

JAPANESE AND CHINESE FILM: AN INTRODUCTION

Coordinator: Moya Duffy

It was only when Kurosawa's film, *Rashomon*, won The Grand Prix at the prestigious Venice Film Festival in 1951 that the West recognized the richness and complexity of Japanese film. Similarly, Mainland Chinese film was unknown until Zhang Yimou took home Berlin's Golden Bear award for the lush and magnificent *Red Sorghum*. We view at home and discuss in class 6 Japanese films and 6 Chinese films. Clips and stills are shown in class for discussion and interpretation. Course pack articles pertinent to each film detail the formal language of film and how each film explores some aspect of culture, history and social/political events. This is a repeat of a study group given in 2010. Please watch Kurosawa's *RAN* for the first class.

Readings and other Required Materials:

12 films to be viewed at home available on Netflix, Netflix streaming or Amazon streaming.

Course pack comprised of articles about film language and pertinent articles relating to each film. For example, *Noh Theater* (Kurosawa's film, *Ran*, draws on *Noh* conventions).

Moya Duffy lived and taught in Hong Kong for many years and ran a group, which screened Asian films to fund scholarships to Chinese University (HK). She has coordinated previous film study groups.

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Object of Course:

The course has 2 objectives:

- To learn, discuss and explore the formal elements of film (film language) and how each filmmaker uses these elements to create masterworks.
- To learn more about and discuss Japanese/Chinese history, culture and whatever social issues the film explores.

All readings are from the course pack.

Films in order of viewing:

- *(The first six films are Japanese & the last 6 films are Chinese)*
- *Ran*: Kurosawa Akira
- *Ugetsu Monogatari*: Mizoguchi Kenzo
- *Tokyo Story*: Ozu Yasujiro
- *Spirited Away*: Miyazaki Hayao
- *Woman in the Dunes*: Teshigahara Hiroshi
- *Vengeance is Mine*: Imamura Shohei
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- *To Live*: Zhang Yimou
- *Ju Dou*: Zhang Yimou
- *Blind Shaft*: Li Yang
- *Still Life*: Jia Zhangke
- *Yi Yi*: Edward Yang
- *Chungking Express*: Wong Kar-Wai

The Three Masters

Week One:

Film: **Ran**: Kurosawa Akira

Culture: Noh Theater, Buddhism

Readings: *What are the formal elements of film & why do they matter.*

Outside Views of the Japanese film: Donald Richie

Realism and Formalism: Louis Gianetti

Week Two:

Film: **Ugetsu Montogatari**: Mizoguchi Kenzo

Culture: Noh Theater and ghosts

Readings: *Editing: Andre Bazin and the tradition of realism: Louis Gianetti*

Ugetsu: Why is it a masterpiece? Keiko I. McDonald

Week Three:

Film: **Tokyo Story**: Ozu Yasujiro

Culture: TBA

Readings:

Ozu's innovative film techniques:

Mise-en-Scene:

Animation

Week Four:

Film: **Spirited Away:** Miyazaki Hayao

Culture: Shintoism, Manga

Readings: *Shinto Perspectives in "Spirited Away": James W. Boyd & Tetsuya Nishimura*

Animated films: Barsam

Japanese New Wave

Week Five:

Film: **Woman in the Dunes:** Teshigahara Hiroshi

Culture: Post-War Japan

Readings: *Camera movement:*

Sand, Man, and Symbols: Teshigahara's the woman in the Dunes:

Week Six:

Film: **Vengeance is Mine:** Imamura Shohei

Culture: USA & Japan

Readings: *Eros plus Massacre*

Chinese Film

Fifth Generation Film (mainland)

Week Seven

Film: **to Live:** Zhang Yimou

Culture: 20th. Century Chinese history

Readings: *From the fifth to the sixth generation: and interview with Zhang Yimou. We Endure therefore We Are: Rey Chow*

Week Eight

Film: **Ju Dou:** Zhang Yimou

Culture: The Confucian State

Readings: TBA

Sixth Generation Film

Week Nine

Film: **Blind Shaft:** Yi Lang

Culture: Post-Mao

Readings: TBA

Week Ten

Film: **Still Life:** Jia Zhangke

Culture: China's new consumer society

Readings: TBA

Taiwan

Week Eleven:

Film: **Yi Yi:** Edward Yang

Culture: Taiwan and China

Readings: TBA

Hong Kong

Week Twelve

Film: **Chungking Express:** Wong Kar-Wai

Culture: Film industry H.K and the return of HK to China

Readings: TBA