

**Literature Seminar**  
LLEA 394: Truth, Beauty and Alienation in Japanese Film and Fiction  
Professor L. Selden  
University of Notre Dame

**MWF 11:45-12:35**  
Spring 2004 (3 credits)

**Course Description**

For Japan, an island nation whose feudal state followed a policy of isolation for over 150 years (1600-1868), the transition to modernity has been an abrupt and complicated process. Modernization has involved a transformation at every level of Japanese society, ranging from the political and economic realms, to the scientific, cultural, and educational. This course focuses on how some of Japan's most creative authors and film directors have responded to debates relating to the strategies and sacrifices involved in enacting sweeping social changes, and to developing a modern, educated citizenry that would include not only elite males, but women, the poor, and ethnic or other minorities. Through critical essays that are assigned in conjunction with the primary sources, students will be introduced to the concepts of narrative voice and perspective; to questions concerning the tension between presentational and representational modes of Japanese filmic expression; and to the ways in which gender, nationality, and other affiliations have been constructed in the Japanese cultural imaginary. Novels and films to be analyzed include *Silence* (Endo, 1966), *Hana-Bi* (Kitano, 1997), *Ghost in the Shell* (Oshii, 1995), *Some Prefer Nettles* (Tanizaki, 1929), and *Out* (Kirino, 1997).

No prior knowledge of Japanese language, history, or culture is required. All readings are in English, and films are subtitled.

**Required Texts**

1. Course Pack.
2. Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference: with Apa Guidelines, Fifth Edition* (Bedford, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2003).
3. Shusaku Endo *Silence* (New York: Taplinger, 1969).
4. Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *Some Prefer Nettles* (New York: Vintage, 1995).
5. Natsuo Kirino, *Out* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003).

Required books may be purchased at Hammes Bookstore. The Coursepack is available at the Copy Center on the second floor of Decio Hall.

Cost of books: approximately \$130-50. The Course Pack is about \$40, *A Writer's Reference* under \$45, *Out* is about \$25 (available in hard back only; on sale at Amazon for \$17); the remaining two novels are each under \$15.

## Course Expectations

1. Familiarity with content of syllabus and course handouts
2. Common sense in dealing with obstacles to your success in the course
3. Active class participation, including class journal
4. Group presentation and handout on a critical essay
5. Quizzes (5)
6. Midterm exam
7. Final exam
8. Critical analysis paper (6-8 pages)

Note: Please check your e-mail every couple of days for messages from the instructor

\*The ultimate aim of this course is to help students advance their critical thinking and writing skills. In order for students to succeed, they will need to prepare sufficiently so as to be able to

- participate actively and congenially in discussion
- complete assignments according to the guidelines provided

\*If you miss class, contact a classmate to catch up on notes and announcements.

E-mail addresses of two classmates who are willing to share their notes with you:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

\*The group presentation is graded on content, self-presentation, and handout. Students will be asked to sign up for a critical essay in groups of two or three, depending on the length of the essay. Students must meet with instructor one week in advance of the presentation, having prepared a rough draft of the handout.

\*The midterm and final exams are take-home. Questions will be distributed in class a couple of days before an exam is due. The exam will include ten identification questions and a choice of two essays out of several possibilities. Each essay should be approximately one page long, typed (300-500 words).

\*Paper topics will be distributed in class the week that paper proposals are due. Proposals are due as e-mail attachments (in Microsoft Office format) and will be returned with feedback within 72 hours. Contact the instructor if you do not receive comments. Paper drafts must be submitted as hard copy. They will be graded and returned with comments during paper conferences. If a student chooses to revise the paper, only the rewrite will count toward the final grade.

\*If you feel that something about the classroom environment hampers your intellectual development in any way, big or small, please alert the instructor as soon as possible. You may visit during office hours, or you may wish to drop off an anonymous note. I will do my best to respond constructively to your concerns.

## Evaluation

The final grade is broken down as follows:

Critical analysis paper	30%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Class participation, group presentation, quizzes	30%

## Time Management

1. The reading load in this class has been kept fairly light in order to allow you ample time to think, analyze, and write. Please keep up with the schedule so as to allow for productive discussion in class.
2. All due dates are indicated in the syllabus, so plan ahead. No extensions will be granted for paper proposals, drafts, and final versions without a doctor's note or equivalent. Quizzes cannot be made up. Each student's lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

## PROVISIONAL CLASS SCHEDULE

Truth, Beauty and Alienation in Japanese Film and Fiction

### I. Introduction

1. W, Jan. 14

Introduction: review of syllabus; overview of modern Japanese social, cultural, and political history

2. F, Jan. 16

Introduction, continued (including trip to library)

Excerpts: Kurosawa (*Hidden Fortress*), Ozu (*Tokyo Story*), and Mizoguchi (*Ugetsu*)

► **purchase Course Pack** on Friday (Volume I will not be ready for purchase until Friday, Volume II not until later this month)

► **read through** Culler's "Narrative," McDougal's "Glossary," and Chatman's "What Is a Narrative" in the Course Pack. PLEASE READ BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM MONDAY! (there will be a quiz on terminology from all three readings on Jan. 23)

## II. Truth, Illusion, and Narrative Voice in Storytelling

### 3. M, Jan. 19

view Yasujiro OZU *I was Born, But...* (1:29) at the ETS Theatre, 9 McKenna Hall  
Culler, Jonathan. "Narrative." In *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, 78-89.  
Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

McDougal, Stuart Y. "Glossary: Vocabularies of Literature and Film." In *Made into Movies: From Literature to Film*, 394-401. Forth Worth, TX and New York:  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1985.

Chatman, Seymour. "What Is a Narrative? Some Basic Terms." In *Reading Narrative Fiction*, 7-8. New York: Macmillan, 1993.

### 4. W, Jan. 21

discuss *I was Born, But...*

Ozu Yasujro, dir. *I was Born, But...* (1932). New Yorker Films, 1999.

Thompson, Kristin. "Notes on the Spatial System of Ozu's Early Films." In *Wide Angle*,  
1.4 (Summer 1976), 8-17.

### 5. F, Jan. 23

Ryunosuke AKUTAGAWA stories

Akutagawa Ryunosuke. "Rashomon (1917)," "In a Grove (1921)," and "The Martyr  
(1918)." In *Rashomon, and Other Stories*, 22-34, 13-21, and 60-75. Trans. Takashi  
Kojima. New York: Liveright, 1961.

### ► Quiz #1

### 6. M, Jan. 26

view Akira KUROSAWA *Rashomon* (1:23) at ETS Theatre

McDougal. "Adaptation: The Metamorphic Art" (Chapter 1). *Made into Movies: From  
Literature to Film*, 3-7. PLEASE READ BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM!

### 7. W, Jan. 28

discuss *Rashomon*

Kurosawa Akira, dir. *Rashomon* (1950). Criterion Collection, 2002 (1951).

Richie, Donald. "Rashomon." In Donald Richie, ed., *Focus on Rashomon*, 71-94.  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972.

McDonald, Keiko I. "Introduction: A Search for Unity" and "The Dialectic of Light and  
Darkness in Kurosawa's *Rashomon*." In *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major  
Japanese Films*, 11-17 and 23-35. London and Toronto: Associated University  
Presses, 1983.

### 8. F, Jan. 30

no class meeting—read ahead

9. M, Feb. 2

Shusaku ENDO

Endo Shusaku. "Prologue" and Chs. 1-5. In *Silence* (1966), 3-100. Trans. William Johnston. Marlboro, NJ: Taplinger, 1980 (first edition, 1969).

Chatman. Excerpt from "Plot." *Reading Narrative Fiction*, 20-26.

McDougal. Excerpts from "Plot and Structure" (Ch. 3) and "Time" (Ch. 9) *Made into Movies: From Literature to Film*, 27-30 and 326-29.

10. W, Feb. 4

Writing Workshop I—how to write a critical analysis paper

11. F, Feb. 6

Endo. Chs. 6 & 7. In *Silence*, 101-53.

Chatman. Excerpt from "Character and Setting." *Reading Narrative Fiction*, 58-65.

McDougal. Excerpt from "Character" (Ch. 4). *Made into Movies: From Literature to Film*, 113-17.

12. M, Feb. 9

Endo. Chs. 8-10 and "Appendix." In *Silence*, 155-201.

►Quiz #2

### III. Presentationalism and Representationalism in Japanese Art

13. W, Feb. 11

view Masahiro SHINODA *Double Suicide* (1:45) at ETS Theatre

Keene, Donald. "Introduction," and *The Love Suicides at Amijima*. In *Major Plays of Chikamatsu*, 1-38 and 394-425. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961. PLEASE READ BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM!

14. F, Feb. 13

discuss *Double Suicide*

Shinoda Masahiro, dir. *Double Suicide* (1969). Criterion Collection, 2000 (1970).

McDonald, Keiko I. "Giri, Ninjō, and Fatalism: Image Pattern and Thematic Conflict in Shinoda's *Double Suicide*." In *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major Japanese Films*, 51-67. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1983.

15. M, Feb. 16

SAIKAKU Ihara and AKINARI Ueda

Ihara Saikaku. "A Subterfuge Behind a Literary Screen" and "Making a Clock in Slow Motion." In *Japanese Family Storehouse, or The Millionaire's Gospel Modernised* (1668), 85-89 and 105-108. Trans. G.W. Sargent. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1959.

Ueda Akinari. "Prophecy." In *Tales of Moonlight and Rain: Japanese Gothic Tales* (1776), 82-96. Trans. Kengi Hamada. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972.

Chatman. Excerpts from “Narration: Narrator and Narratee” and “Narrative Irony.”  
*Reading Narrative Fiction*, 90-97 and 186-92.

McDougal. Excerpt from “Point of View” (Ch. 5). *Made into Movies: From Literature to Film*, 141-45.

16. W, Feb. 18

ICHIYO Higuchi

Higuchi Ichiyo. “Child’s Play (1895-96).” In *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyo, a Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan*, 254-87. Trans. Robert Lyons Danly. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981.

Chatman. Excerpt from “Authors and Readers: Real and Implied.” *Reading Narrative Fiction*, 240-46.

McDougal. Excerpt from “The World of Inner Experience” (Ch. 6). *Made into Movies: From Literature to Film*, 179-82.

►view Hiroshi KORE-EDA *After Life* (1:58) on your own for next class meeting

17. F, Feb. 20

discuss *After Life* (1:58)

Kore-eda Hirokazu, dir. *After Life* (1998). New Yorker Films, 2000.

Johnson, William. “Hirokazu Kore-eda: Memory Man.” *Film Comment*. 35:4 (Jul./Aug. 1999): 64-67.

Rayns, Tony. “This is Your Life.” *Sight and Sound*. 59:3 (March 1999): 24-26.

Reviews of *After Life* in Coursepack.

18. M, Feb. 23

Writing Workshop II—how to write an exam essay

►**Paper Proposal #1 due** Tuesday, February 24 at 5:00 (submit electronically as a Microsoft Office file)

19. W, Feb. 25

midterm exam review

►**Take-Home Midterm Exam** due Wednesday, March 3 at 5:00 p.m. (hard copies only, at 267 Decio Hall)

#### IV. Centers and Peripheries in Westernizing, Modern, and Postmodern Japan

20. F, Feb. 27

Jun’ichiro TANIZAKI

Tanizaki Jun’ichiro. Chs. 1-3. In *Some Prefer Nettles* (1929), 3-40. Trans. Edward Seidensticker. New York: Vintage, 1995.

Chatman. Excerpt from “Theme and Ideology.” In *Reading Narrative Fiction*, 273-80.

21. M, Mar. 1

Tanizaki. Chs. 4-8. In *Some Prefer Nettles*, 41-109.

22. W, Mar. 3

Tanizaki. Chs. 9-11. In *Some Prefer Nettles*, 110-50.

► **Paper Proposal #2** due Friday, Mar. 5 at 5:00 (submit electronically)

23. F, Mar. 5

Tanizaki. Chs. 12-14. In *Some Prefer Nettles*, 151-202.

Mar. 6-14 Spring Break—no class meetings

24. M, Mar. 15

view Takeshi KITANO *Hana-bi* (1:43) at ETS Theatre

25. W, Mar. 17

discuss *Hana-bi*

Kitano Takeshi, dir. *Hana-bi* (1997). New Yorker Films, 1998.

Davis, Darrell William. "Reigniting Japanese Tradition with *Hana-Bi*." *Cinema Journal*, 40: 4 (Summer, 2001), 55-80.

Kehr, David. "Equinox Flower: Takeshi Kitano Sets Off Fireworks." *Film Comment*, 34 (Mar./Apr. 1998): 31-33.

Lane, Anthony. "Love and Death: Welcome to the Cool Comic World of Takeshi Kitano." *The New Yorker*. 74: 6 (Mar. 30 1998): 124-25.

Stephens, Chuck. "Comedy Plus Massacre: 'Beat' Takeshi Kitano's Elegies to Violence." *Film Comment*, 31 (Jan./Feb. 1995): 31-34.

Smith, Gavins. "Takeshi Talks." *Film Comment*, 31 (Jan./Feb. 1995): 32.

26. F, Mar. 19

Writing Workshop III (bring two hard copies of paper draft for peer critiques)

► **Quiz #3**

## V. Death, Beauty and Malaise in a Materialistic World

27. M, Mar. 22

view Mamoru OSHII *Ghost in the Shell* (1:22) at ETS Theatre

28. W, Mar. 24

discuss *Ghost in the Shell*

Oshii Mamoru, dir. *Ghost in the Shell* (1995). Palm Pictures/Manga Video, 1998 (1996).

Napier, Susan. "Anime and Local/Global Identity," "Body, Metamorphosis, Identity," "Ghosts and Machines: The Technological Body," and "Doll Parts: Technology and the Body in *Ghost in the Shell*." In *Anime: From Akira to Mononoke-Hime*, 15-34, 35-38, 85-102, 103-16. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

McDougal. Excerpts from “Figurative Discourse: Metaphor, Simile, Synecdoche, and Metonymy” (Ch. 7) and “Figurative Discourse: Symbol and Allegory” (Ch. 8).  
*Made into Movies: From Literature to Film*, 242-47 and 287-90.

► **Critical Analysis paper due** Wednesday, March 24 at 5:00 p.m.

29. *F, Mar. 26*

29. no class meeting—mandatory paper conferences Th, F, M

30. *Mar. 29*

Kenji NAKAGAMI

Nakagami Kenji. “The Cape (1975).” In “*The Cape*” and *Other Stories from the Japanese Ghetto*, 14-104. Translated, and with a preface and afterword, by Eve Zimmerman. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 1999.

31. *W, Mar. 31*

no class meeting—read ahead

32. *F, Apr. 2*

Natsuo KIRINO

Kirino Natsuo. “Night Shift.” *Out* (1997). Trans. Stephen Snyder. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003.

► **Quiz #4**

33. *M, Apr. 5*

Kirino. “Bathroom.”

► **optional revision of Critical Analysis paper due** Monday, Apr. 5 at 5:00 p.m.

► **Japanese refreshments and paper presentations** (2 minutes each) on Tuesday, April 6

34. *W, Apr. 7*

no class meeting—read ahead

Apr. 9-Apr. 12 Easter Holidays—no class meetings Friday or Monday

35. *W, Apr. 14*

Kirino. “Crows.”

36. *F, Apr. 16*

Kirino. “Dark Dreams.”

37. M, Apr. 19

Kirino. "Piece of Work."

38. W, Apr. 21

no class meeting—read ahead

39. F, Apr. 23

Kirino. "Apartment 421" and "Exit."

► **Quiz #5**

40. M, Apr. 26

Yukio MISHIMA and Haruki MURAKAMI, Course Evaluations

Mishima Yukio. "Death in Midsummer (1952)." In *Death in Midsummer and Other Stories*, 1-29. Trans. and abr. Edward Seidensticker. New York: New Directions, 1966.

Murakami Haruki. "The Elephant Vanishes (1987)." In Theodore Goossen, ed., *The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*, 400-16. Trans. Jay Rubin. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

41. W, Apr. 28

Review for final exam

► **Take-Home Final Exam** due Thursday, May 6 at 10:00 a.m.

**Recommended starting point for presentations and papers:**

Bordwell, David. *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Buehrer, Beverly. *Japanese Films A Filmography and Commentary, 1921-1989*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 1990.

Gessel, Van, ed. *Japanese Writers Since WWII. Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 182. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1997.

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003.

Nolletti, Arthur and David Desser, ed. *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1992.

Richie, Donald. *Ozu*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974.

----. *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965.

Schilling, Mark. *Contemporary Japanese Film*. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1999.