

565:350 (195:321) Japanese Film

Fall 2007

M 6,7: 4:30pm-7:30pm (MU-113)

W 6: 4:30pm-5:50 pm (SC-115)

Instructor: Satoru Saito

Office: Scott Hall, Room 338

Office Hours: MW 12:00pm-1:00pm; 2:30pm-4:20pm

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Course Description

This course explores the major cinematic representations of pre-WWII and post-WWII Japan. Among the themes of the courses are the issues of modernity and westernization, nostalgia for the past, and negotiations between progress and tradition. A particular focus will be given to the films of the 1950s and 1960s, the height of the popularity and influence of film media in Japanese society. An examination of the sociohistorical contexts within which the films were produced, circulated, and consumed will be encouraged.

Requirements

Class attendance, participation, and response questions (10%)

4 Response papers (First two at 10 % each, last two at 15% each; total of 50 %)

Final Paper (40%)

Response questions: At the end of each film screening on Mondays, you will be asked to turn in a question you had about the film. Your question should address an issue that you believe to be a crucial one in your interpretation of the film.

Response papers: Every two to three weeks, you are required to write an analytical paper, which focuses on a particular scene of a film that we have seen. The paper consists of two parts. First, I would like you to describe the scene that you will be discussing (one to two paragraphs). Second, analyze this scene (1 page for the first two papers and 2 pages for the last two papers). Your analysis should show why the selected scene is important for our understanding of the film.

Final Paper: At the end of the semester, you are asked to submit a final paper (8-10 pages). The final paper should present an organized argument on a theme of your choice. You may discuss a single film at length or compare multiple films. I will talk more about the final paper as the semester progresses.

Texts

Richie, Donald. *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*. Revised Edition. New York: Kôdansha International, 2005.

Class Schedule

(Single asterisk indicates reading materials on electronic reserves; triple asterisks indicate writing assignments)

Week 1 (September 5):

Introduction

UNIT I Prewar and Postwar Japanese Film: Two Points of Comparison

Week 2 (September 10 & 12):

Screening: *Sisters of the Gion* (Mizoguchi Kenji; 1936)

*Noel Burch, "Mizoguchi Kenji," in *To the Distant Observer*, pp. 217-246.

*Miram Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant," in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, pp. 239-266.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 17-42, 77-84.

Week 3 (September 17 & 19):

Screening: *I Was Born, But...* (Ozu Yasujirô; 1932)

*David Bordwell, "Materials," in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 31-50.

*David Bordwell, "I Was Born But..." in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 224-229.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 43-76, 84-96.

Week 4 (September 24 & 26):

Screening: *Tokyo Story* (Ozu Yasujirô; 1953)

*David Bordwell, "Structures, Strictures and Stratagems," in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 51-72.

*David Bordwell, "Tokyo monogatari," in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 328-333.

*John Dower, "Shattered Lives" in *Embracing Defeat*, pp. 33-64.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 96-129.

***Response Paper #1 Due Monday (September 24) on *Sisters of the Gion* or *I Was Born, But...*

Week 5 (October 1 & 3):

Screening: *Ugetsu* (Mizoguchi Kenji; 1953)

*Gregory Barrett, "Vengeful Spirit," in *Archetypes in Japanese Film*, p. 97-117.

*John Dower, "What Do You Tell the Dead When You Lose?" in *Embracing Defeat*, pp. 485-521.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 129-134.

UNIT II Films of Kurosawa Akira and Japan Under Occupation

Week 6 (October 8 & 10):

Screening: *Stray Dog* (Kurosawa Akira; 1949)

*Stephen Prince, "Willpower Can Cure All Human Ailments," in *The Warrior's Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa*, pp. 67-100.

*John Dower, "Cultures of Defeat," in *Embracing Defeat*, pp. 121-67.

***Response Paper #2 Due Monday (October 8) on *Tokyo Story* or *Ugetsu*

Week 7 (October 15 & 17):

Screening: *Ikiru* (Kurosawa Akira; 1952)

*Stephen Prince, "Willpower Can Cure All Human Ailments," in *The Warrior's Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa*, pp. 100-113.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 134-176.

Week 8 (October 22 & 24):

Screening: *Yôjimbô* (Kurosawa Akira; 1961)

*Stephen Prince, "History and the Period Film," in *The Warrior's Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa*, pp. 200-249.

*David Desser, *The Samurai Films of Akira Kurosawa*, pp. 97-105.

UNIT III The 1960s: A Period of Transition

Week 9 (October 29 & October 31):

Screening: *Fires on the Plain* (Ichikawa Kon; 1959)

*William B. Hauser, "*Fires on the Plain: The Human Cost of the Pacific War*," in *Reframing Japanese Cinema*, pp. 193-209.

*Saburô Ienaga, "The Horrors of War," in *The Pacific War, 1931-1945*, pp. 181-202.

***Response Paper #3 Due Monday (October 29) on one of the three films by Kurosawa Akira

Week 10 (November 5 & 7):

Screening: *A Cruel Story of Youth* (Ôshima Nagisa; 1960)

*David Desser, "Cruel Stories of Youth," in *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*, pp. 1-75.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 196-208.

Week 11 (November 12 & 14):

Screening: *Woman in the Dunes* (Teshigahara Hiroshi; 1963)

*Keiko McDonald, "Sand, Man, and Symbols: Teshigahara's *The Woman in the Dunes*," in *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major Japanese Films*, pp. 36-50.

*Linda C. Ehrlich and Antonio Santos, "The Taunt of the Gods: Reflections on *Woman in the Dunes*," in *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema*, pp. 89-107.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 192-96.

Week 12 (November 19):

NO CLASS

***Response Paper #4 Due Monday (November 19) on *Fires on the Plain, A Cruel Story of Youth*, or *Woman in the Dunes* (Please turn in the papers underneath my office door at Scott 338 or in my mailbox in Scott 330 by 1pm).

Week 13 (November 26 & 28):

Screening: *Tokyo Drifter* (Suzuki Seijun; 1966)

*Keiko McDonald, "The Yakuza Film: An Introduction," in *Reframing Japanese Cinema*, pp. 165-192.

*Gregory Barrett, "Yakuza Heroes," in *Archetypes in Japanese Film*, pp. 64-76.

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, pp. 177-192, 208-212.

UNIT IV Films of Contemporary JapanWeek 14 (December 3 & 5):

Screening: *Family Game* (Morita Yoshimitsu, 1984)

Readings TBA

Week 15 (December 10 & 12):

Screening: *Maboroshi* (Kore-eda Hirozaku, 1997)

Readings TBA

***FINAL PAPER Due at Noon on Tuesday, December 18 (Please turn in the papers under my office door at Scott 338 or in my mailbox in Scott 330).