

The Samurai Tradition in Japanese Literature and Film

565:320/195:322 Spring 2012

Monday 11:30-12:50pm Hardenbergh Hall B4

Thursday 11:30-12:50pm Scott Hall

Instructor: Yurika Tamura

E-mail: yurika@rci.rutgers.edu

Office: Scott Hall Rm. 232

Office Hour: Monday 1-2pm or by appointment.

Description

The course explores the literary and philosophical traditions of the samurai warriors in Japanese history and the ongoing influence of those traditions in contemporary US and Japanese culture. In this class you will analyze and discuss literary works, texts on swordsmanship and martial arts, as well as documentaries, arts and films. There will also be an Iaido presentation. All readings are in English translation.

The course is divided in four Units.

Unit 1 - Philosophy of Bushidō

Unit 2 - Warriors and Warfare

Unit 3 - The Akō Vendetta

Unit 4 – The Ethical Use of The Sword

Texts

1. Thomas Cleary, The Japanese Art of War: Understanding the Culture of Strategy (Shambhala Classics, 2005)
2. Hiroaki Sato, Legends of the Samurai (Overlook Press, 1995)
3. Miyamoto Musashi, The Book of Five Rings (Shambhala Classics, 2000)

Course Requirements

Grading: You will be evaluated on the basis of 4 discussion sheets (20%) (one sheet for each Unit,) two 4 page papers on assigned topics (15% each,) and one presentation.

Discussion sheets must be turned in on the day the class discusses the reading of your choice. The detailed of the assignments are explained in the class.

Please note that an “A” paper explains and interprets the material in an original way on the topic. A “B” paper accurately explains and interprets the material on the topic. A “C” paper presents and summarizes ideas in the texts and is mostly about the topic. A “D” paper presents an unclear argument and does not adequately address the topic. An “F” paper has no argument or is off topic. A: 91-100%; B+: 86-90%; B: 80-85%; C+: 75-79%; C: 70-74%; D: 60-69%; F: 59% and below.

Attendance/Quizzes/Participation (35%)

Discussion sheets (20%) [1 sheet x 4 Units = 4 sheets/5% each]

Two 5-pages Response Papers (30%) [15% each]

Presentation (15%)

Attendance/Participation/Quizzes: For participation, see Participation Policy. The quizzes will be conducted to see if you have read the text.

Response Papers/Discussion Sheets: Your papers must be double-spaced, typed in the standard format (12" font preferably in Times New Roman, 1-inch margins around,) and stapled together if printed, or electronic submissions accepted, provided it is received on time. **No late submission will be accepted.**

Presentation: By yourself or as a group of 2-3, you will conduct a 15-20 min. research presentation at the end of the semester. You can choose any topic that is related to the course material as long as you use class concepts and materials for your analyses.

Suggestions of the topic include but are not limited to:

Anime (e.g. Samurai Champloo)

Hollywood films (e.g. Kill Bill)

Gender in Samurai

Sexuality in Samurai cultures

Other cultural formations in Samurai culture (e.g. tea ceremony, make-up and fashion)

Other martial arts that resonates Bushidō philosophy

Samurai or Bushidō in comparison to other warrior or military forms

Bushidō as a way of life in Contemporary Japanese culture

Participation Policy: First and most important, your participation mainly depends upon completing the reading assignments. If you are not participating by skipping the readings, it WILL affect my view of your integrity as a student and therefore affect the grading.

Your opinions will be respected, and simultaneously you will be required to respect the opinions of your classmates.

Missed class cannot be made up. Each time you miss a class or are significantly tardy (make sure you come in quietly!) it will affect your grade through participation, pop quizzes, etc. In addition, if you miss more than four classes, your grade will be lowered by one full letter. If you miss ten or more classes, you will fail the course.

!!! All mobile-phones and similar electronic devices need to be turned off and PUT AWAY in class. **No net-surfing in the class and No text messaging is allowed** in the class. Violation to this rule will directly affect your participation credit which is 35% of the total course grade. In cases of emergency where you need to have your phone on for reception of calls or text message, you must speak with the instructor and obtain permission.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences, starting with failing this class. You are responsible to be familiar

with the Rutgers Policy on academic Integrity. In other words, not knowing the policy will not be an excuse for violation of the policy. Make sure you check:

<http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>

Disability Support Services

If you have a learning and/or physical disability, you must contact the instructor AND Disability Support Services. Without doing this, no special treatment or exception will be given to your coursework, and you will be evaluated just as any other student.

Call 732-932-2848 (Disability Service Support) for more information

Guidelines for discussion sheets and 5-page papers:

Discussion sheets (2-3 pages) are due on the dates we discuss the specific reading which you are writing on. You may choose what day you would submit your discussion sheet, but it just has to be submitted on the day we discuss the reading of your choice. You will submit 1 discussion sheet in each Unit. The discussion sheets must be typed and printed, single-spaced, one page in length, and in 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent font. Your name, the date, and title of the essay or chapter discussed should appear in the first three lines. No late submission is received.

5-page papers must be typed double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent font. Include page numbers and staple the pages together. Proofread every page to catch grammatical errors, spelling errors, and typos. Failure to do so will reduce your grade. Your name, the date, and title should appear in the first three lines. Make sure you cite. Book titles must be italicized or underlined, and titles of short stories must appear in quotes.

Note: Plagiarism is the use of other people's words or ideas without proper acknowledgment. To avoid suspicion of plagiarism, when you use a direct quotation in your papers, be sure to indicate this by surrounding it with quotation marks or by indenting it, if it is more than four lines. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, discuss them with the instructor.

Schedule

1/19 Introduction

Unit 1 – Philosophy of Bushidō

1/23 The Japanese Art of War pp. 1-38

1/26 The Japanese Art of War pp. 39-85

1/30 The Japanese Art of War pp. 86-122

2/2 Excerpts from The way of the samurai Yukio Mishima on Hagakure in modern life by Yukio Mishima, translated by Kathryn N. Sparling.

Unit 2—Warriors and Warfare

2/6 Sato, Legends of the Samurai, “Raikō and Others: Tales of Archery”-“Minamoto no Yoshiie: The Samurai of the Greatest Bravery under Heaven” pp. 80-109.

2/9 Sato, Legends of the Samurai, “Minamoto no Yoshitsune: A Hero Hounded” pp. 110-156.

2/13 Film: “Men Who Tread On the Tiger’s Tail” (Tora no o wo fumu otoko, 1945) dir. Kurosawa (60 mins.)

2/16 DC Conference / Reading day (for 2/23)

2/20 Film: “Samurai Banners” (Fūrin kazan, 1969) dir. Inagaki.

2/23 Sato, Legends of the Samurai “Miyamoto Musashi: Gorin no Sho (Book of Five Elements)” pp. 254-272; and Miyamoto Musashi, The Book of Five Rings pp. 3-62.

2/27 Film: “The Duel at Ganryū Island” (Samurai Trilogy III, 1956) dir. Inagaki.

3/1 Yagyū Munenori, The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War, pp. 65-111 (in The Book of Five Rings).

3/5 **First 5-page paper due.** Topic: Choose one of the samurai figures 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. And finally, connect your reading of these figures to the Bushidō Philosophy we discussed in the Unit 1.

3/12 & 3/15 Spring Break

Unit 3 - The Akō Vendetta

3/19 Sato, Legends of the Samurai “Yamamoto Tsunetomo: Hagakure (Hidden in Leaves)” pp. 287-303.

3/22 Sato, Legends of the Samurai, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account” pp. 304-321 and “The Forty-Seven Samurai: Arguments” pp. 322-338.

- 3/26 Sato, Legends of the Samurai, “Kō no Moronao: When a Warrior Falls in Love,” pp. 188-203.
- 3/29 Film clips: The sword wound--Asano’s attack on Kira in the shōgun’s court. “Chushingura: The Loyal 47 Retainers” (Chūshingura, 1962) dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” (Genroku Chūshingura, 1941) dir. Mizoguchi. The raid—the night assault on Kira’s mansion and the taking of the head. “Chushingura” dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” dir. Mizoguchi.

Unit 4—The Ethical Use of the Sword

- 4/2 The sheathed sword. Film: “Sanjūrō” (Tsubaki Sanjūrō, 1962) dir. Kurosawa (96 mins.)
- 4/5 “Sanjūrō” cont.
- 4/9 Competing allegiances to family, clan, fief, and shōgun. Film: “Twilight Samurai” (Tasogare Seibei, 2002) dir. Yamada (129 mins.)
- 4/12 “Twilight Samurai” cont.
- 4/16 Iaido Presentation by Mr. Raab Rashi (Buffer day)
- 4/19 **Second 5-pages Response Paper Due**
 Topic: Select one of the samurai films in Unit 3 and 4. 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 today’s ethical concerns. Finally connect the ethic you discuss with the presentation of Mr. Raab and Iaido philosophy.
- 4/23 Final Discussions and In-class Presentations
- 4/26 Presentations
- 4/30 Presentations