COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the representations of the Chinese knight-errant (*wuxia*) in martial arts novels, comics, and movies. If ancient philosophers regarded the knight-errant as chilvarous, transgressive, and anti-authoritarian, this portrait evolved in historiography, fiction, and film to assimilate a wide range of gender and social concerns within its framework of the heroic narrative. As such, the representations of the knight-errant offer a unique vantage point for Chinese society and culture. The course will examine the knight-errant in classical tales and in early modern vernacular novels, and move on to explore the knight-errant in modernity, including topics such as the birth of the Cantonese school of *wuxia* fiction, Jin Yong and his debt to Cervantes, kung fu comics, and the explosion of popular Hong Kong action cinema, as well as art house films by Wong Kar-wai and Zhang Yimou.