Syllabus

Instructor

Professor Paul Schalow schalow@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Scott Hall Rm. 325, Mon. & Thurs. 1:00-2:00 pm or by app’t.
Lecture: MTh3 (11:30-12:50)

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) The Akō Vendetta, (2) Legendary Warriors, and (3) The Ethical Use of the Sword.
- All readings are in English translation.

Requirements

- A one-page Response Sheet worth 3% is due for the readings indicated in the syllabus. Late submissions automatically lose one percentage point.
- A 5-page paper worth 20% is due 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 10 response sheets (30%), three 5-page papers (20% each), and class participation (10%).

Required Texts (available for purchase at Rutgers Bookstore or Jersey Books)

- 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.

If you ever have questions about academic integrity in the course, please talk to me or send me an email immediately with your concerns.


Attendance and Assignments Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss a class, please talk to me in advance or send me an e-mail (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/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) and an email will automatically be sent to me.

In order to earn full points, one-page typed Response Sheets (3% each) must be submitted in class on the day of our discussion of the assigned reading; late assignments automatically lose a point and will be accepted anytime during the semester up to Thur. May 8, 2014. Only typed submissions are accepted.

*If you ever have questions about my Attendance and Assignments Policy, please talk to me or send me an email immediately with your concerns.*
Class Schedule

Unit 1—The Akō Vendetta

23 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.

27  Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* “Yamamoto Tsunetomo: 
*Hagakure* (Hidden in Leaves)” pp. 287-303. Due: **Response #1**

30  Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: An 
Eyewitness Account” pp. 304-321. Due: **Response #2**

3 Feb.  Film clip: 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.

6  Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: 
Arguments” pp. 322-338. Due: **Response #3**

10  Film clip: The raid—the night assault on Kira’s mansion and the taking of 
the head. “Chushingura” dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” dir. Mizoguchi.

13  Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Kō no Moronao: When a Warrior 
Falls in Love,” pp. 188-203. Due: **Response #4**

17  Reading: Keene, *Chūshingura: Treasury of Loyal Retainers* Acts 1-6, 
pp.29-103. 
Film clip: *Chūshingura* Act 5, “Two Shots Fired” (NHK, 2010) 19 mins.

20  Reading: Keene, *Chūshingura: Treasury of Loyal Retainers* Acts 7-11, 
pp.104-180. Due: **Response #5**

24  **First 5-page paper due.** Topic: Discuss the Akō Vendetta 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. 
Unit 2—Legendary Warriors

27 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Yamato Takeru: Loser as Hero”-“Sakanoue no Haruzumi: A Warrior’s Shame” pp. 3-60. Due: Response #6


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

13 [class cancelled]

15-23 Mar. Spring Break


31 Film clip: “Samurai Banners” (Fūrin kazan, 1969) dir. Inagaki.

3 Apr. Reading: Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, pp. 3-62. Due: Response #9
Film clip: “The Duel at Ganryū Island” (Samurai Trilogy III, 1956) dir. Inagaki.

7 Yagyū Munenori, *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War*, pp. 65-111 (in *The Book of Five Rings*). Due: Response #10

10 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

14 The sheathed sword.
   Film: “Sanjūrō” cont.

17 False honor and the inhumane use of the sword.
   Film: “Harakiri” (Seppuku, 1962) dir. Kobayashi (134 mins.)

21 “Harakiri” cont.

24 Nonviolence in the face of violence.
   Film: “Samurai Fiction” (1998) dir. Nakano (111 mins.)

28 “Samurai Fiction” cont.

1 May Competing allegiances to family, clan, and state.
   Film: “Twilight Samurai” (Tasogare Seibei, 2002) dir. Yamada (129 mins.)

5 “Twilight Samurai” cont.

*8 Thur. Final 5-page paper due. Please submit the paper by 4:00 PM to Prof.
   Schalow’s mailbox in Scott Hall Rm. 330. Topic: Select one of the
   samurai films studied in Unit 3 and discuss the depiction of its hero (or
   another central figure) in detail. 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 discuss the hero of your
   film in relation to one other hero chosen from the films viewed in class.