Department of Cultural & Religious Studies

Fall Semester 2012

CURE 2039: Trans-Asian Bodies and Visual Fantasy Cultures

Thursdays 2:30-5:15pm

Prof Katrien Jacobs
Dept of Religious and Cultural Studies
Room 307
Leung Kui Kau Building
kjacobs@cuhk.edu.hk
This course will focus on the visualization of bodies and identities in different Asian cultures. It will offer a cross-cultural or “Trans-Asian” perspective on developments in popular youth cultures and related social and political issues. There will be a special focus on the impact of Japanese animation culture in how it has encouraged performative subcultures and virtual communities. Additionally the course will discuss evolving paradigms of the body, gender/sexuality and technology as they shape the commercial mass media and digital media, contemporary art, social networks and blogging discourses.

Students will explore visual culture analysis and carry out creative exercises with photography and new media. They will develop analytical tools and research projects to get immersed in a new understanding of the Asian body, identity and gender/sexuality.

**Credit Units:** 3  
**Course Duration:** one semester  
**Medium of Instruction:** English  
**Teaching/learning activities:**  
Lectures, tutorials, field trips & online activities

**Learning Activities:**
The course combines theoretical lectures with the viewing of photographs, film and video examples, and a designated fieldtrip, that support and reinforce the topic of discussion for each week. Students are required to complete the readings and attend a 3-hour class each week. The class consists of a 2-hour lecture and 1 hour class discussion. After each lecture students will form groups of 4 or 5 and discuss one of the weekly readings for 15-20 minutes. Each group will then elect one member to present their discussion to the class. In addition to the weekly readings, students will also conduct research and planning for their assessments and oral presentations independently and in groups.

**Assessment:**

**Assessment Type**  
**Weighting**  
**Date Due**
Assessment 1 Attendance and Participation in group discussions, weekly exercises, including photo-diary 30%
Assessment 2 Group Oral Presentation and Mid-term Essay about Celebrity Culture Week 9 30%
Assessment 3 Final Exam Week 13 40%

**Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the diversity and similarities of different Asian cultures and subcultures in constructing the body and gender/sexuality

2. Understand the unique position of Asia in current discourse on the body and identity.

3. Able to critically apply or interrogate Western based theories with specific Asian case studies

4. Able to understand the relationship between cultural representations and social conditions of the body and gender/sexuality

5. Gain a unique understanding of Hong Kong and China from the perspective of Asia

**Session Outline and Readings**

**Week 1. Sept 13 Introduction Course and Major Themes**

What do we mean by Trans-Asian Bodies and Visual Fantasy Cultures?

Screening excerpts:

Michael Cho, *Another America*
Mamoru Hosada, *Summer Wars*

**Week 2 Sept 20. The Japanese Lolita in Trans-Asian Contexts**
Case Study:

The Asian and Western appropriation of Japanese Lolitas

Readings:


**Week 3: Sept 27 Chinese Sex Workers: Hollywood Versus Hong Kong**

Movie industries and concepts of orientalism and femininity

Screening excerpts:

*Richard Quine, The World of Suzie Wong*(1960)  
*Angela Chan, My Name Ain’t Suzie*(1985)

Reading:

Gina Marchetti, ‘Romance and the Yellow Peril,’ Race, Sex and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction, University of California Press, 1993, ch.6  
White Knights in Hong Kong

Kenneth Brorson Film Review *My Name Ain’t Suzie*  
http://www.sogoodreviews.com/reviews/mynamesuzie.htm

**Week 4 Oct 4 The Post-Human Body in Japanese Animation**

Philosophical questions about ethnicity and gender in post-humanism.

Screening excerpts:

*Mamoru Oshiio, Ghost in the Shell*(1995)
Readings:


Film Review Patrick W. Galbraith Summer Wars
http://www.otaku2.com/articleView.php?item=455

**Week 5 Oct 11 Japanese ACG Culture Goes Global**

Readings:


Katrien Jacobs, *Wandering Dolls: Cosplay Journey Across East Asia*

Screening excerpts:

*Mia Chen, I am that: Cosplay*(2009)
*Katrien Jacobs, Visits to My Fantasy Family*(2008)

Readings:

**Week 6 Oct 18. Fieldtrip and The Making of A Short Photography-Diary (Due week 8)**

**Week 7. Oct 25 Performing Gender: Boy Love Fandom and the Takarazuka Revue**

Readings:

Mari Mori, The Lover’s Forest

Kazumi Nagaike, “Perverse Sexuality, Perverse Desires: Representations of Female Fantasies and Yaoi Manga as Pornography Directed at Women.
Week 8 Nov 1 Trans-Asian Perspectives on Celebrity Culture

How do Asian and Chinese celebrities and celebrity types get constructed? What is the relationship between celebrity culture and the mass media? How can we use celebrity scandals and sex scandals to further analyze culture?

Readings:


Week 9 November 8 In Class Presentations Celebrity Culture

Week 10 November 15 (Trans) Gendered Bodies

Screening Excerpts:

*Jennie Livingston, Paris is Burning*(1990)
*Kim Loginotto, Shinjuku Boys* (1995)
*Katrien, Jacobs: Maggie/Martin*

Student presentations about celebrities types in different Chinese or Asian cultures

Week 11. November 22 Male and Female Voyeurism

Screening and Discussion

Steven Soderbergh *Magic Mike*
*Ditta Von Teese’s Burlesque Performances*

Week 12. November 29

Course revision and exam preparation

Week 13 December 6 In-Class Examination
Recommended Reading List/References

Research and sources on Japanese animation


Chua, Beng Huat."Conceptualizing an East Asian Popular Culture." Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Volume 5, Issue 2, pp. 200 – 22, 2004

Fong, H. “Hong Kong Connection: Pretty Bizarre”. RTHK Hong Kong Public Television Hong Kong, 2005.


Lent, John. A. "Animation in Asia: Appropriation, Reinterpretation, and Adoption or Adaptation." Screening the Past, 2000


Mackie, Vera “Transnational Bricolage: Gothic Lolita and the Political Economy of Fashion” In Intersections, Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific Issue 20, April 2009


Wang, Yang "The Dissemination of Japanese Manga in China." University essay from Lunds universitet/Centrum för öst- och sydöstasienstudier, 2005
