

Film Studies Program

National Cinemas: Japanese Cinema
Film Studies 2243G (001)
Winter 2017

Instructor: Michael Raine
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Office: AHB 1G31
Office Hours: Monday, 4:30-5:20, or by
appointment

Course Date/Time:
Screening: Monday 5:30-8:30 AHB 3B04
Lecture/tutorial: Wednesday 11:30-1:30
AHB 3B04

Course Location: Arts & Humanities 3B04

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in Film Studies 1020E or Film Studies 1022 or permission of the Department. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course surveys Japanese cinema from its prehistory to the work of contemporary transnational auteurs. We will focus on both Japan and the cinema: each week will present a specific historical context and a particular argument in film studies brought into focus by that week's films. For example, we will consider the relation between traditional aesthetics and Japanese cinema; the burgeoning mass culture of 1930s Japan and theories of "vernacular modernism"; the war film and propaganda; genre theory and postwar melodrama; J-Horror; and Japanese animation. We will of course pay attention to geniuses of Japanese cinema such as Mizoguchi, Ozu, and Kurosawa but we will also study films in relation to broader economic and institutional contexts. In addition to critically appraising various films and theoretical approaches, we will study the connections between cinema and parallel institutions such as radio, television, and the record industry, as well as intermedia relations between cinema and theatre, literature, *manga*, and *anime*.

All readings on the course are in English; no Japanese is required.

Objectives:

The course aims to familiarize students with the broad outlines of the history of cinema in Japan. It will argue that Japanese cinema can be analyzed using the same tools and strategies used to study a more culturally familiar cinema and aims to integrate a discussion of Japanese film texts, genres, and institutions into a broader discussion of the films, genres, and institutions that make up world cinema.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understanding, capacity for argument, judgement and analysis will be fostered by essays, presentations and assignments, and by in-class small-group and whole-class discussion.
2. Communication skills will be imparted through in-class discussion and credit given for frequency and quality of contributions, and by essays and other assignments marked in accordance with a grading scale given to the students and including benchmarks for the expectations associated with each grade, from A+ to F.
3. Awareness of the limits of knowledge will be enhanced by exploring the legitimate differences of opinion and methodology within the field, and by requiring students to negotiate the formulation of their own opinions in-class with the terms and knowledge brought to that discussion by other students and the instructor.
4. The ability to argue and decide on complex issues will be fostered by essays and in-class discussion; that to manage time, by the need to prepare properly for class and to deliver assignments in a timely manner; and that for academic responsibility, by the need to source assignments accurately.

Course Materials

Required Reading:

All readings for the course will be posted to the resources section of the class web site.

Recommended online texts: (linked from OWL)

David Bordwell. *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*

Noel Burch. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema*

Recommended Texts: (library reserve, or order your personal copy)

Andrew GORDON. *The Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present.*

Methods of Evaluation

Class attendance	5%
Participation in discussion board, group discussion, and presentations	10%
In-class quizzes	10%
Close analysis assignment on "silent" Japanese cinema (1500 words)	15%
Research Essay (2000 words)	25%
Final Examination	35%

Attendance and participation:

Attendance will be taken at every class (screenings and lecture/tutorials). More than three absences will affect the attendance mark. "Participation" includes paying attention, asking relevant questions and engaging productively in discussions. The score will be lowered by such behaviors as arriving late, leaving early, being disrespectful to the views of others, or engaging in disruptive behaviors in the classroom such as reading non-class-related materials, using personal electronic devices, or having private conversations during class. Computers can be used in class only for taking notes.

Discussion board, small-group discussion, and group presentation:

- Most weeks you will be asked to post your thoughts on films and readings to the class web site. Those postings will be evaluated and will count toward your final grade.
- Small-group discussions will be a feature of every class. You will discuss assigned topics related to the film or one of the readings with a group of fellow students and then report back to the class.
- Those groups will also present on one or two films or readings during the term. This will involve researching the background to the film route by which the film arrived on a world stage (film festival, commercial release, retrospective, DVD release, etc) and the critical reception of the film. It will also involve presenting an analytic summary of that research, using whatever visual aids are necessary. The group will decide what work each member should do and will be asked to report on levels of participation. Each member of the group who is recognized as pulling their weight will get the same grade.

In-class quizzes:

Most weeks there will be pop quizzes of approximately five questions, in the form that will be used in the final examination. Quizzes will be evaluated and will count toward your final grade.

Close analysis essay:

This 1,500 word essay will be a close analysis of the material qualities (cinematography, editing, performance, sound, etc.) of a film, so that you can practice and demonstrate your mastery of the tools needed to analyze film as an audiovisual medium. You should analyze those elements and make an argument for how they guide your experience of the film as a whole. You might find it helpful to look at the following website: <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>.

Research essay:

The emphasis in the research essay will be on marshaling evidence to make cogent arguments, drawing on scholarly and other resources. You will decide your topic in consultation with me. After producing an outline and a bibliography you will write a 2,000 word essay. I will give you feedback on the essay and an opportunity to make changes, which can result in an improvement of your grade of up to 10%. You cannot lose points on the rewrite. Please note that there are four deadlines for this assignment: for the *topic*, for the *outline and bibliography*, for the *first submission*, and for the *rewrite submission*.

Please note:

- a. All essays must be uploaded to the class web site; they will be automatically passed through the plagiarism filters at turnitin.com and a report will be sent to you.
- b. Essays should not be above or below the required word count by more than 10%.
- c. Assignments handed in late without a previously approved extension will be penalized 3% per day. Essays should be submitted to the assignments section of the class web site as a *single uploaded file* in .docx format (please put your name and the film title in the filename and include the .docx file extension). I will write comments in your file and send it back to you. Please read them! You should keep a copy of every assignment you hand in, and you should back up frequently while writing.
- d. Please refer to the grading criteria at the end of this syllabus.

Final Examination:

The final examination will consist of an identification section (key concepts, figures, film clips etc.), a short answer section based on the films, the lectures, and the course readings, and an essay section. Further details will be provided before the examination.

E-Mail Policy:

Generally, all emails will be responded to within 24-48 hours during weekdays (not including holidays). Don't be shy about reminding me if you don't hear back.

Laptops and Cell Phones Policy:

Laptops are not to be used during screenings. You will need to take notes using paper and pen so be sure to bring those materials with you. Exceptions may be granted in the case of students with special needs, but this will only come with official approval from academic counseling. Laptops are useful for making notes and reading material from the web site but they are also a source of distraction, to you and to others. Any indication that you are not doing class work will result in laptops being banned for in-class use. Please remember that, and remind your classmates. In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones. Text messaging during class is unacceptable.

Complaints:

If students have a complaint concerning a course in which they are enrolled, they must discuss the matter with the instructor of the course. If students are still not satisfied, they should then take the complaint to the Film Studies Office, IGAB, Room 0N64. These regulations are in place because a failure to follow these procedures creates the potential for injustices of various kinds affecting either the instructor or the students themselves, or both parties. Concerns should not be allowed to fester but should be raised with the instructor in a timely manner, so that they can be addressed in time to make a difference to the course.

Timetable

[Note: to make things clear, the family name of every author in this syllabus is CAPITALIZED.]

Week 1 (January 9/11): The prewar period film

Cinematic antecedents. Utsushi-e and gento. Film technology and "wonders from abroad." Kabuki, kōdan, popular literature. Documentary and dramatic films. The soundscape of early cinema. Benshi. Kyūgeki and jidaigeki. Presentational and representational. Genres, metagenres and intertexts. Artisanal production and the first film studios. Fans and stars. Toward a "pure" medium. Extrapolating from a ruined archive.

Screening: *Backward Flow* (Gyakuryū, FUTAGAWA Buntarō, Nikkatsu, 1922, 28 mins) / *Orochi* (FUTAGAWA Buntarō, Nikkatsu, 1925, 74 mins)

Readings: Lisa SPALDING. "Period Films in the Prewar Era"
Laura LEE. "Japan's Cinema of Tricks: Optical Effects and Classical Film Style"

Week 2 (January 16/18): Vernacular modernism and Japanese mass culture

The studio system. Shōchiku, Americanization, and the shōshimin film. Kamata modernism. Urbanization, modernization, and new social classes. Urban space: uptown, downtown, suburb. Politics and entertainment: the tendency film and the shōshimin film. Cinema and the public sphere: slapstick, melodrama, vernacular modernism. The transition to sound. Talkies and subtitling. Benshi cinema, the "sound version," and the "neo film sans silence."

Screening: *Dragnet Girl* (*Hijosen no onna*, OZU Yasujirō, Shōchiku, 1933, 100 mins)

Readings: David BORDWELL. "Backgrounds" + "Materials" + "Dragnet Girl"
[in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 17-50, 244-247]

Week 3 (January 23/25): Mizoguchi, sound, and mise-en-scène

Realism in film and literature. Class consciousness in the cinema. Modern girls and modern boys. Syuzhet, style, and narration. Sound, image, and mise-en-scene. The voice and Japanese radio drama. Celebrity and performance. Theater and film. Making the invisible visible: intensity and psychological depth. Subtitling, accent, and dialect.

Screening: *The Downfall of Osen* (Orizuru Osen, Mizoguchi Kenji, ???, 1935, ??? mins)

Readings: Noel BURCH. "Mizoguchi Kenji" [in *To the Distant Observer*, pp. 217-246]
Chika KINOSHITA. "The Benshi Track: Mizoguchi Kenji's *The Downfall of Osen* and the Sound Transition"

Week 4 (January 30/February 1): Wartime image culture

Cinema in the Japanese empire. Documentary, ethnography, kulturfilm. Physical culture and the body in film. Mass Ornaments and Media Events. Documentary diegesis. Wartime cinephilia: "Film-like" films and "subject-based" films. "National Policy films and People's films. Recapturing the cinematic sky: special effects and wartime spectaculars. Science as wonder. Pan-Asian cinema.

Screening: *Can You Become a Pilot?* (Kimi wa sōjūsha ni nareru ka?, Tōhō, 1942, 12 mins) / *The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya* (Hawai-Marei okikaisen, YAMAMOTO Kajirō, Tōhō, 1942, 116 mins)

Readings: *Kokutai no hongī* [Fundamentals of our National Polity] [excerpt]
Aaron GEROW. "Narrating the Nation-ality of a Cinema: The Case of Japanese Prewar Film"

***** CLOSE ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE: January *****

Week 5 (February 6/8): Occupation cinema

Occupation culture. Trauma and defeat. Democratic-Enlightenment films. The community of contrition. Resistance and accommodation. The Tōhō strikes. Occupation musical culture: Jazz, boogie-woogie, and country. Family reunification melodramas. Mother films and the revelation of virtue. Neoformalist film study. Style: ideology, arbitrariness, play. Citation, play, and devices. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism. The family as self-replicating machine.

Screening: *Late Spring* (Banshun, OZU Yasujirō, Shōchiku, 1949, 108 mins)

Readings: Kristin THOMPSON. "*Late Spring* and Ozu's Unreasonable Style"
David BORDWELL. "Late Spring" [in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 307-312]

Week 6 (February 13/15): Postwar art cinema

Postwar film festivals: ecumenical understanding and the Cold War. Japan between Hollywood and Mosfilm. The export film in the golden age of Japanese cinema. Representing Japan: hard currency and exoticism. The apotheosis of mise-en-scene aesthetics. The long take. The art cinema as a mode of film practice.

Screening: *Ugetsu* (Ugetsu monogatari, dir: MIZOGUCHI Kenji, Daiei, 1952, 96 mins)

Readings: Keiko McDONALD. "*Ugetsu*: Why is it a Masterpiece?"
David BORDWELL. "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice"

***** Week 7 (February 20-24): Reading Week *****

Week 8 (February 27/March 1): Postwar entertainment cinema

Politics, censorship, and independent cinema. Copying and resistance. Genre theory and film style. History of the jidai-geki. Japanese cinema and western film studies. Remembering and forgetting. Film festivals and cultural flow. Art Cinema and the elevated style. Mise-en-scene and the French nouvelle vague. Wartime genres in the postwar. Action Cinema. Kurosawa and the visual syllogism.

Screening: *Seven Samurai* (Shichinin no samurai, KUROSAWA Akira, Tōhō, 1954, 207 mins)

Readings: Mitsuhiro YOSHIMOTO. "Seven Samurai"
Luc MOULLET, André BAZIN, Jacques RIVETTE. "Exchanges About Kurosawa and Mizoguchi"

*** RESEARCH ESSAY TOPIC DUE: March 2 ***

Week 9 (March 6/8): The popular song film

Import substitution and exported cinema. High economic growth and postwar popular culture. Radio, records, television. Teen musicals and juvenile delinquency. Americanization and postwar cultural mimesis. Series and star vs. director and text. Celebrity authors and celebrity culture. Film study circles and the "pre-new wave". Auteurism and the avant-garde. Postwar art/theory/film groups: night / century / cinema '57 / blue / documentary / image art... Alternatives to the studio system: independent production, documentary, avant-garde. Global new waves. ANPO. Engagement.

Screening: *You Can Succeed, Too* (Kimi mo shusse ga dekiru, SUGAWA Eizo, Tōhō 1964, 100 mins)

Readings: YOSHIMI Shun'ya. "'America' as desire and violence: Americanization in postwar Japan and Asia during the Cold War"
Aaron GEROW. "The International Film Musical: Japan"

Week 10 (March 13/15): The 1960s narrative avant-garde

Art circles and alternative exhibition. ATG cinemas and the Shinjuku scene. Angura. Manga. Poster art. Photography and landscape theory. Repertory screening and the "Suzuki Seijun problem." Direct action. Political, aesthetic, and sexual avant-gardes. Resistance and the ideology of critical distance. Concrete music and expanded cinema. Cultural nationalism on the Left. Film study circles and the popularity of Japanese genre cinema. The culture of the copy and the culture of authenticity.

Screening: *Death by Hanging* (Kōshikei, OSHIMA Nagisa, Sōzōsha, 1968, 117 mins)

Readings: YOMOTA Inuhiko. "Two or Three Things I Know About ATG"
Lucia NAGIB. "Oshima, Corporeal Realism and the Eroticized Apparatus"

*** RESEARCH ESSAY PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE: March 16 ***

Week 11 (March 20-22): Post-Studio cinema: film studies and genre cinema

The oil shocks. Blockbuster cinema. Collapse of the studios and the rise of home video. Japan as number one. Education hell. Overcrowding and leisure culture. Economic growth and cultural nationalism. New forms of narration and the always already postmodern. Cynicism, irony, and black comedy. Studio bankruptcies and outsourcing. Film study in Japan. Hasumi, Godard, and film genre. Philosophy of the Other. Pink cinema, V-cinema, TV production. J-Horror and the end of economic growth.

Screening: *Kairo (Pulse)*, KUROSAWA Kiyoshi, Daiei/Hakuhōdō/Imagica/NTV, 2001, 118 mins)

Readings: Collette BALMAIN. "Techno-Horror and Urban Alienation"
Stephen T. BROWN. "Consensual Hallucinations and the Phantoms of Electronic Presence in *Kairo* and *Avalon*" (pp. 111-132)

***** RESEARCH ESSAY FIRST SUBMISSION DUE: March 26 *****

Week 12 (March 27/29): 21st Century genre mixing

Post-bubble Japan. Atomization and anomie. Rise of "production committees" and the banality of cinema. TV/Video culture, genre mixing, and 21st century cinema. Digital technology and new forms of filmmaking. Media archeology as cultural memory. Popular music and televisual celebrity.

Screening: *Memories of Matsuko* (Kiraware Matsuko no isshō, NAKASHIMA Tetsuya, Amuse/TBS, 2006, 130 min)

Readings: Linda WILLIAMS. "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess"
Anne Allison. "From Lifelong to Liquid Japan"

Week 13 (April 3/5): Animation / Anime and the media mix

The rise of China and the closing of Japan. Allegories of entrapment. Reflections on the history of Japanese militarism. Adaptation and intermediality. Drawing movements and moving drawings. Layers, multiplanar images, and ballistic perception. Manga and anime. Animation, anime, and late-night anime. Anxiety and other bad feelings. Grit and determination!

Screening: *Attack on Titan* (ARAKI Tetsuro, Wit Studio/Production IG, 2014, 119 min)

Readings: Marc STEINBERG. "LIMITING MOVEMENT, INVENTING ANIME" [EXTRACT]
Tina AMINI. "*Attack on Titan*, Explained"

***** RESEARCH ESSAY REWRITE SUBMISSION DUE: April 2 *****

***** FINAL EXAMINATION *****

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

For information on the examination services provided by the Student Development Centre, please visit www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Grading Criteria

A+ (90-100)

Argument: Clear development of a specific, challenging and original thesis. The writer has taken significant risks successfully; in the resulting piece, distinctive ideas and content have discovered their necessary distinctive form. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

Presentation, structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

Research/Scholarship: Evidence of effective, extensive and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

A (80 to 89)

Argument: The writer has taken risks and most of them succeed. Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphs. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

Presentation, structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

Research/Scholarship: Evidence of effective and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

B (70 to 79)

Argument: Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs. Adequately detailed reference to texts. Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity.

Presentation/structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. A few typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation. Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor.

Research/Scholarship: Evidence of adequate research, with proper documentation of sources.

C (60 to 69)

Argument: Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs. Basic ability to expound ideas, whose development might be rather thin. Effort to support points with references to the text. Tendency to replace analysis with descriptive retelling of plot.

Presentation/structure: Presentation showing lapses in tidiness and/or proofreading. Poor use of paragraphs.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma. Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

Research/Scholarship: reasonable effort at documentation, but rather thin.

D (50 to 59)

Argument: Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought. Ideas inchoate but clouded by weak expression. Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or examples that run to lengthy paraphrase, with little or no analysis.

Presentation/Structure: Very poor to non-existent use of paragraphs. Inadequate and inaccurate documentation. Multiple typographical errors.

Language Skills: Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding.

Research/Scholarship: Little serious effort to research the topic.

F (49 and down)

Argument: Ideas too simple for level of course. Argument completely incoherent. Erroneous content showing little or no understanding of subject.

Presentation/Structure: Very sloppy proof-reading. Documentation virtually non-existent.

Language Skills: writing frequently ungrammatical.

Research/Scholarship: Non-existent. Content largely "borrowed" from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive.

0 (Report to Department)

Plagiarism with intent to deceive.