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JPNS 371.01: Japanese Film and Anime

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The University Of Montana

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JPNS 371: Japanese Film and Anime

Spring 2017

Course Information

- Course Meets: 11:00 – 11:50 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
- In: LA 307
- Course Instructor: Robert Tuck (robert.tuck@mso.umt.edu)
- Instructor's Office: LA 318
- Student hours: Noon every weekday except Weds

Course Description

This course provides an introduction and overview to Japanese visual media from 1945 to the present day. It introduces a number of major postwar directors and landmark works in both film and anime, locating each work and its director in historical and cultural context. The course features a strong component of background information on postwar Japanese history and international reception of Japanese film. It develops visual literacy, as students learn to analyze film from both formal and thematic perspectives. It also encourages students to engage with secondary critical works in English, and develop their own critical perspectives on how each director approaches the major social, cultural, and political narratives of postwar Japanese society. The course takes as its main themes: (a) the Pacific War, its aftermath, and its enduring memories; (b) gender and sexuality, particularly ideals of masculinity and femininity; and (c) the effects of Japan's postwar economic boom on family and the individual.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- acquire an in-depth knowledge of the major events and narratives of postwar Japanese society
- acquire a critical vocabulary and skills for analyzing the specific formal features of Japanese film and anime
- develop critical skills with which to approach each film's presentation of its ideas and narratives
- develop skills with which to critically assess secondary scholarship on Japanese visual culture, and receive training on how to best incorporate such sources into their own research

Course Prerequisites

You do not need to know Japanese to take the course, though if you can speak Japanese you may pick up on things that non-speakers do not. Also, those of you who are learning the language will probably improve your skills just by watching so much material in Japanese. All of the films are available with English subtitles, and all secondary readings will be in English. However, for

obvious reasons, you will get more out of this course if you have a previous grounding in either film studies or modern East Asian/Japanese history.

Course Materials and Film Viewing Information

There is no assigned textbook for this course. With one exception, the course materials are either films or secondary reading assignments. The exception is the first two volumes of Nakazawa Keiji's manga *Barefoot Gen*, which we will read first, then discuss the anime adaptation during Week # 10:

Nakazawa Keiji, *Barefoot Gen vol. 1* (ISBN 978-0-86719-602-3)
 -----, *Barefoot Gen vol. 2* (ISBN 978-0-86719-619-1)

IMPORTANT NOTE: With one exception in Week #8, **we do not use class time to show movies.** You are expected to watch each film on your own time, as part of the required work for the class. There are various ways to do this.

The easiest way to view the films this semester will be to watch them at the Mansfield Library. Everything assigned during the course is available on DVD at the library, on 4-hour reserve (this means you can check a film out at the front desk for up to 4 hours, but cannot take it out of the library building). To check out a DVD, go to the library circulation desk and ask for the film by name, making sure to mention that it is part of the reserve list for "JPNS 371 Japanese Film and Anime, with Prof. Tuck." Given the relatively large number of students taking the class, it would be a good idea to form small groups and organize showings amongst themselves at mutually convenient times. The Moodle site's discussion function will have a board to allow you to coordinate this.

Most of the films in the first two-thirds of the class are also available via at least one out of Netflix (NF), Amazon Instant Video (AIV), iTunes (IT), FilmStruck (FS), Film Box Live (FBL), YouTube, or similar services. FilmStruck in particular has the Criterion Collection, which includes almost all of the films to be shown during the first half of the course, and so is particularly useful. Film availability is marked on the syllabus below.

This information is correct as of 01/12/2017. A few warnings/suggestions:

- YouTube is unreliable. Films may disappear without warning, and a general search for films on YouTube often produces versions that have been significantly edited from the original in an attempt to avoid copyright claims. I do not recommend YouTube as a way to watch films for this class.
- Netflix has many of the films assigned for the class, though on DVD only. If you intend to use Netflix, you will have to request the DVDs several days in advance to give them time to arrive – and some DVDs may have limited availability. Plan ahead.
- Students can get a limited-time free membership to Amazon Prime, which may allow you to watch some films listed below as AIV for free – please check and let me know.

- You may of course use other internet-based services to watch the films in question, so long as you do so in a way that accords with US copyright law. If you find a film available online in a legitimate venue that I have not mentioned, please let me know and I will pass it on to the rest of the class (after checking it myself).
- One or two of the suggested sources have dubbed rather than subtitled films. I strongly prefer that you watch a subtitled version if at all possible.

I mention AIV, FilmStruck, Netflix etc as a convenient option, not as an endorsement. You do not have to sign up for any of them to take the class; **you can always watch a film for free at the Mansfield Library.**

Content

Some films throughout the course feature overt and occasionally graphic violence, or occasional (though always brief) nudity and/or sexual content. At the start of each week, I will mention in my lecture which films may have such content so that you know what is coming. If, for any reason, you think you might be uncomfortable with sexual or violent content, please contact me as soon as you can to discuss the film. All such communications and arrangements will be treated as confidential.

Course Structure

Classroom activity is primarily structured around in-class discussion; students are expected to have viewed each week's materials in advance of class meetings and to be ready to contribute substantially to discussion with the instructor and other class members. Generally speaking (though not always), the Monday session will provide social and cultural background for the week's course materials, as well as an introduction to the main authors and filmmakers. The Wednesday and Friday sessions will then consist of discussion of each of the main readings for the week.

Your Responsibilities

For each film we cover this semester, you will have to do three things:

- Watch the film as far as possible before the session in which we discuss it, AND take notes as you do so on formal aspects, imagery, or themes that strike you.
- After watching the film, read the relevant assigned critical readings for that film. This is an important part of your learning experience for the class and should not be skipped.
- Look at the questions for the film posted on the Moodle site.
- Think about, write, and post a short (around 2 paragraphs, 250-300 words) written response to the film (compose in a Word or other program, not online, in case your computer crashes and you lose it). Then, post your response on the Moodle site no later than 9:30 a.m. the day of class (the night before is usually a better option).
- Then, come to class prepared to fully participate in discussion of the film in question.

About Postings

Though they are submitted online, postings are formal written assignments and should be treated as such. This means they should be composed in an appropriately formal, academic style (NOT in the style of an email, text, or casual posting on a message board) and carefully proofread for spelling, punctuation and coherency. Because postings are an important part of your development as a writer and critic, and are the basis of our class discussions, you should not miss them. Late or missed postings will result in a zero for that session; more than THREE missed postings will result in a penalty of two percentage points from final grade per missed posting beyond the second (so five missed postings will result in a penalty of -6%)

Postings for each class session are graded as follows:

- Check Plus – “Excellent” - reflecting close attention to both primary and secondary materials, and clearly expressed, carefully argued ideas on their content and significance.
- Check – “Good/Acceptable” – shows a genuine effort to engage with the material and think about its significance; provides at least one coherent, well-supported argument
- Check Minus – “Weak” – sloppy or poorly argued post, showing only a superficial engagement with the material or strongly suggesting student has not watched the film. May also be too short (2-3 lines) or contain multiple spelling/grammar errors.
- No grade – no post submitted, or submitted late. Posts that do not add anything to the discussion (e.g. “I agree with Kevin” and not much else) or which simply repeat previous postings may also be given a grade of zero.

Please see the Moodle course site for further information on posting criteria.

In addition to this, three longer written assignments are due during the semester to help you develop as a writer and film analyst. The first is a research exercise designed to give you experience in locating and assessing suitable sources for academic discussion of Japanese film and anime. Based on this exercise, students will then submit early drafts of a final paper, ahead of submitting the final paper itself at the end of the semester. Late submission of any longer written assignment will result in a penalty of one-third of a letter grade for every calendar day late, including weekends (thus, a B paper turned in 3 days late will receive a C).

Assessment and Grading:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| • Attendance: | 10% |
| • Contribution to in-class discussion | 25% |
| • Weekly written postings: | 20% |
| • Research assignment | 10% |
| • First draft of final paper | 5% |
| • Final paper | 30% |

You are expected to attend all class sessions. Up to THREE absences (for whatever reason) are permitted without penalty. Reserve these for situations where absence is genuinely unavoidable. Further absences beyond the third will result in a deduction of two points per absence from a

student's final grade (so eight absences would result in a 10-point overall penalty; 8 less three allowed = 5, $5 \times 2 = 10$).

Personal or family emergencies necessitating prolonged absence from the course should be discussed with the instructor as soon as practical. Please note that it is usually not possible to 'catch up' once a student has fallen behind. Additionally, other than in the extreme circumstances mentioned above (with suitable documentation), no make-up assignments or extra credit will be offered.

Grade Distribution

A: 93-100 A-: 90-92 B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82 C+: 77-79 C: 73-76 C-: 70-72 D+: 67-69 D: 63-66 D-: 60-62 F: below 60

Academic Honesty

All students are required to abide by the rules of academic honesty as outlined in the U of M [Student Conduct code](#).

In particular, note that plagiarism (that is, submission of other people's ideas without proper acknowledgement of sources) is a serious breach of academic honesty and will result in severe penalties. Any and all work you submit in this class is understood to be your own work; you must, therefore, make it very clear when you are quoting from or using someone else's work. It is essential to cite your sources in full; in this class, papers lacking appropriate citations will be returned ungraded and the student required to re-do the work. For help with citations, see the [Mansfield Library's guide](#).

Note also that double submission (submitting written work that has been or will be submitted for another class, without the explicit permission of both instructors) is not permitted and will result in a zero for the assignment at the very least.

If you are at all unsure about any aspect of the student conduct code, please discuss it with the course instructor. Note also that it is the responsibility of the individual student to read and understand the appropriate sections of the code.

Disabilities

Students with a disability should contact me privately to discuss any specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised I may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services [website](#).

Course Schedule (subject to change, with notice)

Week 1 Akira Kurosawa and the Immediate Postwar

- Monday, 01/23 Introductory session – course aims and overview
- Wednesday, 01/25 *Drunken Angel* (*Yoidore tenshi*; Kurosawa, 1948) (FS, FBL)
- Friday, 01/27 *Stray Dog* (*Norainu*; Kurosawa, 1949) (FS, FBL)
- Critical Readings: Dower, “Cultures of Defeat” in *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of WWII* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000); Yoshimoto, “Stray Dog” in Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 2000)

Week 2 Representing the War after the Occupation

- Monday, 01/30 Introduction and background
- Weds 02/01 *Godzilla* (*Gojira*; Honda, 1954) (AIV, iTunes; YT (paid content) Google Play (paid content); Shoutfactory.com)
- Friday 02/03 *Fires on the Plain* (*Nobi*; Ichikawa, 1959) (FS, YouTube)
- Critical Readings: Yomota, “Menace from the South Seas: Honda’s *Godzilla* (1954)” in Alistair Phillip, Julian Stringer, eds., *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Hauser, “Fires on the Plain: The Human Cost of the Pacific War” in Noletti and Dresser, eds., *Reframing Japanese Cinema* (Bloomington: U of Indiana Press, 1992)

Week 3 Postwar “Classics” of Japanese Cinema: *Rashōmon* and *Tokyo Story*

- Mon 02/06 Intro and background
- Weds 02/08 *Rashōmon* (*Rashōmon*; Kurosawa, 1950) (FS, FBL, AIV, NF (DVD only))
- Fri 02/10 *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo monogatari*; Ozu, 1953) (FS, NF (DVD only); AIV)
- Critical Readings: Yoshimoto, “Rashomon” in *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*; Geist, “Narrative Strategies in Ozu’s Late Films” in *Reframing Japanese Cinema*

RESEARCH EXERCISE DUE IN CLASS 02/10

Week 4 **Anpo, Youth, and the US: Japan in the 1960s**

- Mon 02/13 Intro and Background
- Weds 02/15 *Cruel Story of Youth* (*Seishun zankoku monogatari*; Ōshima, 1960) (FS)
- Fri 02/17 *Pigs and Battleships* (*Buta to gunkan*; Imamura, 1961) (FS, NF (DVD only))
- Critical Readings: Desser, “Cruel Stories of Youth” in *Eros Plus Massacre* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988)

Week 5 **The Japanese New Wave: Teshigahara’s *Woman in the Dunes***

- Mon 02/20 **PRESIDENTS DAY – NO CLASS**
- Weds 02/22 Intro and background
- Fri 02/24 *Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no onna*; Teshigahara, 1964) (NF (DVD only; AIV; FS; IT))
- Critical Readings: Kimura-Steven, “The Otherness of Women in the Avant-Garde Film *Woman in the Dunes*,” in Mostow et al., eds., *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2003)

Week 6 **Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Postwar Modernity**

- Mon 02/27 Intro and Background
- Weds 03/01 *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* (*Onna ga kaida o agaru toki*; Naruse, 1960) (FS, NF (DVD only))
- Fri 03/03 *Yearning* (*Midareru*; Naruse, 1964) (FS)
- Critical Readings: Russell, *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 2008)

Week 7 **Suzuki Seijun: Gangster Movies, Masculinity, and Urban Spaces**

- Mon 03/06 Intro and Background
- Weds 03/08 *Tokyo Drifter* (*Tokyo nagaremono*; Suzuki, 1966) (AIV; FS; IT)
- Fri 03/10 *Branded to Kill* (*Koroshi no rakuin*; Suzuki, 1966) (FS; AIV; NF (DVD only))
- Critical Readings: Antoniou, “*Koroshi no Rakuin*: Branded to Kill” in Bowyer, ed., *The Cinema of Japan and Korea* (Wallflower Press, 2004)

Week 8 Interlude: Tora-San, a Japanese Comic Tradition

- Mon 03/13 Intro and Background
- Weds 03/15 *It's Tough Being a Man (Otoko wa tsurai yo, Yamada, 1969)*
In-class showing, no postings required for today
- Fri 03/17 *It's Tough Being a Man (Otoko wa tsurai yo, Yamada, 1969)*
In-class showing, no postings required for today
- Critical Readings: Ehrlich, “Comic Traveller: Tora-san and the Interweavings of Japanese Popular Culture” in Slaymaker, ed., *A Century of Popular Culture in Japan* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 2000)

Week 9 SPRING BREAK

- Mon 03/20 NO CLASS
- Weds 03/22 NO CLASS
- Fri 03/24 NO CLASS

Week 10 Manga-Anime Adaptation, Memory, and Revisionism: *Barefoot Gen*

- Monday 03/27 Intro and Background
- Weds 03/29 Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen I* (manga to be read for class)
- Fri 03/31 Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen II*, & anime version (1983; YT)
- Critical Readings: Napier, “No More Words: *Barefoot Gen*, *Grave of the Fireflies* and ‘Victim’s History’” in Napier, *Anime: From Akira to Howl’s Moving Castle* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005)

Week 11 Enduring Memories: The A-Bomb and War Crimes in the 80s

- Monday 04/03 Intro and Background
- Weds 04/05 *Black Rain (Kuroi ame; Imamura, 1989; YT)*
- Fri 04/07 *The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On (Yukiyukite shingun; Hara, 1988)* (Fandor.com, YT, or Library DVD)
- Critical Readings: Cavanaugh, “A Working Ideology for Hiroshima: *Black Rain*” in Cavanaugh and Washburn, eds., *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema*; Ruoff and Ruoff, *The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On: Yukiyukite shingun* (Wiltshire, UK: Flicks Books, 1998)

FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS ON 04/07

Week 12 **Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Space Battles: Anime as Contested Narrative**

- Monday 04/10 Intro and Background
- Weds 04/12 *Space Battleship Yamato* (*Uchū senkan Yamato*; Matsumoto et al., 1977) (Library DVD)
- Fri 04/14 *Mobile Suit Gundam I* (*Kidō senshi Gandamu*; Tomino, 1981) (Library DVD)
- Critical Readings: Ashbaugh, “Contesting Traumatic War Narratives: *Space Battleship Yamato* and *Mobile Suit Gundam*” in *Imag(in)ing the War in Japan: Representing and Responding to Trauma in Postwar Japanese Literature and Film* (Leiden: Brill, 2010)

Week 13 **Apocalypse Then: Images of Disaster, Reclusion, and Survival**

- Monday 04/17 Intro and Background
- Weds 04/19 *Grave of the Fireflies* (*Hotaru no haka*; Takahata, 1988) (Library DVD only)
- Fri 04/21 *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*; Miyazaki, 1984) (NF, DVD only)
- Critical Readings: Napier, “No More Words: *Barefoot Gen*, *Grave of the Fireflies* and ‘Victim’s History’”(see above); Paik, “The Saintly Politics of Catastrophe” in Paik, *From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Catastrophe* (U of Minnesota Press, 2010)

Week 14 **Dystopic Visions and Societal Breakdown: *Akira* and *Battle Royale***

- Monday 04/24 Intro and Background
- Weds 04/26 *Akira* (*Akira*; Ōtomo, 1988) (NF (DVD only); AIV (dubbed))
- Fri 04/28 *Battle Royale* (*Battoru rowaiaru*; Fukasaku, 2000) (NF (DVD only); AIV; YT (paid content, dubbed))
- Critical Readings: Wiley, “Of Brutality and Betrayal” in Stahl, ed., *Imag(in)ing the War in Japan*; Lamarre, “Born of Trauma” *Positions*, 2008

Week 15 **Zero Blind Spots: *Kaze tachinu* and Contemporary Japan**

- Mon 05/01 Intro and Background
- Weds 05/03 *The Wind Rises* (*Kaze tachinu*; Miyazaki, 2013) (NF, DVD only)
- Fri 05/05 Workshop & Discussion for Final Papers
- Critical Readings: Inkoo Kang, “The Trouble with *The Wind Rises*” *Village Voice*, 2013

FINAL PAPER DUE IN PROF. TUCK’S MAILBOX BY 5:00 p.m. MONDAY MAY 8th

NOTE: THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE.