experience—May 1**

Kyu Hyun Kim. " 'Is There Nothing Worse Than Pro-Japanese Collaboration?': The Colonial Experience in the Contemporary Korean Popular Culture." Unpublished paper presented at Association for Asian Studies Conference, March 25, 2007. pp. 1-6.  
\_\_\_\_\_. "Reflections on the Problems of Colonial Modernity and 'Collaboration' in Modern Korean History." *Journal of International and Area Studies*. vol. 11, no. 3. Special Issue, 2004. pp.

**Film to be shown:** *Blue Swallow*

### **Week 6: Field Trip to San Francisco International Film Festival—May 8**

**Film to be shown:** TBA

## **Part 4: Fear and Anxiety**

### **Week 7: Why Violence and Gruesome Deaths?—May 15**

Julian Stringer. "Putting Korean Cinema in Its Place: Genre Classifications and the Contexts of Reception." In Julian Stringer, Chi-Yun Shin, eds. *New Korean Cinema*. pp. 95-105.

**Week 8: Horror, the Horror!—May 22**

Peter Hutchings. *The Horror Film*. Chapter 3. “All in the Mind?: The Psychology of Horror.” pp. 55-76.

Kyu Hyun Kim. “Contemporary Korean Horror: A Diagnosis.” *Nosferatu*. 2007.

**Film to be shown:** *Tale of Two Sisters*

**Part 5: Melodrama**

**Week 9: Mothers Are Not Appreciated, or “We Just Live Because We Cannot Die.”—May 29**

Nancy Abelmann. *The Melodrama of Mobility*. Chapter 4. “Class Work,” Chapter 10. “Conclusion.” pp. 100-131, 281-190.

**Film to be shown:** *My Mother, the Mermaid*

**Week 10: Recap and Further Discussion—June 5**

**Film to be shown:** TBA