1. Course Description:

Since the 1960s, Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu (1903-1963) has been the object of increased popular and critical attention by international film scholars and audiences. Ozu is widely considered “the most Japanese” of Japanese directors, but what does “the most Japanese” mean? Do Ozu’s films express the special characteristics of Japanese cinema? If so, what constitutes the cultural specificity of Japanese cinema? At the same time, Ozu was a big fan of foreign films. The director considered “the most Japanese” was in fact steeped in foreign popular culture. How can Ozu be located in global film cultures and international histories of cinema?

This course reexamines Ozu’s works in terms of their social and cultural context, from both national and transnational perspectives. It locates Ozu’s films at a dialogic focal point of Japanese, American and European cinema. Through an intense examination of Ozu’s films as primary texts, this course pays particular attention to Japanese modernization in the 1920s; the influence of wartime film policy; reconfiguration of traditional Japanese art forms during the postwar Occupation; the decline of the Japanese film studio system and the popularization of international film festivals. We will also discuss the mutual influence between American and European cinema and Ozu’s films and Ozu’s legacy in international films, including New German Cinema (Wim Wenders), American independent films (Jim Jarmusch), and contemporary Japanese films (Kiju Yoshida, Masayuki Suo). Films to be shown include Tokyo Story, Autumn Afternoon, and I Was Born, But….

On the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Yasujiro Ozu’s birth, Shochiku Studio, where Ozu made all of his films, is sponsoring a world-wide retrospective of his films. This includes screenings and programs at the New York Film Festival in October 2003, which will be a supplement to the course.

2. Texts:

Required Textbooks:

(available to purchase at Labyrinth Books)
Coursepack (available to purchase at Copyquick, 1211 Amsterdam Ave. between 119th & 120th Streets)

Recommended Additional Books (not required):


In addition to the weekly on-campus screenings, you have the unusual opportunity to view most of Ozu’s films at the New York Film Festival Ozu Retrospective. There are $7.00 student discount tickets at the box office of Walter Reade Theater of the Lincoln Center.

3. Course Requirements:

**Participation**
*(Attendance, Class Discussion, and Web-memos): 30% of grade*

You should read the assigned materials in time for class and actively participate in class discussion. Attendance to class lectures, screenings and discussion is mandatory. Please be punctual, as lateness to class will be penalized. In the case of illness or emergencies, you must provide appropriate documentation and get the instructor’s approval. Excessive absences will result in a reduction of your final grade and may result in FAILURE of the course.

In addition, you must make one web-memo posting per week on the course website, in which you discuss the films, the assigned class readings, and the lectures. The instructor will provide questions about each film before the screening. These questions will serve as a starting point for in-class discussion and web-memos. Web-memo postings will not be individually graded but will count in the final grade. Postings are due by each Wednesday by 8 AM.

**Midterm Exam Paper**
*(5-7 page midterm exam paper on films, readings, and lectures): 30%*

**Due: Nov. 5**

Questions for the exam paper will be distributed in class on Oct. 27. In your exam paper, you will be asked to discuss particular issues raised by the assigned readings on the film that you choose, and to critically review their arguments based on lectures, class discussion, web-memos, your own viewing of the film, and additional readings from the supplementary bibliography below. For instance, What is lacking in their arguments? What are the shortcomings of their discussion? What do you find or what interests you in the actual film viewing? What is your reaction to the film? etc.

**Final Paper**
*(1 page research proposal + 10 page research paper): 40% (10%+30%)*

**Proposal Due: November 12**

**Final Due: on the scheduled exam date**
For your final paper, choose one or more films of Ozu. You can choose any film from Ozu’s filmography even if it was not screened in class. Bearing your criticism of assigned readings in mind, articulate your argument on the film based on your viewing of the film, additional reading and research (articles in journals, film reviews in newspapers and magazines, etc). For example, consider such questions as…

- What was the political, economic, or cultural context when the film was made, and what was the relationship between the context and the film?
- What was the historical condition of the Japanese film industry when the film was made, and what influence did that condition have on the film, technically, aesthetically, financially, etc?
- What kind of relationship does the film have with other films by Ozu, in terms of its motif, theme, aesthetic style, technique, etc?
- Does the film have a relationship with international films of the past or present, and how?
- Does the film have any relationship with other cultural forms, such as traditional art forms, novels, classical music, etc?

Students are required to submit a one-page paper proposal including a description of your paper topic, the title(s) of the film(s) selected and a draft bibliography by Nov. 12. This paper proposal counts toward 10% of your final grade.

Late work will not be accepted and will negatively affect your final grade. Incompletes will be only considered in cases of sickness or other dire circumstances, for which you must provide documented evidence.

Plagiarism is a serious offence and can lead to an F for the course and further disciplinary action. Students should acknowledge all research and reading sources in their assignments (be they from books, magazines, journal articles, Internet sources, DVD commentaries, etc.) with proper footnote and bibliographic citations. Remember to keep a copy of submitted assignments until your final grade is posted.

4. Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction
   No Reading Assignment.

Week 2: “The Most Japanese Director”?
9/8: History of Japanese Cinema and Ozu
   Optional Screening: Early Summer (Bakushu, Ozu, 1951)
   Reading:
   Richie, Ozu, 1-17.
9/10: Historiography of Japanese Cinema and Ozu
   Reading:
   Bordwell, Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema, 5-30.
Optional Reading:

Week 3: Traditional Arts, Cinema, and Ozu
9/15: Traditional Arts and Transcendental Ozu Style
Screening: Late Spring (Banshun, Ozu, 1949)
Excerpt: Throne of Blood (Kumonosujo, Akira Kurosawa, 1957)
Reading:
Optional Readings:
Kathe Geist, “Playing with Space: Ozu and Two-Dimensional Design in Japan.” Cinematic Landscape, 283-98.

9/17: “Presentational Practices” in Ozu
Discussion: Late Spring
Readings:
Optional Reading:

Week 4: Modernization and Ozu
9/22: Modernization and Cinema
Screening: I Was Born, But… (Umaretewa mitakeredo, Ozu, 1932)
Excerpt: Lady Windermere’s Fan (Ernst Lubitsch, 1925)
Reading:

9/24: Modernization and Ozu
Discussion: I Was Born, But…
Reading:
Bordwell, Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema, 31-50, 143-59, 224-29.

Week 5: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Ozu
9/29: What is Classical Hollywood Cinema?
Screening: Woman of Tokyo (Tokyo no onna, Ozu, 1933)
Excerpts: Underworld (Josef von Sternberg, 1927)
**Scarface** (Howard Hawks, 1932)  
*The Maltese Falcon* (John Houston, 1942)

Reading:  

### 10/1: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Ozu

**Discussion:** *Woman of Tokyo*

**Reading:**  

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**Week 6: Sound and Silence in Japanese Cinema and Ozu**

**Special Screening:** *The Only Son* (*Hitori musuko*, Ozu, 1936) Unavailable on video. Students must see this film at the Ozu Retrospective @ Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center. 10/4 (Sat) 1:30; 10/6 (Mon) 7:45; or 10/12 (Sun) 1:30. There is a $7.00 student discount.

**10/6: The Popularity of Benshi**

**Reading:**  

**10/8: Coming of Sound in Japanese Cinema and Ozu**

**Discussion:** *The Only Son*

**Readings:**  

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**Week 7: Wartime Film Policy and Ozu**

**Special Screening:** *There Was a Father* (*Chichi ariki*, Ozu, 1942) Unavailable on video. Students must see this film at the Ozu Retrospective @ Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center. 10/9 (Thu) 4:30 or 8:45. There is a $7.00 student discount. For those who cannot see the film on 10/9, non-subtitled version will be screened on regular schedule (10/13 6:10 @410 IAB). The instructor will provide the summery of the story.

**10/13: Wartime Film Policy**

**Reading:**  

**10/15: World War II and Ozu**

**Discussion:** *There Was a Father*

**Readings:**  
Yoshida Kiju, *Ozu’s Anti-Cinema*, trans. Daisuke Miyao and
Week 8: Post War Occupation and Ozu
10/20: Postwar Occupation and Censorship
Screening: Record of a Tenement Gentleman (Nagaya shinshi roku, Ozu, 1947)
Optional Special Screening: A Hen in the Wind (Kaze no naka no mendori, 1948)
Unavailable on VHS. Students are strongly recommended to see this film at the Ozu Retrospective @ Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center. 10/10 (Fri) 4:15 or 7:45. There is a $7.00 student discount.
Reading:

10/22: Postwar Occupation and Ozu
Discussion: Record of a Tenement Gentleman & A Hen in the Wind
Readings:
Bordwell, Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema, 296-305.
Optional Reading:
Yoshida, Ozu’s Anti-Cinema, 51-58.

Week 9: Postwar Melodrama and Ozu
10/27: Postwar Melodrama
Screening: Tokyo Story (Tokyo monogatari, Ozu, 1953)
Excerpt: Twenty-four Eyes (Nijushi no hitmi, Keisuke Kinoshita, 1954)
Reading:
Optional Reading:

10/29: Tokyo Story
Discussion: Tokyo Story
Readings:
Bordwell, Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema, 328-33.
Optional Reading:
Week 10: Special Guest Lecture
11/5: Mr. Yoshishige (Kiju) Yoshida (Director) & Ms. Mariko Okada (Actor) talk on Ozu
   Reading:
   Yoshida, Ozu’s Anti-Cinema, 1-3, 87-117.

Week 11: Ozu and The Golden Age of Japanese Cinema in the 1950s in Full Color
11/10: Japanese Cinema in the 1950s in Full Color
   Screening: Equinox Flower (Higanbana, Ozu, 1958)
   Excerpts: Good Morning (Ohayo, Ozu, 1959)
             Drifting Weeds (Ukikusa, Ozu, 1959)
             Tokyo Drifter (Tokyo nagaremono, Seijun Suzuki, 1966)
             Sonatine (Takeshi Kitano, 1993)
             Red Desert (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964)
             The Women (George Cukor, 1939)

   Readings:

11/12: Ozu in the 1950s
   Discussion: Equinox Flower
   Readings:
   Bordwell, Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema, 343-359.
   Optional Reading:

Week 12: Japanese New Wave and Ozu
11/17: Japanese New Wave
   Screening: An Autumn Afternoon (Sanma no aji, Ozu, 1962)
   Excerpt: A Cruel Story of Youth (Seishun zankoku monogatari, Nagisa Oshima, 1961)
   Reading:

11/19: Ozu in His Autumn Years
   Discussion: An Autumn Afternoon
   Readings:
   Bordwell, Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema, 370-76.
   Optional Reading:
   Yoshida, Ozu’s Anti-Cinema, 119-42.
Week 13: Ozu's Legacy I: Contemporary Japanese Cinema

11/24: Japanese New Wave Directors Now
Screening: Women in the Mirrors (Kagami no onnatachi, Yoshishige Yoshida, 2003)
Excerpts: Abnormal Family, Older Brother’s Wife (Hentai kazoku, aniki no yome-san, Masayuki Suo, 1983)
Mabroshi (Maboroshi no hikari, Hirokazu Kore-edo, 1995)
Reading:
Yoshida, Ozu’s Anti-Cinema, 145-49.

11/26: Japanese New New Wave
Discussion: Women in the Mirrors
Reading:
Optional Reading:

Week 14: Ozu’s Legacy II: World Cinema

12/1: New German Cinema & American Independent Films
Screening: Tokyo-ga (Wim Wenders, 1985)
Excerpt: Stranger Than Paradise (Jim Jarmusch, 1984)
Reading:

12/3: New German Cinema & American Independent Films
Discussion: Tokyo-ga & Stranger Than Paradise
Readings:

Week 15: Conclusion

12/8: Conclusion
No Reading Assignment.

5. Supplemental Bibliography of Japanese Cinema

Barrett, Gregory. Archetypes in Japanese Film: The Socio-political and Religious Significance of the Principal Heroes and Heroines. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna


