



KCJS Spring 2025

Women's Documentary Films in Japan and Beyond

Instructor: Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano

Office hours: Wednesday after class or by appointment

Email: mwadamar@gmail.com

Class meetings: Wednesday, 13:10-14:40 and 14:55-16:25

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to unlearn “Documentary Film History” via examining documentary films directed by Japanese women filmmakers and beyond. When it comes to filmmaking, male directors and cameramen have historically made up a large percentage of the workforce. Especially in the history of documentary film, most directors who are considered canon are male. In the case of Japanese cinema, for example, names such as Noriaki Tsuchimoto, Shinsuke Ogawa, Kazuo Hara, and Kazuhiro Soda must be the first that come to mind as central figures in the history of documentary film.

However, the number of female documentary filmmakers has been increasing as digitalization has brought about further miniaturization of filming equipment, with the software required for editing has become cheaper and simpler. East Asian cinemas are no exception. This course will reconsider the history of documentary film by tracing the genealogy of documentary films made by women. While shedding light on the cinematic scenes, we will scrutinize contemporary documentary films made by women in Japan and beyond.

Organization

This course will be taught once a week, not twice a week, on Wednesday in the third and fourth periods consecutively. If we do not take a 15-minute break between two class slots due to a screening, we may finish our class a bit earlier than 16:25.

In addition, to consider the historical meaning of “cinema” rather than simply “watching a movie,” students will be required to go to art house movie theaters in Kyoto City twice during the semester to see films that are currently screened. Students who have another lecture after this course on Wednesday, please let me know in advance. Please note that these activities of going to the theaters are not voluntary, but part of this course.

Format

The course consists of film screenings, lectures, and discussions based on the screenings and the assigned readings, all of which will take place on campus. As I described above, there will be three field trips to art house movie theaters.

Requirements

Attendance and participation (20 + 10%)

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each meeting, and you are asked to engage substantially in class discussion and demonstrate familiarity with the required readings.

Arriving more than ten minutes late to class counts an absence. More than two unexcused absences will result in a “F” grade.

Please turn off all electronic devices—cell phone and laptop computer—during screenings.

Two short response papers on field research trips and the film you have seen there	(20%): due next class
Presentation on one's final essay	(20%)
Final essay	(30%): due Friday, April 25

Required Readings

All texts will be available on the Dropbox, that I'll explain during the first class.

Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1

January 15

Introduction

Screening:

Stories We Tell (dir. Salah Polley, 2012, 1h 48m)

Readings:

Peter Bradshaw, "Stories We Tell review—Sarah Polley's complex love letter to her parents," *The Guardian* (Thu 27 Jun 2013, 15.29 BST)

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/jun/27/stories-we-tell-review> (accessed August 26, 2024).

Sheila O'Malley, "Stories We Tell review," *Roger Ebert.com* (May 19, 2013)

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/stories-we-tell-2012> (accessed August 26, 2024).

Week 2

January 22

Women's stories from Taiwan

Screening:

Small Talk (dir. Hui-Chen Huang, 2016, 1h 28m)

Readings:

"Ri Chang Dui Hua/Small Talk,"

<https://www.berlinale.de/en/2017/programme/201710814.html> (accessed August 26,

2024).

“Small Talk: a video love letter,”

<https://asiatimes.com/2017/05/small-talk-video-love-letter/> (accessed August 26, 2024).

“INTERVIEW: Facing Past Pain and Empowering Others Through *Small Talk*,”

<https://international.thenewslens.com/article/63925> (accessed August 26, 2024).

Week 3

January 29

Women Documenting the Olympics

Screening:

Olympia Part One: Festival of the Nations (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938, 2h 1m)—excerpt

Olympia Part Two: Festival of Beauty (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1938, 1h 36m)—excerpt

Tokyo Olympiad (dir. Kon Ichikawa, 1965, 2h 50m)—excerpt

Official Film of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 Side A (dir. Naomi Kawase, 2022, 1h 59m)—excerpt

Tokyo 2020 Side B (dir. Naomi Kawase, 2022, 2h 3m)

Readings:

Wakae Nakane, “Constructing an Intimate Sphere Through Her Own Female Body:

Naomi Kawase’s Documentary Films,” In *Female Authorship and the*

Documentary Image: Theory Practice and Aesthetics, edited by Boel Ulfsdotter

and Anna Backman Rogers, 171-185. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,

2018.

Optional Readings:

“河瀬直美総監督 映画「東京 2020 オリンピック SIDE:A/SIDE:B」への思い,”

Sponichi Annex (2022 年 6 月 1 日 05:30)

<https://www.sponichi.co.jp/entertainment/news/2022/06/01/kiji/20220531s00041000652000c.html> (accessed August 26, 2024).

“東京五輪公式記録映画 河瀬直美総監督に聞く【ウェブ限定・インタビュー全容】,” *Tokyo Web* (2022 年 6 月 30 日 05:00) <https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/186005>

(accessed August 26, 2024).

Week 4

February 5

Visiting Movie Theater Day 1: TBA

Week 5

February 12

Queer Cinema from Tokyo and Osaka

Screening:

Shinjuku Boys (dir. Kim Longinotto, 1995, 53m)

Thus, a Noise Speaks (dir. Kaori Oda, 2012, 38min)

Readings:

Rona Murray, "Speaking About or Speaking Nearby? Documentary Practice and Female Authorship in the films of Kim Longinotto," In *Female Authorship and the Documentary Image: Theory Practice and Aesthetics*, edited by Boel Ulfsdotter and Anna Backman Rogers, 107-123. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

Optional Reading:

"小田香：未知と対話し、過去と現在をつないでいく | GINZA CREATOR'S FILE vol.2" *GINZA* (2021 年 1 月 4 日)

<https://ginzamag.com/categories/culture/198852> (accessed August 26, 2024).

Week 6

February 19

Turn History Upside Down

Screening:

A Japanese Village (dir. Shinsuke Ogawa, 1982, 3h 30m)—excerpt

Devotion: A Film About Ogawa Productions (dir. Barbara Hammer, 2000, 1h 22m)

Readings:

Abé Mark Nornes, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese*

Documentary (Minneapolis, Minn. : University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp.xxx-xxx.

Sarah Keller, *Barbara Hammer: Pushing Out of the Frame* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021) pp. 1-21, 107-115.

Week 7

February 26

Spring Break

Week 8

March 5

Taking a Short Detour: Barbara Hammer and Her Films

Screening:

Dyketactics (dir. Barbara Hammer, 1974, 04:03m)

Superdyke (dir. Barbara Hammer, 1975, 17:37m)

Nitrate Kisses (dir. Barbara Hammer, 1992, 1h 5m)

Readings:

Sarah Keller, *Barbara Hammer: Pushing Out of the Frame* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021) pp. 1-21, 107-115.

Week 9

March 12

Food Ecology

Screening:

Meat (dir. Frederic Wiseman, 1976, 1h 52min) —excerpt

The Story of a Butcher Shop (dir. Aya Hanabusa, 2013, 1h 48m)

Readings:

Official Site: <https://www.seinikuten-eiga.com/english/> (accessed on August 22, 2024)

Distributor's site: <http://yashihofilms.com/portfolio-item/seinikuten> (accessed on August 22, 2024).

Week 10

March 19

Disaster and Survivors

Screening:

Double Layered Town (dir. Haruka Komori, 2019, 1h 18m)

Optional Readings:

細萱航平, “小森はるかとは瀬尾夏美の取り組みにみる地面と風景および被災地域で暮らす住民のアイデンティティの関係性についての考察,” 藝術研究第 33 号 2020, pp.49-59.

青山 太郎・高森 順子, “災害の記憶伝承における映像上映の創造性—『波のした、土のうえ』をめぐる対話の場について—,” メディアと社会 第 9 号, 2017, pp.19-36.

Week 11

March 26

Visiting Movie Theater Day 2: TBA

Week 12

April 2

Student Presentations

Week 13

April 9

Student Presentations

Week 14

April 16

Winding Down

Course policies

As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit

acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated.

If you are a student with a disability and have a Disability Services-certified 'Accommodation Letter' from your home institution, please send me this letter before the first day of class to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you might have a disability that requires accommodation and do not have an accommodations letter, you should contact the Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement at Columbia University (uge@columbia.edu).