

EAAS V3317: Ozu and World Cinema

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First offered as an ExEAS course at Columbia University in Fall 2003

Class Meetings: Monday & Wednesday 4:10-5:25

Screenings: Monday 6:10-

1. Course Description:

Since the 1960s, Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu (1903-1963) has been the object of increased popular and critical attention by international film scholars and audiences. Ozu is widely considered “the most Japanese” of Japanese directors, but what does “the most Japanese” mean? Do Ozu’s films express the special characteristics of Japanese cinema? If so, what constitutes the cultural specificity of Japanese cinema? At the same time, Ozu was a big fan of foreign films. The director considered “the most Japanese” was in fact steeped in foreign popular culture. How can Ozu be located in global film cultures and international histories of cinema?

This course reexamines Ozu’s works in terms of their social and cultural context, from both national and transnational perspectives. It locates Ozu’s films at a dialogic focal point of Japanese, American and European cinema. Through an intense examination of Ozu’s films as primary texts, this course pays particular attention to Japanese modernization in the 1920s; the influence of wartime film policy; reconfiguration of traditional Japanese art forms during the postwar Occupation; the decline of the Japanese film studio system and the popularization of international film festivals. We will also discuss the mutual influence between American and European cinema and Ozu’s films and Ozu’s legacy in international films, including New German Cinema (Wim Wenders), American independent films (Jim Jarmusch), and contemporary Japanese films (Kiju Yoshida, Masayuki Suo). Films to be shown include *Tokyo Story*, *Autumn Afternoon*, and *I Was Born, But...*

On the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Yasujiro Ozu’s birth, Shochiku Studio, where Ozu made all of his films, is sponsoring a world-wide retrospective of his films. This includes screenings and programs at the New York Film Festival in October 2003, which will be a supplement to the course.

2. Texts:

Required Textbooks:

Bordwell, David. *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988.
(available to purchase at Labyrinth Books)

Coursepack (available to purchase at Copyquick, 1211 Amsterdam Ave. between 119th & 120th Streets)

Recommended Additional Books (not required):

Richie, Donald. *Ozu*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1972.

In addition to the weekly on-campus screenings, you have the unusual opportunity to view most of Ozu's films at the New York Film Festival Ozu Retrospective. There are \$7.00 student discount tickets at the box office of Walter Reade Theater of the Lincoln Center.

3. Course Requirements:

Participation

(Attendance, Class Discussion, and Web-memos): 30% of grade

You should read the assigned materials in time for class and actively participate in class discussion. Attendance to class lectures, screenings and discussion is mandatory. Please be punctual, as lateness to class will be penalized. In the case of illness or emergencies, you must provide appropriate documentation and get the instructor's approval. Excessive absences will result in a reduction of your final grade and may result in FAILURE of the course.

In addition, you must make one web-memo posting per week on the course website, in which you discuss the films, the assigned class readings, and the lectures. The instructor will provide questions about each film before the screening. These questions will serve as a starting point for in-class discussion and web-memos. Web-memo postings will not be individually graded but will count in the final grade. Postings are due by **each Wednesday by 8 AM.**

Midterm Exam Paper

(5-7 page midterm exam paper on films, readings, and lectures): 30%

Due: Nov. 5

Questions for the exam paper will be distributed in class on **Oct. 27**. In your exam paper, you will be asked to discuss particular issues raised by the assigned readings on the film that you choose, and to critically review their arguments based on lectures, class discussion, web-memos, your own viewing of the film, and additional readings from the supplementary bibliography below. For instance, What is lacking in their arguments? What are the shortcomings of their discussion? What do you find or what interests you in the actual film viewing? What is your reaction to the film? etc.

Final Paper

(1 page research proposal + 10 page research paper): 40% (10%+30%)

Proposal Due: November 12

Final Due: on the scheduled exam date

For your final paper, choose one or more films of Ozu. You can choose any film from Ozu's filmography even if it was not screened in class. Bearing your criticism of assigned readings in mind, articulate your argument on the film based on your viewing of the film, additional reading and research (articles in journals, film reviews in newspapers and magazines, etc). For example, consider such questions as...

-What was the political, economic, or cultural context when the film was made, and what was the relationship between the context and the film?

-What was the historical condition of the Japanese film industry when the film was made, and what influence did that condition have on the film, technically, aesthetically, financially, etc?

-What kind of relationship does the film have with other films by Ozu, in terms of its motif, theme, aesthetic style, technique, etc?

-Does the film have a relationship with international films of the past or present, and how?

-Does the film have any relationship with other cultural forms, such as traditional art forms, novels, classical music, etc?

Students are required to submit a one-page paper proposal including a description of your paper topic, the title(s) of the film(s) selected and a draft bibliography by **Nov. 12**. This paper proposal counts toward 10% of your final grade.

Late work will not be accepted and will negatively affect your final grade. Incompletes will be only considered in cases of sickness or other dire circumstances, for which you must provide documented evidence.

Plagiarism is a serious offence and can lead to an F for the course and further disciplinary action. Students should acknowledge all research and reading sources in their assignments (be they from books, magazines, journal articles, Internet sources, DVD commentaries, etc.) with proper footnote and bibliographic citations. Remember to keep a copy of submitted assignments until your final grade is posted.

4. Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

9/3: Introduction: Who Is Yasujiro Ozu? What Is Film History?

No Reading Assignment.

Week 2: "The Most Japanese Director"?

9/8: History of Japanese Cinema and Ozu

Optional Screening: *Early Summer (Bakushu)*, Ozu, 1951)

Reading:

Richie, *Ozu*, 1-17.

9/10: Historiography of Japanese Cinema and Ozu

Reading:

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 5-30.

Optional Reading:

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "The Difficulty of Being Radical: The Discipline of Film Studies and the Post Colonial World Order," *Japan in the World*, eds. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunin (Durham: Duke UP, 1993): 338-53.

Week 3: Traditional Arts, Cinema, and Ozu

9/15: Traditional Arts and Transcendental Style

Screening: *Late Spring (Banshun)*, Ozu, 1949)

Excerpt: *Throne of Blood (Kumonosujo)*, Akira Kurosawa, 1957)

Reading:

Richie, "The Influence of Traditional Aesthetics on the Japanese Film." *Cinematic Landscape: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan*, eds. Linda C. Ehrlich and David Desser (Austin: U of Texas P, 1994): 155-64.

Optional Readings:

Paul Schrader, *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1972): 3-55.

Kathe Geist, "Playing with Space: Ozu and Two-Dimensional Design in Japan." *Cinematic Landscape*, 283-98.

9/17: "Presentational Practices" in Ozu

Discussion: *Late Spring*

Readings:

Kristin Thompson, "Late Spring and Ozu's Unreasonable Style," *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988): 317-52.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 307-11.

Optional Reading:

Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1979): 154-85.

Week 4: Modernization and Ozu

9/22: Modernization and Cinema

Screening: *I Was Born, But...* (*Umaretewa mitakeredo*, Ozu, 1932)

Excerpt: *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1925)

Reading:

Donald Kirihiro, *Patterns of Time: Mizoguchi and the 1930s* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1992): 30-70.

9/24: Modernization and Ozu

Discussion: *I Was Born, But...*

Reading:

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 31-50, 143-59, 224-29.

Week 5: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Ozu

9/29: What is Classical Hollywood Cinema?

Screening: *Woman of Tokyo (Tokyo no onna)*, Ozu, 1933)

Excerpts: *Underworld* (Josef von Sternberg, 1927)

Scarface (Howard Hawks, 1932)
The Maltese Falcon (John Houston, 1942)

Reading:

Bordwell, "Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures." *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed., Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia UP, 1986): 17-34.

10/1: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Ozu

Discussion: *Woman of Tokyo*

Reading:

Kristin Thompson & Bordwell, "Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu," *Screen* 17.2 (1976): 41-73.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 237-47.

Week 6: Sound and Silence in Japanese Cinema and Ozu

Special Screening: *The Only Son* (*Hitori musuko*, Ozu, 1936) Unavailable on video. Students must see this film at the Ozu Retrospective @ Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center. 10/4 (Sat) 1:30; 10/6 (Mon) 7:45; or 10/12 (Sun) 1:30. There is a \$7.00 student discount.

10/6: The Popularity of Benshi

Reading:

J. L. Anderson, "Spoken Silents in the Japanese Cinema; or, Talking to Pictures: Essaying the *Katsuben*, Contextualizing the Texts," *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History*, eds. Arthur Nollelli, Jr., and David Desser (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992): 259-311.

10/8: Coming of Sound in Japanese Cinema and Ozu

Discussion: *The Only Son*

Readings:

Kenji Iwamoto, "Sound in the Early Japanese Talkies," *Reframing Japanese Cinema*: 312-27.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 262-66, 268-74.

Week 7: Wartime Film Policy and Ozu

Special Screening: *There Was a Father* (*Chichi ariki*, Ozu, 1942) Unavailable on video. Students must see this film at the Ozu Retrospective @ Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center. 10/9(Thu) 4:30 or 8:45. There is a \$7.00 student discount. For those who cannot see the film on 10/9, non-subtitled version will be screened on regular schedule (10/13 6:10 @410 IAB). The instructor will provide the summery of the story.

10/13: Wartime Film Policy

Reading:

Peter B. High, *The Imperial Screen: Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931-1945* (Madison: U on Wisconsin P, 2003): 3-91.

10/15: World War II and Ozu

Discussion: *There Was a Father*

Readings:

Yoshida Kiju, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, trans. Daisuke Miyao and

Kyoko Hirano (An Arbor: U of Michigan P, forthcoming): 39-51.
Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 289-95.

Week 8: Post War Occupation and Ozu

10/20: Postwar Occupation and Censorship

Screening: *Record of a Tenement Gentleman* (*Nagaya shinshi roku*, Ozu, 1947)
Optional Special Screening: *A Hen in the Wind* (*Kaze no naka no mendori*, 1948)
Unavailable on VHS. Students are strongly recommended to see this film at the Ozu Retrospective @ Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center. 10/10 (Fri) 4:15 or 7:45. There is a \$7.00 student discount.

Reading:

Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1992): 13-103.

10/22: Postwar Occupation and Ozu

Discussion: Record of a Tenement Gentleman & A Hen in the Wind

Readings:

Edward Fowler, "Piss and Run: Or How Ozu Does a Number on SCAP," *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema*, Dennis Eashburn and Carole Cavanaugh, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001): 273-92.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 296-305.

Optional Reading:

Yoshida, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, 51-58.

Week 9: Postwar Melodrama and Ozu

10/27: Postwar Melodrama

Screening: *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo monogatari*, Ozu, 1953)

Excerpt: *Twenty-four Eyes* (*Nijushi no hitmi*, Keisuke Kinoshita, 1954)

Reading:

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "Melodrama, Post Modernism, and the Japanese Cinema," *East-West Film Journal* 5.1 (Jan. 1991): 28-55.

Optional Reading:

Maureen Turim, "Psyches, ideologies, and melodrama: The United States and Japan." *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, ed., Wimal Dissanayake (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993): 155-178.

10/29: Tokyo Story

Discussion: Tokyo Story

Readings:

Keiko I. McDonald, *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major Japanese Films* (London: Associated UP, 1983): 201-27.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 328-33.

Optional Reading:

Arthur Nolletti, Jr., "Ozu's *Tokyo Story* and the 'Recasting' of McCarey's *Make Way for Tomorrow*," *Ozu's Tokyo Story*, David Desser, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997): 25-52.

Week 10: Special Guest Lecture

11/5: Mr. Yoshishige (Kiju) Yoshida (Director) & Ms. Mariko Okada (Actor) talk on Ozu

Reading:

Yoshida, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, 1-3, 87-117.

Week 11: Ozu and The Golden Age of Japanese Cinema in the 1950s in Full Color

11/10: Japanese Cinema in the 1950s in Full Color

Screening: *Equinox Flower (Higanbana)*, Ozu, 1958)

Excerpts: *Good Morning (Ohayo)*, Ozu, 1959)

Drifting Weeds (Ukikusa), Ozu, 1959)

Tokyo Drifter (Tokyo nagaremono), Seijun Suzuki, 1966)

Sonatine (Takeshi Kitano, 1993)

Red Desert (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964)

The Women (George Cukor, 1939)

Readings:

Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film: A Concise History, with a Selective Guide to Video and DVDs* (New York: Kodansha International, 2002): 107-76.

David Desser, "Gate of Flesh(tones): Color in the Japanese Cinema," *Cinematic Landscape*, 299-322.

11/12: Ozu in the 1950s

Discussion: *Equinox Flower*

Readings:

Edward Branigan, "The Space of *Equinox Flower*," *Screen* 17.2 (1976): 74-105.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 343-359.

Optional Reading:

Hasumi Shigehiko, "Sunny Skies," *Ozu's Tokyo Story*, 118-29.

Week 12: Japanese New Wave and Ozu

11/17: Japanese New Wave

Screening: *An Autumn Afternoon (Sanma no aji)*, Ozu, 1962)

Excerpt: *A Cruel Story of Youth (Seishun zankoku monogatari)*, Nagisa Oshima, 1961)

Reading:

David Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988): 1-38.

11/19: Ozu in His Autumn Years

Discussion: *An Autumn Afternoon*

Readings:

Kathe Geist, "Narrative Strategies in Ozu's Late Films," *Reframing Japanese Cinema*: 92-111.

Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, 370-76.

Optional Reading:

Yoshida, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, 119-42.

Week 13: Ozu's Legacy I: Contemporary Japanese Cinema

11/24: Japanese New Wave Directors Now

Screening: *Women in the Mirrors* (*Kagami no onnatachi*, Yoshishige Yoshida, 2003)

Excerpts: *Abnormal Family, Older Brother's Wife* (*Hentai kazoku, aniki no yome-san*, Masayuki Suo, 1983)

Maboroshi (*Maboroshi no hikari*, Hirokazu Kore-eda, 1995)

Reading:

Yoshida, *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, 145-49.

11/26: Japanese New New Wave

Discussion: *Women in the Mirrors*

Reading:

Richie, "New Japanese Cinema." *Post Script* 18.1 (Fall 1998): 8-10.

Optional Reading:

Joseph Christopher Schaub, "Generation Women: The Evolution of Women's Roles in Two Films by Masayuki Suo." *Post Script* 18.1 (Fall 1998): 89-100.

Week 14: Ozu's Legacy II: World Cinema

12/1: New German Cinema & American Independent Films

Screening: *Tokyo-ga* (Wim Wenders, 1985)

Excerpt: *Stranger Than Paradise* (Jim Jarmusch, 1984)

Reading:

Wim Wenders, *The Logic of Images: Essays and Conversations*, trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Faber, 1991): 60-65, 106-7.

12/3: New German Cinema & American Independent Films

Discussion: *Tokyo-ga & Stranger Than Paradise*

Readings:

Steve Barnes, "Independence Within Limits: The Influence of Alternative Cinema on American Independent Feature Filmmaking," *Persistence of Vision* 6 (Summer 1988): 91-100.

Flo Leibowitz, "Neither Hollywood Nor Godard: The Strange Case of STRANGER THAN PARADISE." *Persistence of Vision* 6 (Summer 1988): 20-25.

Week 15: Conclusion

12/8: Conclusion

No Reading Assignment.

5. Supplemental Bibliography of Japanese Cinema

Abe, Mark Nornes and Fukushima Yukio. *The Japan/America Film Wars: WWII Propaganda and Its Cultural Contexts*. Harwood Academic P, 1994.

Barrett, Gregory. *Archetypes in Japanese Film: The Socio-political and Religious Significance of the Principal Heroes and Heroines*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna

- UP, 1989.
- Bernardi, Joanne. *Writing in Light: The Silent Scenario and the Japanese Pure Film Movement*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2001.
- Bock, Audie. *Japanese Film Directors*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978.
- Bordwell, David. "Our Dream Cinema: Western Historiography and the Japanese Film," *Film Reader* 4 (1979): 45-62.
- Buruma, Ian. *A Japanese Mirror: Heroes and Villains of Japanese Culture*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1984.
- Davis, Darrell William. *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film*. New York: Columbia UP, 1996.
- Dower, John. *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon, 1986.
- Ehrlich, Linda C., and David Desser, eds. *Cinematic Landscape: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1994.
- Freiberg, Freda. "Genre and Gender in World War II Japanese Feature Films," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 12.3 (1992): 245-52.
- Galbraith, Stuart II. *The Japanese Filmography: 1900 through 1994*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1996.
- Kirihara, Donald. "A Reconsideration of the Institution of the Benshi," *Film Reader* 6 (1985): 41-53.
- Lehman, Peter. "The Mysterious Orient, the Crystal Clear Orient, the Non-existent Orient: Dilemmas of Western Scholars of Japanese Film." *Journal of Film and Video* 39 (Winter 1987): 5-15.
- McDonald, Keiko I. *From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature in Film*. Armonk; M. E. Sharp, 2000.
- . *Japanese Classical Theater in Films*. London: Associated UP, 1994.
- Miyao, Daisuke. "Blue vs. Red: Takeshi Kitano's Color Scheme." *Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities* 18.1 (Fall 1998): 112-27.
- Mellen, Joan. *Voices from the Japanese Cinema*. New York: Liveright, 1975.
- . *The Waves at Genji's Door: Japan through its Cinema*. New York: Pantheon, 1976.
- Nygren, Scott. "Reconsidering Modernism: Japanese Film and the Postmodern Context," *Wide Angle* 11.3 (July 1989): 6-15.
- Richie, Donald. *Japanese Cinema: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990.
- . *Japanese Cinema: Film Style and National Character*. New York: Doubleday, 1971.
- Sato, Tadao. *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, trans. Gregory Barrett. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982.
- Schilling, Mark. *Contemporary Japanese Film*. New York: Weatherhill, 1999.
- Yoshimoto, Mitsuhiro. "Logic of Sentiment: The Postwar Japanese Cinema and Questions of Modernity," diss. U of California, San Diego, 1993
- . *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*. Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 2000.