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JPNS 371.01: Japanese Film and Anime

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JPNS 371 Japanese Film and Anime

Time: MWF, 1:00-1:50 pm

Meeting Place: LA338

Instructor: Michihiro Ama (michihiro.ama@mso.umt.edu)

Office: LA320

Office Hours: 11:00–11:50am and 2:00–2:50 pm on Monday

11:00–11:50am on Friday, and by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to the world of Japanese motion pictures from the beginning of the 20th century. We, however, focus on films and *anime* produced after 1945. Critical analyses of Japanese motion pictures require visual literacy—understanding Japanese history and culture. This course examines representations of Japanese society and Japanese values seen through landmark films produced by major directors, such as Ozu Yasujiro, Mizoguchi Kenji, and Kurosawa Akira; perceptions of those works and their influence on other films; and the development of Japanese cinematic tradition and formation of the Japanese film industry. Thematic orientations of the course include memories of the Pacific War, Japanese perceptions of life and death, expressions of Japanese masculinity and femininity, and Japanese family and kinship.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and characterize works of major Japanese film directors,
- 2) Describe the postwar development of Japan and discuss problems of modern/contemporary Japanese society seen through Japanese motion pictures,
- 3) Explain changes in Japanese families, domestic life, their values, and human relationships,
- 4) Demonstrate an ability to critically analyze Japanese visual culture.

Course Materials and Instruction for Viewing Films

Students are required to watch films before they come to class. While most of the films assigned for this course are reserved for four hours at the Mansfield Library—which means students can check out a film at the front desk and watch it only within the library—they are also available through Amazon Instant Video. Students are encouraged to communicate with each other and form small groups to watch the films together. Some films include “adult” and violent contents and students will be alerted in advance about them. In addition

to viewing the films, students are strongly encouraged to read scholarly articles about those films. For the assigned articles, see course schedule.

Course Media

Moodle will be used. Students are responsible for obtaining updated course information by checking Moodle. Students are required to maintain all artifacts, which include presentation materials, review papers, and summaries of the readings.

Course Requirements and Grade Evaluations

1. Weekly Postings	40 %
2. Midterm exam	10 %
3. Submission of the topic for final research paper	5 %
4. Final research paper, first draft	10 %
5. A 10-page final research paper	15 %
6. Class discussion	10 %
<u>7. Attendance & participation</u>	<u>10 %</u>
Total	100 %

Grade Scale

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=below 59%

Weekly Postings and Midterm Exam (See 1 and 2)

Before students come to class, they are required to respond to a combination of fact check questions and short essay questions that the instructor will post on Moodle about assigned films. There are going to be 20 posting assignments. Grades will be given as $\sqrt{+}$ (100%), $\sqrt{}$ (85%), $\sqrt{-}$ (70%), or 0. There will be a mid-term examination.

Final research paper project (See 3, 4, and 5)

Students are required to write a final research paper about a film they wish to explore. They should briefly summarize the storyline, explain the film's historical background, and identify and discuss its major themes. They should cite at least two scholarly articles.

Class Discussion (See 6)

Students must come to class fully prepared to discuss assigned films.

Attendance & Participation (See 7)

- **“UM is currently *requiring* everyone to wear a mask in classes and laboratories.”**

- Attendance is mandatory. *Student attendance will be noted at the beginning of each class.* Late arrival to class will be counted as 1/2 an absence. Early departure from a class will be counted as a one-day absence.
- Participation is a vital part of language acquisition and will affect a student's grade. Students can improve their participation and make the class more interesting by coming to class prepared; interacting with the instructor and classmates in Japanese; and asking questions, commenting on discussion topics, and volunteering answers and sharing ideas.
- While in class, students must refrain from chitchatting, studying for other classes, sleeping, and using cell phones. If these activities are repeated, the student will be subject to points-reduction (10 percent of their final grades).
- It is highly recommended that students keep up-to-date by regular contact with their classmates, regarding handouts and other such information.

Grading Policy

- If a student drops the course, s/he is responsible for the paperwork. Otherwise, the student will receive an F as the final grade. If a student wishes to change grade option, s/he must register this request. See **Official Dates and Deadlines for Autumn Semester 2021.**

<https://www.umt.edu/registrar/calendar/autumn-2021.php>

Changing the status after the official dates and deadlines is NOT permitted.

- *Incomplete grades will NOT be granted*, unless the student has progressed satisfactory but is prevented from continuing the course because of incidents beyond the student's control.
- When long absences and emergencies are expected, consult with the instructor immediately. *Do NOT wait until the incident is over.*
- *Make-up tests will NOT be permitted* unless the student has a legitimate excuse and contacts the instructor 12 hours prior to a quiz/exam. However, it will be completely up to the instructor's discretion about whether to grant a make-up.
- Students are required to maintain all of their work, including tests, quizzes, homework, and artifacts, which may include business cards, a video recording of a presentation, business letters, etc.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to follow ethical standards such as integrity and honesty in preparing and presenting materials that demonstrate their level of knowledge and which will be used to determine their grades. When an act of academic dishonesty is detected, the instructor is obliged to speak to the student and report it to the Department. For more detailed information, see the **section V Academic Conduct in the University of Montana Student Conduct Code**

(<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20-%20FINAL%20-%20208-24-18.pdf>).

Student Service Policies

- Emergency Procedures: In case of an emergency evacuation, students will take all their personal belongings and move to a safe area outside the building.
- **Disability Accommodations:** “Students with disabilities, faculty, and Disability Services for Students have rights and responsibilities related to reasonable modifications. Collaborative efforts among these three parties ensure equal access.”
“Faculty expects the student to initiate modification requests and provides reasonable modifications to ensure equal access. Faculty also refers students to Disability Services when necessary and refrains from retaliation against individuals advocating for accessibility.” (Cited from <https://www.umt.edu/dss/Students/Responsibilities.php>)
It is highly recommended that students with certified disabilities make a specific request to the instructor at least one week prior to a particular need.
- Disruptive and Improper Behavior: Cell phones must be turned off when a class is in session. No chewing of gum or eating in class is allowed. The dress code should be in accord with the learning place.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

WK 1	8/30 (M)	Introduction to the course
		POSTWAR JAPAN
	9/1 (W)	Postwar Japan/ A brief survey of Japanese cinema
	9/3 (F)	<i>Drunken Angel</i> (<i>Yoidore tenshi</i> ; Kurosawa Akira, 1948)
		A DVD reserved at the library; available on Amazon Prime Video
WK 2	9/6 (M)	Labor Day
	9/8 (W)	<i>Stray Dog</i> (<i>Norainu</i> ; Kurosawa Akira, 1949)
		A DVD reserved at the library; available on Amazon Prime Video
	9/10 (F)	Discussion of the two films

Suggested Readings:

Keiko McDonald, “Dream, Song, and Symbol: Akira Kurosawa’s *Drunken Angel*.”
In *Reading a Japanese Film: Cinema in Context* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 33-48.

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, “Stray Dog.” In *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese*

Cinema (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 2000), 147-178.

LIFE AND DEATH

- WK3 9/13 (M) The World of Kurosawa
9/15 (W) *Rashomon* (*Rashomon*; Kurosawa Akira, 1950)
A DVD reserved at the library; available on Amazon Prime Video
9/17 (F) *To Live* (*Ikiru*; Kurosawa Akira, 1952)
A VT reserved at the library; available on Amazon Prime Video

Suggested Readings:

Michael Lucken, "Kurosawa Akira's *Ikiru*, or, the Impossibility of Metaphor." in *Imitation and Creativity in Japanese Arts: From Kishida Ryusei to Miyazaki Hayao* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 107-136.

JAPANESE FAMILY

- WK4 9/20 (M) Japanese family system
9/22 (W) *Tokyo Monogatari* (*Tokyo Story*; Ozu Yasujirō, 1953)
A DVD reserved at the library; available on Amazon Prime Video
9/24 (F) The World of Ozu

Suggested Readings:

Keiko McDonald, "Ozu's *Tokyo Story*: Simple Means for Complex Ends." *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 17, no. 1 (1982): 19-39.

REPRESENTATIONS OF SAMURAI AND MEDIEVAL JPN

WOMEN

- WK5 9/27 (M) A brief history of Samurai
9/29 (W) *Sanjūrō* (*Tsubaki Sanjurō*; Kurosawa, 1962)
available on Amazon Prime Video
10/1 (F) *Harakiri* (*Seppuku*; Kobayashi Masaki, 1962)
available on Amazon Prime Video (\$3.99), MAKE SURE TO
WATCH THE 1962 VERSION

Due: Final Research Paper Topics

- WK6 10/4 (M) *Ugetsu* (*Ugetsu*; Kenji Mizoguchi, 1953)
A VT reserved at the library
available at <https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/401-ugetsu-from-the-other-shore>

10/6 (W) *The Life of Oharu* (Oharu; Kenji Mizoguchi, 1964), in-class showing

10/8 (F) *The Life of Oharu*, in-class showing

Suggested Readings:

Adam Bingham, "Jidai-Geki and Chambara: The Samurai Onscreen." In *Contemporary Japanese Cinema Since Hana-bi* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 13-38.

YAKUZA and CRIME FILMS

WK7 10/11 (M) A brief history of Japanese mafia and Japanese mafia films
Tokyo Drifter (Tokyo Nagaremono: Suzuki Seijun, 1966)

available on Amazon Prime Video (\$3.99)

10/13 (W) *The Yakuza Papers: Battles without Honor and Humanity* (*Jingi naki tatakai*; Fukasaku Kinji, 1973) available on Amazon Prime Video (\$3.99)

10/15 (F) Contemporary Yakuza and Crime Films

WK8 10/18 (M) **Final research paper consultation**

10/20 (W) Mid-term

10/22 (F) **Final research paper consultation**

TRAUMA AND RE-IMAGINING JAPAN'S WAR EXPERIENCE

WK9 10/25 (M) Introduction

10/27 (W) *Grave of the Fireflies* (*Hotaru no haka*; Takahata Isao, 1988)

A DVD reserved at the library, available on Youtube

10/29 (F) *Black Rain* (*Kuroi ame*; Imamura Shōhei, 1989)

A VT reserved at the library, available on Youtube (\$2.99)

Suggested Readings:

Wendy Goldberg, "Transcending the Victim's History: Takahata Isao's 'Grave of the Fireflies.'" *Mechademia* 4 (2009): 39-52.

Owain Jones, "Black Rain and Fireflies: The Otherness of Childhood as a Non-Colonising Adult Ideology." *Geography* 97, no. 3 (2012): 141-146.

Carole Cavanaugh, "A Working Ideology for Hiroshima: Imamura Shohei's *Black Rain*." In *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema*, Dennis Washburn and Carole Cavanaugh ed., 250-270 (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

IDENTITY CRISIS

- WK10 11/1 (M) A brief history of Manga and Anime
11/3 (W) *Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi*; Miyazaki Hayao, 2001)
A VT reserved at the library
11/5 (F) *Your Name (Kimi no nawa*; Shinkai Makoto, 2016)
available on Amazon Prime Video (\$2.99)

Due: Final Paper First Draft

- WK11 11/8 (M) *Kubo* (Travis Knight, 2016)
available on Amazon Prime Video (\$3.99)
11/10 (W) *The Wind Rises (Kaze tachinu*; Miyazaki Hayao, 2020), in-class showing
11/12 (F) *The Wind Rises (Kaze tachinu*; Miyazaki Hayao, 2020), in-class showing

Suggested Readings:

- Michael Lucken, "Miyazaki Hayao's Spirited way, or the Adventure of the Obliques" in *Imitation and Creativity in Japanese Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 175-200.
Timo Thelen, "Disaster and Salvation in the Japanese Periphery, 'The Rural' in Shinkai Makoto's *Kimino na wa (Your Name)*." *ffk Journal* Nr. 4, (2019): 215-230.
Inkoo Kang, "The Trouble with *The Wind Rises*." *Village Voice*, 2013.

MONSTER FILMS

- WK12 11/15 (M) Veterans Day, No Class
11/17 (W) A brief history of Japanese monsters
Godzilla (Gojira; Honda Ishiro, 1954)
available on Amazon Prime Video (\$2.99)
11/19 (F) *Shin Godzilla (Shin Gojira*; An'no Hideaki, 2018)
available on Amazon Prime Video (\$2.99)

Suggested Readings:

- Steve Ryfle, "Godzilla's Footprint." *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 81, no. 1 (2005): 44-63.
Inuhiko Yomota, "Menace from the South Seas: Honda Ishirō's *Godzilla (1954)*." In *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*, ed., Alastair Phillip and Julian Stringer (New York: Routledge, 2007), 102-123.

HORROR FILMS

- WK13 11/22 (M) Either *Ring* (Ringu; Nakata Hideo, 1998) or *Kaidan* (*Kaidan*; Nakata Hideo, 2007) **available on Youtube and Amazon Prime Video (\$3.99)**
11/24 (W) Student Travel Day, No Class
11/26 (F) Thanksgiving Break

Suggested Readings:

Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, “J-Horror: New Media’s Impacts on Contemporary Japanese Horror Cinema.” *Canadian Journal of Film* 16, no. 2 (2007): 23–48.

JAPANESE FAMILIES, REVISITED

- WK14 11/29 (M) *Departures* (*Okuribito*; Takita Yojirō, 2008)
Reserved at the library, available on youtube (\$3.99) or on Amazon Prime Video (Here TV with 7-day free trial)

Suggested Readings:

Michihiro Ama, Transcending Death in *Departures* (*Okuribito*)—A Case Study of Film, Literature, and Buddhism in Modern Japan.” *The Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema* 2, no.1 (Dec. 2010): 35-50.

- 12/1 (W) *Shoplifters* (*Manbiki Kazoku*; Koreeda Hirokazu, 2018)
available on Amazon Prime Video (\$3.99)
12/3 (F) Discussion of the Japanese Families

- WK15 12/6 (M) Presentations on Final Research Papers
12/8 (W) Presentations on Final Research Papers
12/10 (F) Presentations on Final Research Papers

Final Research Papers Due, TBA