**Narrating the City: Literary and Visual Representations of Shanghai**

**Course Details**
- **Course Title:** Narrating the City: Literary and Visual Representations of Shanghai
- **Course Code:** EAST-UA 9950
- **Credit Points:** 4

**Instructor**
- **Name:** Dr. Shaoyi Sun

**Course Description**
Ever since the explosive growth of the city from the middle of the 19th century, every mass medium that has emerged in an urban setting has generated a new form of city narrative. Balzac’s Paris, Dickens’ London, Joyce’s Dublin, and Mao Dun’s Shanghai offered us literary examples of how the pulsing rhythm of a particular city was narrated and commented upon. Cinema and other visual forms, on the other hand, provide a range of decoding devices to the city labyrinth. Ruttman’s Berlin and Vertov’s Moscow or Kiev opened up new ways of seeing the world and narrating the city. The arrival of “new media” creates a new narrative form that not only brings together a multitude of city narratives, makes it possible for the user to interact with those narratives and to formulate his/her own city narrative, but also foregrounds the fact that the city does not acquire its own meaning but only exists in modes of speaking, writing, and representation. While focusing on the literary and visual representations of Shanghai, this course will also introduce some of the most important theoretical and art works that discuss/speak about the cities other than Shanghai.

No prior knowledge of Chinese literature, cinema, and culture is required. All works of fiction are the original versions as translated into English. All films and new media works carry English subtitles.

**Course Objectives**
The objective of this course is to investigate a variety of modern and contemporary “Shanghai narratives,” particularly that of fiction, film, advertising, cartoons, and computer-based new media products, that have contributed to our understanding of one of the most remarkable cities in East Asia. We will examine how the city of Shanghai is “narrated” in both literary and visual forms and what role narrative plays in knowledge production, in this case the production of our knowledge and experience of Shanghai. The investigation of the competing narratives of either the constructive or the destructive potential of the metropolis is more of an attempt to explore how the urban landscape of Shanghai was culturally imagined in ideological, national, transnational, and gender terms than of an endeavor to piece together the “real” picture of Shanghai.

**Grading Components**
- **Class Participation:** 10%
- **Mid-term Paper 5-7 pages:** 30%
- **Final Paper 8-10 pages:** 40%
- **Media Project & Presentation: In class** 20%

**Instructor Bio**
Shaoyi Sun is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Shanghai University’s School of Film & TV. He has taught Chinese film, literature, and cultural studies at the University of Southern California (USC), the University of California at Irvine (UCI), and NYU Shanghai. He was the NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema) juror of the 2011 Bengaluru International Film Festival, the 2009 Singapore International Film Festival (Chair), the 2007
Brisbane International Film Festival, the 2001 Hawaii International Film Festival, and a jury member of the 2008 Shanghai International Film Festival’s International Student Shorts Award and the 2000 Dhaka International Film Festival.


Blog: [http://shaoyis.wordpress.com/](http://shaoyis.wordpress.com/) (requires VPN to get access to)

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<th>Grading Expectations</th>
<th>A: Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning.</th>
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<td>B: Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research.</td>
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<td>C: Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level.</td>
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<td>D: Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations.</td>
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<td>F: Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria.</td>
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**Plagiarism Policy**
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Students must retain an electronic copy of their work until final grades are posted on Albert. They must be prepared to supply an electronic copy if requested to do so by NYU Shanghai. Not submitting a copy of their work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

**Required Text(s)**

Course Reader (original copy available at NYU Shanghai main office).


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**PART ONE: Pre-1949 Shanghai**

**Week One**

Introduction: Why the City, Why Shanghai?

Read:  

“Preface” and “Chapter One” from Yingjin Zhang *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film*

**Week Two**

Mapping Shanghai: Space, Gender and Ideology

Read:  

“Introduction” to the unpublished dissertation *Urban Landscape*

NYU Shanghai
Narrating the City: Literary and Visual Representations of Shanghai and Cultural Imagination by Shao-yi Sun
Midnight (excerpts) by Mao Dun

Week Three
Revolutionary Vision vs. New Sensationalism
Read: Course Reader for Week Three
“Shanghai Spring, 1930” (Part I) by Ding Ling
“Five in a Nightclub” by Mu Shiying

Week Four
Love in a Fallen City
Read: Course Reader for Week Four
“Sealed Off” & “Lust, Caution” by Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing)
View: Lust, Caution (clip; d. Ang Lee, 2007, 159 min.)

Week Five
The Cinematic City: The Kino-Eye
Read: Course Reader for Week Four
“The founding myth of cinema, or the “train effect”
View: Metropolis (d. Fritz Lang, 1927)
Berlin, Symphony of a Great City (d. Walter Ruttmann, 1928)
Man with a Movie Camera (d. Vertov, 1929)
Discussion

Week Six
**Mid-Term Paper Due**
Policing Shanghai: Cinema and the City
Read: Course Reader for Week Six
“The Left-Wing Cinema Movement” by Laikwan Pang
View: Daybreak (d. Sun Yu, 1933, 97 min.)

Week Seven
Cartooning & Advertising Shanghai: Desire and Anxiety
Read: Course Reader for Week Seven
“Fashioning the Shanghai Woman” by Shaoyi Sun
View: Instructor’s PPT Presentation

**PART TWO: Post-1949 Shanghai**

Week Eight
Communist Re-visioning of Shanghai
Read: Course Reader for Week Eight
View: The City that Never Sleeps (clip; d. Tang Xiaodan, 1957)

Week Nine
Shanghai’s “Second Coming” and Re-Cosmopolitanization
Read: Wei Hui
View: Shanghai Baby (clip; d. Berengar Pfahl, 2007, 93 min.)

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Week Ten
Re-imagining the City at the Turn of the Century
Read: Wang Anyi (half of the novel)

Week Eleven
Re-imagining the City at the Turn of the Century
Read: Wang Anyi (finish the whole novel)
View: Everlasting Regret (clip; d. Stanley Kwan, 2005)

Week Twelve
New Media and the City
Read: Course Reader for Week Twelve
View: New media works on Shanghai

Week Thirteen
Guest Speaker & Screening

Week Fourteen
Student Media Project Presentation

Week Fifteen
Final Paper Due: No Electronic Submission is accepted; No Late Paper is accepted.