



**Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University**

*presents*

**Cinema of Mainland China,  
Hong Kong and Taiwan**

*(Screenings shown in coordination with CHNS 174a and FILM 313a)*

**FALL 2003 SCHEDULE**

**ALL FILMS SHOWN AT 7:00 PM**

**HENRY R. LUCE HALL AUDITORIUM**

**34 HILLHOUSE AVENUE (\* unless noted otherwise)**



**9/11**      ***Farewell My Concubine (Bawang bieji)***  
**Dir. Chen Kaige, China, 1993 (171 minutes)**

*Farewell My Concubine* is the compelling story of two Peking Opera actors and a woman prostitute unexpectedly caught in a passionate love triangle. Tracing over fifty years of their life-long friendship, the movie is set against the sweeping historical backdrop of 20th century China, depicting the two men's greatest triumphs and failures while China herself alternates between rejecting and embracing them. It is a story about two men: one who worked as a Peking Opera actor, the other who lived the opera.

**9/15**      ***New Year's Sacrifice (Zhu fu)***  
**Dir. Sang Hu, China, 1956 (100 minutes)**

*New Year's Sacrifice* is based on the story by Lu Xun of a peasant woman who is widowed twice, and betrayed by both the strict confines of society and by the cruel nature of her neighbors.

**9/18**            ***Xiao Wu***  
**Dir. Jia Zhangke, China, 1997 (107 minutes)**

AND

***On the Beat (Minjing gushi)***  
**Dir. Ning Ying, China, 1995 (102 minutes)**

Filmed on a small budget with a non-professional cast, *Xiao Wu* follows its eponymous protagonist, a small-time pickpocket, through the days and nights of his amiable but aimless existence. This unglamorized view of small-town China won top prize at the Pusan, Korea Film Festival; the Dragons and Tigers Award for Young Cinema at the Vancouver International Film Festival; and has been shown at the Rotterdam Film Festival and in Lincoln Center and MoMA's New Directors' program.

*On the Beat* is the award-winning third feature by Ning Ying, China's premiere woman director, is a subtly subversive portrayal of modern Beijing. Set within a desolate landscape of imposing skyscrapers amidst stretches of tenement housing, contemporary urban life emerges as a highly compromised series of negotiations between individuals attempting to embrace their own destinies and a state machine that manages to intervene in the most intimate affairs of daily life. Ning Ying's gift is to gently capture this retail dispensing of ideology to the citizenry—from young policemen patrolling neighborhoods by bicycle to aged women who monitor the fertility of their female neighbors and parents who attempt to mold their children into "fitting" members of the society.

**9/25**            ***In the Heat of the Sun (Yangguang canlan de rizi)***  
**Dir. Jiang Wen, China, 1994 (134 minutes)**

*In the Heat of the Sun* chronicles the rites-of-passage of a group of adolescent men and is based on Wang Shuo's 1991 novella. The film includes additional autobiographical anecdotes from writer/director Jiang Wen. The story is set in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution. Due to lack of adult supervision at a time of great political unrest, a group of young boys wander in the City, riding their bikes, having fun, chasing girls, enjoying each day under the bright sun, oblivious to their tumultuous surroundings.

**9/29**            ***Early Spring in February (Zao chun er yue)***  
**Dir. Xie Tieli, China, 1963**

*Early Spring in February* is based on the novel of Rou Shi, the famous writer who was executed by Chiang Kai-shek in the 1930s, this film tells the love story of two school teachers in a small town.

**10/09**            ***The Terrorizer (Kongbu fenzi)***  
Dir. Edward Yang, Taiwan, 1986 (109 minutes)

*The Terrorizer* tells the tale of a delinquent Eurasian girl, Shu-an, who is kept under lock and key in her room by her mother. To break the monotony of her ‘incarceration,’ she makes prank calls on the telephone. Purely by coincidence, the number she calls belongs to that of the authoress Chou Yu-fen. The prank call arouses Chou's inspiration to create but it also leads her to question the condition of her seven year-old marriage. Ever since she resigned from her job, Chou has been a housewife. The boredom of being a housewife causes her to write. Her husband, Li Li-chung is a conscientious laboratory technician in a hospital. He yearns for a promotion and when a high-level position falls vacant, he resorts to ruthless means to discredit his rival in order to win the post. This film won Best Picture in the 1986 Golden Horse Awards and Best Screenplay at the Asian Pacific Film Festival.

**10/13**            ***Yellow Earth (Huang tudi)***  
Dir. Chen Kaige, China, 1984 (90 minutes)

*Yellow Earth* focuses on the story of a Communist soldier who is sent to the countryside to collect folk songs for the Communist Revolution. There he stays with a peasant family and learns that the happy songs he was sent to collect do not exist; the songs he finds are about hardship and suffering. He returns to the Army, but promises to come back for the young girl, Cuiqiao, who has been spellbound by his talk of the freedom women have under Communist rule and who wants to join the Communist Army.

**10/16**            ***A Touch of Zen (Hsia nu)***  
Dir. King Hu, Taiwan, 1969 (200 minutes)

A profound influence on Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, veteran director King Hu's *A Touch of Zen* is an ambitious, intricately structured tale that begins as a ghost story in a sleepy town outside Peking. Hu goes on to audaciously blend elements from the political thriller, the martial arts genre, and Japanese Samurai movies to create a highly spiritual Ming dynasty epic. The film boasts some of the most impressively choreographed and imaginative action sequences. Beautifully performed throughout (the feisty, combative heroine Hsu Feng presents a refreshing vision of female empowerment), *A Touch of Zen* has acquired a legendary status that entirely befits its visionary daring and its utterly transcendent beauty.

**10/23**      ***Eat Drink Man Woman (Yin shi nan nu)***  
**Dir. Ang Lee, Taiwan, 1994 (123 minutes)**

A delicious comedy about food, fatherhood and family ties, *Eat Drink Man Woman* depicts the foibles of a contemporary Taiwanese family while movingly capturing the complexities of modern life, the inevitability of change, and the necessity for finding balance in life. Every Sunday, venerable Master Chef Chu prepares an elaborate dinner for his three lovely daughters. Despite Chu's exotic dishes, the family barely nibbles at the food. The listless mealtime ritual mirrors the foursome's general lack of appetite for life: Chu has lost his sense of taste and his daughters just want to go on with their separate, lonely lives. But something new is cooking that is about to spice up everyone's existence, and three marriages and a funeral later, the Chu family will learn to embrace life's unpredictability.

**11/03**      ***Old Well (Lao jing)***  
**Dir. Wu Tianming, China, 1986**

*Old Well* depicts the story of what happens when a married village worker teams up with an old girlfriend to try to dig a well for his water-starved village. The well collapses and they are trapped. Their enforced confinement leads to them exploring their feelings for each other and those around them.

**11/06**      ***Song of the Exile (Ketu qiuhen) \****  
**Dir. Ann Hui, Hong Kong, 1990**

**NOTE: THIS FILM WILL BE SCREENED AT 7:00 PM IN ROOM 101,  
LINSLEY-CHITTENDEN HALL, 63 HIGH STREET**

After the Sino-Japanese War, Kwei Dz, one of the family members of Japanese soldiers accepted a Chinese officer's proposal and remained in China. Later they had a daughter named Ann. The officer went to Hong Kong to work, leaving Kwei Dz and Ann in Macao. Kwei Dz, unable to communicate with her in-laws, much less accept their ways, became remorseful. Yet the worst problem she had was that Ann did not accept her as a mother. After Ann got a Master Degree in the United Kingdom, she went back to Hong Kong. Kwei Dz had been feeling very homesick for her mother country and decided to take Ann and return to Japan. In Japan, Ann began to understand her mother's pain because she did not understand Japan or the Japanese. Later a telegram from Canton arrived saying that Ann's grandfather had had a stroke. Upon seeing her grandfather, Ann realized that, in spite of his now frail body, a body once tortured by the Red Guards, he was so hopeful for China's future. Ann saw that China was now trying to find its own way in the midst of its self-inflicted turmoil.

**11/10**      ***How Steel is Made (Gangtie shi zenyang lian cheng de)***  
**Dir. Lu Xuechang, 1998 (108 minutes)**

Spanning two decades of Chinese history—from the repressed seventies to the money-crazed present — *How Steel is Made* follows a young man's journey from boiler stoker to frustrated rocker in Beijing. In the end, the misfit hero develops a sort of nostalgia for the revolution, stoked by the memory of a social-realist book from his childhood entitled *The Making of Steel*.

**11/13**      ***Once Upon a Time in China (Wong Fei-hong)*** \*  
**Dir. Tsui Hark, Hong Kong, 1991 (134 minutes)**

**NOTE: THIS FILM WILL BE SCREENED AT 7:00 PM IN ROOM 101,  
LINSLEY-CHITTENDEN HALL, 63 HIGH STREET**

*Once Upon a Time in China* is set in late 19th century Canton. This martial arts film depicts the stance taken by the legendary martial arts hero Wong Fei-hong (1847-1924) against foreign forces' (English, French and American) plundering of China. When Aunt Yee arrives back from America totally westernised, Wong Fei-hong assumes the role of her protector. This proves to be difficult when his martial arts school and local militia become involved in fierce battles with foreign and local government. As violence escalates even Aunt Yee has to question her new western ideals, but is it possible to fight guns with Kung Fu?

**11/17**      ***Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress***  
***(Balzac et la Petite Tailleuse Chinoise)***  
**Dir. Dai Sijie, 2002 (116 minutes)**

In 1971, in the lingering grip of the Cultural Revolution, two university students, Luo and Ma, are sent to a mountain mining village as part of their reeducation duty to purge them of their classical western oriented education. Amid the backbreaking work and stifling ignorance of the community, the two boys find that music, and the presence of the beautiful local young women are the only pleasant things in their miserable life. However, none compare to the young seamstress granddaughter of the local tailor. Stealing a departing student's secret cache of forbidden books of classic western literature such as the works of Honore de Balzac, they set about to woo her and teach her things she had never imagined. In doing so, they start a journey that would profoundly change her perspective on her world and teach the boys about the power of literature and their own ability to change their world in truly revolutionary ways.

**11/20**            ***Center Stage (Ruan Lingyu)***  
**Dir. Stanley Kwan, Hong Kong, 1992 (167 minutes)**

*Center Stage* is a biopic of Chinese silent film actress from the 30's, Ruan Lingyu. This movie tells the sad story of a young woman who is rescued from poverty by show business, and is subsequently destroyed by it. It is a classic story of the patriarchal double standard in which an adulterous woman is punished by society while an adulterous man is not.

**12/04**            ***In the Mood for Love***  
**Dir. Wong Kar-Wai, Hong Kong, 2000 (98 minutes)**

*In the Mood for Love* is set in 1962 Hong Kong. Chow Mo-Wan is a newspaper editor who moves into a new building with his wife. At approximately the same time, Su Li-zhen, a beautiful secretary and her executive husband also move in to the crowded building. With their spouses often away, Chow and Li-zhen spend most of their time together as friends. They have everything in common from noodle shops to martial arts. Soon, they are shocked to discover that their spouses are having an affair. Hurt and angry, they find comfort in their growing friendship even as they resolve not to be like their unfaithful mates.

