Japanese Film Culture

Instructor: Yuka KANNO
Office hours: Thursday after class and by appointment
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Class meetings: **Tuesday and Thursday, 16:40-18:10**
Screenings: TBA

**Course Description**
This course offers an introduction to film and visual culture in Japan by covering a wide range of topics, including women filmmakers, representation of minorities and their communities, as well as film festivals and video art. We will look at the history and theory surrounding these topics, examining concrete visual texts and practices (actual film and art production and reception). As images play a critical role in forming identity, fantasy, and social reality both on personal and collective levels, we make recourse to film and visual culture to understand contemporary social, cultural, and political issues in our daily lives. In particular, this course closely analyzes gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, nationality, and the ways in which each visual text and practice addresses them in form, content, and style.

As Kyoto is not only considered to be the birthplace of cinema in Japan, but also remains an active site of contemporary film and TV production, we will also take field trips to major film studios, such as Shochiku Kyoto Studio and Toei Studios, Kyoto. We are also planning to visit shooting locations in Gion and Nijishin, as well as the film theatres to see how the city reutilizes historical cinematic locales for new film experiences. Students are strongly encouraged to go to the Kyoto Historica International Film Festival to be held from October 31 to November 8. See more details: http://www.historica-kyoto.com/en/

**Requirements**

Attendance and Participation (30%)
Three short response papers (15%×3= 45%)*
Research Paper or Visual Project (25%): due **Monday, December 12. **

*The purpose of the short response papers is to evaluate your understanding of key terms and concepts from the readings. You will also be asked to analyze certain scenes from the films based on what you have learned.

** Students can chose either research paper or visual project for the grade. The visual project can be a creative video work or visual essay based on concrete plans. Students need to submit a plan sheet with the title, summary, and purpose of the project.

· Attendance will be taken at each meeting, and you are asked to engage substantially in class discussion and demonstrate familiarity with the required readings.
· Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class counts as absence. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in an F grade.
· Please turn off all electronic devices (cell phones and laptop computers) during screenings.
**Required Readings:**
All texts are available on Courseworks site or Dropbox.

**Schedule** (subject to change):

September 6:
Introduction to Japanese Film Culture

**Interpreting Film: The Case of Ozu Yasujiro**
Screening: *Late Spring* (Ozu Yasujiro, 1949) or *Early Summer* (Ozu Yasujiro, 1951)

September 8

September 13

September 15

**Women, Melodrama, and Empire: Naruse Mikio**
Screening: *Floating Clouds* (Naruse Mikio, 1955)

September 20

**The Male Star and His Body**
Screening: *Crazed Fruit* (Nakahira Ko, 1951) or *The Season of the Sun* (Furukawa Takumi, 1956)

September 27

September 29

**Cinematic Kyoto: Studio and jidaigeki**
Screening: *Twilight Samurai* (Yamada Yoji, 2002)

October 4

October 6
• Field Trip to the Studio (Shochiku or Toei).

Kyoto in Film: Memory and Local Identity
Screening: Conflagration (Ichikawa Kon, 1958)

October 11

October 13

Mizoguchi and Kyoto
Screening: Sisters of the Gion (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1936)

October 18

October 20
• Sato Tadao, Kenji Mizoguchi and the Art of Japanese Cinema (New York: Berg, 2008), 41-54

Representing Otherness
Screening: Go (Yukisada Isao, 2001)

October 25

October 27
• Mika Ko, Japanese Cinema and Otherness, 160-170.

Love and Friendship in Girls’ Film
Screening: Kamikaze Girls (Nakashima Tetsuya, 2004)

November 8

November 10

**Anime/Animal**

Screening: *Ponyo on the Cliff* (Miyazaki Hayao, 2008)

November 15

November 17

**Kawase Naomi and Autobiographical Ethnography**

Screening: *Suzaku* (Kawase Naomi, 1997) or *The Mourning Forest* (Kawase Naomi, 2007)

November 22

November 24

**Hamano Sachi: Aging and Sexuality**

Screening: *Lily Festival* (Hamano Sachi, 2001)

November 29

December 1

**Queer Film Culture in Japan**

December 6

December 8