

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: 3.0

Description:

In this series lecture seminar, you will take an in-depth look at the film world of Japan. Your course director is Mr. Tsukasa Ariyoshi, who has over forty years of experience as a film producer, buyer, distributor, and promoter. Course highlights include a personalized tour of Toho Film Studio (the studio for Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and Ishiro Honda's *Godzilla*) with a lecture from the former President of Toho Studio. You will receive lectures from Japanese film professionals on Japanese film history, anime, and avant-garde film. You will have Q&A with principle Japanese producers, directors, and actors. Past lecturers have also included award-winning Japanese soundtrack composers, film editors, and screenwriters, who introduce you to their creative process live in the classroom. By course-end, you will have gained a healthy sense of the professionalism, dedication, and skill that so characterizes the Japanese film industry.

The course includes an immersive culture program at a seaside retreat in Kyonan, Chiba, survival Japanese training, a visit to the largest sitting Buddha in Japan, a Matsuri performance with taiko drumming and dinner to follow, a trip to the Studio Ghibli museum, a culture program lecture and dinner in Tokyo, and a cultural tour from Asakusa's old town to Tokyo's Skytree.

Requirements include:

A) **Detailed Journal:**

- i. For note-taking during lectures and films, generating questions, observations, responses as well as ideation/formulation for your group project. This is in addition to the journal entries for the culture program, with a minimum of a two pages entry per culture program lecture/event (15% of your grade).
- ii. You must watch at least three of the following films before your arrival in Japan: *Gojira*, *Tokyo Story*, *Nobody Knows*, *Crazed Fruit*, *Gate of Flesh*, *Akira*, *Audition*, and *Tokyo Sonata*. For the three films you pick, write a complete plot summary, detailed analysis, and your overall response to and review of the film. This will be written in your journal, approximately three single-spaced pages per film, due by your arrival in Japan (submitted as screenshots in a pdf) (15% of your grade).

B) **Active Participation:** Motivation, enthusiasm, exemplary behavior, and looking out for your peers for the duration of the course (20% of your grade).

C) **Group Project:** Your team will be assigned a contemporary Japanese independent film to promote and distribute in New York. To make this simulation more realistic and relevant, Magic Hour is typically in charge of promotion and distribution of this film as well, but to a Japanese audience, which proves an interesting cultural comparison

between the Japanese and American sensibilities. Your team will “package” the film for promotion and distribution in a New York theater (initial strategizing/brainstorming, etc., goes in your journals. Final output and materials will be collected and emailed to theacademyatmagichour@gmail.com). Your team will present their promotion/distribution strategy to a panel of film professionals presided over by Mr. Ariyoshi. Your goal is to convince this panel how and why your film will be shown in this movie theater as well as how you plan for the film to have a successful run. All materials will be collected and assessed. **No background in marketing and media is required.** In fact, some of the most successful promotion packages in past programs have come from students with no or little experience in these fields (30% of your grade).

- D) **Final Reflective Essay:** In a six-to-eight typed, double-spaced page essay, reflect on your time in Japan, its history and culture, cuisine, and so on, with detailed, in-depth reflection on the film course, your impression of Japanese film in general, and on your total in-country experience. In the spirit of the film genre, you may elect to write this essay in the form of a minimum ten-page film script, following proper film formatting rules. For the truly bold, you may elect to shoot this as a minimum ten-minute short film.

Due January 24 to theacademyatmagichour@gmail.com (20% of your grade).

**Ultimately, the journal and final reflective piece are not only for your grade, but also serve as literal mementos of your immersion experience.

Required Materials:

Course handouts

Journal (see Culture Program requirements)