

**TERM:** Fall 2024  
**COURSE TITLE:** Chinese Characters: Myths and Marvels  
**COURSE NUMBER:** FFYS 1000.09 CRN 41553  
**TIMES/DAYS:** 3:40-5:20 p.m. M/W  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Prof. Yu Li

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION/ PRINCIPAL TOPICS**

This course is a student-driven, inquiry-based, and interdisciplinary introduction to the Chinese script. Students pose questions regarding Chinese characters, for example – Are Chinese characters little pictures? Why are there so many of them? How do they work? Are they still used in writing Korean, Japanese, or Vietnamese? What is the difference between the simplified script and the traditional script? Why are there two scripts? How to type Chinese characters on a computer? How important an artform is Chinese calligraphy? – and so on. These questions will serve as the starting points in their collective inquiry into the Chinese writing system as a linguistic subject, a cultural phenomenon, a technological impetus, or an artistic embodiment in and beyond Asia. They will be guided to dive deeper in debunking the popular myths about Chinese characters – the Ideographic Myth, the Universality Myth, and the Emulatability Myth, among others. While exercising critical thinking skills, cultivating analytical rigor, and honing articulative precision, they will be able to understand and appreciate the indispensable role the Chinese script plays in constructing ethnic identities, facilitating cultural exchanges, motivating social reforms, encoding political contradictions, stimulating technological innovations, and fueling literary and artistic imaginations.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to (1) describe how Chinese characters work as a writing system, (2) explain why some of the popular myths about Chinese characters are misconceptions, (3) delineate the history and describe the present state of Chinese characters being used to write languages not related to Chinese, (4) discuss the sociocultural context of script reforms in China, (5) demonstrate understanding of how to write or type Chinese characters by hand and on an electronic device, (6) articulate the significance of Chinese character in constructing and representing global Chinese identity, (7) demonstrate an informed appreciation of Chinese calligraphy and influential avant-garde artworks referencing the Chinese script, and (8) read, write, and type on the computer 100 high-frequency Chinese characters.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Li, Y. (2020). *The Chinese writing system in Asia: An interdisciplinary perspective*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge.

### **COURSEWORK/EXPECTATIONS**

Regular attendance for class is essential. Coursework includes readings, discussions, presentations, reflective essays, character quizzes, and a final project.

**TERM:** FALL 2024  
**COURSE TITLE:** Childhood in International Cinema  
**COURSE NUMBER:** FFYS 1000.13 CRN 41557  
**SECTION TIMES/DAYS:** 4:00 - 7:20 PM M  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Prof. Áine O’Healy

**CORE AREA:** Freshman Writing



### **COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS**

This seminar introduces students to critical writing through the exploration of international cinema. Our thematic focus is the representation of childhood in several films produced internationally since the 1940s. In order to engage with the films, which are drawn from different national contexts and historical periods, we apply the tools of audiovisual analysis and identify the symbolic function fulfilled by the figure of the child on screen. We also examine how the construction of children in cinema intersects with discourses of nation formation and with the representation of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and social class. The assigned readings will guide our explorations and will allow us to place the filmic analyses in a broader context, encompassing issues of globalization, social conflict, and discussions about multiculturalism and diversity.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will

- Demonstrate the ability to write critically, using logical argumentation
- Demonstrate the ability to perform basic scholarly research
- Understand the links between cinema and other aspects of national cultures.
- Demonstrate the ability to deliver an informed oral analysis of a film sequence.

### **PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND**

Fulfills the requirement of freshman writing.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

All texts will be supplied on Brightspace

### **COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS**

Reading assignments; Short Essays; Oral Presentation; Final Research Paper.