

Department of English & Writing Studies
Film Studies Program

Politics and Performance in the Japanese New Wave
Film 3375G (001)
Winter 2023

Instructor: Michael Raine
mraine3@uwo.ca
UC2421

Course Day/Time:
Screening: Monday, 2:30 – 5:30, UC 1401
Lecture/tutorial: Thursday, 3:30 – 5:30, UC 1401

Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2pm, or by
appointment

e -iBĩ%ãlXÈàevent that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites

Course Description

"New Wave" cinemas emerged around the world between 1955 and 1973. A new generation of iconoclastic filmmakers rebelled against the studio system and established forms of acting and storytelling. They drew on experiments in related fields of drama and performance and explored new media such as the graphic novel and television. Like those other arts the new cinema aimed to shock: the films we study are rhetorical interventions that often scandalized audiences with their unsettling juxtaposition of sex, violence, and politics. By studying critical writing as well as the films themselves we will seek to understand the intellectual and material conditions of Japanese New Wave cinema. We will discuss what the films tell us about Japan, about the relationship of cinema and performance, and about the global simultaneity and cultural permeability of cinema around the world that is sometimes ignored in single film histories.

All readings on the course are in English; no Japanese is required.

Objectives:

The goal of the course is to develop an understanding of what it means to create something new in the cinema, with a particular attention to performance. It aims to connect the specific experience of cinema in Japan to its social context, so that students can reflect on the social production of art. Studying this particular situation will give students an understanding of how to approach the relation between text and context in other times and places.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course students will have learned to critically appraise a wide range of films and other audio/visual texts and will be prepared to make historically informed arguments about cinema as both symptom and agent of social change.

Course Materials

Required Reading:

All readings are available on the class web site. Please make sure to bring the readings to class, with the notes you have made on them. You can either print the readings or read them on your laptop.

There are two prior surveys in English on the Japanese New Wave that are certainly worth reading:

Desser, David. *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988)

Standish, Isolde. *Politics, Porn, and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s* (Continuum, 2011)

Maureen Turim's *The Films of Oshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast* is also interesting.

I would also highly recommend Yuriko Furuhashi's *Cinema of Actuality* (Duke UP, 2013), which deals with some of the material on the course.

The MOMA source book *From Postwar to Postmodern, Art in Japan, 1945-1989* is also a useful collection for tracing the development of avant-garde art in Japan, which occasionally intersected with the cinema.

You can find these books in the library or through your favorite bookseller.

Methods of Evaluation

Attendance and participation [10%]

- Classes are collective experiences so attendance is mandatory. More than two absences will affect the attendance mark. If you are absent from a screening or lecture, or an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons, contact Student Services and have them forward supporting documentation to me. Please do not approach me with your private medical information. Make sure you catch up with the material by looking through the slides on the web site.
- Although virtual screenings are now commonplace, I would like to return to watching films as an event and a communal experience. Watching a film on a tiny monitor while "multitasking" is no substitute for the experience of watching a film as it was intended to be seen, with full-screen projection and an audience. If you must miss a screening or to prepare for the tests and exam, study copies of the films are available in the Film Resource Library (UC 1126).
- Participation means taking active part in class discussion, and posts, demonstrating that you have prepared the readings and that you have thought carefully about the film. I will assign individual reports if I think people are not sufficiently preparing the readings. I will also hand out name cards so that I can make sure I know your names.

Viewing responses [15%]

This is an essay course. In previous years, I have assigned two academic essays to satisfy that requirement. This year I am experimenting with alternative forms of writing that require you to put your original thoughts into persuasive prose. At the end of each screening, you will be given time to respond to a prompt on the film and the readings for that week. The benefit of this exercise comes from nudging you to do the readings in time for class, giving you a chance to organize your thoughts on the films before we discuss them, and giving you practice in writing persuasive prose. The top five responses will be counted for your grade.

Pop quizzes

s

Politics and