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Classroom: Uris Hall G88
TUE/TH 10:10–11:25

Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Southeast Asian Cinema



This course examines the new commercial, documentary, and art cinemas of Southeast Asia and their engagement with contemporary discourses of gender and sexuality. It pays special attention to the ways in which sexuality and gendered embodiment are at present linked to citizenship and other forms of belonging and to how the films draw on Buddhist and Islamic traditions of representation and belief. Focusing on globally circulating Southeast Asian films of the past 15 years, the course draws on current writings from feminism, Buddhist studies, affect theory, queer studies, postcolonial theory, and film studies to ask what new understandings of subjectivity might emerge from these cinemas and their political contexts.

Each topic will be discussed for one week. Filmic materials may include violent or explicit passages.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week I. August 26, 2014. Introduction

August 28 Femininity and Nation in the Heritage Cinema (Thailand)

Film: Nonzee Nimibutr *Nang Nak*, Thailand, 1998.

May Adadol Ingawanij “*Nang Nak*: Thai Bourgeois Heritage Cinema.”

Benedict Anderson, “Cultural Roots.”

Week II. Femininity and Nation in the Heritage Cinema (Thailand), continued

September 2: John S. Strong, “The Story of Vasavadatta.”

Liz Wilson, “False Advertising Exposed: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Pali Hagiography.”

Bliss Cua Lim, “Spectral Times: The Ghost Film as Historical Allegory.”

Recommended reading: Susan Stewart, "Notes on Distressed Genres" (67–75; 88–93).

Adam Knee "Thailand Haunted: The Power of the Past in the Contemporary Thai Horror Film."

September 4: Feminist Reconfigurations (Thailand)

Film: Pimpaka Towira, *Mae Nak*, (Thailand, 1997, 30 min)

Projection in class: Stills from Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook's video work.

Readings:

Adam Phillips, "On Flirtation: An Introduction." And "Contingency for Beginners."

Linda Williams, "Film Bodies."

Recommended readings:

Douglas Crimp, "Mourning and Militancy."

Week III. Transnational Femininity and Prosthetic Memory (Hong Kong-Thai Coproduction)

Film: *The Eye*, Danny and Oxide Pang (Thailand/Hong Kong/Singapore, 2002)

September 9

Jean Ma, "Time Without Measure, Sadness Without Cure."

Alison Landsberg, "Prosthetic Memory."

Vivian Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh."

Recommended short newspaper article:

Michael Vatikiotis, "Sino Chic: Suddenly, It's Cool to Be Chinese."

September 11

Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny."

Carol Clover, "The Eye of Horror."

Adam Knee, "Thailand in the Hong Kong Cinematic Imagination."

Recommended reading:

Adam Knee, "The Pan-Asian Outlook of *The Eye*."

Kasian Tejapira, "Imagined Uncommunity: The *Lookjin* Middle Class and Thai Official Nationalism."

Seltzer, Mark. "Wound Culture."

IV. Border Belongings (Southern Thailand / Malaysia)

Film: *This Area is Under Quarantine* (Thunskana Pansittivorakul, Thailand, 2008)

Pangyau (Amir Muhammad, Malaysia, 2002, 13 min)

September 16 Jasbir Puar, "The Sexuality of Terrorism."

Judith Butler, "Sexual Politics, Torture, and Secular Time."

Benjamin McKay, "Reclaiming History: The Politics of Memory and Trauma in the Films of Amir Muhammad."

Viewing (images): Ampannee Satoh, "Burqa 2010." Richard S. Ehrlich, "Bangkok Exhibition Fights for Rights of Islamic Fashionistas," *CNN Go*, July 26, 2011.

<http://www.cnn.go.com/bangkok/play/interview-muslim-female-photographer-defies-frances-burqa-ban-photos-374776>

September 18 Jin Haritaworn and Jennifer Petzen, "Invented Traditions, New Intimate Publics: Tracing the German "Muslim Homophobia" Discourse."

Berlant, Lauren. "Intimacy: A Special Issue."

Viewing (images): Angélique Chrisafis, "Cornered – Princess Hijab, Paris's Elusive Graffiti Artist," *The Guardian*, November 11, 2010 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/nov/11/princess-hijab-paris-graffiti-artist>

Recommended short reading: In the Land Where Everyone's God: Interview with Musdah Mulia, August 8, 2014 <http://magdalene.co/news-215-in-the-land-where-everyone%E2%80%99s-god-interview-with-musdah-mulia-.html>

V. Instructor on field trip with graduate course

September 23 No Class! Make-up session: Mandatory outside event with speaker Bliss Lim, time and date TBA

September 25 Mandatory library session with Greg Green and Jeffrey Petersen

VI. Body, Technology, City—Queer Hong Kong

Film: Yau Ching, *Let's Love Hong Kong* (Ho Yuk, Hong Kong, 2002)

September 30 Yau Ching, "Dreaming of Normal While Sleeping with Impossible: Introduction"
Olivia Khoo, "The Ground Beneath Her Feet: Fault Lines of Nation and Sensation in Yau Ching's *Ho Yuk: Let's Love Hong Kong*."

Denise Tang, *Conditional Spaces*, (selection).

Short recommended reading: Bérénice Reynaud, "Let's Love Hong Kong."

http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2002/feature-articles/love_hk/

October 2 Tani Barlow, "Green Blade in the Act of Being Grazed."

Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (selection)

Saskia Sassen, "Whose City Is It? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims"

Recommended reading: Ackbar Abbas, "Cinema, the City, and the Cinematic"

VII. Sexuality in Colonial Times (Vietnam)

Film: Jean Jacques Annaud, *The Lover*, (France/Vietnam, 1992)

October 7 Nguyen Tan Hoang, "*The Lover's* Gorgeous Ass."

Ann Laura Stoler, "A Colonial Reading of Foucault: Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves."

Reference: Eve Sedgwick, "Shame, Theatricality, and Queer Performativity: Henry James's *The Art of the Novel*."

October 9 Marie-Paule Ha, "The Chinese and the White Man's Burden in Indochina."

Julia Waters, "Cholen, la capitale chinoise du l'Indochine française: Rereading Marguerite Duras's (Indo)chinese Novels," (179–188).

Recommended reading:

Fran Proschan, "Eunuch Mandarins, *Soldats Mamzelles*, Effeminate Boys, and Graceless Women: French Constructions of Vietnamese Genders."

October 10 Midterm paper due

Week VIII. Sexuality in Colonial Times (Vietnam), continued

October 14 Fall break. No class!

October 16

Film: Regis Wargnier, *Indochine* (1992)

Lily V. Chiu, "Camille's Breast: The Evolution of the Fantasy Native in Regis Wargnier's *Indochine*."

Judith Henchy, "Vietnamese New Women and the Fashioning of Modernity"

IX. Queer Avant-Garde: Beyond Wound Culture (Thailand)

Film: Apichatpong Weerasethakul *Tropical Malady* (Thailand, 2004)

October 21 Ji-Hoon Kim, "Learning About Time: An Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul."

Lauren Berlant, "The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, and Politics."

Wendy Brown, "Wounded Attachments."

October 23 Judith Butler, "Melancholy Gender/ Refused Identification" and Adam Phillips' commentary "Keeping It Moving."

Jonathan M. Hall, "Japan's Progressive Sex: Male Homosexuality, National Competition, and the Cinema."

Kong Rithdee, "Thinking Locally, Filming Globally: The Search for Roots in Contemporary Thai Cinema." <http://www.cineaste.com/articles/filming-locally-thinking-globally-the-search-for-roots-in-contemporary-thai-cinema>

Recommended: Benedict Anderson, "The Strange Story of a Strange Beast: Receptions in Thailand of Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Sat Pralaat*."

James Quandt, "Exquisite Corpus: The Films of Apichatpong Weerasethakul."

<http://www.douban.com/group/topic/1452267/>

X. Same-Sex Desire and Prohibition (Indonesia)

Film: The Children of Srikandi Collective, *The Children of Srikandi*, Indonesia/Germany/Switzerland, 2012.

Bagasworo Aryaningtyas, *Bilal*, Indonesia, 2006, 4 min.

October 28 Intan Paramaditha, "Cinema, Sexuality and Censorship in Post-Soeharto Indonesia."

Nancy Smith-Hefner, "Hypersexed Youth and the New Muslim Sexology in Contemporary Java."

Wendy Doniger, *Bisexual Transformations: Males Females in India*."

October 30 Saskia Wieringa, "Marriage Equality in Indonesia? Unruly Bodies, Subversive Partners and Legal Implications."

Farid Muttaqin, "Early Muslim Feminists in Indonesia: Egypt, Islamic Movement and Dutch Colonialism."

Laura Bellows, "The Aroused Public in Search of the Pornographic in Indonesia."

Recommended short newspaper article:

UPI, "Indonesian Punks File Human Rights Report," http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2011/12/19/Indonesian-punks-file-human-rights-report/UPI-34391324311425/

XI. Performance (Indonesia)

Film: Garin Nugroho, *Opera Jawa, (Requiem from Java, Austria/Indonesia, 2006)*

November 4 David Hanan, "Innovation and Tradition in Indonesian Cinema."

Felicia Hughes-Freeland, "Embodied Communities" (selection)

Rianne Subijanto, "The Visibility of a Pious Public."

November 6 Suzanne Brenner, "Gender and the Domestication of Desire" (134–170).

Laurie Sears, *Fantasizing the Feminine* (selection)

Deirdre Boyle, "Trauma, Memory, Documentary: Reenactment in Two Films by Rithy Phan (Cambodia) and Garin Nugroho (Indonesia).

November 9 Paper #2 proposal due (1 page)

XII. Love/Family (Cambodia)

Film: *Bophana* (Cambodia, 1996)

November 11 Rithy Panh, "Bophana: A Cambodian Tragedy."

Ashley Thompson, "Performative Realities: Nobody's Possession."

Davis, Erik W. "Between Forests and Families: Death, Desire, and Order in Cambodia."

November 13 Veena Das, "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain."

Caruth, Cathy. "Recapturing the Past: Introduction."
Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching."

XIII. Gender and the Supernatural (Burma)

Film: watch online through library: Lindsey Merrison, *Friends in High Places* (Germany/Switzerland, 2001).

November 18 Tamara C. Ho, "Transgender, Transgression, and Translation: A Cartography of *Nat Kadaws. Notes on Gender and Sexuality within the Spirit Cult of Burma.*"

Melford E. Spiro, "The Shaman."

November 20 Viewing: Nguyen Trinh Thi, *Love Man, Love Woman* (Vietnam, 2007)

Readings: Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters* (selection)

Transgender Studies Reader II (selection)

November 22 Paper #2 Draft Due (5 pages)

XIV. Southeast / Asian Diaspora

Films: Shorts by Nguyen Tan Hoang: *Pirated!* (2000, 11'), *7 Steps to Sticky Heaven* (1996, 24'), *K.I.P.* (2002, 4'), *Cover Girl: A Gift from God* (2000, 18'), *The Calling* (2000, 8'), *Forever Bottom!* (1999, 4').

Shorts by Ming Wong: *Life and Death in Venice* (2010, 16'), *Learn German with Petra von Kant* (2007, 10'), *In Love for the Mood*, (2009, 4'); Hito Steyrl

November 25 Feng-Mei Heberer, "Back to Myself: Negotiating German Belonging and Transnational Asianness in Experimental Video."

Kien Nghi Ha, "Integration as Colonial Pedagogy of Postcolonial Immigrants and People of Color."

Recommended viewing:

Catalog: *Dong Xuan Festival, Vietnamese in Berlin*, November 21–27, 2010 (excerpts).

November 27 Thanksgiving Break: No Class!

XV. Writing workshop

December 2 and 4

December 10: Paper #2 due. Papers will receive a grade, but no comments. To receive comments, please make an appointment.

Reference works and links

Southeast Asian Cinema

- *Criticine: Elevating Discourse on Southeast Asian Cinema*, <http://www.criticine.com/main.php>
- May Adadol Ingawanij, McKay, Benjamin, eds., *Glimpses of Freedom: Independent Cinema in Southeast Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012.
- Baumgärtel, Tilman, ed., *Southeast Asian Independent Cinema*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

Cultural Studies

- Social Text Keyword Issue (keywords such as affect, body, commodity, etc.)
Social Text: 30 Years of Collective History
Vol. 27, no. 100 (2009) Available online through the library.

- *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, edited by Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, Meaghan Morris, Raymond Williams. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*
Bruce Burgett, Glenn Hendler, 2007. Available online through the library website:
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/cornell/docDetail.action?docID=10210077>

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Students are required to attend all class sessions and participate fully in class discussions. You must be prepared to discuss each reading assignment on the day indicated. All readings are available on Blackboard. Recommended readings are optional.

Short Response Papers (total of 10)

The class will be divided into two groups and members of each group will write short critical response papers. **Your response papers are due on Blackboard by 8 p.m. on the evening before class.**

The response papers are made up of two small parts. They should include three short paragraphs at a minimum and should not exceed one page. They should include

- 1) A short critical analysis of a passage or an issue in one of the assigned texts as well as two or three additional questions that you would like to pose to the readings/film of the session.
- 2) A short paragraph with an “*afterthought*” regarding the previous session’s topic — this might consist of an alternative perspective on the topic, a concluding thought about the topic, something that you feel was left out in class or something that you thought of after class.

Midterm paper (5 pages, double-spaced)

This paper can be a film analysis, a review of a screening, or a small curatorial project (i.e. which films would you show in a SEA gender & sexuality film series or festival, and why).

Paper #2 (conference paper length, 10–12 pages, double-spaced/Graduate: 15 pages)

Use some of the concepts discussed in class to analyze a film **not** covered on the syllabus. You must refer to at least three outside sources and three class readings in your paper #2. You will be evaluated on the quality of your research, ability to analyze texts, and skill in crafting a coherent and compelling argument. Outstanding papers demonstrate depth of understanding, original thought, and a fresh perspective on the topic.

Term paper drafts (5 pages) are due on November 22. PAPER #2 IS DUE ON DECEMBER 10.

Facilitate Discussion

Each member of the class will give a short 10–15 minute presentation at the beginning of class intended to start off discussion of the film of the week and the accompanying readings of the session.

Assessment for this class is 100% coursework. There is no final examination.

You must provide references for quotations and/or citations that you use in all your work. This also applies to images, sound clips, and video clips. Refer to the MLA guidelines on Blackboard.

Please submit paper #2 to **Turnitin**.

Grading

Response papers—20%

Presentation—10%

General class participation—15%

Midterm paper—15%

Paper #2 proposal— 5%

Paper #2—35%

Due October 10

Due November 9

Due December 10

Code of Integrity / Policy of Inclusiveness

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Violations will earn penalties. I respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to racial or ethnic discrimination, sexual harassment, providing assistance to handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired students, the observation of religious holidays, and plagiarism. All students are advised to become familiar with these regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to my attention

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