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

Location: Tokyo, Japan
Dates: January 1 - 24
Host: The Academy at Magic Hour
Credits: 3

Description:

In this lecture series and seminar, you will explore the film world of Japan. Your course director, Mr. Tsukasa Ariyoshi, has over forty years of experience as a film producer, distributor, and promoter. You will receive lectures from Japanese film professionals on Japanese film history, anime, and independent film. You will have a Q&A with principal Japanese producers, directors, and/or actors. Past lecturers have included award-winning Japanese soundtrack composers, film editors, screenwriters, and special-effects and Foley artists, who introduce you to their creative process live in the classroom. Other highlights include a personalized tour of Toho Film Studio (the studio that produced Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and Ishiro Honda's *Godzilla*) with a lecture from the former President of Toho Studio. By the end of the course, you will gain a healthy sense of the professionalism, dedication, and character of the Japanese film industry.

Your course begins at a seaside retreat in Kyonan, Chiba, and includes survival Japanese, a visit to the largest sitting Buddha in Japan, mochi and fan-making for the New Year, zazen practice at a Zen Buddhist temple, and more. In Tokyo, you will visit the Studio Ghibli museum, wear kimonos while exploring Asakusa (Tokyo's "old" town) and Senso-ji Temple, and have a program dinner.

Requirements:

A) **Journal (size B5 to US Letter)**:
   i. You will be assigned three Japanese films to watch before your arrival in Japan. For each film, you will offer a handwritten plot summary, detailed analysis, and your overall response to and review of the film. Guidelines will be provided. Due by your arrival in Japan. (15% of your total grade)
   ii. A handwritten log for note-taking during all lectures and films, generating questions, observations, responses, as well as ideas for your group project. In addition, you will offer entries for each cultural activity in the program, starting with your arrival and stay in Kyonan. Your journal/log also forms the basis for your final reflective essay. At the end of the course, you will take screenshots of your entries, compile them as a single pdf, and submit them to: academy@magichour.co.jp.
   (20% of your total grade)

**The journal/log is being evaluated for your content, curiosity, sense of exploration, and effort, not your perfect grammar and writing style

B) **Active Participation**: Based on your attendance, punctuality, motivation, enthusiasm, exemplary behavior, and looking out for your peers for the duration of the course. (20% of your total grade)

C) **Group Project**: Your team will be assigned a contemporary Japanese independent film to promote in New York. Your team will create the promotional material for the film's New York release, presenting your plan to a panel of film professionals presided over by Mr. Ariyoshi. Your goal is to show how and why your promotional material for the film will attract a New York audience (presentation time: 20-24 minutes). All materials will be collected and evaluated as part of your grade. **No background in marketing or media is required**. Some of the most successful presentations in past programs were from groups with little or no experience in these fields. You are rewarded for creativity and your engaging, dynamic presentation and presence. (25% of your total grade)

D) **Final Reflective Essay (no AI use permitted)**: Building from your journal/log entries, write a six-to-eight page typed, double-spaced reflection on the film course, impressions of Japanese film, and overall thoughts about your in-country experience. You are being evaluated for your content, not your perfect writing. In the spirit of the film genre, you may complete this reflection as a short film/video (minimum length: ten minutes), with a script that includes your narration, shot selection, locations, etc. Email as a pdf (or .mov, depending) by January 24 to: academy@magichour.co.jp. (20% of your total grade)

**Ultimately, the journal/log and final reflective essay are not only for your grade, but also serve as mementos of your immersion experience in Japan this January. Make it meaningful for you.

Required Materials:

Course handouts
Journal