

Introduction to Japanese Film (3 credits)

The Japan Center for Michigan Universities
Hikone, Shiga, Japan
In affiliation with Michigan State University
Spring Term 2016
Instructor: Dr. C.J Boland

Class Times

Wednesdays, 3.30 – 5.00 p.m.

Fridays, 1.00 – 3.00 p.m.

Office Hours: T.B.A

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Course Description

Introduction to Japanese Cinema is a three-credit interdisciplinary culture studies course that examines Japan's world-renowned cinematic output over the last one hundred years. The central philosophy behind the course is that an interdisciplinary and historically grounded study of an evolved modality of cultural production (e.g. film) has the potential to enhance our understanding of the originating society.

The defining developmental phases and so-called 'golden eras' of Japanese narrative (fictional) cinema will be represented through a series of retrospective case studies that consider the work of particular studios, auteur directors and their landmark films. Each case study will contextualize the examination of film industry practices and aesthetic developments against the socio-cultural background of a particular period (e.g. post-war/late modern, postmodern). This review will be complemented by critical readings of selected 'representative' films, applying salient conceptual frameworks from film studies to support the analysis.

While the broad interdisciplinary approach of this course differentiates it from the typically narrower foci of traditional film studies, students will still be expected to engage in the critical analysis of films and apply the theory and conceptual language introduced in class.

Each week of study is split between two class sessions. The shorter Wednesday session will usually be a lecture or discussion. The longer Friday sessions are designed to accommodate film screenings and class discussions. A course text and/or reading materials will be supplied. Students will be expected to prepare for class and participate actively in discussions.

Instruction Objectives:

This module aims:

1. To deliver a comprehensive introductory course on the history of Japanese narrative cinema; one tailored for students who are not film majors.
2. To instruct students on approaches to film analysis as a means to broaden their study of Japanese society and culture.
3. To encourage students to develop a scholarly appreciation of film.

Course Requirements, Assignments and Evaluations

Punctuality and Attendance: Students are required to attend all classes, meetings, and other scheduled events programmed for this course. Excessive tardiness and lack of participation may result in the dismissal of a student from a program.

Absence Policy: Your attendance is very important not only to you but also to other classmates. Due to the nature of Study Abroad, no unannounced absences will be permitted. Please refer Office of Study Abroad for further details (<http://studyabroad.msu.edu>). Your tardiness may be counted as 1/2 unexcused absence. Excessive unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the course.

Preparation and Participation: This class will require some background reading and review of the materials covered in classes. This background reading is required and necessary to facilitate your meaningful participation in class discussions.

Participation in class discussions will facilitate your deeper understanding of the content covered, and is therefore a key to success on this course. Students that are routinely unprepared or are reticent to participate may be asked to leave the class and will be marked as absent.

Assignments and Evaluations

The assessment will be structured as follows:

1. Attendance = 10%
2. Film Analysis Papers = 40%
3. Presentation on a Japanese film or director* = 25%
4. A Short Article based on the presentation topic* = 25%

*While the course does not cover animation films, students will be permitted (subject to approval) to research a presentation/article topic based on works from this genre.

Film Analysis Papers (40%)

Over the duration of the course the tutor will select and screen a number of films in full. These are noted as 'Film Study' classes on the schedule. The film and the work of the director in question will be discussed in class.

You are required to write and submit a response-analysis paper on four of the films screened (4 out of 8). Each paper (500 words approx.) should present your interpretation of the film. Guidance will be given in class on the approach to writing analysis papers. Each paper must be submitted one week after the screening (hand-in at the next class).

Presentation (25%) | Short Article (25%)

The presentation and short article assignments are your opportunity to conduct independent research on a Japanese film, or the career work of a particular director. The presentation and article may be on the same subject, or look at different films and directors.

The presentations will be held in class (see schedule). Each presentation will be approximately 15 minutes in duration, not including Q&A.

The short article is essentially an extended analysis paper (1000 words approx.), although in this case you are expected to support your research with references and citations from authoritative sources. The article should be written with a view to publishing online (JCMU Blog).

Required & Recommended Reading

A course text will be provided.

Ritchie, D. (2012) *100 Years of Japanese Film*. New York: Kodansha USA.

Most of the required reading for this course will be taken from the course text. Other materials will be provided as class handouts. The tutor will also refer you to materials available online.

Please note that students are expected to have read and studied any assigned reading prior to each class. Be sure to bring any materials under discussion to class.

Academic Honesty and Classroom Etiquette

Students should always value academic honesty in their own work. In addition to other things, plagiarism is considered among the most blatant forms of academic dishonesty. This means that a student will not submit any written work that has been copied from the Internet or any other form of published media.

Additionally a student must not submit any work that has been written by another person without citing that source and will never submit another's work as his/her own. This would also include unacknowledged paraphrasing. As specified by university policy, such academic dishonesty may result in a penalty grade for the course. For more information on academic dishonesty policy please refer to the ombudsman webpage:

<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>

Grading Criteria and Grading Scale

You will be graded on four elements:

Attendance	Analysis Papers	Presentation	Article
10%	40%	25%	25%

Note: Attendance makes up to 10 % of the whole course grade. However, if a student misses three (3) classes without permission or medical excuse, the student maybe terminated from the course.

Grade Breakdown

Conversion Table between 4.0 Scale and Points

4.0 point	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0.0
90- 100	85-89	80-84	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	59 & below

Class Schedule

No	Date	Time	Content
1	Jan. 8	1:00-3:30	<u>Introduction</u> Course Overview & Assignments. Film Theory & Analysis I.
2	Jan. 13	3:30-5:00	<u>Early Developments in Japanese Film</u> Screenings & Discussion.
3	Jan. 15	1:00-3:30	<u>Pre-War Era</u> Film Theory and Analysis II Sound Films 1920's – 1930's: The First Golden Era. Screenings & Discussion.
4	Jan. 20	3:30-5:00	<u>Propaganda & Censorship</u> Film Theory and Analysis III The War on film. National Policy films and the Motion Picture Law. Post-War Occupation and Censorship. Screenings & Discussion.
5	Jan. 22	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 1</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
6	Jan. 27	3:30-5:00	<u>1950's - The Second Golden Age pt.1</u> Gendaigeki films. Post-occupation humanism. Director studies: Mikio Naruse and Yasujiro Ozu.
7	Jan. 29	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 2</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
8	Feb. 3	3:30-5:00	<u>1950's - The Second Golden Age pt.2</u> Jidaigeki films. Director studies: Kenji Mizoguchi and Akira Kurosawa.
9	Feb. 5	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 3</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
10	Feb. 10	3:30-5:00	<u>Voices of Rebellion</u> Sun Tribe (<i>Taiyozoku</i>) films. Japanese 'New Wave' Cinema. Director studies: Shohei Imamura, Nagisa Oshima & Masahiro Shinoda.
11	Feb. 12	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 4</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].

No	Date	Time	Content
12	Feb. 17	3:30-5:00	<u>Post-modern Transitions I</u> Studio decline and the rise of independent film. Sex, violence and dark satire in film.
13	Feb. 19	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 5</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
14	Feb. 24	3:30-5:00	<u>Post-modern Transitions II</u> The Yakuza on film. Director Studies: Juzo Itami and Takeshi Kitano.
15	Feb. 26	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 6</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
16	Mar. 2	3:30-5:30	<u>Film Study 7</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
March 4th Spring Break			
17	Mar. 9	3:30-5:00	<u>Monsters, Ghosts and Horror</u> Tokusatsu and Daikaiju Movies of the 1950's & 1960's. Vengeful Spirits': Narrative themes in Japanese Horror Films. Nouvelle horror and western remakes.
18	Mar. 11	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 8</u> Screening & Discussion. [Response Paper Option].
19	Mar. 16	3:30-5:00	<u>A Settled Picture</u> Genre Films and Anime. The Current State of the Japanese Film Industry.
20	Mar. 18	1:00-3:30	<u>Film Study 9</u> Screening and Discussion.
21	Mar. 23	3:30-5:30	Class Presentations.
22	Mar. 25	1:00-3:30	Class Presentations. Course Review.