

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
FRIDAY NOON FILM SERIES

PRESENTS

Japanese Civilization: Perspectives In Film

This series will be presented by East Asian Civilization: Japanese Civilization Faculty and Staff.

January 17: Ghost Story (Kwaidan)

Masaki Kobayashi, 1964, 161 minutes – presented by Christopher Oakes

Four terrifying tales of the supernatural filmed with visual sensitivity. This is no Japanese monster movie. Rather, it creeps up on you by appealing to human emotions and fears. An Academy Award nominee, this distinctive work is filled with graceful camera movement, unusual colors, haunting sound effects and music. Japanese with English subtitles

January 24: The Abe Clan (Abe Ichizoku)

Hisatora Kumagai, B&W, 1938, 106 minutes – presented by Professor James Ketelaar

Japanese with English subtitles

January 31: Stray Dogs (Nora Inu)

Akira Kurosawa, B&W, 1949, 122 minutes – presented by Bill Mihalopoulos

A first-rate thriller in which Kurosawa has acknowledged his debt to Georges Simenon. Toshiro Mifune plays rookie Detective Murakami, who loses his gun only to discover that it has fallen into the hands of a killer. Terrified of losing his job, his search takes him into the Tokyo underworld, full of postwar shortage, “divinely hellish under Kurosawa’s odd-angled lensing and staccato editing...Stray Dog is a Dostoevskian saga of guilt, and expiation, by association” (Pacific Film Archive). Japanese with English subtitles

February 7: Osaka Elegy (Naniwa ereji)

Kenji Mizoguchi, B&W, 1936, 84 minutes – presented by Heather Bowen-Struyk

“In 1936 Mizoguchi made his most brilliant pre-war film, Osaka Elegy, shot in 20 days and banned after 1940 for ‘decadent tendencies,’ a euphemism barely concealing the military government’s fear of the radicalism of Mizoguchi’s satire of the ruthless, all-pervasive Osaka capitalism. In this film the mature Mizoguchi style emerges for the first time as he creates, entirely through visual means, a balance between the fate of the heroine Ayako and the corrupt, degenerate values of Osaka. The plot concerns the seduction of Ayako, a switchboard operator, by her boss” .Japanese with English subtitles

February 14: Double Suicide (Sinju ten no amijima)

Masahiro Shinoda, 1969, 104 minutes – presented by Professor James Ketelaar

Inspired by a classic 18th-century puppet play, this film is the heartbreaking tale of a married shopkeeper in love with a prostitute. Bound by duty, and too poor to pay her way out of bondage, Jihei asks Koharu to enter a suicide pact, the only way they can be free. Masahiro Shinoda’s moving adaptation is at once faithful to the original and extremely innovative. Puppet masters and stagehands appear on screen, changing scenery and manipulating the actors’ movements. Japanese with English subtitles

February 21: Black Lizard (Kurotokage)

Kinji Fukasaku, 1968, 90 minutes – presented by Brian Bergstrom

A hilarious caper movie written originally for the stage by Yukio Mishima; the plot concerns a female jewel thief who kidnaps nubile youths and ferries them to a glitzy secret island. There she turns them into naked love statues--one of them bizarrely played by Mishima himself. The transvestite actor Akihiro Miwa, who

flounces around in an impossible collection of boas and chokers and turns every flourish of her cigarette holder into an over-the-top arabesque, portrays Miss Lizard. Japanese with English subtitles

February 28: Black Rain (Kuroi ame)

Shohei Imamura, 1989, 123 minutes – presented by Yuki Miyamoto

A somber, restrained, and very moving story detailing ten years in the life of a family, which survived the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima--and the ways, in which the fallout poisoned their bodies and souls. Filled with haunting images. Japanese with English subtitles

March 7: After Life (Wandafuru raifu)

Hirokazu Koreeda, 1998, 118 minutes – presented by Chikako Osawa – de Silva

After people die, they spend a week with counselors, also dead, who help them pick one memory, the only memory they can take to eternity. They describe the memory to the staff who work with a crew to film it and screen it at week's end; eternity follows. 22 dead arrive that week, assigned to three counselors and a trainee. One old man cannot find a memory, so he watches videotape of his life. Others pick their memory quickly, and the film crew gets right to work. The trainee, 18-year-old Shiori, helps a teenage girl choose a memory other than Disneyland. The youthful staff have a secret and feelings too, which play out, especially Shiori's affection for her mentor, Mochizuki. Japanese with English subtitles

ALL SCREENINGS ARE FREE AND TAKE PLACE AT JUDD 302, BEGINNING AT 12:40 PM. FEEL FREE TO BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH TO EAT WHILE WATCHING THE FILMS!