

# COLLOQUIUM BY NICOLE TALMACS

*GHOSTLY THRILLS AT THE EXPENSE OF MENTAL ILLNESS AT THE CHINESE BOX OFFICE*

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TIME: 5:00-6:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, 28 MARCH 2018

VENUE: ACADEMIC BUILDING 1079

## *Ghostly Thrills at the Expense of Mental Illness at the Chinese Box Office*

**Speaker:** Dr. Nicole Talmacs, Lecturer in Media and Communications Studies at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (Suzhou, China)

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### ABSTRACT:

Cinema portrayals of mental illness have long been argued to contribute to mental health stigmas and influence sufferers' willingness to seek medical assistance. For this reason, China's noticeable spike in the production and exhibition of horror films that explain the vision of ghosts and paranormal activity as a result of a protagonist's mental illness or their psychiatric treatment can only be a cause for concern. Especially because these films seem to undermine the ambitions of China's recently promulgated *Mental Health Law* (2013) designed to improve the protections of the mentally ill and increase mental health literacy across Chinese society. Through examples from recently released Chinese horror films between 2014 and 2016, this presentation contemplates the need to re-evaluate China's film regulations that claim to improve China's socialist and spiritual civilization by censoring all content deemed superstitious. Censorship in these cases it will be argued, rather function to weaken China's public morality through the exploitation of stigmas associated with an already vulnerable community in Chinese society, especially among China's Gen Y (born after 1990) who are the largest consumers of this genre of cinema.

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**BIO:**

Dr. Nicole Talmacs is a Lecturer in Media and Communications Studies at XJTLU-JC School of Film and Television Arts at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (Suzhou, China). She is the author of *China's Cinema of Class* (Routledge 2017). Her current research project investigates China's efforts to internationalize its commercial film industry through global audience reception.

This event is open to all. For any queries email [yg73@duke.edu](mailto:yg73@duke.edu) or call 3665 7149.

Hope to see you all.

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