Japanese Film Culture

Instructor: Yuka KANNO
Office hours: Thursday after class and by appointment
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Class meetings: Wednesday, 14:55-16:25; 16:40-18:10
Screenings: TBA

Course Objectives
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 local film activities. Our class has a double aim. First we will learn the history, theory, and analytical approaches informed by film studies in order to be able to read the filmic texts accurately. Particularly, we will focus on the issues of gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity, and the ways in which they are expressed in form, content, and style. The second aim is to understand and experience the film culture in national, regional, and local contexts, which require not only film studies but also historical and sociological imagination. Therefore, our goal is to learn how to read the filmic images and narrative, while paying close attention to specific contexts in which these images and narratives are produced and circulated. As cinema plays a critical role in forming identity and social reality both on personal and collective levels, we will make recourse to film and visual culture to understand contemporary social, cultural, and political issues in our daily lives.

Content and Organization
Throughout the course we will learn conceptual frameworks, terminology, and methodology necessary to analyzing film and visual texts. Adding to that, As Kyoto is not only the birthplace of cinema in Japan, but also remains an active site of contemporary film culture and TV production, we will take field trips to local film theatres and events to see how the city reutilizes historical cinematic locales for new film experiences.

Format
The course consists of film screenings, lectures, and discussions based on the assigned readings, all of which will take place on campus. Also, there will be two field trips to cinematic sites.

Requirements
Attendance and Participation (30%)
Two short response papers (10 %×2= 20%)*
Research Paper or Visual Project (50%): due Friday, April 13, 2018 **

*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 choose either a research paper or a visual project for the grade. The visual project can be a creative video work or visual essay based on a concrete plan. 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 the Courseworks site or Dropbox.

Schedule (subject to change):

January 10
Introduction to Japanese/Kyoto Film Culture

January 17
Interpreting Film: The Case of Ozu Yasujiro
Screening: Late Spring (Ozu Yasujiro, 1949) or Early Summer (Ozu Yasujiro, 1951)

January 24
Women, Melodrama, and Empire: Naruse Mikio
Screening: Floating Clouds (Naruse Mikio, 1955)

January 31
The Male Star and His Body
Screening: Crazed Fruit (Nakahira Ko, 1951) or The Season of the Sun (Furukawa Takumi, 1956)

February 7
Kansai Film:
Screening: The Makioka Sisters (Ichikawa Kon, 1983)
February 14
Local Film Culture in Kyoto
Field trip to a local film theatre/event (TBA)

February 21
Kyoto in Film: Memory and Local Identity
Screening: *Sisters of the Gion* (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1936)
- Sato Tadao, *Kenji Mizoguchi and the Art of Japanese Cinema* (New York: Berg, 2008), 41-54

February 28
Representing Otherness
Screening: *Go* (Yukisada Isao, 2001)

March 7
Love and Friendship in Girls’ Film
Screening: *Kamikaze Girls* (Nakashima Tetsuya, 2004)

March 14
Anime/Animal
Screening: *Ponyo on the Cliff* (Miyazaki Hayao, 2008)

March 28
Hamano Sachi: Aging and Sexuality
Screening: *Lily Festival* (Hamano Sachi, 2001)

April 4 & 11
Presentations on Research Paper/Visual Project: