

How Does It Move? – Action and Moving Image in Modern Japan

JAPAN 80

Instructor: Junko Yamazaki (junkoyam16@ucla.edu)

Office Location: Royce 264A

Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-4 & by appt. (https://calendly.com/junko_yamazaki_ucla/20-minute-meeting-1)

Course Asst.: Victoria Davis (vdavis42@ucla.edu); Jiajun Liang (jliangsh@ucla.edu); Fang-Ru Lin (fangru.lin@ucla.edu); Danica Truscott (danica.truscott@gmail.com)

Course Description:

How is action constituted on the screen? How has modern technological media informed and transformed our experience and understanding of action? Insofar as action is traditionally understood through the notion of agency, any attempt to extend the concept of action beyond animals is liable to involve confusion between three conceptually distinct kinds of phenomena: what a thing does, what happens to it, and how it moves. In this course, we will explore how our experience and conception of action is mediated by technological aesthetic media by tracing the history of the portrayal and experience of action both in media theory and practice. While emphasis is put on the moving image practices surrounding the production and reception of popular action film genres from Japan, we will also consider their relationship to international film cultures and genres in the context of broader historical transformations in media practices and in modes of distribution and reception. We will study theoretical debates, institutional practices, and ethical and political questions that inform our inquiries into the moving image as action, and into action as/through moving image.

This course aims to hone your ability to perceive, comprehend, and interpret various moving image practices by encouraging the close analysis of films and other moving image media, their materials and formal attributes. In lectures, we will explore various critical methods drawn from cinema studies and other disciplines appropriate to the explication of a given work. Through class discussion and various writing assignments, you will develop skills necessary to communicate this understanding both orally and in writing.

All readings on the course are in English; no Japanese is required.

LECTURES:

TR 12:30-1:45 (Bunche 2209A)

DISCUSSION SECTIONS:

1A: F 9-9:50 (Bunche 2168)	1B: F 10-10:50 (Pub Aff 1256)
1C: F 11-11:50 (Pub Aff 1256)	1D: F 12-12:50 (Bunch 2156)
1E: F 13-13:50 (Moore 1003)	1F: F 14-14:50 (Moore 1003)
1G: F 10-10:50 (Pub Aff 1278)	1H: F 11-11:50 (Bunch 2168)

WEBSITE:

- All course readings and films will be available on the CCLE course website.

REQUIREMENTS:

1) Participation and Attendance (15% of final grade)

Come to class regularly, come to class on time, and come to class having done the assigned readings. Participation includes paying attention, asking relevant questions and engaging productively in discussions. Be respectful of your peers. No cell phones in class, please. Laptops will not be allowed in class unless the student receives approval directly from the instructor. If you have a medical condition that requires you to use a laptop or any other aids, please let me

know. I will do my best to accommodate your need.

Absences: One unexcused absence from Friday discussion section is permissible. But if you are going to miss a discussion section, or an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons (e.g. family emergencies, jury duty), please be sure to let your TA know. If you are chronically late and/or absent, if you repeatedly leave lectures/discussions before they are done, if we notice you texting, and/or if you frequently disrupt discussion with inappropriate comments, your grade will suffer.

2) **Discussion Board Postings** (20% of final grade)

The CCLE website for the course will have a discussion board set up for every week. Each student is expected to contribute at least one posting per week. This posting should respond to the topic question and discusses that week's films and readings. Postings are due on **Wednesday at 5 p.m.** This will allow everyone to read the postings before attending discussion section and will thus generate further discussion. They should be brief—about 250 words (a short paragraph or two) – and should be as sharply focused as you can manage. Credit will be given not for polished prose or length but for evidence that you are thinking about the material of the course, asking thoughtful questions, and making productive arguments. Think of each posting as an attempt to come up with an idea for a potential essay (and indeed, you can expand on a posting for your final paper). I will assign more specific directions or prompts, and will present those ahead of time in class or on the Discussion Board. Late postings will be marked down 25% for every hour they are late.

3) **Shot Analysis** (2-3 pp, typed and double-spaced, 20% of final grade) – due **Feb 9 at 5 p.m.**

The purpose of this assignment is to give us a sense of how you write about film, and to give you feedback on your progress. Details TBA.

4) **In-class Sequence Analysis** (10% of final grade)

In this assignment, you will work in groups to perform a close analysis of one of the pre-selected film sequences in your discussion section in Week 9. Details TBA.

5) **Final Paper/Project** (30 % of final grade) – due **Mar 20 at 5 p.m.**

Option A: Action Sequence Analysis (5-7 pp, typed and double-spaced)

Based on a topic of your own choice, develop a well-defined and original thesis concerning action in a film or a small group of films, and discuss it in detail in an essay of 5-7 pages. Both the choice of film or films and the choice of topic are up to you, but there are two basic requirements that all papers must follow. 1) You must include a close and careful film analysis of a segment or segments, and 2) you must use this analysis to advance an argument deriving from one of the theoretical and/or historical issues we discussed during the quarter. You will develop your paper in three stages that must be discussed and approved in advance: a one-page topic statement telling your TA what you want to write on and why; an outline and bibliography; and the final submission. A more detailed description of the assignment will be available later in the quarter.

Option B: You will write an essay (5-7 pages, typed and double-spaced) in response of one of the prompts provided in Week 9.

Option C: Creative Project. If you are interested in this option, you need to consult me during office hours.

6) **Pop Quiz** (5% of final grade)

TBA

7) **Extra Credit** (up to 2% of final grade)

If you organize a film screening with your peers, each participant will receive 1 % towards the final grade. Each screening has to be attended by more than 5 people and be followed by a brief discussion. Please provide the following: photographic evidence of your attendance, a list/sign-up sheet showing all in attendance, and a short description of the post-screening discussion. Include them in your posting.

Students needing an **academic accommodation based on a disability** should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located at (310) 825-1501 or A255 Murphy Hall.

Mental Health & Wellness:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, depression, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. UC offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, consider utilizing the confidential mental health services available on campus. I encourage you to reach out to the Counseling Center for support (www.counseling.ucla.edu and 310-825-0768, available 24/7). An on-campus counselor or after-hours clinician is available 24/7.

Please also note that with your permission, I could also work with your counselor as well as your academic advisor to offer the support and assistance that you need.

Academic Integrity:

With its status as a world-class research institution, it is critical that the University uphold the highest standards of integrity both inside and outside the classroom. As a student and member of the UCLA community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, when accusations of academic dishonesty occur, The Office of the Dean of Students is charged with investigating and adjudicating suspected violations. Academic dishonesty, includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic misconduct. Plagiarism is a serious offense. It is the presentation of another author's words or ideas as if they were your own. If you have any questions about documentation, quotations, and related matters, please do not hesitate to ask me before submitting your work.

UCLA Rules of Student Conduct: <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct>

Undergraduate Writing Center's guide to citation: <http://wp.ucla.edu/wc/resources/handouts-for-students/>

SCHEDULE:

**Films and readings are subject to change. Check the CCLE website for the most up-to-date version of the schedule.*

***Viewings and readings must be completed before class the week they are listed unless otherwise noted.*

Week 1 Action and Moving Image

7 JAN: Introduction

8 JAN: Introduce yourself on CCLE

9 JAN: Film Language as Expressive Form

READING:

Donald Davidson, "Agency"

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, section 611-628

Tom Gunning, "Making Sense of Film" & "Film Criticism: The Challenge of the Specific"

Week 2 To Animate, To Bring to Life

VIEWING: *Paprika* (Satoshi Kon, Madhouse, 2006, 90 min.); *Spacy* (Ito Takashi, 1981, 10 m); *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (Takahata Isao, Studio Ghibli, 2013; clips); *Making of the Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (clip).

14 JAN: Animation and Cinema

READING:

Colin Williamson, "The Blow Book, Performance Magic, and Early Animation: Meditating the Living Dead"

15 JAN: Response due at 5 p.m.

16 JAN: Agency and Inner Life

READING:

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, section 281-288

Lesley Stern, "I Think, Sebastian, Therefore...I Somersault: Film and the Uncanny"

Optional Reading:

David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, "The Animated Film"

Optional Viewing:

The Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, USA/Hong Kong/UK, 1982, 117 min.)

Week 3 Action and Attraction

VIEWING: *Dead or Alive* (Takashi Miike, Daiei/Toei Video, 1999, 105 min.)

21 JAN: Cinema of Attraction

READING:

Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde"; "Now You See It, Now You Don't: The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions"

22 JAN: Response due at 5 p.m.

23 JAN: Excess of Astonishment and Display

READING:

Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation"

David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, "Story Causality and Motivation"

Optional Reading:

Alexander Zahlten, "V-Cinema"; "Subgenres: Violence, Finances, Sex, and True Accounts"

Week 4 Wartime Spectacle and Collective Body

VIEWING: *The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya* (Yamamoto Kajirō, Toho, 1942); *Can You Become a Pilot?* (Toho, 1942)

28 JAN: Wartime Spectacle and Special Effects

READING:

James Lastra, "Film and the Wagnerian Aspiration: Thoughts on Sound Design and the History of Senses"

29 JAN: Response due at 5 p.m.

30 JAN: Audiences and Affective Community

READING:

Michael Baskett, "Media Empire: Creating Audiences"

Week 5 Comedy and Trauma in Japanese Period Films

VIEWING: *Bloody Spear at Mount Fuji* (Tomu Uchida, Toei, 1955)
Know Your Enemy: Japan (Frank Capra, Joris Ivens, USA, 1945; clip)

4 FEB: Prohibited Subject

READING:

Kyoko Hirano, "Prohibited Subjects," *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952*

5 FEB: Response due at 5 p.m.

6 FEB: Politics and Aesthetics of *Jidaigeki*

READING:

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "Seven Samurai"

**Shot Analysis Due
Sunday, February 9 at 5 p.m.**

Week 6 Body Genre and Choreography of Vengeance

VIEWING: *Lady Snowblood* (Toshiya Fujita, Toho, 1973)

11 FEB: Myth of Regenerative Violence and Circuitous Action

READING:

Jean Ma, "Circuitous Action: Revenge Cinema"

Review David Bordwell on narrative and action picture from Week 3

12 FEB: Response due at 5 p.m.

13 FEB: Body Genre and its Politics

READING:

Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess"

Week 7 Action Documentary of Kazuo Hara

VIEWING: *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (Kazuo Hara, Imamura Productions/Shisso Production/Zanzou-sha, 1987)

18 FEB: Postwar Japanese Documentary

Abé Mark Nornes, "The Postwar Documentary Trace: Groping in the Dark"

19 FEB: Response due at 5 p.m.

20 FEB: Action Documentary of Kazuo Hara

READING:

Abé Mark Nornes, "Private Reality: Hara Kazuo's Films"

Kazuo Hara, excerpts from *Camera Obstrusa*

Week 8 Autonomy

VIEWING: *100 Yen Love* (Take Masaharu, Studio Blue Co./Toei Video Company, 2014, 113 min.)

25 FEB: Agency and Social Self

READING:

Natalie Stoljar, "Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Anne Allison, "Pain of Life" from *Precarious Japan*

26 FEB: Response due at 5 p.m.

27 FEB: Punch-Drunk Love and Autonomy

READING:

Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Women, Self-Possession, and Sport" (1982)

Week 9 Touching Image

VIEWING: *Sweet Bean* (Naomi Kawase, 2015, 113 min.)

3 MAR: Tactile Cinema

READING:

Jennifer M. Barker, "Introduction: Eye Contact," *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*

4 MAR: Response due at 5 p.m.

5 MAR: Intimacy

READING:

TBA

Week 10 Mediated Action

TBA

**Final Paper Due
Friday, March 20 at 5 p.m.**