

Japanese Film Series

Fall 2005 Semester

All films will be screened in Ridgley 219 starting at 7:00 PM.

Sept. 7 “Mononoke hime” (Princess Mononoke), 1997

Directed by Miyazaki Hayao

The very popular animated film portraying the epic struggle between technology and nature, community and alienation.

Sept. 14 “Madadayo” 1992

Directed by Kurosawa Akira

Kurosawa's final film, and in a sense a fitting culmination to his brilliant career, is a wonderfully evocative and sympathetic portrayal of a beloved Japanese writer and teacher, Uchida Hyakken (1889-1971). Viewed through the eyes of his circle of young proteges, Hyakken's experiences, which span the years prior to and following the Pacific war, reflect in microcosm Japanese society at a crucial juncture in its modern history. But more to the point, Kurosawa's portrayal stands as a deeply moving testament to a beautiful soul and the many people whom he touched--and as an elegy of sorts to a way of life that has vanished.

Sept. 28 “Tampopo” 1985

Directed by Itami Juzo

In this humorous paean to the joys of food, the main story is about trucker Goro who rides into town like a modern Shane to help Tampopo set up the perfect fast-food noodle restaurant. Woven into this main story are a number of smaller stories about the importance of food, ranging from a gangster who mixes hot sex with food to an old lady terrorizing a shopkeeper by compulsive squeezing of his wares.

Oct. 12 “Traffic Jam” (Jutai) 1991

Directed by Kurotsuchi Mitsuo

A hard working salaryman takes off five days from his busy job and sets off with his wife and two children to visit his parents in his hometown for the 1991 new year holidays. He decides that they will go by car to save on expenses. Unfortunately, the long drive from Tokyo to his hometown becomes a much longer journey than expected due to traffic, sickness and other misfortunes and by the time they arrive three days later, they only have time for a short but happy visit.

Oct. 26 “The Tale of Genji” (Genji monogatari) 1987

The melodramatic, modern animated version of Murasaki Shikibu’s classic tale of love and loss.

Nov. 9 “Shall We Dance”

Directed by Suo Masayuki

Shohei Sugiyama is an accountant who spots a beautiful Japanese woman in a dance studio window. Hoping to get closer to her, even though he's married and has a child, he signs up for dance lessons in secret, and slowly begins to fall in love with the art form itself.

Dec. 14 “Kwaidan” 1964

Directed by Kobayashi Masaki

A spectacular supernatural fantasy film consisting of four episodes, *Kwaidan* is based on the writings of folklorist Lafcadio Hearn. Consisting of four haunting episodes involving chilling contact between the mundane world and the realm of ghosts. Winner of the Special Jury Prize at the 1965 Cannes Film Festival.