

565:320 “The Samurai Tradition in Japanese Literature and Film”  
Rutgers University  
Spring 2017

## Syllabus

### Instructor

Professor Paul Schalow [schalow@rutgers.edu](mailto:schalow@rutgers.edu)  
Office Hours: Scott Hall Rm. 325, Mon & Wed. 3:00-4:00 pm, or by app't.  
Lecture: MW6 (4:30-5:50) Hardenbergh Hall B-4, CAC

### Course Description

- The course explores the literary and philosophical traditions of the samurai warrior in Japanese history and the ongoing meaning of those traditions in contemporary Japanese culture.
- Coursework consists of analysis and discussion of visual media such as documentary and feature-length films and readings on warriors and swordsmanship.
- The course is divided into three Units: (1) *Chūshingura: The 47 Rōnin*, (2) *Legendary Warriors*, and (3) *The Ethical Use of the Sword*.
- All readings are in English translation.

### Requirements

- Post a question/answer a classmate's question. 15 Forums (2 pts. each) must be posted online on Sakai Forum for readings and films as indicated in the syllabus. Late postings are not possible once the Forum is closed.
- Three 5-page Unit papers (20 pts. each). Papers must be uploaded to Sakai Assignments by the due date at the end of each Unit. See the syllabus for a description of the assigned topic for each Unit.
- Your final grade is based on 15 Sakai Forum postings (30%), three 5-page Unit papers (60% total), and your class participation (10%).

### Required Texts (available for purchase at Barnes and Noble Rutgers Bookstore)

- Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* (Overlook Press, 1995)
- Donald Keene, *Chūshingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (Columbia, 1971)
- Miyamoto Musashi, tr. by Thomas Cleary, *The Book of Five Rings* (Shambhala Classics, 2000)

## Learning Goals

“The Samurai Tradition in Japanese Literature and Film” satisfies the following Asian Languages and Cultures Departmental Learning Goals for Japanese majors and minors:

*Majors* will be able to demonstrate substantial knowledge of Japanese literature and culture and pursue advanced study and/or employment in a capacity requiring such cultural knowledge. *Minors* will be able to analyze and interpret texts and relate relevant issues to other areas in the humanities.

(See full statement of Asian Languages and Cultures Departmental Learning Goals at [http://sas.rutgers.edu/component/docman/doc\\_download/532-sas-learning-goals](http://sas.rutgers.edu/component/docman/doc_download/532-sas-learning-goals))

## Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity at all times. Violations include cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

(See full statement of current Academic Integrity Policy at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_9\\_01\\_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf))

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes. Students are allowed 1 excused absence per Unit. If you expect to miss a class, please talk to me in advance or send me an e-mail ([schalow@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:schalow@rci.rutgers.edu)) immediately with the date and reason for your absence. You may also use the absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> and an email will automatically be sent to me.

**If you ever have questions about the above goals or policies, please talk to me or send me an email immediately with your concerns: [schalow@rutgers.edu](mailto:schalow@rutgers.edu)**

## Class Schedule

### Unit 1— Chūshingura: The 47 Rōnin

- 18 Jan. Introduction to the course.  
Film clip: “Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire” (PBS, 2004)  
(Parts 1 & 2: *The Way of the Samurai & He Cut His Belly*) 20 mins.
- 23 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* “Yamamoto Tsunetomo: *Hagakure* (Hidden in Leaves)” pp. 287-303. **Forum #1**
- 25 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account” pp. 304-321. **Forum #2**
- 30 Film clip: The sword wound—Asano’s attack on Kira in the shōgun’s court. “Chūshingura: The Loyal 47 Retainers” (Chūshingura, 1962) dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” (Genroku Chūshingura, 1941) dir. Mizoguchi.
- 1 Feb. Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: Arguments” pp. 322-338. **Forum #3**
- 6 Film clip: The raid—the night assault on Kira’s mansion and the taking of the head. “Chūshingura” dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” dir. Mizoguchi.
- 8 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Kō no Moronao: When a Warrior Falls in Love,” pp. 188-203. **Forum #4**
- 13 Reading: Keene, *Chūshingura: Treasury of Loyal Retainers* Acts 1-6, pp. 29-103. **Forum #5**
- 15 Reading: Keene, *Chūshingura: Treasury of Loyal Retainers* Acts 7-11, pp.104-180. **Forum #6**
- 20 **First 5-page paper due.** Topic: Discuss the story of the 47 Rōnin in terms of the samurai concept of dying with honor. Explain how competing allegiances made it difficult to determine what constituted an “honorable” death in this case. Discuss how the vendetta was dramatized differently in the puppet theater (1748) and in films by Mizoguchi (b&w, 1941) and Inagaki (color, 1962). Give specific examples from readings and films to support your discussion.  
Film clip: *Chūshingura* (NHK, 2010): Act 5 “Two Shots Fired” and Act 7 “The Ichiriki Teahouse.”

## Unit 2—Legendary Warriors

- 22 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Yamato Takeru: Loser as Hero”-“Sakanoue no Haruzumi: A Warrior’s Shame” pp. 3-60. **Forum #7**
- 27 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Minamoto no Raikō: Alert and Penetrating”-“Minamoto no Yoshiie: The Samurai of the Greatest Bravery under Heaven” pp. 61-109. **Forum #8**
- 1 Mar. Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Minamoto no Yoshitsune: A Hero Hounded” pp. 110-156. **Forum #9**
- 6 Film: “Men Who Tread On the Tiger’s Tail” (Tora no o wo fumu otokotachi, 1945) dir. Kurosawa (60 mins.)
- 8 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Kusunoki Masashige: A Guerrilla of Unflinching Loyalty” pp. 157-187. **Forum #10**
- 11-19 Mar. Spring Break**
- 20 [class cancelled]
- 22 [class cancelled]
- 27 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin: Two Warlords” pp. 204-231. Film clip: “Samurai Banners” (Fūrin kazan, 1969) dir. Inagaki. **Forum #11**
- 29 Reading: Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, pp. 3-62. Film clip: “The Duel at Ganryū Island” (Samurai Trilogy III, 1956) dir. Inagaki. **Forum #12**
- 3 Apr. Yagyū Munenori, *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War*, pp. 65-111 (in *The Book of Five Rings*). **Forum #13**
- 5 **Second 5-page paper due.** Topic: Choose one of the legendary warriors from Unit 2 and describe how he is depicted in literature and/or film. Discuss what deeds or accomplishments made him a legend and what aspects of his character or thought contributed to his fame. Address the ways that literary or cinematic depictions may differ from the historical facts. Give specific examples from readings and/or films to support your discussion.  
Film: “Sanjūrō” (Tsubaki Sanjūrō, 1962) dir. Kurosawa (96 mins.)

### Unit 3—The Ethical Use of the Sword

- 10            The sheathed sword.  
Film: “Sanjūrō” cont. **Forum #14**
- 12            False honor and the inhumane use of the sword.  
Film: “Harakiri” (Seppuku, 1962) dir. Kobayashi (134 mins.)
- 17            “Harakiri” cont.
- 19            Nonviolence in the face of violence.  
Film: “Samurai Fiction” (1998) dir. Nakano (111 mins.)
- 24            “Samurai Fiction” cont. **Forum #15**
- 26            Competing allegiances to family, clan, and state.  
Film: “Twilight Samurai” (Tasogare Seibei, 2002) dir. Yamada (129 mins.)
- 1 May        “Twilight Samurai” cont.
- \*5 Fri.        **Final 5-page paper due.** Topic: Select one of the samurai films studied in Unit 3 and discuss the depiction of its hero and main characters. What does the film have to say about the ethical use of the sword? Be attentive in your analysis to the ways in which the film is set in the past but in fact serves as a critique of present-day ethical concerns. To earn full credit, you must compare and contrast the hero of your film to the hero from another film we viewed in class.