EALL/ASAN 473: Chinese Diaspora and Visual Culture

Objectives: The concept and phenomena of “Chinese diaspora” broadly refers to the cultural practices and social experiences of diverse Chinese migrant and settler communities outside the PRC, e.g. places like Taiwan, Hong Kong, North America, Australia, and Europe. Since the 1990s, “Chinese Diaspora” has become a popular subject of scholarly research in the field of Chinese Studies. This course responds to this noteworthy, rapidly growing trend by focusing on the representation of the Chinese diaspora within “visual culture,” which is a field of inquiry central to film studies and media criticism. This course is also designated as a Focus requirement that fulfills the emphasis on “Contemporary Ethical Issues” (see below), which means that one important pedagogical goal will be to expose students to an ethics of representation, i.e. a critical awareness of the ethical issues and responsibilities that come with the power and privilege to represent. The course material explores how visual technologies and strategies shape our understandings of media, migration, and multiple home affiliations. Such subject matters have become pivotal concerns in film, theatre, and other performing arts produced not only for and about, but also by the Chinese diaspora. Placed within a broader context of contemporary debates on globalization, this course ultimately seeks to understand the powerful role visual culture plays in forging national identity, historical memory, and transnational modernity and subjectivity.

Focus (CEI)-Designation: “Critical ethics courses tend to focus on the more intense issues that have become highly polarized and involve criticism of the status quo in economic, political, and cultural life. For example, current and historical practices that involve a strong sense of injustice, exploitation, and abuse have obvious ethical implications. When the ethical choice is obvious and it is clear that one choice is bad and another good, however, complex ethical decision-making may not be involved. A good E-focus course will raise ethical awareness of the issue and challenge the student to
confront his or her own certainty about the choices involved and create a class atmosphere in which diverse ideas are encouraged.” [General Education Web site] (http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/cei/misperceptions.htm)

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- To achieve basic competency in analyzing and making ethical judgments as relevant to issues in Chinese Diaspora and visual culture.

- To gain a critical understanding an ethics of representation and its relevance for identifying contemporary ethical issues.

- To be able to use the disciplinary approach(es) taught in class as tools for the development of responsible deliberation and ethical judgment in a cross-cultural and global context.

**Organization:** Colloquium style (i.e. Power-point lectures combined with class discussion) to allow for an interactive classroom atmosphere. In order to guide students’ ethical deliberations, lectures will *not* be summaries or repetition of the assigned readings/films but instead present a series of intellectual dialogues with and conceptual interrogations of the material. Time permitting, some clips/trailers of the assigned films will be viewed in class to illustrate the critical texts and aid students with the interpretation. Discussions are intended to provide a critical forum for exploring concerns within the scope of the course theme.

**Student Responsibility:**

- To be informed about the course *at all times*, therefore a high degree of self-motivation and initiative is expected and will be required.

- Queries about a missed class or course material can usually be answered more quickly by checking the syllabus or announcements on the Laulima course website or by emailing classmates. Contacting the professor ought to be students’ last resort.

- *Regular access to and familiarity with the UH-email account and Laulima is mandatory for class communication and announcements of changes in syllabus or other matters.*

**Requirements:**

1. *Regular class-attendance is mandatory according to UH regulations.* Every 10% class absence will lower the final course grade, e.g. A- =>B+. Every absence must be excused in writing (via email). A sign-in sheet for each class will be kept for records and counting starts FIRST DAY OF CLASS MEETING.

2. *Active class participation* involves a careful reading of the assigned material and readiness to contribute to class discussions (there will be weekly quizzes to check students’ level of preparedness e.g. whether students viewed the films and read the texts).
3. Students are expected to bring the assigned reading material to class for the day of discussion so that they can quote from the text or refer to passages during discussions.

4. One take-home midterm exam (2-6 essay type questions), 6-8 pages, double-spaced, typed. One final take-home paper (critical reflection paper), 6-8 pages. Mastery of basic writing skills is essential for passing this course.

Exam and Make-up Dates:
October 07: Distribution of mid-term exam questions (in-class only).
October 14: Mid-term (electronic copy) due.
November 4 & 11: Election Day and Veterans Day, make-up classes TBA
December 09: Distribution of final essay questions (in-class only).
December 16: Final paper (electronic copy) due.

Grading Policy:
- Class performance (#1-3): 40%
- Take-home exams (#4): Midterm 30%, Final 30%

Evaluation Criteria: Since this course is an upper-division undergraduate and a designated Focus course (contemporary ethical issues), strong emphasis will be placed on critical and analytical thinking and student performance will be evaluated in the following manner:

- Student’s preparation of assigned material: being able to summarize the gist of an essay or film, asking intelligent questions, grasping the author’s main argument, and engaging critically with the reading material.
- Student’s ability to follow the lecture/discussions: responding sensibly to questions, contributing intelligently to discussion, interacting sensitively with instructor and classmates.
- Student’s writing skills: clarity in writing, coherence in structure, consistency in argumentation.

Textbooks: (Required and available at UH bookstore):
2. *Course Reader EALL/ASAN 473*
   - The *Course Reader* is available for purchase at CRDG (Curriculum Research & Development Group), Marketing and Publication Service [MaPS], 1776 University Avenue, Castle Medical Annex 101, Ph: 956-4969. Call them (to avoid waiting) before picking up your copy

Library Reserves: Except for the *Course Reader*, all textbooks will also be on reserve at Wong AV, Sinclair library. All “optional” readings (see in “schedule of readings” below) are available electronically through the “reserves” link at the main search page on UH Voyager. Click under course# or instructor’s name to access the list of reserves.
**Student Conduct Code**: Please be advised that plagiarism and copying essays from the Internet is a serious violation of academic ethics and may lead to suspension. Check the UH catalogue or website for definitions of plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and how violation of UH regulations and rules will be dealt with. As the website cautions: “Ignorance of these definitions will not provide an excuse for acts of academic dishonesty.” [http://www.hawaii.edu/student/conduct/](http://www.hawaii.edu/student/conduct/)

**Writing and Disability Assistance**: Students with a disability or with disability-related needs or concerns, please inform the instructor on the first day of class and contact the Kokua program at 956-7511 or drop in Student Services Center, room 13.

The English department, in Kuykendall Hall, 4th floor, runs a *Writing Workshop*, which provides assistance with writing papers. If you need help with your writing, please contact them.

***********************************************************************

**Schedule of Readings** (are arranged by week and are subject to change): Unless it refers to one of the textbook authors, all other articles are included as hard copies in the Course Reader. “E-reserve” means the article is available as electronic file and can be accessed under “Courses Reserves” on the UH Voyager library website. **Optional readings are highly recommended because they provide important background information to the assigned reading material that is mandatory preparation.**

NOTE: All feature films for this course are streamed (see list of links uploaded to the RESOURCES folder on the course’s Laulima homepage) and DVD/video copies are on reserve at Sinclair library’s Wong AV Center for two weeks. Movies MUST VIEWED at your convenience PRIOR to the day it is scheduled for discussion in class.

(Contact Prof. Yue for the day-to-day reading list, which is not attached here because of copyright).