FIS 410 1003 MAJOR FIGURES: Kurosawa SPRING 2020

Instructor: Dale Melgaard

Class Meeting Time: Monday 9:30AM to 1:15PM Room FDH 109

email: dale.melgaard@unlv.edu Film Dept 702 895 3547

WEBCAMPUS https://www.it.unlv.edu/webcampus

Log into this class on WebCampus for assignments, announcements, grades and supplementary material. You may post the ten written ‘Discussions’ on or before the due date. No paper copies please.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

During this term, we will examine the films of Japanese director Akira Kurosawa from the following perspectives: historical, social, cultural, political, artistic and humanistic, guiding students to a richer understanding of Japanese culture. Students will be introduced to basic aesthetic and technical film language, genres, and critical applications in analyzing the films. We will consider the cinematic accomplishments of Kurosawa through the screenings of his films in addition to writing and reading assignments.

COURSE OVERVIEW

We will view the films of Akira Kurosawa in chronological order to appreciate his growth as a director. We will analyze his stylistic contributions (cinematography, editing, narrative content and themes,) and his mastery of genres (samurai, drama) and the impact and influence that Kurosawa has generated in the international film community. Although most of his films were panned by Japanese critics for being too ‘Western’, he did not compromise the content or spirit of his stories, many of which are based on historical events, myths or legends.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

Introduce students to the films of Akira Kurosawa, the first Japanese filmmaker to achieve international honors and recognition.

Discuss how his early life experiences influenced the subject matter of his films.

Analyze Kurosawa’s storytelling style and the employment of specific themes in his films.

Understand Kurosawa’s films within historical, political, social and cultural contexts.

Evaluate the roles of gender in Japanese society that are mirrored in his films.

Interpret the function of allegory in his films.

Appreciate the influence he had on international directors especially Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas.

Examine Kurosawa’s translations of Japanese novels into films.

Continue to develop a basic film vocabulary for writing critically about film.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Be familiar with the major works of Akira Kurosawa and understand his stature as a ‘Major Figure’ and an internationally acclaimed director.

Express what Kurosawa’s films reveal about Japanese history, society, and culture.

Analyze and explain the ways in which societies and cultures other than our own address human needs and concerns.
Reveal our understanding of the ways in which culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and class affect individual and collective identities, experiences, and interpretations of experiences.

Cultivate a greater interest in the extraordinary development of Japanese cinema and in national cinemas outside Hollywood.

REQUIRED FILM VIEWING

We will view each film during the Monday class meetings.

All the films listed in the syllabus are required viewing and are available on Amazon for supplementary viewing. Some of the films are also available on Netflix.

REQUIRED READINGS: ebooks available Lied Library (no purchase necessary)

Title: *Akira Kurosawa* Peter Wild


Title: *Akira Kurosawa: A Viewer’s Guide* Eric San Juan


SCREENING CONTENT

Some of the screenings included in this course may contain sexually explicit, violent, and/or disturbing material, all of which will be discussed in an intellectually responsible manner. Such material will be flagged in advance of individual screenings, and alternative assignments will be provided for students who request them.
You are not required to sit through a film that offends, disturbs, or upsets you in any way. Please inform the instructor. Your grade will not be affected.

HOWEVER if you cannot view R rated films for religious or any other reason, we recommend that you do not take this course.

CLASS SCHEDULE/PROCEDURES

This course begins January 27 with a Midterm Exam on March 10 and concludes with the Final Exam May 11. During Monday’s class, we will view one of Kurosawa’s films. Each film will be introduced by the instructor before the screening with a discussion period following the film. There are ten (10) mandatory written discussion posts regarding the films we view. The questions are located by clicking on ‘Discussions’ on the course website.

Exam dates are strictly adhered to and clearly listed in this syllabus and the online ‘Announcements’. Make arrangements now with your employment and social situations so you can take exams on the scheduled days. Due dates are your responsibility. Mark your calendar.

Film Screening Etiquette

Cell phones, tablets, and laptops must be turned off for the duration of film screenings. The use of these or any similar devices during class screenings will negatively affect your grade and you will be asked to leave the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 27</td>
<td><em>Stray Dog</em></td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 3</td>
<td><em>Roshomon</em></td>
<td>1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td><em>Ikaru</em></td>
<td>1952</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>Presidents’ Day</td>
<td>No Class Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Film Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td><em>Seven Samurai</em></td>
<td>1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td><em>Throne of Blood</em></td>
<td>1957</td>
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<td>March 9</td>
<td><em>The Lower Depths</em></td>
<td>1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td><em>The Hidden Fortress</em></td>
<td>1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td><em>The Bad Sleep Well</em></td>
<td>1960</td>
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<td>April 6</td>
<td><em>Yojimbo</em></td>
<td>1961</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
<td><em>High and Low</em></td>
<td>1963</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
<td><em>Red Beard</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
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<td>April 27</td>
<td><em>Dersu Uzala</em></td>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td><em>Ran</em></td>
<td>1985</td>
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In each of the modules, the readings correspond to the film(s) to be viewed in class.

**Module One**

**Readings:**
- Peter Wild: Intro, Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- Eric San Juan: *Intro, Stray Dog*

**Screening:**
- *Stray Dog* January 27
Module Two

Readings: Peter Wild: Chapters 4 and 5

Eric San Juan: *Roshomon, Ikaru, Seven Samurai*

Screenings: *Roshomon* February 4

*Ikaru* February 10

*Seven Samurai* February 24

Module Three

Readings: Peter Wild: Chapter 6

Eric SanJuan: *Throne of Blood, The Lower Depths*

Screenings: *Throne of Blood* March 2

*The Lower Depths* March 9

Module Four

Readings: Peter Wild: Chapter 7

Eric San Juan: *The Hidden Fortress, The Bad Sleep Well*

Screenings: *The Hidden Fortress* March 23

*The Bad Sleep Well* March 30
Module Five

Readings: Peter Wild: Chapter 8

Eric San Juan: Yojimbo, High and Low

Screenings: Yojimbo April 6

High and Low April 13

Module Six

Readings: Peter Wild: Chapter 9

Eric San Juan: Red Beard

Screening: Red Beard April 20

Module Seven

Readings: Peter Wild: Chapter 10

Eric San Juan: Dersu Uzala, Ran

Screenings: Dersu Uzala April 27

Ran May 4
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

**GRADING**  
Midterm Exam  March 10  100 points  
Final Exam  May 11  100 points  
Discussion Papers (10)  10 points each  100 points  

300 Total Points

**Midterm** March 10  Short Answers  Essay Questions  
**Final**  May 11  Short Answers  Essay Questions

**Missed exams** cannot be made up without medical or family emergency documentation.

Plan your schedule now to avoid conflicts on the exam dates. Jobs, employment, travel plans, working on a film project etc. are not acceptable excuses to miss an exam.

The final course grade is determined by dividing your point total by 266 for the percentage. For example, if your point total is 200, then divided 200 by 266 for a percentage of 75 %.

A  92.1 - 100 %  
A-  90.0 - 92.0 %  
B+  88.1 - 89.9 %  
B  82.1 - 88.0 %  
B-  80.0 - 82.0 %  
C+  78.0 - 79.9 %  
C  72.0 - 77.9 %  
C-  70.0 - 71.9 %  
D+  68.0 - 69.9 %  
D  62.0 - 67.9 %  
D-  60.0 - 61.9 %
DISCUSSION PAPERS – Grade value is 10 (ten) points per paper.

1) A minimum of three hundred fifty (350) words per question, reflecting your insights and observations. Writing less than 350 words is a five point loss.

2) Posts must be supported with specific illustrations and examples from the film.

3) The content of the papers consists of your thoughts and observations and must include specific examples from the film itself. There will be a serious loss of points if you do not support your statements and observations with specific examples from the films that should include characters, scenes, themes, and events. General comments will receive no credit because it indicates that you did not see the film.

4) Original content only. Do not cite or quote outside sources.

5) Do not list the director, the actors, production co, awards etc. Answer the topic question.

Each discussion post is worth up to 10 points depending on its quality and length and illustrations/examples from the film itself.

No credit will be received for late discussion posts.

The final course grade will drop one full grade for every two (2) discussion posts not turned in.

For example, if your final course grade is a B and you missed two discussion posts, then your final course grade will be a C.

Discussion Paper Due Dates

Disc 1 February 2                 Disc 6 March 22
Disc 2 February 9                 Disc 7 March 29
Disc 3  February 23  Disc 8  April 12
Disc 4  March 1  Disc 9  April 19
Disc 5  March 8  Disc 10  May 3

EXTRA CREDIT: This raises the question of fairness to all students. If one student is given the privilege of extra credit, then in fairness to all students, everyone should have that option. Therefore there is no extra credit.

*Missed exams* cannot be made up without a documented medical or family emergency excuse. This is film department policy. Any other excuse is not acceptable. Plan your schedule now to avoid conflicts on the exam dates. Work, social engagements, travel plans, etc. are not acceptable excuses to miss an exam.

**IMPORTANT** As a film student, you will have opportunities to work on film projects. You are encouraged to participate, but not at the expense of your classwork. Working on ANY production is not an acceptable excuse for missing assignments or exams.

[Academic Misconduct Policy](https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy), which defines, “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” as a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

**Identity Verification in Online Courses**

All UNLV students must use their Campus-issued ACE ID and password to log in to WebCampus. UNLV students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to read and adhere to the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, [https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy](https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy), which defines, “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” as a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.
UNLV students enrolled in online courses are also expected to read and adhere to the Acceptable Use of Computing and Information Technology Resources Policy, https://www.it.unlv.edu/policies/acceptable-use-computing-and-information-technology-resources-policy, which prohibits sharing university accounts with other persons without authorization.

To the greatest extent possible, all graded assignments and assessments in UNLV online courses should be hosted in WebCampus or another UNLV-managed platform that requires ACE login credentials for access.

**Missed Classwork**

Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Policy for Missed Work, under Registration Policies, on the Academic Policies webpage, https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&amp;navoid=531.

**Public Health Directives**

Face coverings are mandatory for all faculty and students in the classroom. Students must follow all active UNLV public health directives while enrolled in this class. UNLV public health directives are found at https://www.unlv.edu/coronavirus/health-requirements. Students who do not comply with these directives may be asked to leave the classroom. Refusal to follow the guidelines may result in further disciplinary action according to the UNLV Code of Student Conduct, https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/StudentConduct-Code.pdf, including being administratively withdrawn from the course.

**Academic Misconduct**

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the University community. We all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and are encouraged to always take the ethical path whenever faced with choices. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s educational mission. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person, from the Internet or any other source without proper citation of the source(s). See the Student Conduct Code, https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct.

**Auditing Classes**

Auditing a course allows a student to continue attending the lectures and/or laboratories and discussion sessions associated with the course, but the student will not earn a grade for any component of the course. Students who audit a course receive the same educational experience as students taking the course for a grade, but will be excused from exams, assessments, and other evaluative measures that serve the primary purpose of assigning a grade.
Classroom Conduct
Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn, or of instructors to teach. Use of electronic devices such as pagers, cellular phones, or recording devices, or potentially disruptive devices or activities are only permitted with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative withdrawal of the student from the course.

Copyright
The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with, and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional copyright policy information is available at https://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)
The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A, Room 143, https://www.unlv.edu/drc, telephone 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. Students who believe that they may need academic accommodations due to injury, disability, or due to pregnancy should contact the DRC as early as possible in the academic term. A Disabilities Specialist will discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours, so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Final Examinations
The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur on the date and at the time specified in the Final Exam schedule. The Final Exam schedule is typically available at the start of the semester, and the classroom locations are available approximately one month before the end of the semester. See the Final Exam Schedule, https://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars.

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Incomplete Grades
The grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student’s control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of “F” will be recorded, and the student’s GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the “I” grade.

**Library Resources**
Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the Libraries’ Research Consultation website, https://guides.library.unlv.edu/appointments/librarian. You can also ask the library staff questions via chat and text message at https://ask.library.unlv.edu/.

**Missed Classwork**
Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Missed Work policy, under Registration Policies, on the Academic Policies webpage, https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=7326.

In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student provides official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

The spirit and intent of the policy for missed classwork is to offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students, including those representing the University in extracurricular activities. Instructors should consider, for example, that in courses which offer a “Drop one” option for the lowest assignment, quiz, or exam, assigning the student a grade of zero for an excused absence for extracurricular activity is both contrary to the intent of the Faculty Senate’s policy, and an infringement on the student’s right to complete all work for the course.

This policy will not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the University that could be reasonably avoided. There should be a good faith effort by both the instructor and the student to agree to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, decisions can be appealed to the Department Chair/School Director, College/School Dean, and/or the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee.

For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to: academic recruitment activities, competitive intercollegiate athletics, fine arts activities, liberal arts competitions, science and engineering competitions, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

**Rebelmail**
Rebelmail is UNLV’s official email system for students and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students’ Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways in which students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events,
and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Emailing within WebCampus-Canvas is also acceptable.

**Tutoring and Coaching**

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the ASC website, https://www.unlv.edu/asc, or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the College of Engineering building (TBE A 207).

**UNLV Writing Center**

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, https://writingcenter.unlv.edu/, located in the Central Desert Complex, Building 3, Room 301 (CDC 3–301). Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, but students with appointments receive priority assistance. Students may make appointments in person or by calling the Center, telephone 702-895-3908. Students are requested to bring to their appointments their Rebel ID Card, a copy of the instructions for their assignment, and two copies of any writing they have completed on their assignment.

**Diversity Statement**

As an institution of higher learning, UNLV represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students, and is committed to aspiring to maintain a Campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the University supports understanding and appreciation of all members of its community, regardless of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, or political affiliation. Please see University Statements and Compliance, https://www.unlv.edu/about/statements-compliance.

A successful learning experience requires mutual respect and trust between the students and the instructor. Accordingly, the instructor asks that students be willing to listen to one another's points of view, acknowledging that there may be disagreements, keep discussion and comments on topic, and use first person, positive language when expressing their perspectives.
In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student provides official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

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Rehearsals and/or Screen Performances

UNLV FILM is committed to creating an inclusive and respectful environment for all students. Whenever physical contact of any kind between performers is anticipated, individuals coordinating the shoot or rehearsal (directors, instructors, etc.) should outline the nature and rationale of the planned contact, ensure that participants are comfortable with the actions that will occur, and provide alternatives if requested.