

# **JAPANESE DIRECTORS**

FALL SEMESTER 2019

FILM 3325.501

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Office hours: by appointment

## **CLASS LOCATION AND TIMES**

### **TUESDAYS**

7:00 PM - 9:45 PM

August 20, 2019 – December 3, 2019

MC 2.410

Direct link to class: <https://go.utdallas.edu/film3325.501.19f>

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Although Japanese film and culture has become much more familiar to American audiences than ever before – with the rise in popularity of such imports as anime, sushi, and Iron Chef – many of the greatest and most important film directors from that island nation remain relatively unknown. This course will provide an introduction and background to some of the important voices that have informed the development of Japan's cinema from its Golden Age, through its New Wave period, and into its Modern incarnation. Emphasis will be on important works as well as key stylistic components of each director's work. Please note: previous knowledge of the Japanese language is not required, as all films are subtitled.

## **TEXTBOOK (Required)**

At this point, there is no assigned textbook. However, selected readings will be required and provided on our eLearning page.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

There are three levels of learning objectives specific to this course

- **“Student Learning Objectives”** are what I expect you to take away from this course. These objectives are specific to this particular class, and reflect my goals in teaching this material.
- **“General Education Core Objectives”** are those overall skills that the State of Texas expects you to gain from this course. These are not subject specific, but should transfer to other areas of study.
- **“FILM 2332 Course Objectives”** are where the above objectives meet. These are the State objectives viewed through the lens of the material we will cover in this class. This section also details the way in which the achievement of those objectives will be assessed.

### STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Become conversant with the important directors of Japanese film, and be able to discuss their individual films and their overall themes and techniques.
- Develop an awareness of the historical and cultural events and trends that inform the films of these directors.
- Gain an understanding of the ways in which Japanese film and films from other nations are both similar and different, and be able to discuss some of the philosophical and cultural bases of Japanese film.

### GENERAL EDUCATION CORE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate competency in the following core objectives:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts, and constructing solutions.
- **Communication skills** – Students will demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork** – Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal, and consider different points of view.
- **Social responsibility** – Students will demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.

### FILM 2332 COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Analyze the artistic, industrial, and social-cultural dynamics of cinema (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Communication skills** – Create short film evaluations that demonstrate mastery of critical concepts and approaches that deepen engagement with cinema (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Teamwork** – Work together to sharpen analytical skills and to explore different points

of view regarding assigned films (assessed via the group presentations, and class discussions).

- **Social responsibility** – Demonstrate knowledge of how society and culture shape film aesthetics and reception (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).

## **GRADING**

Your final grade will be calculated based on the following factors:

- Group Project:** 20%
- Research paper:** 15%
- Exam 1:** 20%
- Exam 2:** 20%
- Final Exam:** 25%

My grading scale is as follows:

- 97-100 = A+
- 94-96 = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 74-76 = C
- 70-73 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 64-66 = D
- 60-63 = D-
- 0-59 = F

## **ATTENDANCE**

**You are expected to attend all classes, to be attentive and considerate, and to keep up with the assignments listed on the syllabus.** Screenings and readings are all to be completed BEFORE the class session for which they are assigned. If you must miss a class, you remain responsible for all course material covered in that class: there are no make-up classes, and each class will be taught only once. Each class period represents one week's worth of work, so attendance will be taken in every class, either by roster, or by collecting presentation evaluation forms.

Please note that the *Rules on Student Services and Activities* of the University of Texas System will be strictly adhered to. For information on the administration's rules and policies regarding student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, e-mail use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grade policies, disability services, and religious holy days, consult the material, generated by the administration, available in the relevant folder on eLearning or in the University catalog.

You are allowed two "Free" unexcused class absences during the second semester. The third unexcused absence will result in your final grade being lowered by half a point (an A becomes a B+); the fourth unexcused absence will result in your final grade being lowered by a full point (an A becomes a B). Any additional absences after four will result in your automatically failing the class.

Note also that **all course requirements must be met: this means that if you miss more than four class periods, and/or fail to take and complete all exams and assignments in full, you will guarantee an automatic failing grade for the course. Make-up exams will be permitted only in the most serious circumstances (family emergency or illness) which must be documented to my and the university's satisfaction.**

**In order to prevent any misunderstandings later on, you MUST provide the following statement to me, exactly as it is written, with no changes or alterations, and signed with your name and student ID number, either on paper in the first class, or emailed to me (at jep140330@utdallas.edu) prior to attending the second class of the semester. Failure to do so will disqualify you from taking the first exam. If you register for the class after the first class meeting has been held, you MUST provide this statement to me within 48 hours of your first class period.**

**The statement to be signed and emailed is:**

"I have read and understood the course syllabus for FILM 2232. I accept, understand, and agree to all the expectations outlined therein, including rules regarding attendance, participation, grading, assignments, etc., and agree to abide by them. I am fully aware that any failure to fulfill these expectations will result in a failing grade. I further understand that, should any problems or complications occur during the semester, it is my responsibility to speak to the professor about them."

### **IN-CLASS ELECTRONICS**

**This class has a strict no laptop, no tablet, and no phone policy. Please do not bring laptops or tablets to class** unless prior arrangements have been made. Please keep your phones on silent/vibrate and out of sight. Electronics are great, but they are distracting to you and everyone around you, including your professor. I don't want to embarrass anyone in class, so consider this your first and only warning.

To answer an often-asked question, No, you may not use your laptop to take notes, unless you have a note from the Office of Student Accessibility addressing this issue. Not only does that violate the "no electronics" policy above, but recent studies have shown that you tend to retain information/notes better when they are taken by hand than when they are typed. So put the laptop/tablet/phone away and take notes the way we did back in the dim and distant past. Be thankful that I'm not requiring you to carve your notes on stone tablets like we did when I was your age.

### **PARTICIPATION**

I expect each one of you to actively participate in each class. I realize that this may be difficult for some of you, but this class should be as much discussion as lecture, with you coming to each session prepared not only to discuss the film in question, but also the assigned reading. I value your participation, so feel free to share your thoughts on the films, on the readings, or on my lectures, albeit in a polite and respectful way (there's only one exception to this: I do not accept the comment "it was boring," when discussing a film. That shows me that you didn't engage with the film and is not worthy of a college level class. Find something else to say). You are not only allowed to, but encouraged to, disagree with me during class, but please bear in mind the comment about being polite and respectful. Since this class is all about actively engaging with film, it's appropriate that you actively engage with the class. When you do, I promise you'll find the entire experience far more enjoyable and much more fulfilling. As well, it's been my experience that those students who engage most actively in the class wind up with the best grades, so there's that.

## **SCREENINGS**

Watching the weekly films is mandatory. No exceptions. All of the films included in the syllabus are on reserve at the UNT library, although you are free to watch them in any way that is convenient. It is entirely your responsibility to watch these films in a timely fashion, as we will not be viewing them in class. If you choose not to view the films, for whatever reason, I can pretty much guarantee you will not pass the class.

Some of the films listed in the syllabus are available on Kanopy.com. Kanopy is a free streaming video service that can be accessed through the UTD library system. To sign up, simply go to Kanopy.com and sign up using your UTD ID and password. Films available on Kanopy will be noted in the schedule. Please note that many of the films we watch are from the Criterion Collection, and thus may be available on Criterion's streaming service (<https://www.criterionchannel.com/>).

## **PROMPTNESS**

I expect you to arrive promptly for class, and to be ready to start the lecture/discussion promptly at 7:00 PM. We have a lot to cover in a relatively short amount of time, so please plan to arrive on time. As well, I expect that you will stay through the entire class, and not attempt to leave early, unless you have spoken to me prior to class. Leaving before the class is finished will result in your being marked absent for the class, and that absence will be counted against your grade.

## **GROUP PROJECT**

At the end of the first class session and the week following, you will be expected to organize into groups for the presentations that will begin in Week 3. A group sign-up sheet will be available for your name and contact email addresses; it will be scanned and posted on eLearning once it is completed (you may also photograph it yourself). Each group will choose one of ten class sessions on offer.

On that day, during the first twenty to thirty minutes of class, you will briefly present three or four interesting points you learned from watching the film for the week, as well as the assigned reading(s) and your own independent research, and lead the class in discussion of three questions derived from concepts and issues presented by the film and your research. As this is an advanced class, I expect everyone in the group to take part in presenting your research findings. No one is permitted to stand up and do nothing.

I'm not looking for a presentation of trivia here, but an exploration of themes, analyses, and/or critical readings that both deepen and broaden our knowledge of the film in question. For example, were you to present on the science fiction classic *Robot Monster* (1953), mentioning that the main shooting location in Bronson Canyon was the same as the location of the Batcave in the 1966 *Batman* TV show is trivia. Fun to know, but it contributes nothing to our understanding of the film. However, you might compare the structure of the film to the works of Italian Neo-Realists such as Roberto Rossellini or Vittorio de Sica, and explain why that is important, or you might want to examine the film in terms of its place within the apocalyptic film genre of the 1950s and in the context of the Cold War that was raging during that time. Or you might choose a combination of all of the above.

Each group must make specific reference to research sources, fully crediting the authors of such works, and must make specific reference to the week's film and the assigned reading(s). You may employ a clip or two, whether from the week's film or from another film that illustrates something usefully, but you will be penalized if clips in total take up more than five minutes of your allotted time.

Several groups in the past have begun their presentation with quizzes on Kahoot! and other platforms. Let me discourage you from doing this in the strongest possible terms. These presentations are academic exercises, not games, and although Kahoot! is a lot of fun, it adds little, if anything, to an understanding of film. Please focus your efforts on helping us approach and see deeply into the film in question rather than playing party games.

The presentations will be graded both by you and by your peers at the end of class; the grading forms will serve as attendance for that day as well, so do not fail to turn in a grading form, as that will result in your being marked absent from class. All students in the group will receive the same grade, and any students who request to do so may read the comments generated by his or her classmates that day after class, or the week following the presentation (when the grade will be available as well).

**In spite of the above, if it is apparent that you, as an individual participant, have not contributed equally to the presentation, I will adjust your individual grade as I feel necessary. If it is clear that your portion of the presentation is largely plagiarized, or if you are absent on the afternoon of the presentation, you will receive a grade of zero (0). I reserve the right to adjust grades for any other reason other than those listed here as circumstances warrant. As in all cases, the final grading decision is mine and mine alone.**

## **EXAMS**

**EXAMS #1 and #2 will be held during class time.**

**FINAL EXAM DATE, TIME, AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**FINALS WEEK FOR FALL 2019 SEMESTER IS SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13.**

**Please do not be late for the Exams. Once the exam has begun, no latecomers will be seated.**

All exams will be 50 questions, multiple choice. Material will come from lectures, any assigned readings, our in-class discussions, film screenings, and any supplemental material supplied during class. In other words, anything is fair game. I don't believe in "trick" questions, but I will ask questions designed to probe your knowledge and assimilation of the material covered.

## **CELL PHONES AND OTHER MATTERS OF COMMON COURTESY**

As mentioned above, cell phones **MUST** be turned off or set to vibrate during class time. No exceptions. Taking calls during class time is likewise prohibited. This is not the time for talking to your friends, texting your parents, sharing photos, or playing games on your phone. It is disrespectful both to me and to your fellow students. If you insist on using your phone during class time, you will be asked to leave, and your absence will be counted against your grade. If you have an emergency of some kind that might require you to take a call during class, you **MUST** see me before class begins and alert me to this situation.

I personally don't mind if you bring drinks to class, but please be mindful that others use the room we're in, so make sure you clean up after yourself, dispose of trash properly, and leave the room as clean and neat as you found it. I do not intend to clean up after you – as an adult, that is your responsibility.

## **A NOTE ABOUT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM**

I have every expectation that any material that you turn in or submit for a grade will be your original work. **Plagiarism – which includes buying or otherwise obtaining material from others and passing it off as**

**your own, as well as copying or paraphrasing the work of another without proper attribution – will not be tolerated. This includes material found on Wikipedia or on the Internet.** As a writer myself, I take this matter very seriously. Any assignment submitted to me and found to contain plagiarized material – in whole or in part – will receive a grade of zero and could lead to further action on the part of the University. End of discussion. Please familiarize yourself with UTD’s policy on plagiarism (<http://www.utdallas.edu/library/help/PlagiarismTutorial/Textonlytutorial.htm>) and take it to heart, as it is fully your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for any form of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please feel free to see me.

**Consider this your first and final warning on the subject.**

For a detailed discussion of UTD’s policy on academic integrity, plagiarism, and other subjects, please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The Office of Student Success offers a number of resources to assist students in a number of academic disciplines, including writing, communication, reading, and study skills. Please visit <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentuccess> for more information on these helpful services.

### **COMET CREED**

*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

### **UT DALLAS SYLLABUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

It is the policy and practice of the University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one week advance notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098, or by email at [studentaccess@utdallas.edu](mailto:studentaccess@utdallas.edu).

**SCHEDULE**

- August 20            **Introduction to Class**  
Review of Syllabus, Outline of Expectations  
Brief History of Japan and Japanese Cinema  
**REQUIRED READING:**
- August 27            **THE GOLDEN AGE: Kenji Mizoguchi**  
**WATCH:** *Ugetsu Monogatari* (Daiei Studios, 1953; 96 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**
- September 3        **THE GOLDEN AGE: Yasuhiro Ozu**  
**WATCH:** *Tokyo Story* (Shochiku, 1953; 136 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #1\*\***
- September 10      **THE GOLDEN AGE: Akira Kurosawa**  
**WATCH:** *Drunken Angel* (Toho, 1948; 150 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #2\*\***
- September 17      **THE GOLDEN AGE: Ishiro Honda**  
**WATCH:** *Matango* (Toho Studios, 1963; 89 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #3\*\***
- September 24      **\*\*EXAM 1** (Covers material through Week 5)\*\*
- October 1            **THE GOLDEN AGE: Kon Ichikawa**  
**WATCH:** *The Burmese Harp* (Nikkatsu, 1956; 116 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #4\*\***
- October 8            **THE GOLDEN AGE: Masaki Kobayashi**  
**WATCH:** *Kwaidan* (Bungei/Toho, 1964; 183 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #5\*\***
- October 15          **THE NEW WAVE: Kaneto Shindo**  
**WATCH:** *Onibaba* (Kindai Eiga Kyokai/Toho Eiga Co., 1964; 103 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #6\*\***

## FILM 2332

- October 22      **THE NEW WAVE: Shohei Imamura**  
**WATCH:** *The Insect Woman* (Nikkatsu, 1964; 123 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #7\*\***
- October 29      **\*\*EXAM 2** (Covers material through Week 11)\*\*
- November 5      **THE NEW WAVE: Hiroshi Teshigahara**  
**WATCH:** *Woman in the Dunes* (Toho Eiga Co., 1964; 123 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #8\*\***
- November 12      **THE NEW WAVE: Nagisa Oshima**  
**WATCH:** *Death by Hanging* (Art Theater Guild, 1968; 117 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #9\*\***
- November 19      **THE MODERN ERA: Hayao Miyazake**  
**WATCH:** *Princess Mononoke* (Studio Ghibli, 1997; 134 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**  
**\*\*GROUP PRESENTATION #10\*\***
- November 26      **\*\*FALL BREAK\*\***
- December 3      **THE MODERN ERA: Takashi Miike**  
**WATCH:** *Dead or Alive* (Daiei Motion Picture Co., 1999; 105 minutes)  
**REQUIRED READING:**

**NOTE ABOUT POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE CONTENT**

Some of the content covered in this class, whether in reading, screenings, or discussion, might contain material that could be considered controversial or offensive to some. I understand that some people, for various reasons, are uncomfortable with depictions, or discussions, of violence, race, or sexuality, for example, but I cannot tailor this class for each individual. If you feel that you do not wish to expose yourself to such material, please consider enrolling in another class. No further warnings will be given, and no exemptions from specific films will be granted to anyone for any reason.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Over the several years that I've taught UNDERSTANDING FILM, I've gathered several pieces of advice that I hope will help you to succeed in this class. I offer them here for your consideration.

- TIP #1: SHOW UP.** I can guarantee that if you do not show up for class, you will fail. The choice is yours.
- TIP #2: PARTICIPATE.** Get involved with the class discussions, ask questions, challenge me. The latter is not only allowed, it is encouraged, as long as you do so politely and respectfully. I've noticed that in past classes, those that get involved and really take part in the class tend to get the best grades in the end.
- TIP #3: WATCH THE MOVIES.** Plan your time so that you can watch each film in advance of the class for which it's assigned.
- TIP #4: FORM STUDY GROUPS AND MEET OFTEN.** Meeting in small groups to study on a regular basis can help with both learning and retention, meaning that you'll be that much better prepared for each exam.
- TIP #5: MANAGE YOUR TIME.** This goes not just for this class, but for the rest of your life. The one big problem I see with students is that they haven't learned and perfected time management skills. Realize that there are only 24 hours in a day, and you have a lot to cram into each one. Learn to budget and control your time and you'll find everything gets a lot easier.
- TIP #6: DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.** This goes along with #5, but it's particularly aimed at group projects. I expect a lot out of you with these and, frankly, so do your fellow students. It's easy to see which groups put time into their presentations, and which blew them off until the last minute, so prepare a presentation of which you can be truly proud.
- TIP #7 TAKE NOTES DURING LECTURES.** Taking notes is a good thing. Trying to transcribe my PowerPoint slides word for word is not. **DON'T TRY TO COPY THE POWERPOINT SLIDES WORD FOR WORD!** Take notes on the most important points, but realize you won't be able to get every word, nor should you try. You'll miss more than you gain that way, so don't burden yourself trying to copy down each word verbatim.

Here are a few resources regarding effective note taking:

<http://www.edudemic.com/effective-ways-to-take-notes-in-class/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Take-Better-Notes>

<https://studyskills.com/students/how-to-take-notes-in-class/>

<https://www.oxfordlearning.com/5-effective-note-taking-methods/>

- TIP #8 TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR.** If you're having a problem that's interfering with your ability to learn in class, come and see me. If you don't understand something, come and see me. If you have a question about assignments or expectations, come and see me. I'm happy to talk to you before or after class, or we can find a time to get together outside of class. The point is, don't let problems build throughout the semester. Talk to me and let's see if we can't work something out.
- TIP #9 ENJOY THE CLASS!** I want you to learn a lot about film this semester, but there's no reason that shouldn't also be fun. If you take the above to heart, we'll all have a good time in class and come out of it with a better understanding of film and media.

*The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change  
at the discretion of the Professor.*



# The Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking

Want to exercise critical thinking skills? Ask these questions whenever you discover or discuss new information. These are broad and versatile questions that have limitless applications!



<b>Who</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... benefits from this?</li> <li>... is this harmful to?</li> <li>... makes decisions about this?</li> <li>... is most directly affected?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... have you also heard discuss this?</li> <li>... would be the best person to consult?</li> <li>... will be the key people in this?</li> <li>... deserves recognition for this?</li> </ul>
<b>What</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... are the strengths/weaknesses?</li> <li>... is another perspective?</li> <li>... is another alternative?</li> <li>... would be a counter-argument?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... is the best/worst case scenario?</li> <li>... is most/least important?</li> <li>... can we do to make a positive change?</li> <li>... is getting in the way of our action?</li> </ul>
<b>Where</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... would we see this in the real world?</li> <li>... are there similar concepts/situations?</li> <li>... is there the most need for this?</li> <li>... in the world would this be a problem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... can we get more information?</li> <li>... do we go for help with this?</li> <li>... will this idea take us?</li> <li>... are the areas for improvement?</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... is this acceptable/unacceptable?</li> <li>... would this benefit our society?</li> <li>... would this cause a problem?</li> <li>... is the best time to take action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... will we know we've succeeded?</li> <li>... has this played a part in our history?</li> <li>... can we expect this to change?</li> <li>... should we ask for help with this?</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... is this a problem/challenge?</li> <li>... is it relevant to me/others?</li> <li>... is this the best/worst scenario?</li> <li>... are people influenced by this?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... should people know about this?</li> <li>... has it been this way for so long?</li> <li>... have we allowed this to happen?</li> <li>... is there a need for this today?</li> </ul>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... is this similar to _____?</li> <li>... does this disrupt things?</li> <li>... do we know the truth about this?</li> <li>... will we approach this safely?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... does this benefit us/others?</li> <li>... does this harm us/others?</li> <li>... do we see this in the future?</li> <li>... can we change this for our good?</li> </ul>