DRAFT SYLLABUS
The Public Servant and Other Heroes:
A Political and Social History of Japan through Film

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Course Description:
A history of modern Japan from the mid-19th Century to the present, this course focuses on the important role that bureaucracies, staffed by public servants, have played in shaping the economic, political, and social realms of Japanese life. We will make use of Japan’s rich visual culture by viewing and discussing Japanese feature films, many of which celebrate public servants. The assigned films, screened in Japanese with English subtitles, will likely include The Twilight Samurai, To Live, and Shin Godzilla among others. The films have been selected based on their attention to key turning points in Japanese history, including the transition to modernity, problems surrounding World War II, and "3/11," the tsunami, earthquake, and nuclear disaster of March 11, 2011. Through written and visual materials, students will gain a better understanding of Japan, public service, and the utility of film for understanding the past.

Anticipated Films in Summer 2020:

Twilight Samurai (Tasogare Seibei), dir. YAMADA Yōji, 2002 2h9m
Military Train (Gun-yong-yeolcha) dir. SEO Gwang-je, 1938 1h31m
To Live (Ikiru), dir. KUROSAWA Akira, 1952 2h23m
Afterlife (Wandafuru Raifu), dir. KORE-EDA Hirokazu, 1998 1h58m
The Departure, Lana Wilson, dir. 2017 1h 27min
Shin Godzilla (Shin Gojira), dirs. ANNO Hideaki HIGUCHI Shinji, 2016 2h

Required book:

Other readings may include:


**Course Goals:**

By the end of the semester, students will learn more about historical approaches to the past and gain an appreciation of the important role of bureaucracies within the sweep of modern Japanese history. Students will also become adept at appreciating the power and limits of film as a historical source.

**Requirements and Evaluation:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best 5 of 6 weekly film engagement reports</td>
<td>5 x 10% = 50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class presentations and discussion leadership</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Take-home Final</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
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See Course Page on Canvas for more information on:
- Academic Integrity
- Accommodations
- Grade Scale and Grading Policies
- Inclusivity
- Laptops and Note Taking
- Leading Discussion
- Subject Position
- Using the Active Voice in Your Writing

**Topics and Possible Films:**

Week 1: Images of Loyalty in the Early Modern Era. Possible films include:

*Ran*, dir. KUROSAWA Akira, 1985
Harakiri (Seppuku), dir. KOBAYASHI Masaki, 1962

Chûshingura: The Loyal 47 Retainers, dir. INAGAKI Hiroshi 1962

Week 2: End of the Reign of the Samurai: an ethic of service redirected to the modern state

Twilight Samurai (Tasogare Seibei), dir. YAMADA Yôji, 2002
(with reference to The Last Samurai, dir. Edward ZWICK, 2003)

Week 3: The Chaos of the Restoration

Why Not? (Eijanaikai), dir. IMAMURA Shôhei, 1981

Week 4: Meiji Successes, Taishô Losses, and Generational Tensions

And Then (Sorekara), dir. MORITA Yoshimitsu, 1981

Week 5: Imperial Japan: colonial assimilation and military service

Military Train (Gun-yong-yeolcha) dir. SEO Gwang-je, 1938 1h31m

The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya (Hawai · Maree oki kaisen) dir. YAMAMOTO Kajirô, 1942 1h56m

The Human Condition (Ningen no jôken), dir. KOBAYASHI Masaki, 1959-61

YMCA Baseball Team (YMCA Yagudan), dir. KIM Hyun-seok, 2002

Week 6: Japan in World War II: breakdown of domestic society

Grave of the Fireflies (Hotaru no haka), dir. TAKAHATA Isao, 1988

Black Rain (Kuroi ame), dir. IMAMURA Shôhei, 1989

Week 7: Fallout from World War II

The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On (Yuki Yukite Shingun), dir. HARA Kazuo, 1987

Rashômon, dir. KUROSAWA Akira, 1950

For consideration: Caterpillar, dir. Wakamatsu Kôji, 2010

Week 8: Bureaucracy and the Postwar Welfare State

To Live (Ikiru), dir. KUROSAWA Akira, 1952, 2h23m
A Taxing Woman (Marusa no onna), dir. ITAMI Juzo, 1987

Week 9: Miyazaki Hayao, Studio Ghibli, and Concerns about the Environment

*Princess Mononoke (Mononoke hime)*, dir. MIYAZAKI Hayao, 1997

*Pom Poko (Heisei Tanuki Gassen Ponpoko)*, dir. TAKAHATA Isao, 1994

Week 10: Aging Society, Social Security, and Danchi Life:

*After the Storm (Umi yori mo mada fukaku)*, dir. KORE-EDA Hirokazu, 2016

Week 11: Public Servants and Death

*Afterlife (Wandafuru Raifu)*, dir. KORE-EDA Hirokazu, 1998 1h58m


*The Departure.* Lana Wilson, dir. 2017 1h 27min


Week 12: The Salary-person as Hero: Responses to Oppressive Corporate Culture

*Shall We Dance? (Sharu wi dansu?)*, dir. SUO Masayuki, 1996

*Fear and Trembling.* Alain Corneau, dir. 2003. 1h 47 min

*Oh Lucy.* Atsuko Hirayanagi, dir. 2017 1h 37min

Week 13: Obsessions

*Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, dir. David GELB, 2011

Week 14: 3/11 and Disaster Response

*Shin Godzilla (Shin Gojira)*, dirs. ANNO Hideaki HIGUCHI Shinji, 2016 2h

*Tell the Prime Minister (Shushō kantei no mae de)*, dir. OGUMA Eiji, 2015

Week 15: Conclusion: The Life Cycle

*Dreams (Yume)*, dir. KUROSAWA Akira, 1990