Summer Program 2017 Course Descriptions

**1. Traditional and Popular Culture in Japan by Associate Prof. Tove Bjoerk**

In this course, we consider the role supernatural beings have in Japanese culture by studying how ghosts, gods, spirits and other-worldly creatures are depicted in traditional and popular performing arts throughout Japanese history. We consider the different cultural traits of each time period up until the present, and the specific performing arts born in each of them.

In **Block 1 (Lessons 1-4) Ancient and Medieval Popular Culture and Religion**, 1) we look at the native Japanese belief in a world of spirits and gods, and how it merged with the Buddhist beliefs imported in the 6th century. Here, 2) we pay special attention to the importance of the concepts of heaven, hell and karmatic retribution, and consider how these ideas were depicted in the performances of ancient Kagura and Bugaku. We further consider how the medieval 3) Noh and 4) Kyōgen, mirror the turbulent times of constant warfare, death and social disorder which gave birth to them.

In **Block 2 (Lessons 5-8) Ghosts, Gods and ‘The Other’ in Jōruri (Bunraku) puppet drama,** we consider 5) the impact of lasting peace on society, as established by the Tokugawa shogunate in beginning of the 17th century, and the development of an urban culture and its centers of popular entertainment. We 6) consider Jōruri (Bunraku) puppet drama, and the greatest playwright of the early modern period, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, and the 7) later developments by writers such as Namiki Shōraku, who gave us the three epic plays The Storehouse of Loyal Retainers (*Kanadehon Chushingura*), Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees (*Yoshitsune senbon zakura*), and Sugawara’s Secrets of Calligraphy (*Sugawara denju tenarai kagami*), which are still performed today, and the 8) roles ghosts, gods and other supernatural creature play in theses masterpieces.

The discussions on this topic continue in **Block 3 (Lessons 9-12) Gods and Demi-Gods in Kabuki**, where we 9) consider the development of Kabuki theatre. We consider both 10) how Kabuki interacted with Jōruri (Bunraku) puppet drama, and how it independently staged deities in connection with various popular temple festivals in Edo. A special key point of interest is 11) the arrival of a new kind of Kabuki actors, who in themselves were revered as demi-gods by the Edo audience, and the development of a highly commercialized fan culture surrounding them, leading us to the question if, and to what extent, ‘profit’ can be considered the new ‘god’ already during the early modern period. The third block concurs 12) with a visit to a Kabuki performance at the National Theatre.

In **Block 4 (Lessons 13-16) The Supernatural in Modern Popular Culture**, we consider how the supernatural features continue to fascinate modern audiences by 13) visiting the Asakusa temple area and analyzing the gods and spirits in popular works of anime, such as 14) Princess Mononoke (*Mononoke hime)* and 15) Spirited Away (*Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi*). The course 16) ends with an assessment and discussion based on the content of the course.

**2.** **History of Pre-modern Japan through Film by Prof. Karl Friday**

How do modern films portray classical, medieval and early modern Japan? How can we “read” these films to deepen our understanding of history?

Like newspapers, magazines, novels and other written materials, films offer scholars an interpretation of the society they depict, through the eyes of the writers and directors who create them. Feature films can be used to study both the subjects they narrate, and the societies in which they were created and enjoyed. And while movies cannot be as “true” representations of reality―just like books, articles, diaries, documents or any other source they are interpretations and, as such, must be subject to critical scrutiny―when examined carefully, and in conjunction with other information on the subject, films provide us an invaluable source of information about the societies they portray, and the societies that produce them.

The purpose of this course is twofold: It seeks first to deepen understanding of Japan’s society, culture, and people, prior to the modern era, through analysis of various films, produced by Japanese masters of cinematography. And second, it seeks to give students practical experience in critical analysis, and to deepen their analytical skills and their ability to evaluate evidence, through the use of film as one form of evidence. By reading books and articles, and viewing and analyzing films, we will develop knowledge and perspectives needed for analyzing and better appreciating the relationship between history and films, and develop a better sense of more than a millennium of Japanese history.

Class Schedule & Reading Assignments

Week 1

Tuesday: What Are We Doing Here? Introduction & Course Mechanics “Rashōmon”

Thursday: “Shin Heike Monogatari”

Readings:

Varner, “Teaching about Heian Japan”

Friday, “Once & Future Warriors”

Week 2

Tuesday: “Hidden Fortress”

Readings:

Lorge, *The Asian Military Revolution*, ch. 2

Souryi, *The World Turned Upside Down*, ch. 11

Thursday: “Kwaidan”

Readings:

Tonomura, “Gender Relations in an Age of Violence”

Week 3

Tuesday: “Ran”

Readings:

Eason, “Warriors, Warlords & Domains”

Butler, “The 16th Century Reunification”

Thursday: Samurai Rebellion

Readings:

Berry, “Defining Early Modern”

Brown, “The Political Order”

Week 4

Tuesday: “Hana”

Readings:

Gainty, “The New Warriors”

Thursday:  **“**Chikamatsu Monogatari**”**

Readings:

Howell, “Urbanization, Trade & Merchants”

Chance, “Ukiyo asobi”

Gainty, “Family, Gender & Sex in Early Modern Japan”

**Course Requirements:**

► Your most important responsibility for this course is to read the assignments (which provide background for the films), watch the films carefully, and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the films in depth. This is a colloquium; there will be no lectures. *The success of this course depends on the efforts you put into it from class to class*. As you watch and read, take notes and jot down questions that will facilitate discussion in class.

***Class attendance and participation will count for* 50% *of your final grade***

► The rest of your grade will be based on one short "think piece" essay about 5‑7 pages in length, on a topic of your choice relating to historical issues and interpretations raised in the films.

These should be carefully thought‑out, well‑organized, and carefully argued statements of your thoughts and opinions on the topic you choose. You may write on individual films, or compare and contrast two or more films. You may write on broad themes or on narrowly focused ones.

There are numerous ways in which you can craft your paper. The key requirement is that it demonstrates familiarity with the film or films, and that it shows informed reflection on the historical themes and issues raised or showcased in the film(s).

Please remember that this is not a film appreciation or film history course, and that your paper is ***not*** a film review, critiquing directors, acting, cinematic technique, and the like (although you may raise these subjects, *if they are relevant to your discussion of historical issues*).

Be sure that your essays show the results of your having done the readings and involved yourself in the discussions‑‑compare and contrast the perspectives of the relevant books, articles, and films with each other and with your own. Additional (outside) readings are encouraged but not required.

Your essay is **due by Thursday, 7/6** (but can be handed in anytime before this).

## Your essay will count for about 50% of your final grade

***Warning!! Warning!!*** Deadlines are to be taken seriously! Extensions will be given only in dire circumstances and only if approved in advance. Late papers will be penalized.

**This syllabus is informational, not contractual. The instructor reserves the right to make changes at any time.**

**3.** **History of Japan and the Asia-Pacific War through Film by Prof. Roger.Brown**

The purpose of this course is to consider the history of Japan and the Asia-Pacific War through film. In order to achieve this objective, each week we will screen films on a given subject or event and these, together with assigned readings, will serve as the basis for discussion both of the historical topic in question and of the perspective conveyed through the movie itself. As with any effort to interpret the past, the work of filmmakers to portray history likewise produces a document of the times in which they live and work. Therefore, we will consider both the accuracy of their creations as history and how their work might reflect the period of its making. In addition to these retrospective representations, we will also view films produced during the war and that thus serve as a first-hand record of the era of the conflict. In sum, the course will provide students with ample opportunity to learn some of the history of a war that remains very relevant in Japan and East Asia today and to enhance their abilities to think critically about how events both historical and current are represented in cultural media such as film.

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1: From China to Pearl Harbor

Week 2: The Greater East Asia War and the Home Front

Week 3: Gyokusai (Shattered Jewels)

Week 4: The End of the War

**4.** **Global Agenda and International Development in the Japanese Perspective by Prof. Tsuji**

The objective of this course is to understand the basic issues of international social-economic development at present through discussion among students and with the professor. The plan of discussion topics is as follows.

Jun. 12: What are the historical or other reasons behind of income disparities between rich and poor countries?

Jun. 14: What causes child labor in many parts of the world? What are possible counter-measures to eliminate it?

Jun. 19: What are the merits and demerits of globalization?

Jun. 21: What should be done to avoid famines and malnutrition on the globe?

Jun. 26: What causes intra- and inter-nations conflicts? Give examples and counter-measures.

Jun. 28: Can mass media be trusted in their reporting international development issues in a balanced manner? Give examples.

Jul. 3: Can private businesses contribute to solving international development issues, such as absolute poverty, income disparities, child labor, climate change, food security, conflict prevention and peace building, and diseases? Give examples.

Jul. 5: Can international organizations solve international development issues? Give examples.

All participants are expected to prepare his/her opinion on these topics in advance and to make verbal presentation on them in a logical manner. Course grades are given based upon active and constructive participation in the discussion. The professor has nearly 40 year working experience in international socio-economic development by the Japanese Government’s foreign aid agencies and resided in Indonesia, the Philippines, India and Kenya.