

Lesson Plans from Chinese Film and Society

NEH Summer Institute for Teachers, July 9 - August 3, 2012

Curriculum for teaching with films:

Beijing Bicycle, Directed by Wang Xiaoshuai. [Full Unit](#)

Blue Kite, Directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang. [Full Unit](#)

Hero, Directed by Zhang Yimou. [Full Unit](#)

The Mao Years: 1949-1976, Directed by Sue Williams. [Full Unit](#)

The Story of Qiu Ju, Directed by Zhang Yimou. [Full Unit](#)



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Beijing Bicycle
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Chinese Film and Society, NEH 2012

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1) Synopsis:

Beijing Bicycle, with its original Chinese title as “*Seventeen-year-old’s bicycle*”, or “*The bicycle I had when I was seventeen*”, is a story about youth and growth. In the film, two seventeen-year-old boys, one of whom is a country boy coming to Beijing to make a living as a courier, the other a local city boy with middle class family background, are connected through a bicycle in an interesting and complicated situation. The bicycle means different things for them and both of them rely desperately on the bicycle to ensure their “happiness”. As a result, they struggle with each other to own and re-own the bicycle, though with quite different strategies. The story ends at a street-fighting scene, with both of them beaten up by a gang. Overall, this film tells a riveting story about two boys growing up in Beijing. While the story is centered on the two boys, their friends and people around them, it exposes Beijing at the turn of the 21-century in many other ways.

2) Historical background:

Since 1982 the urban population in China has gone from approximately 20% to 55%. This is one of the largest human migrations in history. Most of this migration has been in direct response to the opening up of China’s economy under Deng Xiaoping and the development of special economic zones, mostly located in the eastern part of China. Beijing is one of these special zones and being on the eastern seaboard of China, has seen tremendous growth along with cities like Tianjin and Shanghai. Currently the migrant population in Beijing is 1/3 of the total of approximately 20 million. This poses numerous challenges as the migrant population has not been granted full citizenship in their new homes, but rather they and their children remain citizens of their ancestral origin. They retain their ancestral hukou, or registration documents, which does not afford them the right to public assistance in the cities and therefore the government does not treat them in the same regard. In addition to this, many of the citizens of the cities, such as Beijing, do not hold migrant workers to have equal social standing and look down on them. Beijing has seen many changes since the early 1980’s, most dramatically in the destruction of the old style hutongs in favor of wider boulevards and more modern buildings. Much of the movie has a gritty feel as scenery moves between the city boy’s hutong home and the empty construction sites around the city. This plays back and forth between the traditional living style and the modern developing city and could almost be seen as mirroring the tense relationship

between the two young men. Hutongs, which are walled communities with narrow alleys and communal areas, have served as a community within a larger city for hundreds of years. Most of the demolition of hutongs started in the early 2000's in preparation for the Olympics which were held in 2008. In the present day hutongs serve more as a tourist attraction or conservation of the past rather than as a functioning home or community. Beijing itself has continued with its rapid pace of construction development and more and more migrants reach the city each year. Though the film is ten years old, the themes presented are still relevant.

03) Biography of director Wang Xiaoshuai

Chinese Film director, Wang Xiaoshuai, was born January 1, 1966 during the Cultural Revolution. His parents moved from Shanghai to Guiyang when Wang was two months old. Guiyang is a small town located in the mountains. Most of the residents of Guiyang come from neighboring Sichuan Province. When Wang was a child, he studied painting. He also watched many old revolutionary films, such as *Dong Cunrui* (1955) by Guo Wei and *The Twinkling Red Star* (1974) by Li Jun and Li Ang.

When Wang turned thirteen, he and his family moved to Wuhan, a bustling metropolis known for its sizeable "floating population." So the depiction of city residents vs. peasant migrants in *Beijing Bicycle* is a experience that Wang knew first-hand.

In 1981, Wang enrolled in the high school affiliated to the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, with then intention of becoming a painter. However, the early 1980s marked a revival of China's film industry and Wang decided to pursue a directing career at the Beijing Film Academy.

The film academy exposed Wang to a variety of film and filmmakers that were to have a great influence on his work. Certainly the fifth generation film directors made a huge impact on the young film student. But Wang was just as entranced by foreign filmmakers such as Federico Fellini, Alain Resnais and Yasujiro Ozu.

Wang's unique vision and personal style is readily apparent in his early work, *The Days* (1993) to his most recent film, *Drifters* (2003). His films are notable for their beautifully composed scenes, and for showcasing characters, that though passive and disenfranchised, still fight to retain their dignity.

Filmography

As Director:

Drifters (Er Di) (2003)

After the War (Jeon Jang Keu I Hu) (2001) a Korean project consisting of three short films, one directed by Wang.

Beijing Bicycle (Shiqi Sui De Danche) (2000)

Suburban Dreams (Menghuan Tianyuan) (2000) also known as *The House* or *Fantasy Garden*

So Close to Paradise (Biandan, Guniang) (1997) also known as *The Vietnamese Girl*

Frozen (Jidu Han Leng) (1995) released under the pseudonym Wu Ming (anonymous)

Suicides (Da Youxi) (1994)

The Days (Dongchun De Rizi) (1993)

As Actor:

Peering From the Moon (Henry Chow, 1991)

The Red Violin (François Girard, 1998)

04) Scene-by-scene guide to *Beijing Bicycle*

Start-1:42

Young, prospective delivery people (all are country people) are interviewed and cleaned up for delivery jobs in the city of Beijing.

1:43-2:55

Opening credits

2:56-4:46

New employees of Fei Da Express Delivery are cleaned up and given new bicycles. They are given instruction on how they are to conduct themselves as said employees and how they will be paid.

4:47-6:26

Guei goes out on his first day. He is happy as he pedals the streets of Beijing. He visits his relative who is impressed that he was hired and impressed at the bicycle he has been given the chance to earn.

6:27- 8:13

As they eat lunch, Guei and his relative spy on a young woman through a bedroom window as she changes into different clothes. They are amazed at how rich she is because she has so many clothes. The relative tells Guei that city folk are never happy, even with such a huge house. "She never smiles."

8:14-10:31

Guei goes back out, pedaling the streets of Beijing. He arrives at his first job in a large, intimidating building and parks his bicycle out front. He goes inside for the job.

10:32-13:39

Guei makes his first amount of money and records it in his notebook. Guei goes out on his next job. He continues recording the money he has made into his notebook. His relative asks him how long until the bike is his and he says, "Three days at most." He has been working about a month. The pretty woman comes walking down the street to purchase soy sauce from his relative's store. Guei sneaks looks at her as she walks back home.

13:40-14:32

Guei is at the business office of the delivery service to settle his account as, according to his records, he has paid off his bicycle. The woman behind the desk argues with him and says he still owes money. She and another woman keep saying it's only 70 yuan; he can make that in one day.

14:33-16:20

The bike is now Guei's so he marks it so that he can always tell which bicycle is his, even though he still has to work one more day for it. He sits with his relative and the relative explains how city

people always cheat you. But, he says, it's only one more day. Another piece of advice he gives Guei is to not let anyone know you're not from here (Beijing).

16:21-22:04

Shots of street life and lots of bicycles as Guei pulls up to park his bike and lock it. He goes into a "high class hotel" to make a pickup for a Mr. Zhang. The receptionist sends him to the shower area and he gets undressed as he is told and takes a shower. He is then led into a room with men getting massaged. It turns out this is the wrong Mr. Zhang and now Guei is being ordered to pay for the shower he unwillingly took. Guei tries running away but is apprehended. Eventually, the manager comes out and it is revealed that this is the Mr. Zhang.

22:04-23:58

Guei walks out of the hotel and loud drums are foremost in the diegetic soundtrack. There are dancers and general confusion. Guei walks to where his bicycle was and he realizes it is not there anymore. It has been stolen. He walks back and forth among the parked bicycles, desperately hoping his bicycle will appear.

23:58-25:42

Guei is seated on a curb in the dark by himself. He suddenly realizes he hasn't delivered Mr. Zhang's package and runs all the way to the delivery site. He arrives and the place is locked.

25:43-28:38

Guei is at the offices of the delivery company and the secretary is telling him to stop crying and that he is lucky the manager didn't fine him. He goes to speak to the manager who is on the phone. The manager agrees to hire him back if he can find his bicycle. The manager states, "If you can find that bike, your determination will get you another chance."

28:39-30:54

Shots of street life in Beijing. An ocean of bicycles. Long shots, close ups. Bicycles going left, going right. Bicycles carrying mattresses, refrigerators, and other large items. Guei is shown walking the streets looking for his bicycle. Bicycles are in each shot. All long shots. He does this until it is dark. He is shown at the end of the sequence in long shot standing behind hundreds of parked bicycles.

30:55-32:09

Opening shot is young adult boys riding around a construction site inside a building doing tricks on their bikes. It is obvious that one of the boys is on Guei's bike.

32:10-34:30

Jian's friend is asking him if his dad bought him the new bike. There is a group of young adults—the ones who were riding at the construction site—and they are dressed like prep school boys. They take off riding until Jian comes to a screeching halt. We soon see that a pretty young woman (also dressed in prep school uniform) is having bike trouble and Jian stops to help her. They then take off on a bike ride together slowly along a beautiful park until they finally say good-bye. It is apparent that they like each other, or at least Jian likes her and wants to impress her.

34:30-36:40

Jian rides his bike back along the route he and the girl took, only this time he is riding along with no hands on his handlebars, his jacket slung over his shoulder. He is happy and it shows in his riding style. Many close up shots of him as he rides. He finally makes it home and goes to park

his bicycle. He goes to great lengths to hide the bike and now we believe that he is the person who stole Guei's bike.

36:41-37:45

Inside Jian's house, we are introduced to his father and we learn that his father has promised him a bicycle, but Jian's sister has gotten into a very good middle school and they now have to use the money for her tuition. We learn that Jian is not a prep school boy, but is somewhat poor.

37:46-39:17

Inside Jian's bedroom, he wakes from sleep and gets out of bed. He sneaks outside to practice tricks on his bicycle. He tries not to make noise because he doesn't want his family to know he has the bicycle.

39:17-41:59

Quick cut from Jian on his bicycle to Guei and his relative sitting outside in the dark. Guei has been looking for his bicycle all day and will not go inside. His relative tells him he is stubborn and that he is leaving (on bicycle). Guei sits on the curb, small in the frame on the right side. Next shot he is walking slowly and continuing his search up and down the rows of parked bicycles. As he is examining the bikes for his mark, he knocks one down and hears someone coming so he tries to run, but is caught.

41:59-42:43

He is gotten out of jail by his former boss who says he cannot believe that Guei got caught stealing a bike and that he also cannot believe all this fuss over a bicycle. He tells Guei not to bother him again; he is no longer part of the company. He drives away.

42:44-43:34

Cut to Jian and his girlfriend riding their bikes. Cut to Guei's relative squatting outside his store smoking a cigarette. Guei's bike looms in the foreground as the relative eyes it, slowly recognizing the bike. We hear Jian off screen talking to someone on the phone. Jian pays the relative for the use of the phone and they leave. Guei's relative gets up quickly and runs into his store.

43:34-48:24

Jian and his girlfriend are sitting next to a lake with their bicycles parked in front of them. The camera is behind them. The girlfriend gets up and walks away, calling Jian to follow her. They both look up at the sky silently and Jian wants to touch the girl or kiss her, but doesn't. He then notices Guei looking at his bicycle, which is parked in its original spot. A chase ensues. Jian leaves the girl as he runs after Guei on the bicycle. Guei doesn't pay attention and smashes into a truck. Jian is then able to catch him. Guei has landed in the back of the truck that is loaded with bags of flour and when he gets up, his face is comically covered in white. He picks up the bike and begins to walk away, humiliated. The humiliation continues when Jian attacks him and accuses him of stealing the bike. Jian's friends appear and begin to call him a bicycle thief. They start to push him around and try to take the bike, but Guei won't let go. Finally, they wrest the bike from him and kick him and walk away with the bike.

48:24-50:10

Jian and his friends play Dance Dance Revolution at a local game room. The girlfriend comes in and tries to get Jian out of there, but he won't leave. When his friend says there are no more tokens he tells his friends to buy more because he is always paying (which is interesting because his family does not appear to have expendable income). He goes to purchase more tokens to play

as the girlfriend leaves. Jian returns to the game and discovers she is gone so he leaves to go look for her. Meanwhile, Guei appears in a window, looking for his bike.

50:10-54:55

Jian returns home and hides his bicycle. Guei has followed him home and appears in the background as Jian walks away. Jian goes to his home and sees his sister. She seems to know he has the bike and walks away from him silently. When he gets inside, he discovers his father cannot find the money he has set aside for Jian's sister's school. His father asks Jian if he took the money and Jian replies no. He heads to his room and on the way sees his stepmother and half-sister and they don't speak to each other. He goes out onto the roof of his home by himself.

54:56-57:05

Guei is briefly seen in a very dark setting in the bicycle garage. Next shot is the camera following Jian to the bicycle garage where he has his hiding spot. We see what a winding little community it is in the hutong. He finally makes it to his hiding spot and discovers the bicycle is missing. He looks everywhere in a panic and turns toward the camera. A shot of his sister is shown and it is obvious she knows what is missing and where the money for her tuition went.

57:06-57:48

Guei is lying on the sidewalk holding his bicycle. Off screen we hear, "I'll be damned! Unbelievable!" Cut to a shot of the manager surrounded by the office women who have been putting Guei down since he started working. The manager comments on him, "You country folk! A real 'little engine that could'" and tells him he can have his job back.

57:48-59:56

Cut to Jian standing at a window while his friends try to get him to leave with them, but he no longer has a bicycle so he doesn't want to go with them. Xiao comes into the picture and also tries to get him to go with her, but he won't. She says, "Don't be so upset. It's only a bike. You can always buy a new one."

59:57-1:02:49

Guei rides his bike down the street, dressed in his work clothes. He looks happy as he pedals around the city of Beijing, riding through the hutongs until he turns a corner and crashes into the woman from the window. She has been knocked out and Guei and his relative bring her into the store so she can recover. She gets up and stuffs a huge duffle bag with clothes, puts on her shoes and walks out silently. Guei and the relative stare after her until the relative says she's out of our league.

1:02:49-1:05:42

Shot of a bicycle with a person on it doing tricks. We do not see the person's face yet. Eventually it is revealed that he is the local cool bicycle trick guy that all of the others admire. There is a crowd watching him, including Xiao and even Jian. Jian notices that Xiao is enthralled with him and his is jealous. Jian and one of his buddies pick a fight with each other. The friend is saying that Jian stole the bike. The other friends break up the fight. Xiao is seen leaving with the cool bicycle trick guy. The buddies then sit and begin to discuss a plan on how to get Jian's bike back. One of the buddies recognized the name of the delivery service as "Fei Da."

1:05:43-1:07:50

Cut to Guei riding his bicycle, working. Cut to Jian and his buddies waiting at "Fei Da" for Guei to return from his deliveries. Guei sees them upon his return and jumps back on to his bike and tries to ride away. A huge chase ensues with the buddies chasing after Guei and cornering him

into a construction site or empty building area. They knock him off his bike and begin to mercilessly beat him. Guei gets back onto his bike and takes off again. Again he is caught and they continue to beat him. All done in very extreme long shot. The beginning of the fight takes place very small on the screen, but then cuts to a closeup of the fight which is very jarring to the viewer. They ride away and Guei is left on the ground—we see him very small on the screen as it is another long shot.

1:07:51-1:12:29

The gang of prep school boys watches something we soon discover is an altercation between Jian and Xiao. He has his bike back and wants her back as well. All is done in long shot. The boys try to tell Jian everything will be okay as they ride up to Jian's garage where he hides his bicycle. Jian looks at something and we cut to his father who is in the garage looking for something. Guei and the little sister are there as well. Jian jumps off his bike, clearly not expecting his father to be there. Guei points out the mark on his bike to the father while Jian looks on. The father is convinced and slaps Jian. This leads to a large argument between Jian and his father. They scream at each other as Guei looks on. This is where it comes out that Jian stole the money for his bike from his father. Jian's father hits him again. Jian's father gives Guei his bicycle back as Jian screams and struggles with his father. Guei rides away. The friends look on.

1:12:29-1:13:55

Jian sits by himself on the rooftop and is crying. His sister comes out. This is the first time they speak. She says, "My mother and your father say it's their fault." She tries to make peace between them. Jian ignores her and walks away.

1:13:55-1:14:53

The buddies again sit around and scheme as to how to get the bike back. The biggest of the bunch tells Jian, "Just one word from you and we go after him. We'll get your bike back."

1:14:53-1:18:48

Medium shots of the prep school gang cut with a medium shot of Guei. We know he is surrounded. They are in the abandoned work site again where they do their trick riding. They ask him whose bike it is and he continually states that it is his bike. They threaten him and he continues to say it is his bike. Jian stands in the background. They keep hitting his head and explaining that it isn't his bike anymore. They again try to get the bike away from him until Jian steps in and says he paid 500 yuan for the bike and it's his. They pull Guei and try to get the bike away from him but he won't let go. They let go when he begins screaming at the top of his lungs.

1:18:48-1:22:38

It is now dark and they are still in the same spot. Guei still won't let go of the bike. The big guy says Guei can have the bike if he pays Jian 500 yuan for it. Guei says, "But I've already paid for it." They try haggling with him but he still won't give in. Time goes by and they are still in the same spot. They are getting ready to give up until the big guy comes up with another idea—Guei and Jian are going to swap the bike every other day and share it.

1:22:39-1:25:28

Guei and his relative eat lunch sitting in the shop. The relative is discussing the "deal." He walks away for a moment and the girl from the window walks in looking for something. Guei sits and stares at her. She cannot find what she is looking for and says nothing, just continues to look, bumping into Guei but not speaking. A car drives up in the background. A girl says to her mother, "Look, Mom! It's like I told you!" The mother says, "Qin, what are you doing here?" The woman and her daughter are very obviously upper class as Qin runs out of the shop and stands with her

head down in front of the mother. She picks up a bag and walks away quickly. The mother and daughter get into the car and drive away.

1:25:29-1:29:53

Guei's relative offers his own bicycle for Guei on the days he does not have his regular bike. He explains it is not perfect and "you've gotta pedal hard." The next shot is Guei struggling to ride his relative's bicycle on the street with hundred's of other bicyclists. His chain falls off as does the seat. He struggles to put the chain back on as the seat falls off again. Sweat pours down his face and he becomes frustrated. He leaves the bike on the side of the road as he runs away. It is decided he will run to make his deliveries. As the sun is going down, he meets Jian for the bicycle exchange. Their exchanges are wordless as they check out the bicycle out for any problems upon exchange. The exchanges are wordless until 1:29:36 when Jian asks Guei for his name.

FADE OUT

1:29:56-1:31:29

FADE IN. Guei and his relative sit in the store and the relative says, "I would have never guessed she was a maid." They are talking about the young woman they used to watch changing her clothes in the window. When Guei asks what happened to her, his relative says, "She used to wear her boss's high-heeled shoes." And she sold them sometimes. Fired. Disappeared.

1:31:30-1:35:09

Xiao comes out of her home with her bicycle in the pouring rain. She begins to ride and runs into Jian (who cuts her off and won't let her go any further). Jian rides his bicycle in circles around her. Until eventually he stops and she rides off. To meet the cool bicycle trick guy. Close ups of Jian are juxtaposed by long shots of the new couple. The cool guy rides up (with an umbrella so he isn't soaked like Jian) and puts a cigarette in his mouth, asking Jian for a light which Jian can't supply. Cool guy supplies his own light (with sunglasses on in the rain). He gives Jian the cigarette and rides away, humiliating Jian in front of Xiao.

1:35:09-1:36:54

The scene opens with Jian at his bicycle exchange meeting place, waiting, until Xiao and the Cool Guy ride by and Jian takes off after them. The scene cuts between Jian and the couple, sometimes with Jian shown in the background or foreground with the couple in the opposite area of the frame. Meanwhile, Guei is shown waiting at the exchange site for Jian to show up with the bicycle.

1:36:54-1:39:34

Xiao and the Cool Guy are shown in the far end of the frame and Jian appears in close up from behind on his bicycle. He is stalking the couple. He picks something up and the camera does a rack focus on what is now in his hand: a brick. He begins to ride after the couple. They all ride slowly and the non-diegetic music helps to increase tension. Again, Guei is shown still at the exchange site and he is now playing with a little boy. Jian and the couple continue their ride around the maze of the hutong. Off screen we hear, "You bastard!" and a thump, which we assume is the brick hitting the Cool Guy on the head. We see the reaction of two elderly people sitting in the hutong in a long shot. The next shot is from closer to the action—we see the elderly couple now from down the "street" that Jian and the couple went down, as well as others who have witnessed the brick to the head. Next we see the Cool Guy on the ground with Jian and Xiao standing above him (in long shot). Jian rides away slowly. The Cool Guy sits up and assesses the damage to his head.

1:39:34-end

Opening shot is Guei standing on the left hand side of the screen at the exchange site. Jian comes pedaling into the frame for the exchange. He offers Guei a cigarette and tells Guei to keep the bike and don't bother bringing it back. He knows he is in big trouble. Suddenly, other bicyclists show up in the frame screaming, "There he is!" It is the Cool Guy and his gang. They take off after Jian. Guei is riding his bike behind Jian. Jian asks why Guei is following him. Guei splinters off and rides away. The gang splits and some go after Guei and some go after Jian. Eventually, Jian and Guei meet up again. Jian says, "Are you stupid?" Guei replies, "I don't know the way out!" Eventually, they reach a dead end. The suspenseful non-diegetic music stops and it is silent. They've been caught. Jian tells Guei to get out of here, but the gang won't let him go. We keep hearing Guei off screen saying, "I didn't do anything! Why me?" The only other noise we hear is the beatings they are receiving and one of the gang members breaking Guei's bike. Guei keeps repeating, "I didn't do anything! Give me back my bicycle!" His bicycle is destroyed. As the hoodlum is kicking the bike, Guei walks up behind him and smashes his head with a brick. Jian wakes up and tries walking over to Guei who is lying on his bicycle. Guei gets up, looks at Jian, picks up his bicycle, and limps away. The last shots are in slow motion with Guei carrying his bicycle through the streets of Beijing. We hear the non-diegetic music and the honking of horns and squealing of brakes.

The story takes place in Beijing, which is located in the northeastern part of China, about a hundred miles inland from the coast. We never find out where our hero is from, Guei, but we do know he is a migrant and has come from the countryside to work in Beijing, a city of almost 20 million people.

05) Lesson Plan 01 (by Jian Guo)

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: Chinese Literature

Goals:

1. To help students think and understand the characterization of Gui and Jian.
2. To help students understand Chinese society in ways like urbanization, social polarization, migrant workers, etc.
3. To help students develop creative writing skills.

Set up:

1. Provide historical background (2 minutes; including China's reform and opening up, urbanization and migrant workers).
2. Ask questions about their feelings when they first visited big cities which they are not familiar with (3 minutes to 5 minutes).

Procedure:

Set up and Show film (first part; 35 minutes; ends at Jian's bringing the bike back and hiding it)

(First class ends)

Show film (second part; 40-45 minutes; ends at Gui's struggle with Jian and Jian's friends, but before they reach an agreement of sharing the bike)

(Second class ends)

Homework: creative writing predicting the end of the film, or creative writing that develops the film (or other topics as listed below).

Third class and fourth class (sharing and discussion of students' creative writing pieces, then finish the film--35 minutes; discussion)

Discussion questions:

1. How do you like the ending?
2. What are the characteristics exhibited in Gui and Jian? How do you see that? And your comments?
3. What's Beijing like in this film?
4. What does the bicycle mean to them?

Other creative writing topics:

1. Choose a scene and write a diary article for one of the characters.
2. Write an imaginative story about the future life of Gui or Jian, say, after 5 or 10 years.
3. What's your "bicycle"? Write a story about one thing that used to mean a lot to you, but gradually faded away from the center of your life.
4. Write an essay, poem or a piece of fiction about youth and growing up.

06) Lesson Plan 02 (by Kevin Hurley)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will explore how China's rapid rise as a force in the global economy has affected Chinese culture, society and the individual. Students will first discuss the impact of a massive migration from rural to urban areas. Students will then watch film clips that show how this migration takes place and the challenges that come with it. Finally, students will consider future economic, social, and political challenges meaning behind this large migration.

The video clips used in this lesson are from the films *China Blue*, *Beijing Bicycle*, and *Last Train Home*, which are documentary films dealing directly with rural villagers moving to large cities to find work and increase their income. Please note that these films are in Chinese with English subtitles.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Interpret the meanings of several Confucian teachings seen in the films.

- Discuss how traditional Chinese family life is being challenged by the circumstances of migrant workers.
- Determine basic market forces in China that are causing this migration.
- Understand China's role in a wider global context
- Explain the implications of such a large migration for the future of China and the world.

GRADE LEVELS

9-12

SUBJECT AREAS

Sociology, [Economics](#), [Geography](#), [International Studies](#), [Social Studies](#), [World History](#), [Current Events](#)

MATERIALS

- Internet access and equipment to show the class online video and maps and to display charts
- A world map and a political map of China
- Chart: "Confucianism and Filial Piety" (PDF file)
- Teacher's version: "Confucianism and Filial Piety"
- Article from National Geographic
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/05/china/whats-next/hessler-text>
- Video from Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNXg-kYk-LU&feature=related>
- Copies of Last Train Home, Beijing Bicycle, and China Blue

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED

Two 50-minute class periods, plus time outside of class to complete a short essay

Lesson Discussion Starter:

Use a world map to point out where China is located. Explain that the traditional family in China is changing with the country's rapid industrialization. Today, China has more than 130 million workers who migrate to jobs in urban areas so they can support their families back home, they are termed the 'Floating Population'. Tell students that they are going to watch a series of video clips that show the circumstances of people whose stories are representative of millions of others. First, watch this clip

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNXg-kYk-LU&feature=related>

Then follow the guided questions or come up with a list of your own. These questions can be revisited after viewing each group of clips.

1. With so many people moving to the cities, what kind of social imbalances do you think are occurring?
2. What is likely to be the economic cause and affect of China's rapid industrialization and huge floating population?
3. What kind of divisions can you envision in a society of such rapid growth?
4. With rapid industrialization, what kinds of things do you think the Chinese are gaining and losing in the process?
5. How can China better balance economic development with the needs of its people?

FILM CLIPS

From Last Train Home: Total time 11 minutes

[Clip 1: "The World's Largest Human Migration" \(length 7:38\)](#)

This clip begins at 1:00 with people running through a tunnel and on-screen text that reads,

"There are over 130 million migrant workers in China." It ends at 8:38 with the statement "We don't even know what to say to the kids."

[Clip 2: "We Work Far Away From Home" \(length 0:40\)](#) This clip begins at 55:40 when a man on the train says, "The train is just too slow." It ends at 56:20 with the line "Life would be pointless."

[Clip 3: "A Mother Leaves Her Child For Work in the City" \(length 1:10\)](#) The clip begins at 14:40 with the statement "We were very poor when we left home in the '90s." It ends at 15:50 with the line "Otherwise, I couldn't eat anything."

[Clip 4: "How Can There Be Any Feelings?" \(length 0:31\)](#) This clip begins at 34:15 with a close-up shot of Qin, the daughter. It ends at 34:46 after Qin says, "All they care about is money."

From China Blue: total time approximately 29 minutes

Clip 1: 1:00 to 12:20 an introduction to story and characters. (11:20 total)

Clip 2: 27:50 to 35:55 dealing with foreign business partners and paying employees. (12:05 total)

Clip 3: 40:55 46:20 strike and loss of wages (5:25 total)

From Beijing Bicycle: Total time approximately 26 minutes.

http://merchant.videotex.net/uploads/news/Beijing_Bicycle_-_Teacher_s_Guide.pdf

11 seconds to 7:48 (total 7:37) first scenes at company and looking at the girl in the window

12:45 to 13:50 (total 1:05) scene of arguing over the bike being fully paid for or not.

25:10 to 34:00 (total 8:50) scene of trying to convince boss to give him his job back and the city boy enjoying the bike around Beijing.

49:05 to 52:10 (total 3:05) Father is looking for the money

103:15 to 109:15 (total 6:00) boys steal the bike back and the confrontation with the father.

Wrap-Up ACTIVITY:

Read the article from National Geographic and write a predictive paper

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/05/china/whats-next/hessler-text/2>

Additional Resources:

<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/guides/chinaguide.pdf>

a great guide to China Blue, this raises many other pertinent points and discussion questions

<http://www.aems.illinois.edu/resources/currentevents/chinamanufacturing.html>

Lots of resources from this site on all aspects of China

07) Lesson Plan 03 (by Larry Hoffner)

CREATIVE

- Continue the story with Jian and Guei. The continuation could be immediate or there could be a time-lapse. These characters are boys; what kind of men will they become? Imagine if they met years later and reminisced about the bicycle incident which was a defining moment in their respective lives?
- The respective characters could write a journal about their bicycle experiences and what they learned from them.

- The “girl in the window” (Qin) proves to be someone she isn’t. Imagine the film being told from her perspective. This could be a before-during-after structure.
- Imagine if the boys met again five years from the bicycle incident and the “girl in the window” re-enters their lives and becomes the new ‘object’ of their desires?

RESEARCH

- A formal research project examining the historical and contemporary value of bicycles in Chinese culture.
- The students could write a straight forward film review whereby they examine the cinematic, political, and economic elements of the film. After they have written their review, they are to select three formal reviews that could easily be located at www.mrqe.com. The students will then react/respond to the respective reviews as they integrate/synthesize the material into their research. Another version of this exercise would be to give the students three diverse reviews and have them integrate them into a formal research project.
- The students will compare and contrast DeSica’s The Bicycle Thieves to Wang Xiaoshuai’s Beijing Bicycle making specific references to the context of when the respective films were made.

CRITICAL/REFLECTIVE THINKING

- What moral dilemma does the bicycle pose for the respective teenagers?
- What does the bicycle mean for both Guei and Jian?
- Why does Jian tell Guei to keep the bike? How have each of these characters changed?

SCENES

- The opening scene where the disheveled and unkempt boys are interviewed is immediately contrasted with the same boys in uniform with their new mountain bikes. This visual transformation is forecasting the psychological challenge and transformation the young men will face as they move from the rural to the urban.
- When Guei, the messenger, is mistakenly led to the showers when he is on a delivery, humorously shows the difficulty and the challenges he faces in understanding a ‘foreign’ culture. It could be compared to the excellent immigration film El Norte by Gregory Nava where Guatemalan immigrants illegally cross the border into California. The difficulty of adjusting to that which is ‘foreign’ is most prominent.
- The scene where Guei holds onto the bike and gives a primal scream while surrounded by a gang of hostile boys says (or shows) the psychological importance given to the bike.
- When Jian asks Guei what his name is and extends his hand is most revealing as a strange bond is established between adversaries.

08) Lesson Plan 04 (by Melisa Holden)

Essential Questions:

- How do filmmakers portray downtrodden characters or outsiders in a film in their use of shot types?
- How are working class people portrayed?
- How is editing used to depict sadness and defeat? How is editing used to increase tension?

Common Core Learning Standards

- Literature 1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Literature 11: Interpret, analyze, and evaluate narratives, poetry, and drama, aesthetically and philosophically by making connections to: other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations.
 - a. Self-select text to respond and develop innovative perspectives.
 - b. Establish and use criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.

Films: *Beijing Bicycle* and *Il Ladri di Biciclete*

- Watch the opening of each film (i.e. first 5 minutes or so) and discuss, cinematically, how the each director sets up our protagonist—how does the director present to us the socioeconomic strata in which they live? You may discuss camera movement, shot types, and/or different aspects of mise en scene. Choose three cinematic pieces and discuss in 500 words.
- Read the following essay (<http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Independent-Film-Road-Movies/Neorealism-HISTORICAL-ORIGINS-OF-ITALIAN-NEOREALISM.html>). Discuss ways in which DeSica and the Italians changed cinema after WWII and the reign of dictator Mussolini. Also discuss Wang Xiaoshuai and the 6th generation filmmakers in a post-Mao China. What are some cinematic differences in their filmmaking styles? What are their similarities? How does Marxism come into play in their films?
- Scene Redo: Choose a 1-2 minute scene in each film. Re-create the scenes yourself. Storyboard and shot lists are required. In your journal, describe differences you found between the filmmaking styles of DeSica and Wang.

Blue Kite Group

Discussion Questions

Social Studies Discussion Questions for the Whole Film:

1. How is the Party benevolent or malevolent? Come up with a couple examples that depict the Party both ways.
2. Assess the role of propaganda in this film. What are some of the tools the CCP uses to influence the actions of the people? Are there connections between the propaganda used by the CCP and propaganda in our society?
3. What role does fear play in a totalitarian state? Describe how fear influences how the characters make their decisions in their private lives as well as their public lives.
4. Describe the rectification (100 flowers) movement. How does it impact the lives of the Chinese in this film?
5. Speculate why the Stepfather was targeted during the Cultural Revolution.
6. The CCP is a part of most aspects of the lives of the Chinese featured in this film. Identify three to five ways the Party is a part of their everyday lives.

English Discussion Questions for *The Blue Kite*

1. Foreshadowing: Uncle Li's wedding gift to the newlyweds is a wooden horse figurine and that the horse's head falls off. Write a prediction of what you think will happen next.
2. In the film we see recurring scenes of the Blue Kite.
 - a. In 1-2 sentences, summarize at least two scenes from the movie where the Blue Kite appears.
 - b. What does the Blue Kite represent? Write a short paragraph defending your argument. Consider the political backdrop of China during the Hundred Flowers Movement, The Cultural Revolution, and The Great Leap Forward.
3. What are some of the major emotions in *The Blue Kite*?
4. Compare and contrast the relationships between TieTou and the father, TieTou and the Uncle, and TieTou and the General.
5. Why is there a juxtaposition between the Uncle's collapse on the floor when he is trying to carry dumplings to the pot and the firecrackers and sparklers that the little children are playing with outside? Think about this juxtaposition in terms of the political context of China and the individual within that system.

Music Discussion Questions

1. The "Crow Song" is a simple folk song sung by the mother (Shujan) and the son (Tietou).

What are some songs that you recall singing as a young child with your parents?

2. The “Crow Song” is sung using the pentatonic mode. How does the pentatonic mode differ from most Western music? Name another famous piece of music based on five notes.

3. Otomo Yoshihide is actually a Japanese composer who concentrated on the development of Chinese musical instruments throughout the Cultural Revolution. Who are some composers or other musicians who specialize in doing music of other cultures? As an example, John Williams is an American composer, but he has written music for such films as Far and Away (Irish music) and Memoirs of a Geisha (Japanese music).

4. The “Wedding Song” in the film is actually a Socialist song praising Chairman Mao and Communism. What purpose does music serve at weddings in the United States? What is the most unique song you’ve ever heard at a wedding?

5. The music in The Blue Kite does not use any traditional Chinese instruments. Why do you think the composer chose to use modern instruments to substitute for these traditional instruments?

Discussion Questions for the Film “Blue Kite”. Target Group grades 5-8 Social Studies, Language Arts, Science and Math.

Introduction: This film is a Chinese Film with English subtitles. It is about a young boy, Tietou born and growing up during the 100 Flowers, Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Students will explore the daily life of Tietou explaining how the government has altered his life.

The following discussions are to be used for the first section of the film “Father”.

1. The opening scene shows a blue kite flying. The kite becomes a recurring image throughout the film. What words or phrases come to mind when visualizing a blue kite flying ?
2. Beijing is famous for its siheyuans, a type of residence where a common courtyard is shared by the surrounding buildings. These courtyards are fast disappearing making way for new high rises. Describe two activities that take place in the courtyard.
3. How would you compare and contrast kids playing in a courtyard with kids playing in your neighborhood?
4. The film chronicles events in Tietou's life as the CCP impacts his daily life. What are some ways in which the government alters Tietou's life when his Father learns that they are sending him away to a labor camp?
5. Do you think children that you know would change their behavior if their father were sent away by the government?

resources: education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/interactive-map

youtube: Guo Yue Little Leap Forward (A Boy in Beijing) a memoir grades 3-5

www.Chinaposters.org posters of the Cultural Revolution

Chinese American Library Association www.cala-web.org/node/169

Social Studies Trade Books for Young Readers

Mao's Last Dancer, the story of internationally renowned ballet dancer Li Cunxin

Red Scarf Girl by JiLi Jiang, memoir of the Cultural Revolution

Published by Harper Collins

www.jilijiang.com

Snow Falling in the Spring by Moying Li, memoir of the Cultural Revolution
ages 12 and up
www.moyingli.com

Little Green Growing up During the Cultural Revolution a memoir by Chunye
free verse poetry, younger readers

The Legend of the Kite:a Story of China
Norwalk,Conn
Soundprints 1999

Revolution is not a Dinner Party
Yiang Chang Compestine
Younger Readers

The Historical Context of *The Blue Kite*:

Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Blue Kite* spans 15 years of 20th century Chinese history, including the Hundred Flowers Movement, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. This film can be more easily understood with appropriate historical context.

The Hundred Flowers Movement took place in 1956 and 1957 when Chairman Mao decided to take some of the restrictions off public expression in China. While Mao's motives for this movement are debatable, most historians agree the purpose of the Hundred Flowers movement was to allow China's intellectuals to criticize the Communist bureaucrats, in the hope that

constructive criticism would quell the arrogance and inflexibility of Communist bureaucrats. Mao believed most intellectuals were supporters of the CCP and criticism would be minimal and mostly constructive. The slogan, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend" was created to invite intellectuals to express their true opinions.

By 1957 Mao was disabused of the notion that criticism would be used to refine communism. Many of the intellectuals who "spoke up" directed their criticism against the communist system as a whole. Mao viewed this form of criticism as "bourgeois," "counter-revolutionary," and "rightist."

The inevitable crackdown, known as the "Anti-Rightist" campaign, began in July, 1957. The same intellectuals who had been encouraged to speak out were now arrested, shipped to the countryside to be "re-educated" through labor, or even killed. Worker organizations that employed intellectuals were expected to purge at least five percent of their workers, causing many loyal supporters of the CCP to be branded as rightists. By 1958 even many intellectuals not labeled rightist were in re-education camps doing manual labor. The distrust of intellectuals created during the Anti-Rightist campaign would linger into the Great Leap Forward, with very negative consequences.

In August, 1958 Mao and the central planning committee began the Great Leap Forward. This movement's overall goal was to drastically increase both agricultural and industrial output. Growth rates of 59-100% per year were expected and the country was reorganized to meet these goals. In the countryside, land and workers were consolidated into communes. By 1959 there were almost 26,000 different communes with approximately 5000 households in each. Communal mess halls were created to free workers to be in the field instead of worrying about meal preparation. The extra hands were set to work clearing new fields, digging canals and creating new industrial enterprises. The massive, centralized re-organization of Chinese land and workers held the promise of incredible economic transformation. But the promise did not come to fruition.

Underlying the Great Leap was an ideology that exalted the intellectualism of the masses. Propaganda and state workers encouraged ordinary workers to modify and simplify the operation of complicated imported machines. Others were encouraged to create new industrial enterprises in the countryside. A classic example of this ideology was the "backyard steel mills" that were set up in countless villages and towns across China. These amateur mills mostly turned out very poor steel, and very little of it. Though the backyard uranium mines were a bit more successful, the failure of amateurs melting iron pots into low-grade steel illustrates the central problem of the Great Leap's emphasis on faith and optimism over economic expertise.

This problem manifested itself in one of the worst famines in the history of the world. From 1959 through 1962 an estimated 30 million Chinese starved to death. There were myriad causes of the famine, including horrible weather in the early 1960s, but much of the blame can be laid on the central government. Demanding ever increasing production to meet Mao's unrealistic goals, most communes turned over more grain than they could afford. Moreover, many farmers had

been taken away from the land to toil in the backyard steel mills. Many farmers were ordered to use unorthodox farming techniques, including “deep plowing” and planting seeds closer together. For the most part, these techniques failed miserably. In the first years of the Great Leap Forward crop production reached almost 200 million tons. By 1961 it was down to 136 million. The Great Leap Forward had succeeded only in mass starvation.

By the mid 1960s Mao’s influence over the Communist Party appeared to be waning. The massive failures of the Great Leap Forward had muted some of his power in the CCP, though he remained Chairman and his cultural influence was still strong. In 1966 Mao declared that the CCP had been infiltrated by bourgeois influences that desired a return to capitalism. On May 16, 1966 the Politburo issued a statement alleging that the Party was now filled with enemies of the Party, who must be identified and removed. The Cultural Revolution had begun.

Over the next ten years the Cultural Revolution swept terror across China as millions of people were persecuted as “revisionists” or “counter-revolutionaries.” Many young people formed themselves into factions of Red Guards who took it upon themselves to seek out and “struggle against” revisionist targets. Chinese citizens who became targets of the Red Guard suffered different types of abuses, including public humiliation, the seizure of property, torture, forcible displacement to the countryside, imprisonment, and harassment. Senior officials in the CCP were alleged to be on the “capitalist road” and were purged. Religious and historic sites were ransacked or destroyed in the name of communist cultural purity.

While the Cultural Revolution was declared over in 1969, most historians now agree that it continued during the political chaos that reigned from 1971 until the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976. Today the Cultural Revolution is openly criticized in Chinese film, and is considered a negative aspect of Chinese History by the CCP.

Critical Reaction for the Film

“The Blue Kite” (Lan Fen Zheng, 1993) is a film about human beings, rather than about China. It is a powerful movie because it examines the lives of everyday people who are ultimately unexceptional. There is no villain; there is just the day-to-day existence that is perpetually overshadowed by the Chinese Communist Party during the years 1957 to 1968, which is almost always unseen. It’s an overtly political film because these are the years where the CCP had its most power (and the protagonists certainly feel this), but film has a humanistic focus. (Ebert) Despite the fact that the film takes place in Beijing, the camera never really leaves a particular neighborhood for long, moving from interior shots to exterior scenes in a courtyard. There are occasionally other settings, but it’s clear that these are extensions of this family’s home. Eating and preparing food, grading papers, playing, talking and sitting quietly – this is the action of this film.

Western critics experienced a certain level of frustration with not knowing enough about the

specific events of Chinese history to fully appreciate the impact of the CCP on this woman and her son. However, almost all critics appreciated the overt absence of the CCP from the film. Tian Zhuangzhuang, the director, succeeds with this film because of his understated and minimalist approach to these key events of the early PRC. (Canby) Some critics feel that Tian tried to bite off more than he could chew, attempting to cover such a large sweep of history. (Thompson)

The acting is superb, especially by the principles. Lu Liping, whose portrayal of Shujuan is quiet and powerful in her presentation of the full spectrum of human emotion. The males who depict her three husbands are wonderful as is the three boys who portray Tietou at three different ages. (Berardinelli)

Tian Zhuangzhuang directed the film, and his ability to keep the film understated and quiet and yet powerful comes out strongly. He provides an excellent balance between the personal-psychological and the social-political. (Hinson) Noteworthy is the way Tian uses space, both private and public to show how the CCP controls the lives of these everyday people. It is photographed with remarkable gracefulness, colors and compositions finding beauty in the lives of these people, and especially in their faces. (Ebert)

Sources:

Berardinelli, James. "The Blue Kite." *Reelviews*. N.p., 2012. Web. 19 Jul 2012.
<http://www.reelviews.net/php_review_template.php?identifier=1620>.

Canby, Vincent. "The Blue Kite: In China, The Personal is Political." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, October 2, 1993. Web. 19 Jul 2012.

Ebert, Roger. "The Blue Kite." *Roberebert.com*. Chicago Sun-Times, January 5, 2003. Web. 19 Jul 2012.

Hinson, Hal. "The Blue Kite." *The Washington Post*. The Washington Post, August 5, 1994. Web. 19 Jul 2012.

Thompson, Bill. "90s Far East Bracket: Lan Feng Zheng (The Blue Kite, 1993)." *Bill's Movie Emporium*. N.p., February 16, 2011. Web. 19 Jul 2012.
<<http://billsmovieemporium.wordpress.com/2011/02/16/90s-far-east-bracket-lan-feng-zheng-the-blue-kite-1993/>>.

Biography of Film Director

Tian Zhuangzhuang

Tian Zhuangzhuang is a prominent 5th Generation Chinese Film Director. Tian was born in 1952 to Tian Fang an actor and movie director. His mother was a famous movie star during the 1950's. Tian's family was part of the Communist Party and he spent much time around cinema and even watched films as they were previewed for censorship.

During the Cultural Revolution Tian was sent to a Labor Camp. It was during this time that he became aware of the settings and space that he would use in his first films. Tian later joined the Peoples Liberation Army. Later when society began to return after the Cultural Revolution Tian worked as an assistant cinematographer for the government's agricultural film division.

Tian entered the Beijing Film Academy when it first reopened after the Cultural Revolution. His first films included "Horse Thief" 1986 a film exploring minorities, visually sweeping scenes of remote regions. Popular domestic films include "Drum Singer" 1987, "Rock n Roll" 1988, "Li Lian Ying: The Imperial Eunuch" 1991. Tian entered the International scene with the films "Red Sorghum" 1987 and "Ju Doo" 1990.

The film "The Blue Kite" 1993 was hailed as a masterpiece by the international film scene. The

film chronicles the life of a young boy Tietou, through the 100 Flowers, A Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. It is a look at adult themes through the eyes of a child's innocence of a child. The film is shot with close interiors and a hazy look in contrast to the sweeping vistas of his early films. The film was distributed internationally before it was given permission by the government censors and because of this Tian was banned from making films until 1996.

"The Blue Kite" received numerous international awards. In 1993 it won the Grand Prize at the Tokyo Film Festival, the Best Feature Film at the Hawaii International Film Festival and the Best Director at the Chicago International Film Festival.

Where to buy the film:

http://www.amazon.com/The-Blue-Kite-Tian-Yi/dp/B00007JZVS/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1343156974&sr=8-1&keywords=the+blue+kite

Hundred Flowers Movement Lesson Plan(s): Social Studies/Modern World History

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the Hundred Flowers Movement during Mao Zedong's regime, 1956-57.
2. Students will write a vignette about a time they stood up/spoke out.

Context:

Small 6-12 "IB for All" school with all juniors as IB Diploma Candidates. Class period are 85 minutes long. The class is IB History of Asia. Assume students have already learned about the 1949 Revolution and the first few campaigns of the 1950s (3 Antis, 5 Antis, First Five Year Plan)

Day One:

1. Start class by telling the students that the principal has asked for the juniors to give their input to how the IB Diploma Program is working for them. She is really interested in reforming the school and making it much better, and she needs their insights. She want them to tell truthfully what's wrong with the school, their classes, their teachers, the workload, anything they'd like. They should really take advantage of this opportunity to help make the school better. (5 min)
2. Ask students to pull out a piece of paper, write their name at the top, and to take 5 minutes to jot down their thoughts on how to make the school/program better. Tell them that they should turn in their papers by putting them into a seal-able envelope, and that the last person to turn their paper in should actually seal the envelope. Send a student up to the office to give the stuffed envelope to the school secretary. (8 min)
3. Start the official lesson by writing the words "Constructive Criticism" on the board. Ask students to define it and give examples of it in the United States. Is there a tradition of constructive criticism? (corporations, public meetings, surveys, feedback opportunities, etc.) (5 min)

4. Next, pass out an edited version of the speech by Lu Ting-yi called “Let Flowers of Many Kinds Blossom, Diverse Schools of Thought Contend.” (Lu was Propaganda Minister for the CCP, and he gave this speech in 1956.) Read it aloud, making sure everyone is clear on the vocabulary. <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1956-china-flowers.html>>

Ask/Discuss (30 min):

- a. What is the CCP going for?
 - b. Why? What does it hope to achieve?
 - c. Do you think people will openly give constructive criticism? Why/why not?
 - d. What is the best outcome from the Hundred Flowers Campaign? What is the worst outcome from this campaign?
5. Show 39 min clip from the film “The Blue Kite.” This first 39 minutes depicts a family from marriage under the shadow of Mao to the birth of a child to the Hundred Flowers Campaign to the Party’s purging of those who spoke out during the Rectification Movement of 1958. (40 min)

Day Two:

1. Discuss the film. Here are some guiding questions (25 min):
 - *How is the CCP benevolent or malevolent? Come up with a couple examples from the clip we saw that depict the Party both ways.*
 - *What role does fear play in a totalitarian state? Describe how fear influences how the characters make their decisions in their private lives as well as their public lives.*
 - *What was the Hundred Flowers Movement? How did this particular campaign play out, according to the movie?*
 - *How did it impact the lives of the Chinese people in this film? What do you think the long term implications of this campaign and the following Rectification Movement will be for China?*
2. Ask students to think about a time that they’ve spoken out and where that speaking out got them. How old were they? What was the setting? What were they speaking out against? Was their speaking out effective? What were the consequences, short term and long term, for their speaking out? Was standing up worth it? Have students write a vignette about this experience; they should write with as much detail as possible. (15-20 min)
3. Pair students and have them read their vignettes aloud to their partner. (7 min)
4. Get your students to share 4-8 aloud, with the class giving positive feedback about the writing each time. (15 min)
5. Mini-lecture: Do a quick summary of the Hundred Flowers Movement and the Rectification Movement that followed. (10 min)
6. Ask: Would any of you like to take back the paper you turned into the principal the class period before? Why/why not?

Chinese Music Lesson Plan

National Standards (MENC - Music Educator's National Conference)

2a: Play instruments accurately in small ensembles

4c: Compose, using non-traditional sound sources

5a: Read sixteenth notes in duple meter

6a: listen and describe events in music using appropriate terms

6b: Listen and analyze uses of timbre in music from diverse cultures

7b: Students use specific criteria for evaluating their own compositions

8b: Identify ways music relates to other school subjects

9a: Describe characteristics of music genres and styles from a variety of cultures

9b: Describe the characteristics of high-quality musical works

Materials Needed:

Making Music, Grade 8. Pgs. A-8 - A-11, D-26 - D-27.

CDs: 1.3, 1.4, 9.4

Resource Book, pgs. A-5, D-9, and D-10

The Blue Kite movie clips

The Lord of the Ring: The Return of the King movie clip

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon movie clip

United Streaming Clips

Danny Elfman Movie Scores

Chinese instrument videos

TV/DVD player

Percussion instruments

Keyboards

Garageband/Macs

Essential Questions:

What do you think is the biggest challenge in creating a movie score? (short time frame, creating a theme for each character, writing orchestral parts, etc.)

What are the similarities and differences between Chinese Instruments and Western

Instruments?

How can a composer use instruments to create variety?

Days 1 -3:

Introduction

1. Begin by showing the students 3 short portions of The Blue Kite: (The Wedding Song, The Crow Song, and Chinese New Year). Next, show the scene from The Lord Of The Rings: The Return of the King with the sound off and then with the sound. Discuss with the students how the scene is altered by the absence of music and sound effects. Stress the importance of music in conveying the emotional content.

Development

2. Ask students to read the information on ppgs. A-8 and A-9. Discuss some of the challenges of creating film scores. Discuss what a Foley artist does. Ask for several volunteers. While the rest of the students close their eyes, have volunteers walk around the room to discover recognizable sound effects (a door or window closing, chairs moved, chalkboard). Invite the listeners to identify the sounds they hear. Discuss which sounds could be easily made and recognized.

3. If time permits, share information about Music Across the Curriculum: Science on page A-11.

4. invite students to read "Make A Mood" on page A-9. Ask them to create their own sound effects scores for several United Streaming Film Clips. After viewing each video clip without the sound, have students consider what an appropriate soundtrack would be. Have students:

- List the sound effects they would like to add.
- List possible ways to create those sounds.

5. Divide students into small groups. Use classroom instruments, keyboards, and Garageband to compose and record digital audio tracks that support one of the film clips. Remind students that they will have to accurately time their score to the film clip.

6. Invite students to study the listing map for *Main Title from Edward Scissorhands*. Explain that *Edward Scissorhands* is a fairy tale about a young man who was created by an inventor that died before he could give his creation a pair of human hands. In the film, the viewer experiences Edward's pain and successes that come from being different.

Invite students to use the listening map to help them follow Edward's theme. Ask students to raise their hands when they hear it. Encourage students to describe in detail the musical

instruments they hear using music terminology. For example: **What instruments do you hear in the composition? What performs the theme? What do you hear when the theme is not being played?**

Have the student read the Careers feature on Danny Elfman. Note that Elfman also wrote many other scores, including the theme song for *The Simpsons*. If time permits, play a portion of 5 other Danny Elfman scores. Ask students to discuss any similarities and differences in orchestration, thematic content, texture and other musical instruments.

Invite students to read the information about the composer Tan Dun on pg. A-11. Ask students to listen *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and challenge them to analyze the piece. **What instrument carries the melody? What other instrumentation do you hear? What might be considered unusual in this score?** Students can compare and contrast the two film scores they have heard using the chart on Resource Book pg. A-5. Before they complete the chart, have them discuss the similarities and differences with their learning partner.

Lastly, have students listen to the instrumental score of *The Blue Kite*. Discuss how it is largely a Western style score with no ethnic Chinese instruments. Give background information on the composer. Ask students: **What other composers use different ethnic styles when composing movie scores?**

Assessment:

Invite students to design and apply criteria for evaluating the quality of their music. Ask them to critique the sound effects scores they have created. Encourage additional criteria such as creativity, accuracy and emotional content in their lists. Invite each group to share their sound effects scores for their film clip assignment with other groups. Have students write a peer critique for their classmates' scores as a "ticket out the door". Post the reviews (no names) on the bulletin board.

Days 4 and 5:

Introduction

Rewatch the film clips from *The Blue Kite*. Discuss the music that appears (Children's Folk Song and "patriotic" Wedding Song). Ask students how these songs compare to nursery rhymes and traditional wedding music in the West.

Invite the students to read the opening paragraphs of the lesson about the role of percussion in classical and folk music of China. Refer to the definition at the bottom of page D-26 and have students read about the different functions of the *luogu* ensemble. Share the cultural information about the "Yellow Bell".

Develop

To play the "*Hsu chu* Prelude Ensemble" have students:

- sit in a circle or semicircle
- learn the drum part by clapping the rhythm; have students assigned to these parts transfer this rhythm to their drums

- learn the large and small gong parts by clapping the rhythm; have the students assigned these parts transfer the rhythm to the gongs.
- follow the same method to learn the wood-block part
- learn the small cymbal part, paying attention to the muted notes, played by pressing the cymbals together tightly.
- layer the parts together starting with the drum part. Perform the ensemble as a class. Practice dampening the ringing instruments precisely on beat 4 of the last measure to achieve a clean ending.

Invite students to listen *Huagu ge* as arranged by Han Kuo-Huang. Discuss the various instruments heard in this recording (yunluo, drum cymbals, gongs, small bell). Ask students:

How does the composer use the percussion instruments to create variety? Invite students to read the information on pg. D-27 about the Dragon Dance. Discuss what characteristics of luogu music relate to the dance.

Assessment:

Give students the East vs. West instrument comparison chart. Have students fill in the chart while viewing various performance clips of Chinese instruments. Students should be able to identify the name of the Chinese instrument and the Western instruments that it most closely relates to.

As a final assessment, give students the 5 Discussion Questions above. Invite them to post their responses to 3 of the questions on teacher blog.

Communism Under Mao: *The Blue Kite* Lesson Plan

Established Goal(s):

1. Assess the benefits and costs of Communist policies under Mao Zedong including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. (World History Content Standards – Era 9 – Standard 1B)
2. Analyze the impact of social control on deviance in society.

Understanding(s):

1. Totalitarian regimes like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have incredible power and influence over the lives of their citizens.
2. Totalitarian regimes like the CCP exercise their power of citizens in a variety of ways.
3. The 100 Flowers, Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution were specific campaigns designed to convert mainland China to communism.

Essential Question(s):

1. In what ways did the 100 Flowers, Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution campaigns impact the lives of average Chinese?

Students will know ...

1. Specific similarities and differences between the 100 Flowers, Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution campaigns.
2. Criticism of the government is rarely tolerated in a totalitarian regime.
3. How communist initiatives impacted the characters in *The Blue Kite*.

Students will be able to ...

1. Analyze cause and effect relationships, bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and irrational.
2. Identify and describe the differences between the Chinese culture dramatized in this film and contemporary U.S. culture.
3. Assess the impact of the CCP's influence on the everyday lives of Chinese citizens.
4. Explain the major CCP initiatives undertaken during the film, including the 100 Flowers, Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution.

Performance Task:

Students will choose a role in the RAFT below and create a project that will assess the impact of these initiatives on the lives of everyday Chinese.

ROLE	AUDIENCE	FORMAT	TOPIC
Chinese Propaganda Artist	Chinese people	Four color poster	Why one (or all) of the initiatives are good for the country.
Average Chinese citizen (woman, man, child, etc.)	Friend in the U.S.	Letters	Daily life in China during this time.
Newspaper reporter	American people	Newspaper articles	Impact of CCP initiatives on daily life of the Chinese.

Other Evidence:

1. Ticket-out-the-door after lecture/film.
2. Quiz over three major CCP initiatives.

Days One and Two:

Introduction:

1. Teacher will write the following phrases on the board” *The 100 Flowers Campaign; The Great Leap Forward; The Cultural Revolution*. As students enter the room, they should be directed to respond to the phrases. What do you think they mean? etc.
 - a. Discuss
2. Inform students of where the class is headed:
 - a. For the next few days the class will examine the ways a centralized, totalitarian government can influence the lives of the people who in that society.
 - b. As a case study the class will learn about Communist China under Mao during the 1950s and 1960s.
 - c. To augment learning students will watch the film, *The Blue Kite*, which will dramatize the impact of these initiatives on the lives of average Chinese.
 - d. Finally, students will complete the performance task to demonstrate their understanding of the learning goals.
3. Introduce learning goals, essential questions, etc. if necessary.

Learning:

1. Go over key points of communism, Maoism, the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. This can be accomplished through a traditional lecture format, through the use of film (*The Mao Years* is an excellent primer on these topics) or a combination of the two.
 - a. See historic overview for the film for more information on the campaigns.
 - b. Be sure to assess the key points through a ticket-out-the-door and/or quiz.

Day Three:

1. Once students have demonstrated a good grasp of the key points for each of the major CCP movements covered in the film, it is time for them to watch the movie. Ask students to take notes during the film on the essential question and be ready to discuss that question when the movie has concluded.
2. Show as much or as a little of the film as you feel necessary. Total length runs to more than two hours, but excerpts could easily be used. For example, showing the first 40 minutes of the film will allow students to experience the dramatic turbulence that was the 100 Flowers Campaign and the Anti-Rightist Movement.

Day Four:

1. Debrief the film, focusing on the essential question. Introduce the performance assessment (RAFT) described above. Give students one or two class periods to work on their assessment and ask any questions.

Elements of a curriculum for teaching the film Hero by Zhang Yimou
(As informed by the NEH Summer Institute for Teachers: Chinese Film and Society at the
University of Illinois, Urbana)
Summer 2012

Submitted by:

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Contents

- Background to this project
- Using films to meet Common Core Standards in English Language Arts (7th grade)
- Film synopsis and critical reaction to the film
- Lesson plans
 - Graphic organizers: Chart of scenes and Chart of characters
 - Discussion questions for English Language Arts classes
 - End-of-unit test

Background to this project

In September 2011 Helms Middle School administrators invited me to create a new academic elective specifically for students who had just been reclassified as Fully English Proficient, and for whom there was no room in the other elective classes at Helms. Thus, I developed a new class, “World Literature and Film,” whose primary goals are

1. To improve students’ “Literacy” using film as text, as they specifically

- Use and practice “reading comprehension skills” as they “read” [view] a film
 - inferencing
 - predicting
 - sequencing
 - questioning
 - summarizing
 - context clues
 - compare-and-contrast
 - cause and effect
- Gain and improve their knowledge + confidence in understanding/discussing narrative elements
 - plot
 - setting
 - characters (motivation, traits, etc.)
 - theme
 - conflicts
 - tone and mood
 - point of view
- Consistently use academic vocabulary to discuss narrative and literary elements

2. Build students’ background knowledge and vocabulary – the world outside Richmond/San Pablo/Michoacan – by showing films from (or set in) other parts of the world. Among the films I showed were

- *Bend It Like Beckham*: **England** (and Germany and Sikh culture)
- *The King of Masks*: **China** (Buddhism and cultural traditions)
- *Whale Rider*: **New Zealand** (Maori culture)
- *The Gods Must Be Crazy*: **Botswana** (Bushman culture, African landscape/wildlife)
- *Kirikou and the Sorceress*: **Senegal** (“universal” elements of folk tales)
- *Sierra Leone’s Refugee All-Stars*: **Sierra Leone/Guinea** (refugees, trauma, UNHCR, etc.)
- *Rabbit-Proof Fence*: **Australia** (Aboriginal culture)

(Please e-mail me for a complete list of the films I used)

Using Yang Zhimou's *Hero* with [low test-scoring] 7th graders

Hero was one of the more challenging films for my students. These are the criteria that I used to select films for my students:

1. “kid-friendly” (movies w. kid characters and/or lots of action work best)
2. no gratuitous violence, sexuality, or bad language
3. strong narrative thread and clearly differentiated characters
4. a theme that is comprehensible, accessible, relevant to middle school students

Although *Hero* falls short in all of these, I'd still teach it again w. lots of changes and improvements.

#1 – no kid characters. I thought the gorgeous martial arts scenes would hook them, but I underestimated their familiarity w. this genre, so it was neither that much of a novelty nor the martial arts genre they were most familiar with (Jackie Chan, Kung Fu Hustle, etc.).

#2 – it's not gratuitous, but a few of them showed slight anxiety/embarrassment in the single, short love scene. Part of Culturally Responsive Teaching is working to show respect for the varieties of backgrounds that students bring, which may include a strong religious/moral upbringing. Typically, I do talk to the students about how some scenes may make them feel awkward and that they are free to not attend to those scenes.

#3 – the words *arrow* and *version*, among many others, were new vocabulary for most of my students, so the idea of a story having several different **versions** was a new concept that I needed to teach more explicitly – and possibly using a shorter and/or more accessible text. Clearly *Hero* offers rich possibilities for teaching point of view and perspective.

#4 – the rich themes (heroism, patriotism, loyalty, different kinds of love) are appropriate for 7th grade, but need lots of discussion.

Test: Show what you learned, know, and understand about Zhang Yimou's film *Hero*
OPEN NOTES! (That means you may use your Green Chart of Scenes and your White Chart of Characters)

Directions: Read each question carefully. Write your answers clearly and neatly because if I can't read your answer, I will not be able to grade it, so it won't count in your score.

Part A. Characters. Choose THREE of the five main characters – Broken Sword, Flying Snow, Nameless, Moon, and the King of Qin – and for each one, give ONE piece of “background information” [something about their life before the events shown in the film]. Then explain their role in the film: Their relationships with the other characters, what they did, and why they're important in the film.

Example:

<u>Name:</u> <i>Old Servant (Tianyong Zheng)</i>	<u>Background information:</u> <i>We don't know his background except that he seems to be the <u>lead teacher</u> of the calligraphy school. So, he would have been the teacher of Broken Sword and Flying Snow when they were learning calligraphy and how calligraphy and swordsmanship are related.</i>
<u>Character's role in the film:</u> <i>Besides being the lead teacher in the calligraphy school, he is important in the film because he is the person who has to heal Broken Sword's injury from when Flying Snow stopped Broken Sword from meeting Nameless in a duel. And finally, he is sent by Flying Snow to bring back either a red flag or a yellow flag, depending on what happened when Nameless went to kill the King. His most important scene is when the Qin armies were attacking the calligraphy school and he said, "You must remember! Strong as the arrows of Qin may be, though they will shatter our cities and destroy Our Nation, they shall never extinguish Zhao's written word. Today, I shall teach you the true spirit of Our Culture!"</i>	

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Background information:</u>
<u>Character's role in the film</u>	

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Background information:</u>
<u>Character's role in the film</u>	

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Background information:</u>
<u>Character's role in the film</u>	

Part B: Setting, which is the time and the place where the events in the film take place. Explain briefly the setting: Where the events take place and when.

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Part C: Plot. Write a 5-sentence summary of the events of this film. I will only read the 1st 5 sentences, so don't bother to write more than 5. Remember: A summary contains only the MOST IMPORTANT events – no details.

Part D. Vocabulary. (1) You learned 3 forms of a word that means to kill a specific person, a specific target. The forms were a verb, a person noun, and a noun that names the action. Please spell all 3 words correctly.

_____ _____ _____
verb form person noun noun that names the action

(2) When people tell the story of the same events, but they tell the events differently, we say that those are different _____ of the same story.

Required Bonus Questions (RBQ's). **Required** means that you **have to try and answer these questions.** **Bonus** means that you never LOSE points – **you only gain points,** and points are usually based on the **effort** that you make to do a good job of answering the questions and following directions.

RBQ #1: What did you like most about this movie and why? Points will be based on how specific you are in explaining exactly what you liked about the move.

RBQ #2: Would you recommend this film to other 7th and 8th grade students? Be very specific about why you **WOULD** recommend this film or why you **WOULD NOT** recommend this film.

RBQ#3: Choose ONE MORE of the 5 main characters – a 4th one from the 3 that you wrote about for Part A and write the same information for that 4th main character.

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Background information:</u>
<u>Character's role in the film</u>	

Hero, a film by Zhang Yimou

A quite detailed synopsis of the film may be found here:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero_\(2002_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero_(2002_film))

The director, Zhang Yimou, made his directorial debut w. the film *Red Sorghum*. Some of his other films include *Raise the Red Lantern*, *To Live, Not One Less*, *House of Flying Dragons*, *Shanghai Triad*, *The Road Home*, *Ju Dou*, *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*, *Curse of the Golden Flower*, and most recently, *The Flowers of War*.

Other summaries and commentaries on the film may be found at these websites (current as of July 2012):

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0299977/> -- the usual writeup from everyone's favorite Internet Movie DataBase

<http://www.chinesecinemas.org/hero.html>, as published in *Cinema Scope Magazine* vol: 5, Issue: 1, (issue 14; Spring 2003), p. 9

<http://filmsufi.blogspot.com/2009/10/hero-zhang-yimou-2002.html>, an extremely thoughtful critical analysis

<http://itpworld.wordpress.com/2008/09/15/hero-chinahong-kong-2002---narrative-analysis/>

Because some students will ask about the colors, here's an excerpt from that very comprehensive and useful review:

There are 5 sequences where a color either predominates or is made 'significant' in a scene:

- The King of Qin's palace is **grey/black**, enlivened only by splashes of red. This forms the beginning and the end of the story and the overall feel of this sequence extends into the first fight between Nameless and Sky;
- **Red** dominates the first version of the story by Nameless in which he describes the calligraphy school, the attack by the Qin army, the stabbing of Broken Sword and the subsequent fight between Flying Snow and Moon;
- **Blue** becomes the color for the second version of the story;
- **Green** is the color for the story that Nameless doesn't necessarily know since it covers the first meeting of Broken Sword and Flying Snow and also the failed assassination attempt;
- **White** is the final color, dominating the deaths of Flying Snow and Broken Sword and alternating with the black sequences back in the palace.

An interview w. Zhang Ziyi, who plays Moon, may be found here:

<http://www.wu-jing.org/News/M01/2002-01-Zhang-Ziyi-Hero.php>

Correlating the serious teaching of a film with English Language Arts Common Core Standards

Teaching a film directly supports Common Core English Language Arts Standards in at least the 2 domains of *College and Career Readiness* and *Reading: Literature* by merely considering and then inserting the terms *view*, *film*, or *director* directly next to the terms *read*, *text*, and *author*, respectively, as shown below.

English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read *[VIEW a visual text]* closely to determine what the *[visual]* text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual *[visual]* evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a *[visual]* text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a *[visual]* text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a *[visual]* text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of *[visual]* texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. *In teaching a film, one can teach and examine different kinds of camera angles, shots, tracking, or other details of cinematography to determine how those technical details “relate to each other and the whole.”*
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a *[visual]* text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. *Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
9. Analyze how two or more *[visual]* texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary, *[visual,]* and informational texts independently and proficiently.

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 7

Key Ideas and Details

- RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence *from a film* to support analysis of what the text/*film* says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text/*film*.
- RL.7.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text/*film* and analyze its development over the course of the text/*film*; provide an objective summary of the text/*film*.
- RL.7.3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama/*film* interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Craft and Structure

RL.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text/*film*, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama *or scene of a film*. *Certain cinematic devices can be very effective in demonstrating symbolism, tone, mood, and other literary devices.*

RL.7.5. Analyze how a drama's or poem's *or film's* form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning. [*Documentary vs. fiction, shorts vs. full-length, etc.*]

RL.7.6. Analyze how an author/director develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text/*film*.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.7.7. *Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).* [NOTE TO TEACHERS: Many excellent 7th-grade level texts have been made into films – *The Outsiders* or *Freak the Mighty* (film = *The Mighty*) – or have excellent films that can accompany them: *Chew on This* (*Food, Inc.*, or *Supersize Me*), *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (*Smoke Signals*), etc., etc.]

RL.7.9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction [*or film directors*] use or alter history.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.7.10. By the end of the year, read/view and comprehend literature/*films*, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Discussion questions generated by 7th/8th grade students viewing the film *Hero* by Zhang Yimou

Note: These are questions my students wrote and handed in. These are not ALL the questions they asked; these are questions I selected, about 60-70% of them, which were asked by several students, or which I felt were especially interesting or important to understand the film.

They are arranged acc. to the scenes that triggered them, and when I typed them up, I tried to put them in chronological order (as the events unfolded), and I grouped questions about a similar shot together.

Some student questions about parts of the film *Hero*
that we've watched so far (Scenes 3 + 4)

- 1. Why were the soldiers shooting arrows at the Calligraphy School?**
- 2. How did the soldiers know where Broken Sword and Flying Snow were?**
- 3. Why did Nameless want to go to the Calligraphy School?**
- 4. Why did Flying Snow throw her tea at Moon?**
- 5. What did the leader of the Calligraphy School mean when he said that they can destroy our kingdom, but they can never destroy our art? (the art = their calligraphy)**
- 6. Why didn't the old man (the leader of the Calligraphy School) get hit w. the arrows?**
- 7. Why didn't Flying Snow want Nameless to help fight off the arrows?**
- 8. Why did Nameless and Flying Snow try to fight against all those arrows if they knew that there were too many and it might be impossible to beat them?**
- 9A. How is Flying Snow able to block the arrows with her sleeve?**
- 9B. How is it that Flying Snow is still alive?**
- 10. Why did Nameless ask Broken Sword and Flying Snow to meet him in the library?**
- 11. What does it mean that there are "19 different ways to write sword"?**

More student questions fr. the film *Hero*

Directions: Choose THREE of the following questions and write your best guess for the answer. Please do not copy the questions; just write the number of the question, and then write your answer. You may not be sure of the answer, but write your best guess and explain the reasons for your guess.

Grades will be based on effort, especially the effort you make to write a good guess, even if you are not sure, and to explain the reason(s) for that guess!

1. Why did Nameless tell Broken Sword & Flying Snow that he killed Sky?
2. Why did Broken Sword and Flying Snow get upset after Nameless told them something? (Comment: Think about what Nameless told them. Then you will know why they became upset.)
3. Why does Nameless want to have a duel with Broken Sword?
- 4A. Why did Broken Sword make love to Moon?
- 4B. Why did Broken Sword want Flying Snow to see them together?
- 4C. Why did Moon cry?
5. How did Broken Sword know that Flying Snow would see him with Moon? (Great question! But no name, so no points...)
- 6A. Why did Flying Snow kill Broken Sword?
- 6B. Why was she crying after he died? (2 more great questions [6A/6B]! But no name, so no points...)
7. Why did Broken Sword say, "We are both so foolish."

More student questions about Hero

1. Why were Flying Snow and Moon fighting?

- 2. Why did all the leaves turn red when Moon died?**
- 3. Why was Flying Snow just walking away when Moon was trying to kill her?**
- 4. Why was Moon laughing at Flying Snow after she was stabbed?**
- 5. Did Moon die?**

Why did King Qin think that Nameless was lying?

Why does Flying Snow want Broken Sword to live instead of her?

Why did Nameless want to advance 10 paces?

More student questions about *Hero*:
Scenes 7 + 8, “Advance 10 Paces” and “Flying Snow”

- 1. How can Broken Sword do all those movements and still catch the tea on his sword?**
- 2. Why did Nameless ask the warriors to let Nameless and Flying Snow fight?**
- 3. Why do they want to kill the King?**
- 4A. Why was Nameless lying?**
- 4B. Why did the King suspect that Nameless was lying?**
- 5A. Why does Flying Snow stab Broken Sword?**
- 5B. Why did Flying Snow say to Broken Sword, “Moon will come soon and take care of you.” Wasn’t Moon dead already?**
- 5C. Why did Flying Snow leave Broken Sword alone saying, “I must go.”?**
- 6. Did Flying Snow actually die?**
- 7. Why were Nameless and Broken Sword fighting?**
- 8. Why didn’t Nameless kill Broken Sword?**
- 9. Why did Broken Sword give Nameless his sword?**

BONUS Question: Why does every scene – or almost every scene – have its own color? For example, when Moon died, everything became red. In the library, everything was blue.

**More student questions from *Hero*
Scenes 9 + 10, “Underestimated” and “Spare the King”**

Note: We’ll watch Scene 10 again today to make sure that nobody misses some very important background information about Broken Sword and Flying Snow. Also, pay close attention to the sequence. There is a “flashback” in Scene 10, so be sure you understand what a “flashback” is.

- 1A. Why were Moon and Nameless fighting?**
- 1B. Why did Nameless tell Moon to stop fighting?**
- 1C. Why did Nameless walk away after he pushed Moon into the books?**
- 2. Why did Flying Snow agree to help Nameless kill the King?**
- 3A. Why did Nameless stab Flying Snow?**
- 3B. How is it that Flying Snow is still alive after she was stabbed?**
- 4A. Why were the King and Broken Sword fighting?**
- 4B. Where was Flying Snow when Broken Sword was fighting the King?**
- 4C. Why did Broken Sword stab the King in the neck ... and not kill him?**
- 4D. Why doesn’t Broken Sword want to kill the King?**
- 5. Why are there so many stories?**

**More student questions from *Hero*
Scenes 10 + 11, “Spare the King” and “Our Land”**

1A. Why didn't Broken Sword kill the King?

1B. Why did Flying Snow and Broken Sword break up and not be a couple?

2A. Why does Broken Sword write “Our Land” in the sand?

2B. How is it that Broken Sword understood the King?

3. Why does Nameless want to kill the King with the King's sword?

4. Why didn't Nameless kill the King?

5. Why did all the warriors come to the doors of the palace?

Bonus Question: Why do all [most] of the scenes have a certain color?

Lesson Plans for *Hero* by Zhang Yimou

Note to other teachers: For this lesson, students will already be familiar with the teacher's approach to films, including the following activities:

- Using graphic organizers to write notes about each scene (events, conflicts, setting, etc.) and about each major character
- Writing questions (on 3x5 cards) about aspects of the film that puzzle or interest them or that they want to know more about and submitting these cards/Q's to teacher for class discussion/clarification the next day
- Watching the film in respectful silence

- Watching the film one scene (chapter) at a time, with a pause after each scene (4-5-6-7 minutes of viewing, sometimes more, depending on the film)
- Having the choice of writing their notes either while the film is showing or in the several minutes of silent time after each scene
- Read, think, then write (RTW) by which a lengthy writing prompt (several paragraphs) is up on the Document Reader, is read aloud by the teacher, and then students write for about 10-15 minutes while instrumental jazz is playing (to muffle ambient noise and increase student focus)
- Being held accountable for understanding the film's content (sequence of events, conflicts, resolutions, characters' roles and development, setting, etc.) by on-demand writing (predict what will happen next, explain the conflict and which of the 4 kinds of conflict it is, etc.) and by "open notes" tests at the conclusion of each film. ("Open notes" tests give the students significant incentive for taking good notes, since they'll be able to use those notes to write answers to test questions.)
- Getting "bonus points" for questions they write and submit to the teacher on 3x5 cards.

Day One: Introducing the film

Content Objective: Students will gain an overview of the new film

Language Objective: None today

Warm-up/Opener: **Read, think, then write About Heroes** (attached). Unusually, for a Read-think-then-write, the teacher leads the class in a discussion of heroes in order to elicit at least the 4 types. Students write silently for 10-15 minutes. Teacher collects student writing, which she grades based on effort. Full points (5/5) for effort, more points for extra effort, 4/5 for less effort.

Lesson Steps:

- Teacher distributes [on colored paper] the 1st Chart of Scenes for the film.
- Students briefly discuss the headings – which ones are the "same as always" [events] and which ones might be different.
- Teacher distributes [on different color paper] the Chart of Characters.
- Discuss the characters names: Teacher pronounces, class repeats chorally, for each one. Discuss M/F, whether or not you can tell fr. the names.

IN FUTURE: Suggest filling in "EXAMPLE" boxes in each of the 2 grids to help remind students of the kind of content and level of detail expected in their notes.
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- Students number the 2 handouts and enter the handouts' names in the Table of Contents for their Folders, which hold all the papers (handouts, writing, tests, etc.) for this class, numbered and in order.
- Play preview of film. Teacher distributes 3x5 cards for students to write their Q's about the Preview.
- Teacher answers any questions that "can't wait for tomorrow" about the Preview.
- TIME PERMITTING: Show 1st scene of film. If 1st scene is shown today, it will be repeated tomorrow, after some schemata from the RTW and the Preview have had a chance to sink in.

Closure:

- Students pass Folders to back row for Folder Monitors to put away.
- Students pass 3x5 cards to front, or Teacher collects.
- Last-minute questions.
- Class dismissed.

Day Two:

Content Objective: Students will be able to name and briefly describe several important characters.

Language Objective: "The character _____ [name] _____ is _____."

One characteristic we could use to describe her/him is _____.”

NOTE: “Language objectives” are specific academic vocabulary that students use to display their knowledge and understanding of one or more content objectives.

Warm-up/Opener: Teacher has typed up the students’ questions from the preceding day and displays them on the Document Reader. Students take turns reading each one aloud and then volunteer to answer each one. Teacher will clarify any questions that students don’t answer.

Lesson Steps:

- Students take out their 2 Graphic Organizers (Chart of characters and Chart of scenes).
- Teacher elicits any outstanding questions fr. previous day’s viewing.
- Teacher shows 1st scene, noting on the whiteboard any interesting or problematic vocabulary or cultural references for later discussion.
- Students watch; some take notes during, some take notes after.
- Teacher pauses at the end of that scene, allows students 4-7 minutes to write their notes (summary of events, notes on characters, etc.) on the Graphic Organizers and write their questions on their 3x5 cards.
- Teacher may choose to clarify vocab./cultural references at this point, or at the end of class, as a closing. (NOTE: If there are items for which students will be held accountable, e.g., “on the test,” clarify them directly after the scene and revisit them later.)
- Teacher shows next scene, continuing to note any interesting or problematic vocabulary/cultural references.
- Teacher pauses at the end of that scene, allows students 4-7 minutes to write their notes (summary of events, notes on characters, etc.) on the Graphic Organizers and write their questions on their 3x5 cards.

NOTE: USUALLY, only show 2 scenes – maybe more – not to exceed about 15-20 minutes of film viewing in order to allow time for note-taking, answering questions, etc.

Closure

- Teacher clarifies vocab./cultural references on the board. Generally, students need to take notes. (In later versions of the Chart of Scenes, I left at least one row of boxes empty for students to write notes on vocab., etc. Previously, they wrote these notes in the margins.)
- Students pass Folders to back row for Folder Monitors to put away.
- Students pass 3x5 cards to front, or Teacher collects.
- Last-minute questions.
- Class dismissed.

The following days follow the same format and have similar Content and Language Objectives. This film would greatly benefit from additional schema-building, e.g., about Chinese calligraphy, swordplay, some of the emotions raised (jealousy, loyalty, truth-telling, different versions of the same story, etc.)

Read, think, then write: Heroes

What's a hero? [We'll discuss briefly in class.]

So, there are at least these types of heroes:

- (1) Heroes in history (the past)**
- (2) Heroes in world events today (the present)**
- (3) Heroes in literature (books, stories) – we'll leave out heroes in movies for now ...**
- (4) Our own personal heroes – people in our life who we think of as heroes, who act like heroes.**

Choose TWO of these types of heroes, and write a paragraph about each type. Your paragraph should give several specific examples (at least two examples, and more than 2 is better) – names of real people who are this category of hero in your opinion. For each one, explain what they do, or have done, in their lives to make you consider them a hero.

Here's one way to start your paragraphs:

*One of my heroes from history is _____ . I think
this person is a hero because s/he _____ and
_____ .*

“The Mao Years”

1. **Film Synopsis:** This film is the middle section of the “China: A Century of Revolution” trilogy covering the history of the People’s Republic of China in the twentieth century. This film, “The Mao Years: Catch the Stars and Moon” covers the years from 1949 to 1976; it begins right as the Chinese Communist Party taking control after the 1949 Revolution. It covers the Communist consolidation of power; the Chinese role in the Korean war; early efforts at the collectivization of farming; Mao’s attempts at industrial modernization; the era of allowing “a hundred flowers to bloom;” the reaction against this; the failures of The Great Leap Forward; the recovery from The Great Leap Forward; the Cultural Revolution; Mao’s meeting with Nixon, his final months of life and Mao’s death. Also discussed are the internal politics/intrigues of the Chinese Communist Party concurrent with these events.
2. **Map of Events in the film:**

Image Map of China: Events occur all across China. See map of China below:



Events Map of film

Part I:

- [Chinese Communist Revolution: All of China]
- [Communist Consolidation of Power/Reforms/Women’s Rights: All of China]
- [Economic Reforms – Urban: All of China]
- [Economic Reforms – Countryside – Struggles against Landlords: All of China]
- [PRC – USSR Relations: All of China, Eurasia]
- [Korean War]
- [PRC – USA Relations: All of China; Pacific Rim]
- [Collectivization - - -> The Great Leap Forward; famine: All of China]

Part II:

- [Mao’s semi-retirement; in and around Beijing]
- [Recovery from “The Great Leap Forward” : All of China]
- [Mao’s re-entry into politics: All of China]
- [Genesis: The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: All of China]
- [The Cult of Personality of Mao and the Little Red Book: All of China]

[Condemnation of Party Leaders: All of China]
[Formation of the Red Guards: All of China]
[Attacks on the "Four Olds": All of China]
[Abuses of the Cultural Revolution detailed]
[The Cultural Revolution devolves into Factional Warfare/Civil War: All of China]
[Death of Liu Shaoqi/ The Humiliation of Wang Guangmei; Beijing]
[Death of Lin Biao: Beijing]
[Death of Zhou Enlai Beijing]
[Earthquake in Tangshan China]
[Mao's death; All of China]

3. **Critical Reaction:** This film has received very good critical reaction, as have the other two parts of the trilogy and Ms. Williams' additional works on China.

The paper of record for our nation, *The New York Times* (all the new print to fit, as we say) gave it a solid review, available here:

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9805EFD7103EF930A25757C0A962958260>

Excerpt: *[It is] the second in the series of three films depicting the struggle of China to realize its economic and political goals. Now firmly under Communist Party leadership, following the direction of Chairman Mao Zedong, China must pursue the security of economic strength in order to support its enormous population. Rarely seen footage is used to illustrate the changes the country must undergo to feed its people and still adhere to strict party doctrine. Mao's Great Leap Forward resulted in a terrible famine.*

Another mainstream media view of the film, also very good, from the *Los Angeles Times* is presented here: http://articles.latimes.com/1994-04-13/entertainment/ca-45285_1_mao-years

Excerpt: *The casualty numbers during Mao's rule are truly awesome. Even before 30 million died in the starvation of 1959-61, hundreds of thousands of landlords were killed by revolutionary zealots. (And '60s zealots killed hundreds of thousands more.) Each policy shift by Mao created new enemies of the state, new denunciations of "counter-revolutionaries," new prisoners, new deaths. Those, for example, who had supported his "Let 100 Flowers Bloom" campaign of criticism of party policies were trapped when Mao condemned the campaign. Indeed, Mao's rule seemed to be a series of campaigns, each more disastrous than the next. At the same time, Williams reveals the human cost in the faces of those, like Li Maoxiu and Ding Xueliang, who witnessed public beatings and whole families and villages wiped out. Ding's case is especially interesting. He saw people try to eat dirt to stay alive in the farmlands. Later, in the city, he joined the youth-driven red guard of Mao's "Cultural Revolution."*

ABC-CLIO Video Rating Guide for Libraries gave an excellent review, available here from the UC Berkeley website: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/MaoYears.html>

Excerpt: *This lengthy but very rewarding program depicts the life of Mao Zedong from the time of the communist victory in 1949 to the 1966 Cultural Revolution and beyond. It effectively establishes the central role played by Mao in shaping the political, cultural, and economic life of China as its people struggled to achieve an idealistic, egalitarian society.*

A sample of the glowing review from [The Journal of Asian Studies](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=6786204) 01 February 1995 54: pp 275-276 <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=6786204>

Excerpt: *The Mao Years 1949-1976 is a worthy successor to China in Revolution 1911-1948. The two videos together offer a chronicling of the first three quarters of the century and are a must for any undergraduate course covering the period . . . It is fundamentally events-driven.*

If one is looking for a “Vox Populi” type of review of the entire trilogy on DVD, the Amazon.com website provides it. Beware: maladjusted people sometimes post bizarre comments here from time to time, or complain about Amazon.com’s service record as well.

<http://www.amazon.com/China-Century-Revolution-Three-Disc/product-reviews/B000Q7ZOLC?pageNumber=2>

Excerpt of sample review: *I teach a course on contemporary Chinese politics, in which most students have little background. These disks are ideal in providing that, allowing students to associate the often-difficult Chinese names with faces and personalities. And doing it in an engaging fashion*

4. **Director Statement and/or Biography:** The following biography is from the www.zeitgeist.com website:

Sue Williams founded Ambrica Productions with producer Kathryn Dietz in 1986 to produce quality documentaries of international scope and interest. From the start China has been a special focus. Williams was the writer, director, and producer of the company’s first project, CHINA: A CENTURY OF REVOLUTION, three feature length films that explored the turbulent social and political history of 20th century China. All three films - China in Revolution, The Mao Years, and Born Under the Red Flag – were broadcast nationally in over 25 countries. With China in the Red she continued the story begun in the CHINA trilogy. Shot over four years, from 1998 to 2001, it is an intimate portrait of ten individuals and their families as they struggle to adapt to China’s dramatic economic reforms. It premiered on PBS’s Frontline series in February 2003.

Williams wrote and directed Ambrica’s critically acclaimed biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. This 2½ hour documentary aired as part of the American Experience series in January 2000; 13 million viewers watched, making it one of the series highest rated programs ever. She wrote and directed two films which aired in 2005. Mary Pickford is a 90 minute portrait of the world’s first international superstar and one of the most powerful women in Hollywood history. It premiered on PBS’s American Experience series in April 2005. Time of Fear, about the internment of Japanese Americans in Arkansas during World War II was released nationally on PBS in May 2005. Ambrica’s films have received widespread critical acclaim and are in educational, home video and international distribution. They have also won awards at numerous festivals, including

the Full Frame Documentary Festival, Female Eye Festival, the Chicago International Television Festival, the International Film and Video Festival, the American Film and Video Festival, the US International Film and Video Festival, the Columbus International Film and Video Festival, and the San Francisco International Film Festival, and have received two Cine Golden Eagles and two Christopher Awards. Williams has presented her China films in a variety of venues including the Asia Societies in New York, San Francisco, and Hong Kong. She has been a guest speaker at Yale University Asian Studies Program, NYU Stern School of Business, Colgate College, Hong Kong University, the Esquel Corporation in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, and Zhongshan University in Guangzhou, China. Williams' newest film is YOUNG & RESTLESS IN CHINA. (from <http://www.zeitgeistfilms.com/film.php?mode=filmmaker&directoryname=chinaacenturyofrevolution>)

The Asia Society: A high quality, in-depth interview with Ms. Williams about her work is available here: <http://asiasociety.org/arts/film/new-perspective-china-sue-williams>

Excerpt:

Q: So, is that what you think made this film really different from other historical documentaries on China, presenting a new insight into the lives of the people at that time?

A: I think the footage was a big factor, but then we did something which not many people have done either, which is we spent a month in the documentary archives in Beijing. This gave us a lot of footage that hadn't been widely seen in the West. I think the one thing that interested me, at a personal level, was that I really wanted to tell this history from a Chinese perspective, not an American one. I didn't want to ask, "Why is it relevant that Sino-American relations were A, B, or C at the time?" I just really wanted to ask: "Why does a peasant woman join the Communist guerillas? What happened in the village after the Japanese came and massacred people? What was the motivation for soldiers joining the Nationalist Army?" It's just not American-centric, and so offers a new perspective.

Ms. Williams' motivations as to her entire career vis-à-vis China are also articulated more clearly here, in a interview on the PBS Frontline documentary series website as well:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/red/ordinary/>

Excerpt: At the same time, over the years of going to China, I was more and more struck by how little Americans know about China, and, in some instances, what negative perceptions they have about it. They do not seem to differentiate between the Chinese and the government, and they see the Chinese as somehow fundamentally different from us. This troubled me because the people I met -- the ordinary people who don't get much attention from politicians and the media -- were people I could connect with. They have had very different lives and experiences, but the people I met had similar interests and concerns to me -- jobs, family, making a living, housing, healthcare, bringing up their children. And I really wanted to show Americans how ordinary Chinese live.

5. Background Essay for Teachers:

This film discusses the seminal events of twentieth century history of the People's Republic of China (PRC). As the main title indicates, it covers the years Chairman Mao was in power, or vied to have absolute power, in the PRC in years after the Communist Revolution of 1949. The film is accurate and detailed, and makes a studied effort not to "take sides" as far as this possible. Hence, while a full spectrum of perspectives on Mao are presented, the documentary itself articulates no evaluation of the man, although most Western observers will perhaps naturally take a dim view of Mao's reign, given the events that transpired. The film draws no conclusions of its own, although sometimes obvious wrongdoing on the part of Mao are left for the viewer to infer. (Such is the case with Chairman Mao's serially "resting" with various young women during various "dance parties" thrown at Chairman's living quarters.)

The film presents several events/eras in Chinese history. The film opens with consolidation of power by the Chinese Communist Party after the Communist Revolution of 1949. It depicts the early consolidation of power by the Communists; the role of women; the PRC involvement in the Korean War; the effort to let "a hundred flowers blossom;" the backlash against this; the move to collectivization; the "Great Leap Forward" and its dire consequences; the recovery from the "The Great Leap Forward," the causes of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and its unfolding and impact; next we see the recovery from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The film finishes with the last years of Mao's life, Nixon's visit and his death. Alongside the above events, the details of the inner workings of the Chinese party (as far as is possible) are presented. Mao's life – as well as the activities of main leaders of the CCP – is presented as the backbone of the documentary.

While the film is objective, it is very honest as well. The costs of the perpetual upheaval during the Mao years are clearly depicted: countless lives are wrecked – or even lost – the maelstrom that resulted from Mao's policies. The filmmakers are very careful to put human faces on events – specific individuals often appear on camera to discuss the events of their lives. One particularly effective voice to look at is Li Zhisui, Mao's own private physician. It should be noted that he spoke from the safety of Carol Stream, Illinois when interviewed.

Be warned: the film is often very frank in its depiction of the violence, cruelty and suffering so common in the times it documents; this may be troublesome for "younger or more sensitive viewers." (Sexual matters, however, are only hinted at.) Teachers should be ready for this.

6. Discussion Questions:

(Social Studies)

Part I

- a. Who was the hero of the Chinese Communist Party and Revolution?
- b. What were the goals of the Chinese Communists when taking power?

- c. What did they do in power?
- d. How were women treated in pre-revolution China? How did the Communists change that?
- e. What were “work units” (*danwei*) and how did they function?
- f. What kind of changes happened in the “countryside?”
- g. What happened to people judged to be landlords, and their families even?
- h. What happened to Li Maoyu, and how did that reflect question “g”?
- i. What happened to peasants because of land reform? How does the experience of Zhou Yuanjiu reflect that?
- j. Who were: Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping?
- k. Describe Mao’s personality as far as you can.
- l. Explain the relationship between Mao and Stalin.
- m. Describe the relationship between the USA and the PRC and how it evolved over Mao’s years.
- n. Which country did China fight in Korea? How did the PRC’s people respond to the war?
- o. What happened during collectivization? How did people feel about it?
- p. What happened at the anti-rightist “struggle” meetings?
- q. Describe China’s relations with the USSR, Taiwan/Formosa, and Tibet.
- r. Describe causes and effects of “The Great Leap Forward.” How is this name ironic?
- s. How many people died in the ensuing famine?
- t. What happened to Liu Shaqi and Peng Dehuai? What do their fates illustrate?

Part II

- a. Who took over the CCP/PRC after Mao retired from active political life?
- b. What happened when reforms were enacted after his retirement?
- c. What happened when Mao exited from his semi-retirement? What event followed from this?
- d. What did Mao attack with in the Cultural Revolution? Who did he enlist to do this?
- e. What did the Red Guards attack?
- f. What were the “Four Olds?” How does Wang Ruowang’s experience reflect this?
- g. Describe some of the treatment people received during the Cultural Revolution?
- h. What might make the Cultural Revolution both a watershed event in Chinese history and yet unique in human history?
- i. Who were the Gang of Four – and what happened to them?
- j. Describe the fates of the Liu Shaqi and his wife during the Cultural Revolution.
- k. What did the Cultural Revolution gradually devolve into? What happened because of this?
- l. What happened to many of the youth who had been involved in the Cultural Revolution?

- m. Evaluate the “cult of personality” vis-à-vis Chairman Mao.
- n. What happened to Lin Biao?
- o. Explain the three-way negotiations/power-plays between the USSR-USA-PRC.
- p. What was the Shanghai Communiqué?
- q. What happened to Zhou Enlai? What did this lead to?
- r. How did Mao’s death affect the PRC?
- s. Evaluate Mao as a leader.

(English Questions)

- I. What kind of rhetorical devices do the Communist Party leaders and members use generally?
 - II. What kind of rhetoric did Mao seem to especially relish and use?
 - III. Analyze the language and imagery used in the Cult of Personality vis-à-vis Mao.
 - IV. Evaluate the role of propaganda techniques in communist attempts to rule their society.
 - V. What verbal irony is there in “The Great Leap Forward?” and “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution?”
 - VI. What kind of public communications are common in the PRC at this time? What are the analogues in today’s society?
 - VII. Evaluate the use of the euphemism “rested” in describing Mao’s relations with young girls/women. What do you think of this?
- 7. Lesson Plans:
 - 8. Lesson Plans:
 - 9. Bibliography:

Reviews

Kohler, Robert. “‘Mao Years’ Sheds Light on Series of Ruthless Campaigns.” April 13, 1994. *Los Angeles Times*. Available at:

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9805EFD7103EF930A25757C0A962958260>

ABC-CLIO. Video Rating Guide. “Review of ‘The Mao Years.’” 1994. Available at:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/MaoYears.html>

Cohen, Paul. “Review of the Mao Years.” [The Journal of Asian Studies](#) 01 February 1995 54 : pp 275-276. Segment of Review available from:

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=6786204>

Goodman, Walter. “The Price of Permanent Revolution.” *New York Times*. April 14, 1994. Available at:

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9805EFD7103EF930A25757C0A962958260>

Amazon.com Reviews for the 3 episode DVD are available at: <http://www.amazon.com/China-Century-Revolution-Three-Disc/product-reviews/B000Q7ZOLC?pageNumber=2>

Biography of Director and Comments

“Sue Williams.” Unsigned biography on the Zeitgeist Website. Available at: <http://www.zeitgeistfilms.com/film.php?mode=filmmaker&directoryname=chinaacenturyofrevolution>

Fong, Jennifer. “A New Perspective on China from Sue Williams.” Available on Asian Society Website: <http://asiasociety.org/arts/film/new-perspective-china-sue-williams>

“I Wanted to Show Americans How Ordinary Chinese Lived.” Unsigned article on the PBS.org website. Available: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/red/ordinary/>

Availability of “China: A Century of Revolution”

The Amazon.com website is: <http://www.amazon.com/China-Century-Revolution-Three-Disc/dp/B000Q7ZOLC>

The Ambrica website is: <http://www.ambrica.com/themaoyears.html>

The Youtube website is: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m7YoNlKWzM&feature=related>

10. How to obtain a copy of the film:

There are several ways to watch this film. First, one may order it from Amazon.com at this website: [The Mao Years at Amazon](#). Alternatively, you may stream it at the Ambrica website as well: Ambrica: [The Mao Years at Ambrica](#). Lastly, one may view it streaming from Youtube, the complete video here: [The Mao Years on YouTube](#).

Additional Reading:

Fiction:

Yu Hua. *To Live: A Novel*. [Mandarin Chinese: *Huo zhe*, 1993.] Trans. Michael Berry. New York: Anchor-Random House, 2003.

Min, Anchee. *Wild Ginger*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. April 2002.

Comment: The above two novels cover the time periods mentioned in the book, from circa 1949 to the end of the Mao years. The first is a Chinese novel aimed at adult audience that shows the life of one family during this era; the second is a YA book set against the same time and historical background.

Memoir:

Jiang, Ji-li. Red scarf girl : a memoir of the Cultural Revolution. New York, NY : HarperCollins, c1997.

Li, Zhisui. The private life of Chairman Mao : the memoirs of Mao's personal physician. translated by Professor Tai Hung-chao ; with the editorial assistance of Anne F. Thurston; foreword by Andrew J. Nathan. New York: Random House. 1994.

Comment: The above two books are memoirs of people who lived through the Mao years. The first is a YA memoir about a young girl's experience of the Cultural Revolution; the second are the insightful and intriguing personal memoirs of Chairman Mao's personal physician, which provide a detailed explanation of some of what is only hinted at in the film.

Biography:

Spence, Jonathan. "Mao Zedong: A Penguin Biography." New York: Viking Adult Publishers. 1999.

Comment: This biography is by the highly esteemed Sinologist Jonathan Spence, whose book, *The Search for Modern China*, is the seminal work on China since the Ming dynasty. This concise but readable book delivers deep insights into Mao, his life, and times.

MATERIALS for Qiu Ju

(Shihong Zhang, Joanne Karr, Cindy McNulty, Gary Detore, Chuck Koplinski, Chris Bryant)

SUMMARY

Qiu Ju (Li Gong) is a woman who lives in a small farming community with her husband Qinglai (Peiqi Liu), his sister Meizi (Liuchun Yang) and their father. She is in the final trimester of her first pregnancy. We see the two woman taking Oinglai to a doctor in the city because he has been severely hurt. Only later do we find out that recently Oinglai was talking to Wang Shantang (Kesheng Lei), the village chief, when a miscommunication occurred. Qinglai's comment that Shantang "only breeds hens" is taken to mean that the chieftain is unable to produce a son (he has only daughters). Wang Shantang takes exception to this and assaults Qinglai, kicking him so severely in the groin that he requires medical attention and is forced to miss work.

Qiu Ju wants an explanation of Wang Shantang's behavior, but he refuses to do so. Qiu Ju, is left no choice so she goes to the local police office and complains. The policeman suggests that the village chief pay 200 yuan to Qinglai in damages. Qiu Ju goes to Wang Shantang and informs him of this decision. Ultimately, he throws the 200 yuan notes onto the ground disdainfully and does not apologize. Dissatisfied, Qiu Ju, with Meizi in tow, then takes her complaint to the provincial capital, where they stand out as country people due to their clothes and demeanor. Staying at a cheap hotel, the manager gives them directions to the head of the district police and when Qiu Ju and Meizi inform him of her complaint, he promises to review it.

This does not happen immediately and when Qiu Ju hears of the district police's verdict, she's disappointed and angered by this. The only real difference is that Wang Shantang is now required to pay 250 yuan. This decision has no effect on him and when he still refuses to comply, Qiu Ju returns to the capital where she hires a lawyer to file a new complaint. This has become a personal fight for her, something her husband wishes she would drop as he has recovered from his injuries.

Ultimately, this does no good as the court upholds the decision of the district official. This disappoints Qiu Ju and she pursues another appeal. As a result, officials visit the village and Qinglai is examined by local doctors.

Time passes, winter arrives and Qiu Ju goes into labor. Complications ensue and Qinglai is so desperate he wakes Wang Shantang in the middle of the night and pleads for help. Reluctantly, he gathers a group of local men and they take Qiu Ju, to the hospital, where she gives birth to a healthy baby boy.

Four weeks later, Qiu Ju and Oinglai hold a "one month party" for their son and invite Wang Shantang to attend. Ironically, he is not able to come as he is being sent to jail to serves a fifteen-day sentence as the results of Oinglai's medical exam have finally been revealed, showing that he suffered a broken rib.

Realizing the error of her ways, Qiu Ju, tries to stop the police from taking Wang Shantang away but this is all in vain. The last we see of Qiu Ju is her shocked expression as she attempts to process the irony of the situation.

Historic and Cultural Context

The film *Qiu Ju* is based on a novella entitled *The Wan Family Lawsuit*, by Chen Yuan Bin. Released in 1992, the story examines village life, the rural/urban divide, and the tensions sometimes created when a traditional society adopts new institutions and practices. While on the surface the story is simple, analyzing the film's cultural context requires a basic understanding of a few concepts and facts.

The early village scenes do little to establish the time period but the scenes shot in the city suggest the very late 80's or early 90's. The action depicts the growing vitality of the city and contrasts sharply with the traditional village, creating a tension that even now produces challenges for the government. The film gently pokes fun at the villagers attempting to negotiate the big city. They may as well have been transported in a time machine to another century. The time period of the film's release is important because Zhang's previous two films (*Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*) had been banned in China, while this film received enthusiastic support of the Chinese government. Its positive depiction of government officials, just a few years after the crackdown on Tiananmen Square protestors, was welcomed by the Chinese Communist Party looking to improve its image.

Another thing to keep in mind when preparing to teach the film is the role of Confucian ideals within traditional society. While the communists may have attempted to eliminate Confucian ideas as one of the "four olds", the way in which interpersonal relations formed the basic structure of the village is deeply embedded in society, whether identified as Confucian or not. Neither the chief or Qiu Ju seem concerned with sincerely reestablishing harmony; disrupting social relations within the village could have serious social consequences, especially for a woman. When Qiu Ju's husband complains that people will think they are difficult if they pursue their case, her answer that she doesn't care what others think must be viewed through a Chinese cultural lens. While Americans may admire her pluck, Chinese are more likely to see the enormous risk she is taking with the social relations of the village. For further background on Confucianism, see the teacher resources below.

The late 1970's brought the advent of reform to China, including adjustments to the legal system. Hopes of increasing international investment and trade required China to move to a more transparent judiciary system. In the case of Qiu Ju, her complaints move through the Public Security Bureau at increasingly higher levels: the local, district and city (provincial capital) offices. In each case, the officials hand down decisions based on incomplete reports which are only superficially investigated by a local official, who works to mediate a resolution between the parties. Procedures such as a thorough review of evidence (including getting an X-ray of the chest injury) seem not as important as establishing how the injured parties feel about the episode. Officer Li tells Qiu Ju that the chief lost face when her husband suggested that he produced only hens (daughters rather than a son). When his efforts to reconcile the parties seem to be at risk of failing, he buys gifts for Qiu Ju's family, telling her they are from the chief as his way of apologizing while saving face. Li's desire is to smooth things over rather than risk his important working relationship with the chief. He's clearly a good man who is frustrated by the chief but Qiu Ju's case requires

him to use his official authority over the chief, rather than rely on cooperation born of a harmonious personal relationship. For further background on the subject of the traditional practice of mediation, see the teacher resources below.

Resources for teaching *Qiu Ju*:

Confucianism:

- Asia For Educators at Columbia University is a tremendous website for East Asian History. This is a link to their material on Confucianism.

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/ort/confucianism.htm>

Relationships within a Confucian Society:

- Yum, June Ock. "The Impact of Confucianism on Interpersonal Relations and Communication Patterns in East Asia".

<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~diepthai/images/The%20impact%20of%20confucianism.pdf>

Traditional Mediation:

- Chow, Deborah. "Development of China's Legal System Will Strengthen Its Mediation Programs". **Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution.**

<http://cojcr.org/vol3no2/notes01.html>

Director of Qiu Ju - Zhang Yimou

Zhang Yimou was born November 14, 1951. He is a director, producer, writer and actor, and former cinematographer. He is considered a "Fifth Generation" filmmaker and has won numerous prizes and much international recognition. One of his recurrent themes is the resilience of Chinese people in the face of hardship and adversity.

Zhang was born in Xi'an. His father was a dermatologist and had been an officer in the National Revolutionary Army under Chiang Kai-shek during the Chinese Civil War. Other relatives followed the Nationalist forces to Taiwan after their 1949 defeat. Zhang faced difficulties in his early life because of these family members. During the Cultural Revolution he left his studies and went to work, first as a farm laborer for 3 years, and later at a cotton textile mill for 7 years. During this time he took up painting and amateur still photography. In 1978, he went to the newly reopened Beijing Film Academy and majored in cinematography. Although he was over the requisite age for admission, he appealed and was accepted.

After working at Guangxi Film Studio, a small regional film studio, he (and fellow graduates) began making their own films. He worked as Director of Photography on ONE AND EIGHT (Zhang Junxiao) and YELLOW EARTH (Chen Kaige) in 1984, both successes at the Hong Kong Film Festival, helping to bring the new Chinese Cinema to the attention of world audiences and demonstrating a departure from propagandist films of the cultural revolution. YELLOW EARTH is today widely considered the inaugural film of the Fifth Generation directors.

In 1987, he made his directorial debut with RED SORGHUM.

A good resource for information about Zhang Yimou is the New York Times page http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/z/zhang_yimou/index.html

"In the first part of his career, Mr. Zhang made beautiful art films set in rural China that were banned by censors here. In the second part, he made beautiful historical epics that alienated many of his early supporters, who say Mr. Zhang's narratives now toe the party line.

...But Mr. Xi's criticism of Mr. Zhang in 2007 shows that Mr. Zhang does not necessarily command respect from Chinese leaders. And Mr. Zhang said he did not see himself as a voice of the government."

A Filmmaker Walks a Line Between Artistic Acceptance and Official Approval
NY Times archives

Another good resource:

<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=242&catid=7&subcatid=42>

"The government didn't like Zhang's depiction of the dark side of Chinese culture in his early films. Some labeled his works as poison and even accused him of making veiled attacks of the Chinese leadership....

To get To Live made Zhang submitted a fake script to the censors that said the film was about China's bright future and then made their film under a veil of secrecy. The censors were infuriated and banned Zhang from making films with foreign funds for five years. Worried that he would never be able to make film again, he never seriously challenged the censors after that....

In recent years, Zhang has been accused of selling out to the Chinese government. Some have even accused him of being a kind Chinese Leni Riefenstahl, the German director who made propaganda films under Hitler. Michael Berry, who teaches contemporary Chinese culture at the University of California at Santa Barbara told the New York Times, "He went from being the renegade making films that were banned and an eyesore for the Chinese government to kind of being the pet of the government in some people's eyes." Zhang has served as an artistic advisor to the Communist leadership, promoted China abroad and produced a short film that helped China win the right to host the Olympics. He now is a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body."

Filmography:

Director

1987 Red Sorghum
1988 Codename Cougar (co-director)
1990 Ju Dou
1991 Raise the Red Lantern
1992 The Story of Qiu Ju
1994 To Live
1995 Shanghai Triad
1997 Keep Cool
1999 Not One Less
1999 The Road Home
2000 Happy Times
2002 Hero
2004 House of Flying Daggers
2005 Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles
2006 Curse of the Golden Flower
2009 A Simple Noodle Story
2010 The Love of the Hawthorn Tree
2011 The Flowers of War

Cinematographer

1982 Red Elephant
1983 One and Eight
1984 Yellow Earth
1986 Old Well
1986 The Big Parade

Actor

1986 Old Well

1987 Red Sorghum

1989 Fight and Love with a Terracotta Warrior

1997 Keep Cool

He also was chosen to direct the Beijing portion of the closing ceremonies of the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China. In addition, he has had a stage and opera directing career since the 1990's.

Qiu Ju - Reception and Reviews

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0105197/externalreviews>

IMDB is the first place to look for reviews. There are twenty reviews available on Qiu Ju.

Below are some highlights of various reviews.

Cohen and Cohen "Did Qiu Ju Get Good Legal Advice?"

- Cinema, Law and the State in Asia

- Creekmur and Sidel, eds Palgrave Macmillan 2007 162- 173

- “Qiu Ju” has become a verb –

 - meaning to go to court in an effort to fight a wrong

- many viewers, especially American, do not see the film as a farce: both rural and city scenes ring true

- only four professional actors are used in the film; the rest are ordinary people filmed with hidden cameras and microphones

- some aspects of the film do not ring true: the relation of rural people to those who administer justice, especially in the following areas:

 - easy access to police

 - kind police and administrators

 - competent, conscientious, judges

- she wanted “justice,” an apology not retributive justice

- she is not afraid to challenge the conventions of society, in order to advance her cause

- article concludes civil litigation actually would be a better path, but not necessarily for the story

Roger Ebert www.rogerebert.suntimes.com

- very favorable review: “absorb more information about the lives of ordinary people in everyday China than in any other film I’ve seen”

David Holley Los Angeles Times 2/19/12 F 1-4 “China’s Village Voice”

- favorable review

- demonstrates the “difficulty of making films that meet governments standards regarding censorship”

Edwin Jahiel www.edwinjahiel.com/storyqui.htm

- favorable review

Janet Maslin New York Times 10/2/92 B9

“A Chinese Woman’s Arduous Search for Justice”

- favorable review
- gives “ a detailed view of contemporary Chinese life”
- a documentary aspect

David Sterritt Christian Science Monitor 4/23/93 p.12

“Qiu Ju Breaks New Ground”

- very favorable review: “deserves to be a smashing hit”
- one of the best films of 1993

Alan Stone Boston Review bostonreview.net/BR18.5/alanstone.html

September/October 1993 Boston Review

- notes that American audiences found the film serious but that Chinese audiences describe it as a comedy
- Stone argues that Chinese audiences understand the film is not attempting to portray a realistic picture of the Chinese legal system
- argues that the film should be viewed as a “fable” that considers humans as universal, not as a particular culture
- also argues that Zhang Yimou and Gong Li are nearly transcendent national figures

Physical Map of the “ Story of Qiuju”

The story was happened at 陕西省宝鸡市陇县Longxian(county), Baoji city, Shaanxi province, about northwest 160 mi to Xi'an.

陕西省宝鸡市陇县 China - Google Maps

Page 1 of 1



<http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&q=%E9%99%95%E8%A5%BF%E7%9C%81%E5...> 7/27/2012

Here is the hotel, Named Qiuju Hotel, which was built after the movie got popular. (the first two Chinese characters are Qiuju. The whole sentence means that “ Qiuju hotel welcomes you!”)



Glossary

1. Administrative divisions of the People's Republic of China

From bottom to up, the levels are :

Village - District(township) - County - City - Province - Centrol

Village and Village Chief

The **village** level serves as an organizational division (census, mail system) and does not have much importance in political representative power. But it has defined boundary and designated head (one per area):

In urban areas, every sub-district of a district of a city administers many communities or neighborhoods. Each of them has a neighborhood committee to administer the dwellers of that neighborhood or community. Rural areas are organized into village committees or villager groups. A "village" in this case can either be a natural village, one that spontaneously and naturally exists, or an administrative village, which is a bureaucratic entity.

District or Townships

Township level divisions (*Xiāng* 乡) is the basic level (fourth-level administrative units) of political divisions in China. They are similar to municipalities and communes in other countries and in turn may contain village committees and villages. With the stamp from village on their marriage application, couple may apply marriage license through township as the movie showed.

In the PRC's dual governance system, the township's governance is divided between the Communist Party Township Secretary, and the Mayor (乡长). A township official is the lowest-level ranked official in the CPC government hierarchy. The township has very few defined government responsibilities, except for the Birth Planning Commission (计划生育委员会).

A town (镇; pinyin: zhèn) is larger, often more populous, and less remote than a township.

Qiuju first tried to solve the problem at the village level with officer Li. Then, she went to Xiang (even though on the movie it showed VILLIAGE) after the village chief accepted officer solution to pay 200 yuan as medical cost and compensation of missing work but threw the money on the ground.

County

County is the standard English translation of **Xiàn** or formally **County level divisions**. Counties are found in the third level of the administrative hierarchy. The term *xian* is usually translated as "**districts**" or "**prefectures**" when put in the context of Chinese history.

A county's is called the CPC County Committee (中共县委) and the head called the Secretary (中共县委书记), the *de facto* highest office of the county. Policies are carried out via the People's government of the county, and its head is called the County Governor (县长). The governor is often also one of the deputy secretaries in the CPC Committee.

City

A **prefectural level city** (市 *shì*) is an administrative division of ranking below a province and above a county in China's administrative structure. Since the 1980s, most former prefectures have been renamed into prefectural level **cities**.

A prefectural level city is often an administrative unit comprising, typically, a main central urban area (a city in the usual sense, usually with the same name as the prefectural level city), and its much larger surrounding rural area containing many smaller cities, towns and villages.

Prefectural level cities nearly always contain multiple counties, county level cities, and other such sub-divisions. This results from the fact that the formerly predominant prefectures, which prefectural level cities have mostly replaced, were themselves large administrative units containing cities, smaller towns, and rural areas.

2. Kang-bed

The Kang (Chinese: 炕; pinyin: kàng) is a traditional long sleeping platform made of bricks or other forms of fired clay and more recently of concrete in some locations. Its interior cavity, leading to a flue, channels the exhaust from a wood or coal stove. The heat of a cooking fire, usually in an adjacent central room which serves as a kitchen, either a low stove or a stove actually set just below floor level, may be used for maintaining comfort in cool weather. Typically, a kang occupies one-third to one half the area the room, and is used for sleeping at night and for other activities during the day.

Like the European ceramic stove, a massive block of masonry is used to retain heat. While it might take several hours of heating to reach the desired surface temperature, a properly designed bed raised to sufficient temperature should remain warm throughout the night without the need to maintain a fire.

3. Circular bread

It is shaanxi regional tradition. The bread has to be made by the mother's mother specifically for a child's one-month old celebration party. It said it would help the mother to produce more milk for the baby.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_the_People's_Republic_of_China#Village_level_subdivisions

The Story of Qiuju by Chen Yuanbin 1991 Chinese Literature Press

Panda Books Beijing ISBN 7-5071-0277-7

Major differences between the novella and the feature film

There are many vital differences between the novella and the feature film. For those using the film in class, it may be a useful exercise to compare and contrast the novella with the film version of the story. The novella is only sixty five pages long and it is a very quick read. There are very few difficult vocabulary words and the story is quite straight forward.

In the preface, the author tells us that he learned that the apartment building in which he lived had burned down and that all his belongings were gone. He claims he felt, “unusually calm and was suddenly struck by the urge to write a story.” The Story of Qiuju is what he wrote.

1. In the film the husband and the village chief get in a fight and the husband is kicked in the groin. The husband makes a comment about the chief only having “hens,” a reference to his only having daughters.

In the novella, the chief hits the husband because the husband has refused to grow rape seed and instead grows wheat. No comment is made about the daughters and we never learn about the chief’s children. It is implied that the beating is much more serious than that shown in the film. The husband cannot work for months after the incident.

2. In the film, the chief throws the fine money on the ground and tells Qiu Ju to bend over and pick it up and in the process she will be bowing to him.

This also happens in the written version, but the chief also points out that the money isn’t his anyway and it all comes from the government.

3. In the novella, Qiu Ju is not pregnant and thus does not need the chief to help her. This removes the whole part of the film involving children, the debt she owes the chief and the very ending of the film.

4. In the novella, there are long passages where Qiu Ju goes to a temple and an amusement park while she waits. Months and months pass between the various decisions by the authorities. When she goes to see the director, in the novella, (a Captain Yan), he is stabbed during a break in at his home. As in the film, all the authorities are very kind to Qiu Ju and take her seriously.

5. In the novella, Qiu Ju does all her traveling alone. She does not have the companion that is shown in the film. She sells pigs instead of crops to raise money for her trips.

6. In the novella, Qiu Ju witnesses a very strange scene where she sees people in various states of undress swimming in pond or lake. Others are watching with glee as a young woman changes her clothes in broad daylight.

7. At the end, the wheat crop is destroyed by a disease (“smut”). We are told that after the rape seed was harvested, a rice crop was planted which required a great deal of water. The irrigation destroyed the wheat crop that was planted.

From the above differences, it is clear that the novella is very different than the film version. However, the story line is still very similar. In a film or English class, many interesting questions could be asked comparing the two versions.

Study Questions

GENERAL:

1. Explain whether Qiu Ju received justice.
2. How do public officials treat Qiu Ju?
3. How could Qiu Ju have sought justice without going to any Chinese officials outside of her village?
4. What was life in a small village like?
5. In what ways could this film be seen as a criticism of Chinese officials/government?

DRAMA:

1. Choose someone you see in a street scene and create a backstory/ character for him/her.
2. Based on the facts given in the film, recreate the argument between the chief and the husband.
3. If this story were to be dramatized on stage, sketch a set that would account for the various locations using suggestive furniture and lighting.
4. Compare the dress of Qiu Ju and her family with people in the city.
5. Research uniforms for Chinese officials in the early 1990's and today. Highlight differences.
6. Discuss the music themes and how they reinforce repeated plot elements and excite emotional audience response.
7. Discuss the use of color in the film, especially reds and blues. Is there a significance to Qiu Ju's jacket being red?
8. In the scene when Qiu Ju and her sister-in-law become separated in the city, discuss Gong Li's facial expressions and how they convey everything without words.

History Questions - Qiu Ju

1. Can there be justice in today's China? Furthermore, what changes have taken place in the last twenty years?
2. How important is China's one child policy to the story in the film? How has the one child policy evolved over time?
3. Director Zhang Yimou has said:
"If you don't ask a question, nobody will ever give you an answer. You always have to fight in order that something be done. In China, you have to try 20 times, spend years in order to solve the most minor problems. To request that something to be done is the beginning of democracy. With this film I wanted to say that every Chinese should do the same: to fight for one's right and discover oneself in the process."
-quoted from Jahiel 1992, Cohen, 2007

This arguably, is a universal lesson. What seems to be particularly “Chinese” about the film? Is Qiu Ju sacrificing the harmony of the village for selfish means?

4. Some have seen this film as a commentary on China’s urban/rural split and the increasing disconnect between the two populations. Is there evidence of this in the film?

5. This lone, maverick reformer seeking justice despite any circumstances has always been a theme in American film. Provide an example of this and compare it to Qiu Ju.

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Film review by respected NYTimes film reviewer. Praises Zhang Yimou's stature as storyteller and sociologist.

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Describes how Zhang Yimou captures truth of peasant life in a satisfying and authentic way. Film Review.

3. David Holley, "China's Village Voice," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1992

Describes how Zhang Yimou has regained confidence, verve and imagination. Film Review.

4. Jerome A Cohen and Joan Lebold Cohen, "Did Qiu Ju Get Good Legal Advice?", in *Cinema, Law, and the State in Asia*, Creekmur and Sidel, eds. Palgrave MacMillan, 2007

Chapter in edited book that discusses the legal accuracies and inaccuracies of the legal system Qiu Ju experienced throughout the film

5. Jason McGrath, "The Independent Cinema of Jia Zhanle: From Postsocialist Realism to a Transnational Aesthetic", "The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the 21st Century" ed. Zhang Zhen, (Duke University Press, 2007)

Twelve essays on China's 'Urban Generation' film makers who explore wrenching social and economic changes in Chinese Cinema.

LESSON PLANS

Course: Film, English, World History

(This should not be the first time students have examined a scene, or at least listened and watched as teacher examined scenes (modeling)).

Scene one shows Jiu Liu walking/riding her bike in the country (minutes 16:35-17:00)

Scene two shows Jiu Liu and her sister in the city, surrounded by speeding bicycles; Jiu Liu momentarily loses her sister (minutes 52-54)

1. Objective: Study two scenes from Jiu Liu and attempt a detailed textual analysis of the scenes within the context of the film
2. Compare Jiu Liu in a country setting with Jiu Liu in a city city
(both scenes contain one or bicycles, which should be noted before hand as one of the film techniques)
3. General Goals:
 - a. become informed, reflective and critical film viewer
 - b. express ideas with confidence and competence
 - c. develop perceptual and analytical skills.

Steps:

1. Put students in groups of four
2. Distribute handout
3. Show the two selected scenes from Jiu Liu – ask students just to watch and listen, no note taking yet
4. Show scene a second time, encouraging students to jot notes
5. Give students a couple minutes to discuss
6. Continue showing scene in a loop until students have time to answer the questions
7. Allow students time to share and discuss answers
8. Direct a whole class discussion
9. Have students write a brief essay comparing the two scenes, using the information gathered during the group work and class discussion

Student Handout

Course: Film (scene analysis) or English (Comparative writing)

Scene Analysis Framework Questions

Try to answer these questions after watching a movie segment, or scene.

1. Setting:

- Explain how the setting is authentic or if it is constructed
- When and where does the scene take place?
- How does the director use color in the scene? If there seems to be a color scheme, explain it

2. Camera:

- Where is the camera in the scene? Is it moving or fixed?
- What is the effect created by moving or positioning the camera in this way?

3. Objects:

- Describe what elements/objects are in the scene
- Are all the elements treated in the same way, i.e. does the camera focus on some objects more than others? Explain how the element is treated (i.e. is there a photograph centered between the characters?)
- What emotion does the combination of the elements create?

4. Characters:

- What characters are in the scene?
- Briefly describe their function in the scene

5. Mood:

- What is the general mood of the scene?
- How do color, camera angles and movement contribute to this mood?
- What emotions does the director want to convey? How successful is the director in creating the emotion?

7. Sound

- What sounds do you hear that the character can hear? What is the purpose of these sounds?
- Describe any sound (usually music) that you can hear, but the characters don't hear. What is the purpose of these sounds?

8. Purpose of scene:

- What role does the scene have in the overall movie?

Essay question: Compare the two scenes. Explain what the viewer learns, and how the director imparted that information.

Lesson Plan for AP courses

What is the relationship of Chinese citizens to the legal process?

Rationale: The relationship between the Chinese people and their government is complex, weaving together tradition, culture, modernity and influences from the outside world. Zhang Yimou's movie *Qiu Ju* is, on the surface, a simple story of a rural woman working her way through different levels of government, seeking redress for an attack on her husband by the village chief. Officials at each level are sympathetic and helpful but when she is dissatisfied with the nearly identical decisions handed down from mediators at every level, she resorts to the formal legal system, unleashing a process she does not understand and which brings about several unintended consequences.

On a deeper level, the movie offers an opportunity to examine the evolving culture of legal and human rights in China. The ancient tradition of petitioning the government, the cultural practice of mediation instead of formal law suits, and the current rise in citizen protests and legal actions are aspects of a clear evolution in the relationship between China and its citizens which is reshaping their traditional culture.

Grade level: The following project is designed for either an AP World History class or an AP Language and Composition course.

Procedure:

1. View the film as a group. If this is not possible within class time, the film is readily available on Netflix and can be assigned for out of class viewing.
2. A one day discussion should be sufficient to lay the groundwork for further student research and presentations. Give the students the questions prior to viewing.

Discussion questions:

- Was Qiu Ju really seeking justice or was this a personal grievance? Is there any evidence that this is stubbornness is typical behavior for her? How would you describe her other relationships?
- The village is a small one. Although Qiu Ju says she doesn't care what people think, this conflict has the potential to seriously disrupt relations within the close community. Officer Li, acting as a mediator between the Wan family and the chief, presents the family with gifts he claims the chief bought for them, saying that this is the chief's way of apologizing, hoping this will resolve the dispute. Was Officer Li wrong to lie about the gifts? What was his objective? Was he trying to resolve the issue to avoid more conflict for his office or did he have a real concern about harmonious relations within the village? Present evidence for your ideas.

- The men in the story reach the point of wanting to reconcile several times. Describe the occasions in which the men discuss putting the case to rest. Why is Qiu Ju's husband more willing to settle and move on than she is?
 - The chief becomes a hero in the story, saving Qiu Ju and her baby by taking control of the emergency situation and exerting tremendous effort to round up men to carry her to the hospital. In light of this fact, how do you think the village will react when the chief is arrested? What do you imagine will be the attitude towards Qiu Ju? How do you read her last expression?
 - A small detail in the film is the issue of the X-ray which investigating officials insist that Qiu Ju's husband get of his chest. The X-ray reveals that her husband sustained a broken rib as a result of the beating and this fact makes the conflict more serious, resulting in the chief's arrest. How do you think the story would have been different if an X-ray had been taken right away? Why was that procedure initially ignored?
 - Although the Chinese government had banned Zhang Yimou's two previous films, they universally liked this one. Why do you think this film gained Party favor?
3. Divide the students into three groups. Each group will research one aspect of Chinese conflict resolution and/or legal procedure: mediation, petitioning, or protesting and current legal reform. Each group will create a panel presentation in which they explain the history of the procedure and its use in China today. Groups can divide the task of research and then a day can be set aside for the groups to pull together their findings. Each group must address the following questions:
- What is the history of the method? (Is it ancient, traditional or modern? How did it develop?)
 - What are the uses of the method? Who implements the procedure?
 - What is the role of government in the procedure? What is the current use of each method? (Research suggests that after the massive petitioning over land disputes leading up to the Beijing Olympics, the government tried to abolish the tradition of petitioning in Beijing.)
 - How does the method fit the Chinese cultural context? (For example, mediation is in line with a Confucian ideal of striving for harmonious relations.)
4. Each group will present their research through a panel, in which several students each explain some aspect of the research, or a power point, to which all of the students contribute material. Each group should be ready to answer questions from the class.

5. The discussion following the presentations should be centered on the way in which the Chinese system is adapting to modern concerns and influences while working to maintain the mediation system to handle personal disputes (such as Qiu Ju's).
6. Assessment:
 - For an AP Language and Composition course: Answer the following question: Is traditional mediation still a viable method of conflict resolution in modern China? Support your answer with specific evidence from the presentations.
 - For an AP World History course: Using the research presented, write an essay in which you discuss the changes and continuities in the Chinese approach to resolving legal disputes. Be sure to explain the government's role at each point and how the procedures reflect Chinese culture and society at each point in time.

Resources: Although students will find plenty of information on the web, it is important to provide reliable materials to get them started. The following articles, all available on the web, will give the students a solid foundation from which to proceed with further research.

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The following worksheet is intended for Middle School Level Language Arts classes.

THE STORY OF QIU JU

Below, you will find eight questions dealing with the film “The Story of Qiu Ju.” I would like for you to choose 5 of them and answer them in grammatically correct, complete sentences. Your answers will vary in length, as you may need to write only one paragraph to adequately respond to some of them but be more detailed with others. Make sure to answer every part of each question.

- 1) How would you describe Qiu Ju? Remember to tell me not only how she looks physically but also mention aspects of her character. How does she treat others? How does she approach challenging situations? Would you consider her an optimist or a pessimist? Why?
- 2) While the situation that is the focus of the film may seem humorous on the surface, this becomes a matter of great pride to Qiu Ju. Put yourself in her shoes and tell me how would you have solved this dispute?
- 3) Do you think Qiu Ju is right to continue to pursue the case, that is take it from one higher court to another? Why or why not?
- 4) Pride is defined as “a high opinion of one’s own dignity, importance, merit or superiority.” Tell me who the two most prideful people in the film are and mention how they act that makes them in a proud manner.
- 5) Qiu Ju is very stubborn, that is she won’t change her mind about something even though there are good reasons for her to do so. Tell me about a time when you were stubborn. What were you so determined about? How did the situation turn out in the end?
- 6) Qiu Ju asks repeatedly in the film, “Will the right thing be done?” What, in her mind, is the right thing? What kind of outcome is she looking for where this situation is concerned?
- 7) There is an old proverb that states, “Pride goes before a fall.” In your own words, tell me what this saying means. Then tell me how it relates to Qiu Ju’s situation.
- 8) We discussed irony in class on many occasions. Tell me what the ironic elements are in the story and explain how they are ironic.

High school Chinese II- “ Getting to know Chinese rural life and legal system”

Objective:

In this lesson, students will explore what China's rural life look like and have a basic understanding of Chinese legal system. Follow by this lesson and movie, they students will also be able to create a dialogue based on the story to practice Chinese language speaking skills. Students may be able to speak a few words with the local dialect.

Question before the movie:

Homework at the night before

1. Do you ever hear a Chinese movie named “the story of Qiuju”? Google and find out what it is.
2. Do online research of the movie reviews. Find at least two difference reviews of the movie and summery the difference of the two opposite review by using a list.
3. Online research: What is China’s legal system? Is it similar to ours?

5-10 minutes Discussing questions before watching the movie in class:

1. If two people fight and one was injured. What do you think the person who is injured will do?
2. How much do you know about the US legal system? Do you know the procedure to file a lawsuit in US?

In a 45-minutes period after a movie, the class will have 30 minutes discussion based the following questions :

1. Do you think where it happened in China, south, north, west or east? Can you find the actual place of the story on a China map? What are the weather, common food and other geographic features?
2. How many dialects do you know about Chinese language? Can you identify the dialect used in the movie?
3. What happened to Qiuju’s family? How does Qiuju handle it?
4. How would you handle it if it was you?

5. What is your impression of Chinese rural life in the movie? Is it similar as what is in your imagination before you watch the movie?
6. What do you think about the filmmaking skills? such as color music, customs, shooting angles, etc.
7. Is there a similar movie in US?

At the last 10-15 minute of the period, we will replay a few clips of the movie to hear a few short conversations to prepare for the group work.

Group work: Create a mandarin Chinese dialogue for the conversation of Qiuju first meet the officer of each level, and the man who writes complain letter for others. You may use the line in the movie or create your own dialogue that you think it will better.

Group work: acting out each scenes of Qiuju's journey with the conversation you wrote. Be sure to use some decorations, posters, costumes and gestures that are appropriate to the scene.