Ang Lee Film Festival  李安電影節
Part of the Taiwan Film Series at UTSA

February 12th, 2014 - The East Asia Institute (EAI) will host the inaugural UTSA “Ang Lee Film Festival” (Part of the public Taiwan Film Series”). The EAI is able to present this festival with an opening reception thanks to a generous grant from Houston’s Taiwan Academy. The screenings are free and open to the public. Each month a different film will be showcased on UTSA’s Main Campus:

**Life of Pi**: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Thursday, February 27, 2014 with an opening reception in the foyer area outside of the Main Building 0.106

**The Wedding Banquet**: 5:30-8:30 p.m., Monday, March 17, 2014 in MB 1.124

**Eat Drink, Man Woman**: 5:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday, April 10, 2014 in MB 1.120

After the public screen of each film, a guest speaker will be available for idea and cultural exchange from the societal, historical, and cultural perspectives to examine Taiwan. Dr. Steve Kellman, Professor of Comparative Literature at UTSA, will be available proceeding “Life of Pi.” Mimi Yu, Associate Director of the East Asia Institute will lead the discussion of The Wedding Banquet. In addition, Dr. Jie Zhang, Assistant Professor of Chinese at Trinity University, will be available after the showing of “Eat Drink Man Woman.”

“Life of Pi” - Based on the best-selling novel by Yann Martel, “Life of Pi” is a magical adventure story centering on Pi Patel, the precocious son of a zoo keeper. Dwellers in Pondicherry, India, the family decides to move to Canada, hitching a ride on a huge freighter. After a shipwreck, Pi finds himself adrift...
in the Pacific Ocean on a 26-foot lifeboat with a zebra, a hyena, an orangutan and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker, all fighting for survival.

“The Wedding Banquet” - A gay New Yorker named Wai Tung Gao stages a marriage of convenience with a young woman to satisfy his traditional Taiwanese family, but the wedding becomes a major inconvenience when his parents fly in for the ceremony. Wai Tung has never shared the truth about his sexuality with his family, and hopes to disguise his long-term relationship with his lover Simon by marrying Wei-Wei, a young artist whose only in it for the green card. However, Wai Tung’s parents refuse to let him off the hook easily, showing up to plan a massive wedding banquet.

“Eat Drink Man Woman” - Senior Master Chef Chu lives in a large house in Taipei with his three unmarried daughters, Jia-Jen, a chemistry teacher converted to Christianity, Jia-Chien, an airline executive, and Jia-Ning, a student who also works in a fast food restaurant. Life in the house revolves around the ritual of an elaborate dinner each Sunday, and the love lives of all the family members.

Ang Lee, born in 1954 in Pingtung, Taiwan, has become one of today's greatest contemporary filmmakers. Ang graduated from the National Taiwan College of Arts in 1975 and then came to the U.S. to receive a B.F.A. Degree in Theatre/Theater Direction at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a Masters Degree in Film Production at New York University.

The Wedding Banquet (1993) garnered Golden Globe and Oscar nominations, and won a Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. Lee was also voted the year's Best Director by the National Board of Review and the New York Film Critics Circle. The Civil War drama Ride with the Devil (1999) soon followed and received critical praise, but it was Lee's Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000) that is considered one of his greatest works, a sprawling period film and martial-arts epic that dealt with love, loyalty and loss. It swept the Oscar nominations, eventually winning Best Foreign Language Film, as well as Best Director at the Golden Globes, and became the highest grossing foreign-language film ever released in America.

Dr. Steve Kellman, a professor of comparative literature has taught at UTSA since 1976. Kellman as UTSA’s first Ashbel Smith Professor (1995-2000) received his Ph.D. and M.A. in comparative literature from the University of California at Berkeley. He has received UTSA President’s Distinguished Achievement Award in Recognition of Research Excellence (1990-91, 2005-2006) and the campus-wide teaching award (1985-86). Kellman has served as John E. Sawyer fellow at Harvard University’s Longfellow Institute and has held an NEH research grant, an NEH grant to South Africa, and a Fulbright-Hays grant to China. He was honored with the 2005 Arts and Letters Award of the San Antonio Public Library Foundation and with the 2008 Gemini Ink Literary Excellence Award.

Following a screening of Life of Pi, Kellman will discuss not only the spectacular visual effects of Lee’s film but also the philosophical themes that he embedded within an extraordinary adventure story. Life of Pi, Canadian author Yann Martel’s 2001 novel about an Indian boy who, following a shipwreck, spends 227 days in a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger, which was a huge commercial and critical success. Adapting the book into film presented formidable challenges, not only in making convincing drama out of a boy
and a beast alone at sea. It is very difficult to translate an introspective literary work that explores themes of truth, fiction, and faith into a medium that consists of moving images. Three other directors abandoned the attempt to make a movie out of Life of Pi before Ang Lee took on the project almost a decade later.

**Mimi Yu**, a native of Taiwan, serves as the Associate Director for the East Asia Institute. She received her master’s degree in Japanese Linguistics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and she joined UTSA in 2008. Following the screening of The Wedding Banquet, Yu will lead a discussion by focusing on several aspects of the Taiwanese culture and family life.

**Dr. Jie Zhang** is an Associate Professor of Chinese at the Trinity University. She received a Ph.D. in Chinese and Comparative Literature from Washington University in St. Louis and a Master's degree in Contemporary Chinese Literature from Peking University. Her specialty is Chinese narratives, particularly fiction and drama from 1500 on, and Chinese-language film. The lecture will situate Eat, Drink, Man, Woman in the context of Ang Lee's "Father Knows the Best Trilogy" and discusses how the director deals with themes of family, modernity, and cultural clashes. It will also analyze this film against Lee's more recent films including Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, Brokeback Mountain, Lust Caution, and The Life of Pi.