MIKE CURB COLLEGE OF ENTERTAINMENT AND MUSIC BUSINESS
COURSE SYLLABUS

Course # / Title: ASN3990; HUM3990; MBU3990 / Entertaining China: Using Film & Music to Understand the World’s Biggest Market
Course Credit Hours: 3 Semester Hours
Semester: Fall 2009
Instructor: David J. Moser, J.D./B.F.A.
Instructor Contacts: Massey College of Business, Rm. 242; 460-5439 (office) or 498-3006 (cellphone); david.moser@belmont.edu
Instructor Office Hours: M &W 1:00 - 4:00; Th. 2:00 – 3:00; Other times by appointment
Class Location: MC209B
Meeting Time(s): Wed. 5:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Final Exam: October 14th (final class session)

Course Description: This course is intended to provide an overview of China, from its ancient origins to its current status as an economic powerhouse. An interdisciplinary approach, using film and music, will be used to examine topics such as China’s imperial history, Confucianism, isolation and Western imperialism, revolution, communism, economic reform, and China’s emergence as a superpower in the 21st century. Specific issues to be discussed may include:

- China’s origin as a unified nation and historical development
- Differences in culture, beliefs and values from American (Western) society
- Western misconceptions and stereotypes about China
- How China’s film and music industries have developed and how this development is affected by political, legal, economic, philosophical and cultural factors
- How Chinese film and music is influenced by, reflects and shapes aspects of Chinese society
- Effects of censorship and state regulation on the entertainment industry
- Effect of piracy on the development of China’s music and film industries
- Changes and challenges resulting from China’s modernization and rapid economic growth

Testing & Assignments: The components of your grade are listed below. Please note that the Final Exam will be comprehensive and will take place on the date specified by Belmont University. UNIVERSITY POLICY DOES NOT ALLOW THE INSTRUCTOR TO CHANGE FINAL EXAM DATES AND ANY EXCEPTIONS MUST BE APPROVED IN WRITING BY THE PROVOST. All written assignments are due on the due date at the beginning of class (unless otherwise specified). Late assignments will result in a letter grade reduction (A to B, etc.) for each day late.

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Purpose/Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Blackboard Online Discussion</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>You are required to make at least 5 posts in response to discussion topics on the Blackboard web site for this class. The instructor will post links to articles and/or other content and pose questions based on that content which you are to respond to. Many of the questions posted will not have a “right” or “wrong” answer and are instead intended to encourage critical analysis and debate. Credit will be awarded based on your analysis, clarity and support for your response.</td>
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Length of responses will vary, but should generally be 1-3 paragraphs.

2. Musical Artist Review 20 %
A written report on a contemporary Chinese musical artist in which you will analyze similarities and differences with American artists in similar musical genres. You will be responsible for choosing an artist by searching online although the instructor will provide some suggested online resources. More detailed instructions will be provided. Approximate Length: 2-4 pages, double-spaced.

3. Film Review 25 %
A written summary, analysis and evaluation of a film chosen from a list of optional films (not films viewed during class sessions). More detailed instructions will be provided. Approximate Length: 3-5 pages, double-spaced.

4. Final Exam 30 %
A comprehensive exam which may be given in-class or on Blackboard and which will cover information from class materials and discussion. Questions will include some or all of the following: multiple-choice, true/false, matching, short answer, essay.

Course & Classroom Policies:

Attendance & Participation: Class attendance follows university policy as stated in the current Undergraduate Bulletin. Since this is an 8-week class, a significant amount of material will be covered in each class session and it is highly recommended that you attend all classes. It is also important that you complete assigned readings and assignments on time to participate actively in class discussion. Class attendance will be taken and if you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be counted as absent. As provided by the Undergraduate Bulletin: “When the number of absences for any reason exceeds four times the number of scheduled class meetings per week, a student will be involuntarily dropped from the course with a grade of WF.” Absences can only be excused in writing by the Dean or Provost.

Materials: There is no textbook for this course. Instead, reading materials will be provided online in addition to materials used in class (films, music, etc.). You are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to the date specified on the syllabus.

Grade Evaluation: Per Belmont University policy, the grade assignment scale for this course is:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent (GPA)</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 (4.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 (3.7)</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 (3.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 (3.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 (2.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 (2.3)</td>
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Honor Code: It is the responsibility of each student to abide by the Belmont University Honor Code. “In affirmation of the Belmont University Statement of Values, I pledge that I will not give or receive aid during examinations; I will not give or receive false or impermissible aid in course work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other type of work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of my grade; I will not engage in any form of academic fraud. Furthermore, I will uphold my responsibility to see to it that others abide by the spirit and letter of this Honor Pledge.”

Electronic Device Policy: Notebook computers, cellphones and other electronic devices (e.g., PDAs, etc.) may not be used in class since use of such devices for non-class purposes is a distraction to yourself and others. All use of computers and other electronic devices is also subject to any applicable policies of Belmont University.

Accommodation of Disabilities: In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Belmont University will provide reasonable accommodation of all medically documented disabilities. If you have a disability and would like the university to provide reasonable accommodations of the disability during this course, please notify the Office of the Dean of Students located in Beaman Student Life Center (460-6407) as soon as possible.

Class Schedule: The following is a tentative schedule which may be modified somewhat during the course of the semester. Links to online articles will also be posted online for easier access.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION, CHINA’S ANCIENT ORIGIN & IMPERIAL HISTORY

Reading: (1) Concise Political History of China; http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/chinhist.html; (2) History Timeline at www-chaos.umd.edu/history/time_line.html; (3) Qin Shi Huang, First Emperor of China at http://asianhistory.about.com/od/profilesofasianleaders/p/qinshihungbio.htm

Film: Hero (英雄; Yǐnghóng): 2002 internationally acclaimed martial arts epic directed by Zhang Yimou. The story is loosely based on a failed assassination attempt on the First Emperor of China (before he united the warring states of pre-imperial China to create the nation of China and become the First Emperor).

Music: (1) “The Missing Hero Theme Song” by Faye Wong; (2) “New Heroes - China’s Super Girls”
WEEK 2: WESTERN IMPERIALISM IN CHINA

**Reading:** (1) *England and China: The Opium Wars, 1839-60*; www.victorianweb.org/history/empire/opiumwars/opiumwars1.html; (2) McCartney and the Emperor at http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/china/modern/tch_mcem.htm; (3) *Chinese Film Industry* at http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=245&catid=7&subcatid=42 (Note: This article provides a good overview of the film industry in China, but some information is a bit out of date).

**Film:** *The Opium War* (鸦片战争; Yāpiàn zhànzhēng; 1997; 150 min.): A historical film about the first Opium War between China and Great Britain (1839-1842). The timing of the film is symbolic and of great significance as 1997 was also the year Great Britain returned control of Hong Kong to China.

WEEK 3: REBELLION & TURMOIL DURING LATE 19TH CENTURY CHINA


**Film:** *Warlords* (投名状; tóu míng zhuàng; 2008; 127 min.): A big budget, award winning film which tells a story of conflict between 3 warlord blood brothers (played by Jet Li, Andy Lau & Takeshi Kaneshiro) during the Taiping Rebellion in late 1800s. The dramatic historical events of the time are left as background while the film focuses on the story of the 3 main characters and the tragedy of war. To better understand the film, the historical background will be covered in class and in the reading assignment.

**Music:** “The Actor/Singer Phenomenon in China” (Andy Lau – 100+ Films & 50+ Albums; Actor/Singer Takeshi Kaneshiro; Why Not Jet Li?)

WEEK 4: REVOLUTION & END OF IMPERIAL CHINA


**Film:** *The Last Emperor* (1997; 160 min.): Historical film directed by Bernardo Bertolucci which won 9 Academy Awards including Best Picture. The film portrays the end Imperial China through the story of the last emperor, who became emperor as a young child and later became leader of a Japanese-controlled puppet government, a political prisoner in Communist China, and ultimately a common citizen.

WEEK 5: JAPANESE INVASION, WWII & CONTINUED REVOLUTION

**Reading:** (1) *Japanese Occupation* at http://wsu.edu/~dee/MODCHINA/OCCUP.HTM; (2) *John Rabe: The Good Nazi* at www.moreorless.au.com/heroes/rabe.html; (3) *Nanjing Massacre Memorial* at www.nj1937.org/english/default.asp
Film: *City of Life and Death* (南京! 南京!; Nánjīng! Nánjīng!; 2009; 133 min.): A recent controversial film about the Japanese takeover of the city of Nanjing in the late 1930s and the resulting atrocities known as the “Nanjing Massacre.”

**WEEK 6: FROM NATIONALIST TO COMMUNIST TO CULTURAL REVOLUTION**


Film: *The Soong Sisters* (宋氏三姐妹; Sòngjìā Jiěmèi; 1997; 140 min.): A film chronicling the revolutionary era of 20th century China from the contrasting perspectives of three American educated sisters, each of which married very important leaders and had an important impact on the development of contemporary China.

**WEEK 7: AMERICAN STEROTYPES OF CHINA**


Film: Various Film Clips (Dr. Fu Manchu, Charlie Chan, Hop Sing, Dragon Ladies, etc.)

Music: (1) “Nothing to His Name: Cui Jian, Chinese Rock, Tiananmen & Censorship;” (2) Chinese popular music (Mandopop, Cantopop, C-Rap, etc.)

**WEEK 8: MODERNIZATION & THE NEW CHINA**

Reading: 1) *Hong Kong Movie Industry*; (2) *China changes Hong Kong film biz* at www.variety.com/article/VR1118003693.html; (3) Co-Production, a win-win for U.S. Chinese Film Industries at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6682773.html; (4) *Quotas Open Market for Pirates* at www.screendaily.com/home/features-main/quotas-open-market-for-pirates/5003343.article

Film: *24 City* (二十四城记/二十四城記; 2008; ): Directed by Jia Zhangke, the story follows 3 generations of characters in the city of Chengdu. Told in pseudo-documentary style, the film revolves around the closing of a state-run military factory to be replaced by luxury apartments with various characters telling stories involving changes that have taken place (the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, etc.). The film’s soundtrack also gives somewhat of a chronological history of Chinese pop culture.

**OPTIONAL FILMS:** In addition to the films shown in class, you are to watch at least one of the films listed below which will be the subject of your film review (item #3 in the grade summary above). There will be several non-class viewing times scheduled for some of the films which you may attend. Alternatively, you may watch any of the films on your own. Copies of some of these films are available in the library. Others are available through Netflix and other rental outlets. The films listed include some of the most well-known Chinese films as well as some popular recent Chinese films.
The Emperor and the Assassin (荆柯刺秦王; Jīng Kē cì Qín Wáng; 1999; 162 min.) A film directed by Chen Kaige and based on the same historical scenario as the film Hero (the unification of China in the 3rd century B.C. by the First Emperor), but told in a different way (and a better film overall in my opinion).

Assembly (集结号; Jí jié hào; 2008; 124 min.): Set during the Chinese civil war of the 1940s. A Communist Army Captain and his troop are ordered to defend a coal mine until they hear the retreat assembly of the bugle. However, the Captain never hears the bugle call and ends up being the only survivor. He spends the rest of his life feeling guilty for the death of his men and trying to obtain recognition for their heroic sacrifice.

Farewell My Concubine (霸王别姬: Bàwáng Bié Jī; 1993; 171 min.): A critically acclaimed film directed by Chen Kaige which tells the story of two Peking opera stars during the political turmoil of the mid-20th century in China. Time Magazine ranked this as one of the 100 best films ever made.

To Live (活着; Huózhe; 1994; 125 min.): An excellent film directed by Zhang Yimou which follows the life of a family from the 1940s through several decades of turmoil and tragedy, including the Cultural Revolution. The film’s critical view of some Chinese government actions and policies led to its being banned in China. Note: I’d show this film in class, but some of you have already seen it since it is used in other classes.

Beijing Bicycle (什刹海; Shíchà hǎi; 2001; 113 min.): A film about a teenager (Guo) who moves to Beijing from the countryside and gets a job as a bicycle messenger. His bike is stolen by another teenager, Jian, who is trying to impress a girl with his new bike. Guo gets beaten up a few times while trying to recover his bike so he can get his job back. The film portrays themes of modernization in China, materialism, and differences in social class (urban/rural, rich/poor).

The Blue Kite (蓝风筝; Lán fēngzheng; 1993; 140 min.): A film about the lives of ordinary Chinese families before and during the Cultural Revolution. The story involves a woman who gets married in 1953 and has a baby boy. Her husband is arrested and sent to a labor camp where he dies. The mother later marries a second and third time and while each man tries to be a good father, chaotic circumstances of the times pose insurmountable challenges.

Devils on the Doorstep (鬼子来了; Guīzi lái le; 2000; 139 min.): A black & white film set during Japanese occupation of China which tells the story of a poor village hiding a captured Japanese soldier. The film deals with a serious subject in a sarcastically humorous way with a Chinese interpreter mistranslating much of what is said by the Chinese and Japanese.

Raise the Red Lantern (大红灯笼高高挂; Da hóng dōnglóng gāo gāo guà; 1991; 125 min.): Directed by Zhang Yimou, this film tells the story of a beautiful but poor young woman (played by Gong Li) who becomes a concubine (4th wife) of a rich merchant in the 1920s. The relationships between the wives are full of drama, conflict and tragedy.

Together (和你在一起; Hé nǐ zài yīqǐ; 2002; 118 min.): A country bumpkin brings his prodigy son to Beijing to study violin. The boy studies first with an eccentric teacher, then with a teacher (played by director Chen Kaige), who is an esteemed, successful teacher. The father has kept an important secret from his son which is revealed toward the end of the film and leads to an emotional climax as the boy has to determine what’s really important in life.
Red Cliff (赤壁; Chìbì; 2008 & 2009; 280 min.): A two-part epic historical drama depicting a huge battle (The Battle of Red Cliffs) that occurred in China 1800 years ago. The battle contributed to the end of the Han Dynasty and the beginning of the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The film was hugely popular in Asia and the biggest box office success of any film in China (surpassing Titanic).

If You Are The One (非诚勿扰; Fēichéng Wùrǎo; 2008; 130 min.): An extremely popular romantic comedy in China. The story revolves around a man who becomes rich by selling an invention and then uses the Internet to search for the love of his life. Instead, he befriends a gorgeous woman trying to get over a love affair with a married man.

IP Man (叶问; Yè Wèn; 2008; 106 min.): A semi-biographical film about Ip Man, a famous martial arts master of the Wing Chun martial art style (and teacher of Bruce Lee). The story is set during the Second Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s-40s when the Japanese army occupied Ip Man’s home in Foshan, China.

Lust Caution (色戒; Sè, Jiè; 2007; 157 min.): Espionage thriller directed by Ang Lee loosely based on actual events during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai from the late 1930s to early 1940s. A group of Chinese students from Lingnan University (a Belmont exchange partner university) in Hong Kong devise a plot to have a female acting student play a real life role seducing a Chinese conspirator with the Japanese so that he can be assassinated. **Note:** The film contains some fairly explicit sex scenes so if anyone may be offended by that, feel free to pick another of the optional films instead.

The World (世界; Shìjiè; 2004; 105 min.): Directed by Jia Zhangke, the film tells the story of two employees of a Beijing theme park consisting of scaled replicas of the world’s famous landmarks (Pyramids, Eiffel Tower, Taj Mahal) and examines the impact of urbanization and globalization on a traditional Chinese culture.

Kung Fu Hustle (功夫; Gōngfu; 2004; 95 min.): A martial arts comedy set in the 1940s and involving a wannabe gangster and gets caught up in a war between the notorious Axe Gang and residents of Pig Sty Alley. The film stars Stephen Chow (周星馳), China’s most popular comedic actor, and contains outrageous special effects and references/parodies of many popular Asian and Western films.

Call for Love (爱情呼叫转移; Aìqíng Hūjiào Zhuǎnyí; 2007): Romantic comedy about a man who becomes bored with his marriage and tells his wife he wants a divorce. She breaks his cell phone & he encounters an angel disguised as a cell phone repairman who gives him a replacement. His new phone has a unique feature - dialing a number triggers a romantic encounter with a different women. The 12 women all happen to be very attractive (including popular Chinese actresses Fan Bingbing, Eva Huang Shengyi, Annie Yi, Liu Yiwei, etc.). Although corny, the film has some ludicrously funny scenes and a bit of a subtle message as well.