

INTRODUCTION TO EAST ASIAN CINEMA
AEAS140 (8497)
Spring 2007 Fourth Quarter

Class Time and Location: MW 5:45–8:35 in HU128

Instructor: Mark Blum

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This course is a general introduction to East Asian – in this case focusing mostly on post-War Japanese-speaking cinema. The course presumes no prior knowledge of East Asia or cinema and its artistic tradition. The goal of the course is to view and discuss, as a class, six films, emphasizing an understanding of their cultural background and an appreciation of their aesthetic merits as films and cultural settings in Japan.

Please note this is a quarter course, beginning on March 14. The midterm is April 18; the final is May 14. Normally one class will be devoted to viewing a film, and the subsequent class will be devoted to discussing it, but sometimes there will be two films shown before discussion takes place. The films are generally not available in the library or from the instructor, and there can be no provisions for missed classes or missed exams. It is therefore essential that you plan to attend all meetings of this class. Do not come to class late. Wandering in and out of class is extremely distracting to the instructor and to other students in a class of this nature.

Grading will be determined as follows: 20% -- class attendance, preparation, and contribution; 25% mid-term exam; 25% final exam; 30% (three reaction papers at 10% each). Attendance will be taken at each class, beginning on March 19. There will be only one opportunity to sign the sign-up sheet: at the beginning of each class. No unexcused absences are allowed. Two points (2%) will be deducted for each such absence.

Numerical scores will be converted to course grades according to the following scale: A=95–100; A-=91–94; B+=88–90; B=85–87; B-=81–84; C+=78–80; C=75–77; C-=71–74; D+=68–70; D=65–67; D-=61–64; E=below 61.

The three one-page reaction papers will be due at the beginning of class on the dates assigned. Guidelines for these papers are attached, but the topic will be given out in the class previous to the due date. If the paper is not submitted on-time, **for each day you be will marked down one full grade (e.g. B → C).**

There is no talking, eating, or drinking during the viewing or discussing of the films. This is an academic exercise and you must give the film your full attention. All cell phones and pagers must be turned off before class begins.

The discovery of any cheating (including plagiarism or shared work of any kind) on an exam or written assignment) will result in 1) expulsion from this class with a failing grade, and 2) a referral of the matter to appropriate university officials. Note that copying of **any** material from the Internet without citation is plagiarism. There is material concerning all these films on many Internet sites, but if you take this material without citation, it's cheating, and you fail.

Schedule

March 14	Overview of the course. Lecture on history of cinema in Asia. Film: <i>Rashomon</i> (Japan – Kurosawa Akira, 1950)
March 19	Film: <i>Double Suicide</i> (Japan – Shinoda Masaaki, 1961)
March 21	First Reaction Paper due. Discussion
March 26	Film: <i>Ran</i> (Kurosawa, 1985)
March 28	Discussion
April 2-9	No Class (Spring Break)
April 11	Film: <i>Raise the Red Lantern</i> (China – Zhang Yimou, 1991)
April 16	Second Reaction Paper due. Discussion.
April 18	Midterm Exam
April 23	Film: <i>Tampopo</i> (Japan – Itami Juzo 1985)
April 25	Film: <i>Shall We Dance?</i> (Japan – Masayuki Suo, 1997)
April 30	Third Reaction Paper due. Discussion
May 2	Film: <i>Spring, Fall, Summer, Winter. . . and Spring</i> (Korea – Kim Ki-duk, 2004)
May 7	Discussion. Film: to be announced.
May 14 (M)	FINAL EXAM: 5:45PM – 7:45PM

NOTE: Titles of films are subject to change without notice (depending on availability)

"Reaction Paper"

Guidelines

The purpose of these short papers is NOT to summarize the plot of the film, but rather for you to articulate your own intellectual and aesthetic reactions to the film. The paper should NOT be a plot summary and it should NOT be a simple catalogue of your impressions. The paper SHOULD be a coherent series of observations supported by specific examples drawn from the film. Plot summaries should be as brief as possible and always relevant to your observation. You only have one page to express yourself, so you should not waste your limited space with superfluous descriptions of plots or characters.

- * papers are limited to **one** double-spaced typed page (12 point type face)
 - * use standard 8.5 x 11 inch white paper
 - * handwritten papers will not be accepted
 - * no cover sheet is necessary
 - * at the top of the page write your name and the number of the Reaction Paper, as in "Charlie McCarthy, Reaction Paper #2"
 - * check carefully for spelling and grammar mistakes (run a spell-check program)
 - * if English is not your native language, go to the Writing Center for assistance
 - * plan the paper **before** you write
 - * write short clear sentences
 - * organize paragraphs logically
 - * plan transitions between paragraphs
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- * watch the film carefully and take detailed notes on plot, etc.
 - * try to determine the main "point," "argument," or "theme" of the film
 - * avoid meaningless clichés and jargon. Example:

I feel...

I think...

At this point in time...