Objectives
This course will introduce some of the philosophical and aesthetic themes of Japanese cinema up to the late 1960s. We will examine the ways in which ideological threads manifest themselves in representative (though highly selective) works by such directors as Mizoguchi Kenji, Kurosawa Akira, and Oshima Nagisa. The main issue we will consider is the function of Humanism in shaping the plots of the films we will see, and we will attempt to follow broad patterns in the development of the understanding of this term held by Japanese directors. The class will consist of alternating screening/discussion sessions—participation in the discussions is required. As several of the films are extremely rare, regular attendance in class and completion of all required readings (which will be assigned in class) before they are discussed are politely but strongly recommended.

In accordance with the policies of the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, students who miss more than 10% of classes (three classes) will not be permitted to write the final exam.

Many of the issues we will discuss have the potential to be controversial. I am committed to creating an equitable, inclusive, and safe educational space. Intolerant or abusive comments or behaviour will be dealt with appropriately.

Tentative Schedule

September 8: Introductory remarks
• Course goals and requirements
• What is Humanism, why is it applicable to Japanese cinema?
• How to Read a Film

September 15: Personal choice must be personal: responsibility in the films of Kurosawa Akira
• Introduction to and screening of Ikiru (1952)
September 22: The Political and the Individual—balancing the personal with the social
• Introducing and screening *Sansho the Bailiff* (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1954)

• Introduction to and screening of *Nobi* (*Fires on the Plain*, Ichikawa Kon, 1959)
• **Topics for MIDTERM ESSAY assigned.**

October 6: Discussion: Political and existential dimensions of Humanism
• **Topics for ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY/TERM ESSAYS assigned.**

October 13: **MIDTERM EXAM**, in class, 2 hours

October 20: The Collapse of the Family
• Introduction to and screening of *Tokyo monogatari* (Ozu Yasujirô, 1953)
• **MIDTERM ESSAY IS DUE.**

October 27: The Individual and Society: tension between the traditional and the modern
• Introduction to and screening of *Suna no onna* (*The Woman in the Dunes*, Teshigahara Hiroshi, 1964)
• **ALSO: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY IS DUE.**

November 3: Race, the Individual, and the State
• Introduction to and screening of *Koshikei* (*Death by Hanging*, Oshima Nagisa, 1967) NOTE: this is an extremely rare film—you will not be able to find this in any video shop; anywhere in North America. I recommend that you not miss this screening.
• **ESSAY OUTLINE IS DUE.**

November 10: **READING BREAK**

November 17: Discussion: Society, tradition, change: the humanist view of social construction
• **TERM ESSAYS ARE DUE.** Late papers will not be accepted unless death is the cause of their lateness.

November 24: **FINAL EXAM two hours, in-class.**

December 1: Last day—looking towards other possibilities in Japanese film
• Term essays and final exams returned.

**Readings:** Course readings are on reserve in McPherson Library.
Grading

Attendance is mandatory. Students who miss more than 10% of classes (one class) will not be permitted to write the final exam.

Midterm Exam: 15%
Final Exam: 15%
Bibliography 10%
Midterm Essay: 20%
Term Essay Outline 10%
Final Essay: 30%

Mark Ranges

A+: 90% —> C+: 66-69%
A: 86-90%   C: 60-65%
A-: 80-85%   D: 55-59%
B+: 77-79%   F: Below 54%
B: 74-76%
B-: 70-73%

Students who do not complete all course assignments may receive an N. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all course requirements are complete.
Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

Plagiarism and Cheating

The Department of Pacific and Asian Studies upholds and enforces the University’s policies on plagiarism and cheating. These policies are described on pp. 33-34 of the current University Calendar (2010/11). All students are advised to read this section.

Practices that are not acceptable include:

• Persuading or paying someone else to write the student’s assignments, or otherwise presenting someone else’s work as the student’s own;
• Downloading essays or articles from the Internet, or copying passages from books or journals, and presenting them as the student’s own work;
• Citing only a portion of a quotation, and presenting the remainder as the student’s own work;
• Copying from another student or sharing information in examinations or tests;
• Bringing notes or other materials into an examination or test, except as authorised by the examiner or instructor.

In addition, the following kinds of behaviour, unless specifically authorised by the instructor, are unacceptable in an examination: talking or communicating by computer or other electronic device with another student; looking at the work of other students while writing an exam; consulting books, electronic materials or other sources of information.

In every course, the instructor may choose to conduct an additional oral examination, in the presence of another faculty member from the Department, so as to ascertain the level of a student’s knowledge or understanding of the course material.

Departmental Policy Regarding Penalties for Plagiarism and Cheating

The possible penalties for plagiarism and cheating are outlined in the Calendar. An instructor will notify the Chair of the Department of cases of a suspected violation and the Chair will contact the student to arrange an interview with the student and instructor to review the case. If it is determined that a violation of University policy has occurred, the Chair will notify the Director of Academic Advising of the case and a letter of reprimand will be issued to the student. If it is determined that a violation of University policy has occurred, the Chair will notify the Director of Academic Advising of the case and a letter of reprimand will be issued to the student. Any repeat offenses will be dealt with directly by the Dean. In the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, the minimum penalty for a first offence will be a grade of zero for the assignment, examination or test. Depending upon the seriousness of the offense and the weight of the assignment, the Chair may assign a grade of F (0 GPA) for the course. Students will not be permitted to rewrite an assignment, examination or test on which they have been found to be cheating. Records of any violation will be held by the Director of Academic Advising on behalf of the Dean of Humanities. Such records will be destroyed four years after a student graduates. A repeat offence may result in the additional penalty of Disciplinary Probation being placed on the student’s Official Transcript by the Dean; this notation is removed upon graduation.

If you have any doubts about the University’s policies, or want to know if a practice is acceptable or not, you should raise your concerns with your course instructor.
PAAS 393
Humanism in Japanese Cinema to the 1960s

Course Readings

Available online through JSTOR or Project Muse; also on reserve in McPherson Library, and listed in approximate reading order.

• Sartre, Jean Paul: “Existentialism is a Humanism,” a lecture delivered in 1946 http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm


• Burch, Noël: “Kurosawa Akira,” *To the Distant Observer*, 1979

• Iles, Tim “The Functions of the Past: Political Allegory in Kenji Mizoguchi’s Sansho the Bailiff,” *Film International* #16, 2005.


• Iles, Tim “The Nation Collapsing Under its Own Weight Kōshikei (Death by Hanging)” ejcjs, http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/reviews/filmmreviews/2005/Iles2.html