

565:320 “The Samurai Tradition in Japanese Literature and Film”  
Rutgers University, Spring 2016

## Syllabus

### Instructor

Professor Paul Schalow [schalow@rutgers.edu](mailto:schalow@rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Scott Hall Rm. 325, MThu 11:30 am-12:30 pm, or by app't.

Class: MW5 2:50-4:10 pm, Murray 113 CAC

### Course Description

The course explores the literary and philosophical traditions of the samurai warrior in Japanese history and the ongoing meaning of those traditions in contemporary Japanese culture. Coursework consists of analysis and discussion of visual media such as documentary and feature-length films and readings on warriors and swordsmanship. The course is divided into two units: Unit 1: *Legendary Warriors*, and Unit 2: *The Akō Vendetta & the Ethical Use of the Sword*. All readings are in English translation.

### Grading & Requirements

Your semester grade is based on 16 *Response Sheets* & 4 *Discussion Forums* (total 40%), two *Unit Papers* (25% each; total 50%), and *class participation* (10%).

One-page, single-spaced *Response Sheet* (2 pts.) must be uploaded before class to Sakai “Assignments”; late assignments automatically lose a point and will be accepted in hard copy only. To participate in *Discussion Forums* (2 pts.), you must post a question and answer a question under Sakai “Forums.” A 5-page, double-spaced *Unit Paper* (25 pts.) is due at the end of each unit. See the syllabus for a description of the assigned topic for each unit paper.

### Required Texts (available for purchase at Rutgers Bookstore or Jersey Books)

- Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* (Overlook Press, 1995)
- Donald Keene, *Chūshingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (Columbia, 1971)
- Miyamoto Musashi, tr. by Thomas Cleary, *The Book of Five Rings* (Shambhala Classics, 2000)

### Learning Goals

See full statement of Asian Languages and Cultures Departmental Learning Goals at [http://sas.rutgers.edu/component/docman/doc\\_download/532-sas-learning-goals](http://sas.rutgers.edu/component/docman/doc_download/532-sas-learning-goals)

### Academic Integrity Policy

See full statement of current Academic Integrity Policy at

[http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_9\\_01\\_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf)

### Attendance and Assignments Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you must miss a class, please use the absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to alert me to the reason for your absence.

## Class Schedule

### Unit 1—Legendary Warriors

- 20 Jan. Introduction to the course.  
Film clip: “Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire” (PBS, 2004)  
(Parts 1 & 2: *The Way of the Samurai & He Cut His Belly*) 20 mins.
- 25 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Yamato Takeru: Loser as Hero”-  
“Sakanoue no Haruzumi: Warrior’s Shame” pp. 3-60. **Due: Response #1**
- 27 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Minamoto no Raikō: Alert and  
Penetrating”-“Minamoto no Yoshiie: The Samurai of the Greatest Bravery  
under Heaven” pp. 61-109. **Due: Response #2**
- 1 Feb. Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Minamoto no Yoshitsune: A  
Hero Hounded” pp. 110-156. **Due: Response #3**
- 3 Film: “Men Who Tread On the Tiger’s Tail” (Tora no o wo fumu otoko,  
1945) dir. Kurosawa (60 mins.) **Due after class: Forum #1**
- 8 Reading: *Tale of the Heike*, chaps. 1-4, pp. 265-312. **Due: Response #4**
- 10 Reading: *Tale of the Heike*, chaps. 5-8, pp. 313-369. **Due: Response #5**
- 15 Reading: *Tale of the Heike*, chaps. 9-12, pp. 370-445. **Due: Response #6**
- 17 Performance: Yoko Hiraoka performs *Tale of the Heike* accompanying  
herself on the lute (*biwa*). **Due after class: Forum #2**
- 22 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Kusunoki Masashige: A  
Guerrilla of Unflinching Loyalty” pp. 157-187. **Due: Response #7**
- 24 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Takeda Shingen and Uesugi  
Kenshin: Two Warlords” pp. 204-231. **Due: Response #8**
- 29 Film clip: “Samurai Banners” (Fūrin kazan, 1969) dir. Inagaki.
- 2 Mar. Reading: Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, pp. 3-62. **Due:  
Response #9**  
Film clip: “Duel at Ganryū Island” (Samurai Trilogy III, 1956) dir.  
Inagaki.
- 7 Yagyū Munenori, *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War*, pp.  
65-111 (in *The Book of Five Rings*). **Due: Response #10**

- 9 Class cancelled: **First 5-page paper due.** Topic: Choose one of the legendary warriors from Unit 1 and describe how he is depicted in literature and/or film. Discuss what deeds or accomplishments made him a legend and what aspects of his character or thought contributed to his fame. Address the ways that literary or cinematic depictions may differ from the historical facts. Give specific examples from readings and/or films to support your discussion.

[12-20 Mar. Spring Break]

## Unit 2—The Akō Vendetta and the Ethical Use of the Sword

- 21 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* “Yamamoto Tsunetomo: *Hagakure* (Hidden in Leaves)” pp. 287-303. **Due: Response #11**
- 23 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account” pp. 304-321. **Due: Response #12**
- 28 Film clip: The sword wound—Asano’s attack on Kira in the shōgun’s court. “Chushingura: The Loyal 47 Retainers” (Chūshingura, 1962) dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” (Genroku Chūshingura, 1941) dir. Mizoguchi.
- 30 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “The Forty-Seven Samurai: Arguments” pp. 322-338. **Due: Response #13**
- 4 Apr. Film clip: The raid—the night assault on Kira’s mansion and the taking of the head. “Chushingura” dir. Inagaki; and “The 47 Rōnin” dir. Mizoguchi.
- 6 Reading: Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, “Kō no Moronao: When a Warrior Falls in Love,” pp. 188-203. **Due: Response #14**
- 11 Reading: Keene, *Chūshingura: Treasury of Loyal Retainers* Acts 1-6, pp. 29-103. **Due: Response #15**  
Film clip: *Chūshingura* Act 5, “Two Shots Fired” (NHK, 2010) 19 mins.
- 13 Reading: Keene, *Chūshingura: Treasury of Loyal Retainers* Acts 7-11, pp.104-180. **Due: Response #16**  
Film clip: *Chūshingura*, Act 7, “The Ichiriki Teahouse” (NHK, 2010) 15 mins.
- 18 False honor and the inhumane use of the sword.  
Film: “Harakiri” (Seppuku, 1962) dir. Kobayashi (134 mins.)
- 20 “Harakiri” cont. **Due after class: Forum #3**

- 25 Nonviolence in the face of violence.  
Film: "Samurai Fiction" (1998) dir. Nakano (111 mins.)
- 27 "Samurai Fiction" cont. **Due after class: Forum #4**
- 1 May Class cancelled. **Final 5-page paper due.** Topic: Discuss the Akō Vendetta in terms of the samurai concept of the ethical use of the sword. Explain how competing allegiances made it difficult to determine if the actions of the 47 Ronin were righteous or not. Discuss how the vendetta was dramatized in the puppet theater (1748) and in modern film. How do post-war films address the ethical use of the sword differently? Give specific examples from readings and films to support your discussion.