Japanese Film and Culture
Conducted in English
No prior film experience or knowledge of Japanese or Japanese film is required

Location: Tokyo, Japan
Host by: Magic Hour
Dates: January 1st - January 24th
Instruction: Mr. Tsukasa Ariyoshi, Various Guest Lecturers
Credits: 3.0

Description:

In this series lecture seminar, you will take an extensive look at the film world in Japan with specific attention to Japanese film history, promotion, and production. The course director and key lecturer, Mr. Ariyoshi, President of Magic Hour, Inc., and the founder of The Film Academy at Magic Hour, is a highly experienced and practiced independent film promoter, distributor, and producer. Other course highlights include a personalized guided tour of Toho Film Studio (the studio for Akira Kurosawa’s films, among them Seven Samurai, as well as Ishiro Honda’s Godzilla) by its former President and head of the Japan Academy Award Committee, Mr. Tomiyama. You will receive lectures on sub-genres of Japanese film to include anime and avant-garde from leading producers and/or directors. You will learn about soundtrack composition and sound editing versus mixing in film. By course-end, you should have a healthy respect for the professionalism, artistry, and skill that defines the Japanese film industry.

The course also includes an extensive culture program with a four-night stay at a seaside retreat, survival Japanese training, a visit to the largest Buddha in Japan, a Matsuri performance with taiko drumming and a barbecue to follow, a trip to Studio Ghibli, live Sumo action, and more.

Requirements include:

A) **A Detailed Journal** (this building from your journal for the culture program): To be used for copious note-taking during lectures and films, generating questions, observations, responses as well as ideation/formulation for your group project. You are required to watch three out of the following seven films before your arrival in Japan: Tokyo Story, Seven Samurai, Crazed Fruit, Gate of Flesh, Akira, Ichi the Killer, and Nobody Knows. For the three films you choose, you are required to write a “synopsis,” “review”, as well as a “pitch,” “catch-copy,” and, if you deem fit, a localized “title” for a target New York Audience. This will be written in longhand in your journal. (25% of your grade)

B) **Active Participation**: Motivation, enthusiasm, and exemplary behavior for the duration of the course (15% of your grade)

C) **Group Project**: Your team will be assigned a contemporary Japanese independent film for promotion, publicity, and distribution in New York. To make this simulation more realistic and apropos, Magic Hour is typically in charge of promotion and distribution of this film as well. Your team must “package” the film for promotion and distribution in this New York theater (initial strategizing/)
brainstorming, etc., goes in your journals. Final output will be collected and/or emailed. Your team will present their promotion materials to a panel of film professionals presided over by Mr. Ariyoshi. Your goal is to convince this panel your film not only will sell but also how you will ensure the film has a successful run. All materials will be collected and assessed, from your budget to the pitch, trailer, and so on. **No background in marketing and media is required.** In fact, some of the most successful promotion packages in the past seven years have come from students with no or little exposure to these fields. (40% of your grade)

D) Final Reflective Essay: On your impressions of Japan, its history, culture, cuisine, and so on, with reflection on the film course, Japanese film in general, and your total in-country experience (6-8 typed pages). Due January 24th. (20% of your grade)

**Ultimately, the journal and final essay are not only for your “grade” for the course but mementos of your trip as well**

Required Materials:

Course handouts  
Journal (see Culture Program requirements)

In-country films/project films: TBA (see schedule)