565:320 The Samurai Tradition in Japanese Literature and Film

Course Syllabus

Lecture: TTH (1:10-2:30) Hardenbergh Hall A-6, CAC
Instructor: Haruko Wakabayashi
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Office: Scott Hall Rm. 222
Office Hours: Th (10:00-12:00) or by appointment

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 two canonical warrior tales, *The Tale of the Heike* and *Chūshingura* (commonly known in the Western world as the “Tale of the 47 Samurai”) and other war tales and primary sources (in translation), as well as theatrical reproductions and contemporary visual media/films on warriors and swordsmanship. All readings are in English translation.

Requirements
- Ten 1-page responses (3 pts. each) must be posted online on Sakai Forum before the discussion class for readings and films as indicated in the syllabus. Late posting will be accepted until the last day of each unit for a maximum of 1 point. = 30%
- Eight “Film Forums” (post a question/answer a question; 2 pts. Each) must be completed within 3 days after the viewing of the film. =16%
- Two 5-page Unit Papers (20 pts. each) must be submitted in word file on Sakai. = 40%
- Class Participation = 14%

Required Text (available for purchase at Barnes and Noble Rutgers Bookstore)
- Donald Keene, *Chūshingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (Columbia, 1971)

**All other readings will be posted on the Sakai Resources.
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:

Asian Studies Minors will learn the cultural heritage of East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea) through a wide and coherent curriculum, which includes courses in the following humanities and social science disciplines: literature, visual culture, history, religion, language and linguistics. Minors will learn critical skills in analyzing and interpreting literary, historical, and cultural materials appropriate to the student’s area of specialization. Students will be able to relate relevant issues to other areas in the humanities.

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. Majors 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)

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)

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes. Students are allowed 2 excused absences per Unit. If you expect to miss a class, please talk to me in advance or send me an e-mail (h.wakabayashi@rutger.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: h.wakabayashi@rutgers.edu
**Tentative Schedule:**
(Subject to change)

1/16 (T)  Introduction: What is “Samurai”?

UNIT ONE: *THE TALE OF THE HEIKE AND THE EARLY SAMURAI TRADITION*

1/18 (Th)  The Rise of the Warriors: A Historical Background

Film Forum #1: “Design Talks Plus: Samurai Icons” (NHK)

1/23 (T) & 1/25 (Th)  Raikō, the Demon-Quelling Samurai
“Minamoto no Raikō,” in *Legends*, pp. 61-64.

**Response #1 due at 11:59 pm, 1/24.**

**What are some of the important features of a warrior as you see in the figure of Raikō?**

1/30 (T) & 2/1 (Th)  Warrior Heroes in *The Tale of the Heike* I: The Battles

Film Forum #2: *Kwaidan,* dir. Kobayashi Masaki, 1964

**Response #2 due at 11:59 pm, 1/31.**

What are some of the important features of a warrior portrayed in the *Tale of the Heike*? Choose one or two warrior(s)/episode(s) and explain how they represent an ideal image of a warrior.
2/6 (T) & 2/8 (Th)   Warrior Heroes in *The Tale of the Heike* II: Atsumori and Naozane


Nō Play “Atsumori” and Kabuki “Battle of Ichinotani” (excerpt)

**Response #3 due at 11:59 pm, 2/7.

Compare the *Heike* version and the Noh/Kabuki play versions of the tale of Atsumori and discuss the different ways in which the tale is told. From whose perspective is the story told? For what purpose?

2/13 (T) & 2/15 (Th)   Warrior Heroes in *The Tale of the Heike* III: Yoshitune

Excerpts from *The Story of Yoshitsune* on Benkei and Shizuka.

Film Forum #3: *Men Who Tread on the Tiger’s Tail*, dir. Kurosawa Akira, 1945

**Response #4 due at 11:59, 2/14.

Search Yoshitsune, Benkei, and/or Shizuka Gozen on your internet and find ways in which they are represented in contemporary popular culture (ex. Benkei in http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/UsefulNotes/MusashiboBenkei). How are their portrayals similar/different from those in the earlier works we have read so far? Be prepared to share your findings in class.

2/20 (T) & 2/22 (Th)   Kusunoki Masashige: A Hero of Unflinching Loyalty


**Response #5 due at 11:59 pm, 2/21.

Kusunoki Masashige is a hero known throughout history—up to WWII—for his loyalty to the emperor. Choose one episode that best describes his character as a warrior hero that may have inspired the later generations.

2/27 (T) & 3/1 (Th)   The Arts of Swordsmanship I: Miyamoto Musashi


Film Forum #4: *Musashi* III, dir. Inagaki Hiroshi, 1956

**Response #6 due at 11:59 pm, 2/28.
Miyamoto Musashi’s *The Book of Five Rings* has become somewhat of a “canon” for Japanese businessmen and athletes. Choose and discuss one of the “teachings” from Musashi’s *Five Rings* that you feel might explain such phenomena.

3/6 (T) & 3/8 (Th) The Arts of Swordsmanship II: Yagyū Munenori

PAPER #1 DUE noon, March 9.
5 pages, double-spaced. Submit as a word file to the Sakai course website.
Topic to be announced.

**SPRING BREAK**

PART TWO: CHÛSHINGURA AND THE “WAY OF THE SAMURAI”

3/20 (T) & 3/22 (Th) Sengoku Period and the Establishment of the Tokugawa Rule

Film Forum #5: The Yagyu Clan Conspiracy, dir. Fukasaku Kinji, 1978

3/27 (T) & 3/29 (Th) Samurai Culture and Thought

**Response #7 due at 11:59 pm, 3/28**
After reading the assignments, how would you define bushido? Choose one or two elements that are important and explain why.

4/3 (T) & 4/5 (Th) Women and Family in Tokugawa Society
What was the role of women during the Tokugawa period? How were they defined according to Confucianism, and how was this similar and/or different from men?

4/10 (T) & 4/12 (Th)  The Akō Incident/Introduction to Chūshingura  
“The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account, with Arguments,” in Legends of the Samurai, pp. 304-338; Chūshingura, Acts I-IV.  
**Clips from various versions of Chushingura.**

4/17 (T) & 4/19 (Th)  Kabuki and the Culture of the Common People  

4/24 (T) & 4/26 (Th)  Chūshingura in Contemporary Culture  
Chūshingura, Acts VIII ~XI

PAPER #2 DUE noon, April 30.  
5 pages, double-spaced. Submit as a word file to the Sakai course website.  
Topic to be announced.