



FILM 4375F (001)

POLITICS AND PERFORMANCE IN THE JAPANESE NEW WAVE

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Office Hours: Thursday 3:30 – 5:30pm, or by appointment.

DISCLAIMER

This is the 60s we're talking about. The watchword was "transgression" – of the old order, the old styles, and the old morality. Most of the films on this course feature images and attitudes that you will find cruel, distasteful, or obscene. I have avoided the worst of the worst but be aware that these films can be morally as well as politically and aesthetically challenging. The internet is your friend.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

"New Wave" cinemas emerged around the world between 1955 and 1973. A new generation of iconoclastic filmmakers rebelled against the studio system and its established forms of acting and storytelling. They drew on experiments in related fields of drama and performance art and explored new media such as the graphic novel and television. Like those other arts, the new cinema aimed to shock: the films we study are rhetorical interventions that often scandalized audiences with their unsettling juxtaposition of sex, violence, and politics. By studying critical writing as well as the films themselves we will seek to understand the intellectual and material conditions of Japanese New Wave cinema. We will discuss what the films tell us about Japan, about the relationship of cinema and performance, and about the global simultaneity and cultural permeability of cinema around the world that is sometimes ignored in single-country film histories.

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

COURSE AIMS

The goal of the course is for you to develop a research project on Japanese New Wave Cinema. Not simply to add to the pile of knowledge about the Japanese New Wave but so that you can gain an understanding of what it means to do academic research – something that will help you work on other aspects of Film Studies, or even in fields outside of Film Studies. In the course of doing that, and watching the films and doing the readings on the course, you should gain an understanding of what Film Studies is, as well as an understanding of the connections between cinema, politics, and performance in the "long 1960s" in Japan.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students will have learned to critically appraise a wide range of films and other audio/visual texts and will be prepared to make historically informed arguments about cinema as both symptom and agent of social change. They will also have developed an ability to generate a research question and strategies for how to make novel academic arguments [rewrite]

REQUIRED READING

All readings are available on the class web site. Please make sure to bring the readings to class, with the notes you have made on them. I will be giving you a lot of translations and other readings that are otherwise unavailable. Those are **not for distribution**. You will also be encouraged to locate and study other material that is increasingly becoming available on this period.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation [20%]:

- This seminar is a collective experience, so attendance is mandatory. More than two absences will affect the attendance mark. If you are absent more than two times from a screening or lecture, or an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons, contact Academic Counselling and have them forward supporting documentation to me. Please do not approach me with your private medical information.
- Although virtual screenings are now commonplace, I would like to return to watching films as an event and a communal experience. Watching a film on a tiny monitor while "multitasking" is no substitute for the experience of watching a film as it was intended to be seen, with full-screen projection and an audience. If you must miss a screening, talk to me about how to watch the film. Many of the films are not generally available.
- Participation means taking active part in class discussion, demonstrating that you have prepared the readings and that you have thought carefully about the film. I will assign individual reports if I think people are not sufficiently preparing the readings.

2. Production/Distribution/Reception presentation [10%]

Starting in Week 3, you will research the production, distribution, and exhibition (in Japan and / or abroad) of one film on the course with a partner. You will present your research (how you researched and what you found) to the class at the beginning of the relevant screening.

3. VLOGS! [20%]

This is a new one to me. I want to scaffold the development of your research question, so rather than handing me a topic out of nowhere you will make four short vlogs (three to five minutes) showing the research as it happens. These are field reports, not performances. What did you do, what did you find, and what surprised you?

- Vlog 1: the library. Go to the stacks and explore the sections on Japanese cinema, modern Japan, etc. Show me what you found and what surprised you.
- Vlog 2: the databases and the other online tools. Show me what tools you used, what you searched for, what that led to, and what came out of it.
- Vlog 3: engage with an AI tool: show me your prompts and what came back, and tell me where it helped and where it led you astray. If you'd rather not use AI, show me a different route: an archive, a filmography, a run of a periodical, someone you talked to, a film you went back and watched twice.
- Vlog 4: the research question: I am interested in X, and after working in the library, in the databases, and on vlog 3, this is my question and this is how I intend to answer it.

Deadlines are in the syllabus, all with the three-day grace period described under academic consideration below. 5% for each vlog (use any common format).

4. Research topic, annotated bibliography, research presentation, essay, and rewrite [50%]:

There will be one 2,500 word research essay assignment during the term. The assignment combines textual and contextual analysis. It will feature multiple deadlines for topic, annotated bibliography, first submission, presentation, and final submission. Detailed instructions will be given in assignments posted to the web site. The emphasis will be on marshaling evidence to make cogent arguments, drawing on scholarly and other resources. All essays must be uploaded to the class web site; they will be automatically passed through the plagiarism filters at turnitin.com.

Once everyone's essay is in, you'll present your research to the class. This isn't the topic pitch: the

vlogs ended on your research question; the presentation announces what you found. Five to ten minutes each.

Grading: 5% each for submitting your research question and annotated bibliography on time. 10% for your research presentation. 30% for your research essay. The grade on your research essay can be increased by up to 10% if you choose to rewrite after I grade it.

Also: If you are interested in doing your final assignment as a creative project (e.g. a video essay) instead of an academic essay, we can discuss that possibility.

Please note:

- a. Essays are specific assignments that require a specific style, use of argument, and length (within 10%). Think about that when you are editing your paper before you upload it.
- b. Each stage of the assignment handed in late without a previously approved extension request submitted through academic counselling will be granted a grace period of **three days**. They will then be penalized at **3% per day**, up to a maximum of 21% of the grade for that stage. Essays should be submitted to the appropriate section of the class web site as a *single uploaded file* in .docx format. Video essays should be uploaded as .mp4. Put your name and the film title in the filename).

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Assignments can push you to write about topics that you haven't yet fully assimilated. This situation, as philosopher Harry Frankfurt explains, often leads to "bullshit"—when you have to say more than you truly understand. AI tools might seem like an easy fix, but leaning on AI stops you from growing intellectually and leaves you stuck in bullshit. By skipping the hard work of wrestling with ideas and expression, you block your own path to real learning and the skills education builds: deep engagement with concepts and the ability to express your understanding of the world. Many of you hate AI, and I respect that. I will not require you to use any AI tools in this class. At the same time, I think we should recognize that AI is everywhere now, and it can be a helpful tool for exploring or clarifying thoughts. But passing off AI-generated text as your own is cheating, and counter-productive. Also, you won't have AI with you in the exam room and the assignments on this course are AI-resistant. They ask you to pay close attention to the audiovisual properties of a film (which an AI can't actually see), not to marshal well-known facts and arguments (which AI can do very well).

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

The university policy on academic consideration (not academic accommodation) is laid out here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

You will not be penalized if you miss an assignment deadline by less than **three days**. Also, your first two absences from screenings and first two absences from lecture each term will not affect your attendance grade. ***In accordance with university policy, assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are not eligible for further consideration.***

ACCOMMODATION

Academic Accommodation

Academic Accommodation is "a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program."

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. "Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its

academic programs are accessible for all students"

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be "given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than one week prior to the writing of the test".

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:

Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Whenever you take an idea or passage from another author, you must acknowledge the debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Please consult the statement on the use of generative artificial intelligence above: you must not submit AI-generated written work as your own.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Other 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/>

Academic Support & Engagement <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.