Fall 2012
565:350 Japanese Film
M 5: 3:55pm-5:15pm (RAB-204)
W 2, 3: 10:55am-1:55pm (RAB-206)

Instructor: Satoru Saito
Office: Scott Hall, Room 338
Office Hours: M 12:00pm-1:30pm, W in RAB-206 after film screening
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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 of 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 the 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 (10% each; total of 40%); test (10%); final paper (40%)

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

Response papers: Every two or three weeks, you are asked to write a 2-page analytical paper, which focuses on a specific scene of a film that we have seen. Your analysis should show why the selected scene is important for our understanding of the film. You are asked to write 4 of these papers, although you can choose to submit 5 (but not 6) papers, in which case I will drop the lowest grade. The first three paper assignments are mandatory. The fourth should come from Unit III or IV. You may only submit a paper for Unit V if the paper will be your 5th paper.

Test: Test given toward the end of the semester will check that you have watched all the films carefully and that you have been attentive during class. As such, it will consist, among other components, of passage/character identifications and short answers regarding historical events and concepts discussed in class.

Final paper: At the end of the semester, you are asked to submit a final paper (around 10 pages double-spaced). The final paper should present an organized argument on a theme of your choice and be comparative (at least 2 films from different units).

Note on Academic Integrity: You are expected to uphold the highest level of academic integrity in this class. For more information, please see http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/. I will also be glad to discuss with you any concerns or questions you have on this issue.

Note on absences: Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.
References


Class Schedule
(All reading materials are on Sakai)

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

September 5: Introduction; Screening of *Sisters of the Gion* (Mizoguchi Kenji; 1936)

September 10: Discussion of *Sisters of the Gion*

September 12: Screening of *I Was Born, but…* (Ozu Yasujirô; 1932)

September 17: Discussion of *I Was Born, but…*

September 19: Screening of *Ugetsu* (Mizoguchi Kenji; 1953)

September 24: Discussion of *Ugetsu*

***Response Paper #1 due Monday (September 24) on *Sisters of the Gion* or *I Was Born, but…* (MANDATORY)

September 26: Screening of *Tokyo Story* (Ozu Yasujirô; 1953)

October 1: Discussion of *Tokyo Story*
UNIT II: Humanism of Kurosawa Akira and Japan Under Occupation

October 3: Screening of Drunken Angel (Kurosawa Akira; 1948)
October 8: Discussion of Drunken Angel

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

October 10: Screening of Stray Dog (Kurosawa Akira; 1949)

October 15: Discussion of Stray Dog

October 17: Screening of Ikiru (Kurosawa Akira; 1952)

October 22: Discussion of Ikiru

Unit III: The Fall of the Japanese Youth

October 24: Screening of Crazed Fruit (Nakahira Kô; 1956)

October 29: Discussion of Crazed Fruit

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

October 31: Screening of A Cruel Story of Youth (Ôshima Nagisa; 1960)

November 5: Discussion of A Cruel Story of Youth

UNIT IV: The Rising Woman

November 7: Screening of When a Woman Ascends the Stairs (Naruse Mikio; 1960)

November 12: Discussion of When a Woman Ascends the Stairs

***Response Paper #4 due Monday (November 12) on Crazed Fruit or A Cruel Story of Youth (OPTIONAL)
November 14: Screening of Pigs and Battleships (Imamura Shôhei; 1961)

November 19: Discussion of Pigs and Battleships


November 21: NO CLASS

November 26: Test

Unit V: Permutations of the Japanese Hero

November 28: Screening of Tokyo Drifter (Suzuki Seijun; 1966)

***Response Paper #5 due Wednesday (November 26) on When a Woman Ascends the Stairs or Pigs and Battleships (OPTIONAL; must have written 4 papers by this assignment)

December 3: Discussion of Tokyo Drifter


December 5: Screening of Otoko wa tsuraiyo (Yamada Yôji; 1969)

December 10: Discussion of Otoko wa tsuraiyo


December 12: Review; final paper consultation

***Response Paper #6 due Wednesday (December 12) on Tokyo Drifter or Otoko wa tsuraiyo (OPTIONAL; can only be used as your 5th response paper)

***FINAL PAPER due by noon on Friday, December 21 (please turn in papers under my office door at Scott 338 or in my mailbox in Scott 330).