IDIS 199: Japanese film
Fall 2005
Fridays 1:00-3:00
PPHAC 335

Instructor: Ellen Bearn
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Zinzendorf 102
off. hrs. Fri. 3:00-4:00

1. Blackboard registration
You must register for the course on Blackboard. Make sure you select the fall 2005 IDIS
199 Japanese Film course (not fall 2004). The password to register is “japanflix” (one word,
lower case). I will be using Blackboard to communicate with you, to post some of the readings,
and to use the discussion forum. When you sign up on Blackboard, register whatever email
address you use, and I expect you to check your email at least once a week before class. When I
send an email to the class, I am assuming that everyone will receive it and read it. For help with
Blackboard, go to http://home.moravian.edu/public/cit/help/blackboard/bbstudent.asp

2. Course description
Japanese film: the individual in a modern world
In this course, we will look at some well-known classic, as well as lesser-known,
Japanese films, in order to investigate the issues that surround contemporary Japan’s attempts to
find meaning in a complex modern world. After 250 years of isolation, Japan suddenly opened
its doors to the rest of the world in 1868, being forced to change from a highly traditional and
rigidly stratified society to one based on a Western model. Utterly devastated at the end of
World War II and with a democratic constitution created by the United States, Japan transformed
itself into a technological and economic rival of the West. Shock waves were evident in cultural
expression, from high art to popular culture. We will look at classics such as Rashomon (1950)
and Tokyo Story (1953), as well as more recent contributions such as Maborisi (1995) and
Fireworks (1997) to see how the individual copes with the demands of the modern world.

3. Course objectives
The objective of the course is to get a sense of the wide variety of expression that has
emerged in post-war (WWII) Japan. The films run the gamut from serious to funny, from violent
to tender, from emotionally intense to light-hearted. The wide range of expressions provides a
look at the complexities of modern Japan. Another objective is to focus on writing; by writing
about film, you will come to appreciate how different elements in film are used by the director to
express ideas.
4. Texts
Eleven films; see separate film list.
1) David Desser, ed., *Ozu’s Tokyo Story*.
The three books listed above are available at the college bookstore.
Photocopies; articles will be handed out in class, or there will be an assignment on Blackboard.

5. Course requirements
   a) You are **required** to view each film **before** class on Fridays. We will not have enough time in Friday’s class to view the entire film, so you must see the films before class. The films are available on reserve at the library, to be viewed in the library. You should budget about two hours to watch the films in one of the viewing rooms; some films are longer, some are shorter so plan accordingly (number of minutes is listed on the film list). I expect you to watch the films in Japanese with English subtitles. This will give you the movie experience as close to the original as possible, since movie dubbing is frequently mediocre and often problematic. There will be a scheduled movie viewing at the library on an evening convenient to most of you, and will be announced later. The small viewing rooms can accommodate 2 to 3 people. If you want to take your computer to the library to watch the movies, don’t forget headphones. And even if you’ve already seen the film, you are to watch it again.

   b) When you view the films, take notes. What you write down will depend, to some extent, on the film and on what you find interesting. For some films you may need to keep track of the character’s names; in other films you may want to take notes about camera movement, angles, or scene cuts, soundtrack, or how time is treated; in other films, you may need to keep track of the plot. If you are writing an essay about the film, take notes that correspond to the writing assignment so that you can make specific references to the movie in your essay.

   c) The readings listed on the weekly schedules are to be done before Friday’s class. If it seems that you are not keeping up with the reading, there may be unannounced quizzes.

6. Evaluation
   **Essays**: you are required to turn in five short (2-3 pages) essays. Topics will be assigned each week, and may include writing a review, writing about something that surprised you, an analysis of a symbol, or a discussion of a relevant cinematic element. You can choose which films you write on, but you must select two or three from before the mid-term, and three or two from after the mid-term; don’t save all five for the last five films of the semester, nor should you pick the first five! These essays are due Friday in class and will be returned to you the following Friday. Please do not turn in your essays as email attachments.
**Mid-term:** there will be a short mid-term on October 28. The test will cover the first five films and the readings up to that point in the course. If you keep up with the films, do the readings, and come to class, you will have no problems with the mid-term.

**Paper:** as we watch the films, think about what you might want to write about. The topic could be: a particularly meaningful scene(s) from a film; the way the director transformed the literary piece into film (esp. *Rashomon, Woman in the Dunes, Barefoot Gen*). A list of topics, along with guidelines on writing, will be handed out later in the semester. If you want to write on a topic other than on the list, I will need to ok your idea. Papers will be due on November 18 (the week before Thanksgiving).

**Final:** the emphasis will be on the 2nd half of the course, but the first half will also be included. Details TBA.

**Class participation:** classes will be discussion-based. If you have watched the films carefully, done the readings, and given thought to the essays, you should be able to address the questions and issues that are brought up in class. I expect active participation, and reactions to your peers’ comments are also important. Come to class with questions, observations, comments. If you don’t come to class, you can’t participate, so although I don’t take attendance, your participation grade is related to your attendance. However, just showing up does not equal participation.

8. Plagiarism: don’t do it. Using someone else’s words, whether it’s from a book or anything on the internet, without a reference, is plagiarism.

7. Last but not least, a word on Attendance…

This course has one class meeting per week. That means each class is 1/14 of the total course. I expect you to come to class. As stated above, 5% of your grade is for class participation, so it’s to your advantage to come to class. If for some reason you can’t make it, please let me know ahead of time by email. It is your responsibility to keep up with the material.

**IDIS 199 – Fall 2005 Film List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class date</th>
<th>Film name, film date, (number of minutes)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>(1) Intro to course; <em>Rashomon</em>, 1950 (88) dir. Kurosawa Akira based on two short stories by Akutagawa Ryunosuke</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td><em>Rashomon</em>, cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>(2) <em>Ikiru</em>, 1952 (143) dir. Kurosawa Akira</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td><em>Ikiru</em>, cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>(3) <em>Tokyo Story</em>, 1953 (136) dir. Ozu Yasujiro</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 7</td>
<td><em>Tokyo Story</em>, cont.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>(4) <em>Woman in the Dunes</em>, 1963 (123) dir. Teshigahara Hiroshi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Movie Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>(5) <strong>Double Suicide</strong>, 1969 (142) dir. Shinoda Masahiro based on bunraku (puppet) play by Chikamatsu Monzaemon</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term test</strong></td>
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<td>(6) <strong>Barefoot Gen</strong>, 1983 (85) dir. Mori Masaki based on manga (comics) story by Nakazawa Keiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 4</td>
<td>(7) <strong>Grave of the Fireflies</strong>, 1988 (93) dir. Takahata Isao (Studio Ghibli) based on short story by Nosaka Akiyuki</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
<td>(8) <strong>Maborosi</strong>, 1995 (110) dir. Kore-eda Hirokazu</td>
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<td>November 18</td>
<td><strong>Papers due</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(9) <strong>Fireworks</strong>, 1997 (103) dir. Kitano “Beat” Takeshi</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>(^ ^) No class; Thanksgiving recess ^_^ /</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>(10) <strong>Spirited Away</strong>, 2001 (125) dir. Miyazaki Hayao (Studio Ghibli)</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>(11) <strong>Lost in Translation</strong>, 2003 (102) dir. Sophia Coppola</td>
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<td>Last class</td>
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