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Professor of English  
ENG 372, Term 2, 2018/19

**Introduction to Japanese Cinema Before Anime**

**Course Description**

This course will introduce students to Japanese Cinema with a particular focus on the post-war period. Students will gain knowledge of major trends and directors, acquire film studies terminology, analyze films in class discussions and in writing. Students are not required to know the Japanese language, though will be required to memorize some key terms and names in Japanese.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Acquire knowledge of Japanese Cinematic history, trends in filmmaking, and major directors prior to the advent of the popular anime movement.
* Learn and gain practice using film studies terminology to analyze films.
* Create sound arguments about the workings and meanings of individual shots, scenes, and texts using appropriate terminology.
* Practice listening, viewing, and note-taking skills, in order to hone attention to visual texts.
* Enhance cultural literacy through reflecting on similarities and differences between Japanese and Hollywood (and other World) cinema histories and traditions.

**Class Times and Class Format**

Class will meet from 9-11 and 1-3, in the VEL, unless otherwise noted. Films will often be screened in the mornings with mini-lectures and discussions in the afternoon. All class screenings are mandatory, though students will sometimes be expected to watch a film, or to rewatch a film, on their own. Students should have assigned readings and homework completed prior to the class period for which they are listed on the schedule below.

**Required Texts**

* Corrigan, Timothy. A Short Guide to Writing About Film. 3rd Ed. Longman, 1988.
* Richie, Donald. *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*. Updated edition. Kodansha, 2012.
* Additional readings on Moodle

**A Note on Film Content**

Some of our films deal with challenging subject matter that may or may not be announced in advance of the screening. If you have concerns about being able to engage with particular film content or types of films, please see me early in the term to discuss this. I expect students to view and be willing to discuss all the assigned material honestly and with respect towards class members, even when—especially when—the material raises controversial or emotional issues.

**Contact Information**

I encourage you to attend my office hours regularly (South Hall 203) to let me know how you’re doing in the course, and to share any questions and concerns you may have. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, you are welcomed to email me for an appointment. Note that I do not respond to essay drafts over email but I would be happy to meet with you to assist in person with work in progress. Of course, you will have a better chance of finding me available for feedback if you begin assignments in a timely way.

As you probably know, the block schedule can be unforgiving, so staying on task is important.

If you find yourself getting behind in the readings, or struggling with key concepts, please seek assistance from myself, or from other Academic Support Services, sooner rather than later.

**Grading Policy**

Students often imagine that they begin an assignment with 100 points, and that points are deducted for errors. This is a conceptual mistake. Your instructors may sometimes write point deductions on your work as a shorthand for communicating areas where improvement is needed and to simplify their grading process. However, you should recognize that the default is 0 points, and you must *earn* each point you receive. Moreover, in order to earn a B or an A on an individual assignment, you must go beyond its minimum requirements. You must demonstrate, for example, not only that you have memorized film studies terms and their definitions, but that you thoroughly understand the concepts they represent, either by using them accurately and productively in a film analysis. You must demonstrate not only that you watched a film and remember its plot, but that you can recognize and analyze salient aspects of the film including but also going beyond the plot. You should not merely memorize lectures and repeat them, but be able to pull together multiple strands of thought, make connections between lecture materials and the films you see, and reflect on how what you are learning is related to your prior knowledge or challenges your prior understanding in various ways. Of course, some memorization is always necessary when tackling a new subject area, but memorization alone is insufficient for deep learning. And the course will be more interesting and exciting because of this.

The percentages noted below are a general breakdown of your final grade, though I may consider improvement over the course of the term, and improvement in writing about film, as well.

**General rubric for writing assignments**

Papers will be graded holistically according to the following rubric:

"A" = thoughtful and in-depth analysis of the text, highly convincing and memorable presentation of ideas, clear and careful organization, smooth and concise writing with very few or no errors;

"B" = solid development of ideas, good organization, generally good writing with few errors;

"C" = presentation of ideas is adequate but still sketchy in some places, organization is not always clear, writing is rough in a number of places (major and minor writing errors);

"D" = incomplete development of ideas, unproved assertions, unclear organization, many errors in writing;

"F" = undeveloped ideas, little or no organization, lack of focus, multiple mechanical errors in writing (e.g., poor grammar, inappropriate choice of words, misspellings, etc.).

**Accessibility**

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.  Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format.  For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see [Cornell’s Academic Support Page](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml). (http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml).

**Academic Honesty**

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading “Academic Honesty."

**Schedule (subject to change; readings from Moodle and Corrigan will be added to reading list as needed)**

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| **Day of Block** | **Reading, Viewing, and Assignment Schedule** |
| **WEEK 1** |  |
| Monday | AM: Course Introduction  PM: Screening of *Mifune: The Last Samuri* |
| Tuesday | AM: Discussion of Richie, pp. 17-27.    PM: Screening of *Souls on the Road* |
| Wednesday | AM: Eastern Traditions and Western Influences; Richie, pp. 27-42.  PM: Screening of *I Was Born, But*… |
| Thursday | AM: Taisho Democracy & Shochiku; The New Gendaigeki, Richie, 43-64.  PM: Screening of *Mr. Thank You* |
| Friday | AM: **Terminology Quiz**;  The New Jidaigeki; Richie pp. 64-77  PM: Screening of *The Loyal 47* |
| **WEEK 2** |  |
| Monday | **Due: Shot Analysis**  AM: Nikkatsu & the Shimpa  Film; Richie, 77-84  PM: Screening of *Women of the Night* |
| Tuesday | AM: Expressionism, Leftist Film; jun-bungaku film; Richie 84-96  PM: Screening of *Page of Madness* |
| Wednesday | **Individual Conferences** |
| Thursday | AM: WWII Crackdown; Richie, 96-106  PM: Screening of *The Army* |
| Friday | AM: The Occupation; Richie, pp. 107-115.  PM: Screening of *Tokyo Story* |
| **WEEK 3** |  |
| Monday | **Due: Scene Analysis**  AM: Post-War Developments; Ozu  And Naruse; Richie, 119-129  PM: Writing Workshop.  **Homework:** Screen a film from this period by Naruse or Ozu on your own. Consider how it corresponds with, or contradicts, Richie’s argument about the two directors. Be prepared to report on your screening on Tuesday. |
| Tuesday | AM: Mizoguchi & the Period Film; Richie 129-134.  PM: Screening of *Ugetsu* |
| Wednesday | AM: New genres: jun-bungaku, comedy, social issues (134-166)  PM: Film: Screeing of *The Battle of Narayama* |
| Thursday | AM: Kurasawa; Richie, 166-176  PM: Screening of *The Bad Sleep Well* |
| Friday | AM: Competing with TV; Early and New Independents; Richie, 177-212  PM: Screening of *Woman of the Dunes* |
| **WEEK 4** |  |
| Monday | **Due: Film Analysis, Submission Draft.** |
| Tuesday | Work Day |
| Wednesday | **Due: Film Analysis, Revised and Edited Draft**  **Wrap-Up Session** |

**Requirements**

10% Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation account for 10% of your final grade. You are expected to--

* take copious notes on films, readings, and on lectures
* attend every class period; I may grant exceptions for severe illness or other emergencies if you contact me in advance and provide evidence, but if you miss more than 3 class periods you will harm your ability to finish the course successfully, and I will encourage you to seek a Health Withdrawal.
* attend every scheduled film screening, even if you have seen the film previously or if it is available online
* be prepared: have the readings completed, with your textbook, notes, questions, and other homework at hand.
* show up on time, and note that screenings will begin precisely as noted on the syllabus as long as the technology gods are with us; latecomers can be distracting
* proverbially “pull your weight” in small group discussions and projects
* participate authentically in class discussion each day, and allow others to participate authentically too.
* be mindful of your **level** of participation in discussions (are you habitually reluctant to share? are you oversharing rather than listening, perhaps making it hard for others to speak?) as well as the **quality** of your participation (are you asking questions as well as responding to questions? are your comments connected to the subject at hand or are they designed to derail the subject at hand? are you responding to classmates’ ideas or only to the instructor’s? are you listening carefully, or only thinking about what you want to talk about next? are you open to new or different ideas from your own, and willing to change your views if warranted by new evidence or solid reasoning?)
* ask questions and seek assistance whenever needed

20% The Film Notebook

You are expected to keep a film notebook, which should include a set of extensive and detailed viewing notes on each film, followed by 2-3 pages of reflections for each film.

Include a *header* for each film that specifies

the name of the film

the director of the film

the date of the film’s making

if a scene rather than an entire film, provide a name for the scene

Writing reflections after viewing a film will help to solidify impressions and questions. For example, what patterns did you notice in the film? What surprised you? What do you want to know more about? What aspect of the reading did you observe in the film? Reflections should be completed prior to class discussion on that film—not during class. Keep these up to date, as I may ask to see them, or ask you to share them, at any time during class.

Feel free to enhance your reflections with research, as you may have lots of questions about a film after viewing it and before the next day’s discussion. However, it’s better to *start* with your own observations before turning to the internet or other sources. Also, it’s ESSENTIAL that you record the source of any information you do find, to clearly distinguish research from your own observations. This will help you develop good documentation skills, which will be essential for your final paper.

15% Shot Analysis: A four-page paper that analyzes a single shot from a film that we’re watching for class. Details TBA.

15% Scene Analysis: A 4-5 page paper analyzing a specific scene from a film we’re watching for class. Details TBA.

30% Film Analysis: An 8-10 page paper that makes an argument about the meaning of a particular film we’re watching for class. Details TBA.

10% Final Wrap-Up Session: A final wrap-up session that will give you the opportunity to collectively pull together strands from across the term.