

World Cinema and Contemporary Politics

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Class Hours: MTRF 12:15-2:45

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Course Description

The end of the Cold War made widespread the view that the combination of free market capitalism and liberal democracy constituted the best form of socio-economic organization. This attitude, however, left much of the world unprepared for the shocks and upheavals that would characterize the age of globalization: the Asian financial crisis, the destruction of the World Trade Center, wars in the Middle East, and the global financial crisis. This course will examine the films that have come to engage most profoundly the present historical moment, in which the well-being of capitalism is challenged by climate change and resource scarcity, new powers are gaining influence on the global stage, and the industrialized West finds itself undergoing a crisis of confidence. In taking up these issues, the course will devote special attention to the case of Korea and the vibrant cinema that has arisen here since the IMF bailout. Some of the questions we will consider include: why is it so difficult for postmodern societies to imagine substantive change? What alternatives to the existing order are feasible in an interdependent global economy? What kind of role should historical memory play in societies that are rapidly modernizing?

Requirements

Students will keep a journal of responses to the films and the readings. These entries should range from 1-3 pages, and should reach a minimum length of 18 pages in all.

Readings

All readings will be placed on electronic reserve.

Schedule: World Cinema and Contemporary Politics

Week I - The End of History, and Afterwards

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| M | 7/26 | Introduction to the Class
Screening: <i>Children of Men</i> (dir. Alfonso Cuaron, United Kingdom/Japan/US, 2006) |
| T | 7/27 | Reading: Francis Fukuyama, from <i>The End of History and the Last Man</i>
David Harvey, from <i>A Brief History of Neoliberalism</i>
John Gray, from <i>Heresies: Against Progress and Other Illusions</i>
Screening: <i>Fight Club</i> (dir. David Fincher, US, 1999) |
| R | 7/29 | Reading: Phillip Wegner, from <i>Life Between Two Deaths</i>
Slavoj Zizek, from <i>First as Tragedy, Then as Farce</i> |
| F | 7/30 | Screening: <i>Save the Green Planet</i> (dir. Jang Joon-Hwan, South Korea, 2003) |

Week II - The Politics of the New Korean Cinema

- M 8/2 Reading: Bruce Cumings, from *Korea's Place in the Sun*
Screening: *Peppermint Candy* (dir. Lee Chang-Dong, South Korea, 2000)
- T 8/3 Reading: Aaron Han Joon Magnan-Park, "Peppermint Candy: The Will Not To Forget"
Kim Soyoung, "Do Not Include Me in Your 'Us': *Peppermint Candy* and the Politics of Difference"
Screening: *The Host* (dir. Bong Joon-Ho, South Korea, 2006)
- R 8/5 Screening: *Lady Vengeance* (dir. Park Chan-wook, South Korea, 2005)
- F 8/6 Discussion

Week III - The Dreams and Nightmares of a Multipolar World

- M 8/9 Reading: Fareed Zakaria, from *The Post-American World*
Gloria Davies, from *Worrying about China*
Screening: *24 City* (dir. Jia Zhangke, China, 2009)
- T 8/10 Reading: Cui Shuqin, "Negotiating In-Between: On New-Generation Filmmaking and Jia Zhangke's Films"
Dominique Moïsi, from *The Geopolitics of Emotion*
- R 8/12 Reading: McKenzie Wark, from *Gamer Theory*
Screening: *Gamer* (dir. Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor, USA, 2009)
- F 8/13 Screening: *Up in the Air* (dir. Jason Reitman, USA, 2009)