

Introduction to Classic Japanese Cinema

(eleven four-hour class meetings)

Class #1, January 8, 2009: Course introduction (syllabus, goals, assignments, evaluation, etc.)

film: *Tokyo-Ga*. Dir. Wim Wenders. (1985, 92 min.);

Patriotism [Yukoku]. Dir. Yukio Mishima. Perf. Yukio Mishima and Yoshiko Tsuruoka. 1966. 29 min.

theme: film as *representational ethos* (extension of photography—Hollywood) or *presentational ethos* (extension of theater—Japan); encoding ideology

Class #2, January 15, 2009:

film: *A Story of the Floating Weeds [Ukigusa Monogatari]*. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Perf. Takeshi Sakamoto and Choko Iida. 1934. Silent. 86 min.

readings: Richie *Japanese Film* pp 54-9; Yasujiro Ozu HO; Richie “Stories of the Floating Weeds” HO.

theme: Image; mise-en-scene; transitions; ellipsis; plot construction; parallels

trailer: *Tokyo Story*

Class #3, January 29, 2009:

film: *Tokyo Story [Tokyo Monogatari]*. Dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Perf. Chishu Ryu, Chieko Higashiyama, and Setsuko Hara. 1953. 136 min.

readings: “Tokyo story” pp 396-401; David Bordwell essay;

theme: Dissolution of the family; ellipses, non-plot narrative;

assignment: Response Paper #1 (*A Story of the Floating Weeds*).

trailer: *Rashomon*

Class #4, February 5, 2009:

film: *Rashomon*. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Cinematography: Kazuo Miyagawa. Perf. Toshiro Mifune, Masayuki Mori, Takashi Shimura, Chiaki Minoru, and Machiko Kyo. 1950. 88 min.

• video introduction to *Rashomon* by Robert Altman (10 min.);

• *The World of Miyagawa Kenzou* (12 min)

readings: Atakugawa: “Rashomon” and “In the Grove”; “Akira Kurosawa on *Rashomon*”; Prince essay

theme: relative truths vs. relative realities; restricted vs. unrestricted narratives

assignment: Response Paper #2 (*Tokyo Story*); **announce titles for preces.**

trailer: *Throne of Blood*

Class #5, February 12, 2009:

film: *Throne of Blood* [*Kumosujo*]. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Cinematography: Kazuo Miyagawa. Perf. Toshiro Mifune, Isuzu Yamada, and Chiaki Minoru. 1957. 109 min.

readings: Hapgood; "Kurosawa's Shakespeare Films"; Donaldson: "Surface and Depth"; Prince: "Shakespeare Transposed."

theme: Translating/interpreting Western literature to the non-native screen

assignment: Response Paper #3. (*Rashomon*); **precis #3** (outside film review) due.

trailer: *Ugetsu*

Class #6, February 19, 2009:

film: *Ugetsu*. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Cinematography: Kazuo Miyagawa. Screenplay: Yoshikata Yoda (model for the *Star Wars* character, former Kyoto University professor, open house in Kyoto near Kamogawa River). Perf. Machiko Kyo and Masayuki Mori. 1953. 97 min.; *Interview with Kazuo Miyagawa*. 1992. 10 min.

readings: Lapote: "From the Other Shore"; Ueda: "The House in the Thicket" and "Serpent's Lust"; de Maupassant: "How He Got the Legion of Honor"; Kenji Mizoguchi HO

theme: Persecuted women

assignment: Response Paper #4 (*Throne of Blood*).

trailer: *Sansho the Bailiff*

Class #7, February 26, 2009:

film: *Sansho the Bailiff* [*Sansho Dayu*]. Dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. Cinematography: Kazuo Miyagawa. Screenplay: Yoshikata Yoda. Perf. Kinuya Tanaka, Yoshiaki Hanayagi, and Kyoko Kagawa. 1954. 124 min.

readings: Le Fanu: "The Lessons of *Sansho*"; Agai Mori "Sansho Dayu" (1915); "An Account of the Life of the Deity of Mount Iwaki"; Richie: "Mizoguchi and the Period-Film" (*Japanese Film* pp. 129-134);

theme: Women in feudal society

assignment: Response Paper #5: (*Ugetsu*)

trailer: *Crazed Fruit* [*Kurutta Kajitsu*]

Class #8, March 5, 2009:

film: *Crazed Fruit* [*Kurutta Kajitsu*]. Dir. Ko Nakahira. Perf. Yujiro Ishihara, Masahiko Tsugawa, and Mie Okada. 1956. 86 min.

readings: Stephens: "Heat Stroke!"; Raine: "Imagining a New Japan"; "The Modernization of Japanese Film" (714-721);

theme: *taiyozoku*, Japan's New Wave, aggressive feminine behavior
assignment: Response Paper #6 (*Sansho the Bailiff*); **precis #2** (essay) due.
trailer: *Fires on the Plain* video introduction by Donald Richie (12 min.)

Class #9, March 12, 2009:

film: *Fires on the Plain [Nobi]*. Dir. Kon Ichikawa. Perf. Eiji Funakoshi, Osamu Takizawa, and Mickey Curtis. 1959. 104 min.

readings: Stephens: "Both Ends Burning"

theme: Japan's multi-response to WWII

assignment: Response Paper #7. (*Crazed Fruit*); **precis #3** (outside film review) due.

trailer: *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*

Class #10, March 19, 2009:

film: *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs [Onna ga Kaidan o Agarutoki]*. Dir. Mikio Naruse. Perf. Hideko Takamine, Masayuki Mori, and Tatsuya Nakadai. 1960. 111 min.

readings: Lopate: "They Endure"; Russell: "Diary of Ginza Bar Hostess"; Bock: "Essential Naruse"; Takamine "About Mikio Naruse"; Richie: "Ozu and Naruse" (*Japanese Film* pp. 119-129)

theme: feminine gaze

assignment: Response Paper #8 (*Fires on the Plain*)

trailer: *Woman in the Dunes*

Class #11, March 26, 2009:

film: *Woman in the Dunes [Suna no Onna]*. Dir. Hiroshi Teshigahara. Perf. Eiji Okada and Kyoko Kishida. 1964. 123 min.

readings: Gilli: "The Spectral Landscape of Teshigahara, Abe, and Takemitsu"; Bock: "Shifting Sands"

theme: Changing paradigms of humanity ("new proofs of innocence"); person as individual (no body) and person as institution (some body); eroticism of the cage; absurdity; gullibility vs. trust

assignment: Response Paper #9. (*When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*)

Due by April 1, 2009:

assignment: Response Paper #10 (*Woman in the Dunes*).