Syllabus Spring 2014
Wednesday, 3:30-6:10
IDSEM UG 1697
March 26-May 7

Murder and More: 3 Films by Imamura Shohei

Imamura Shohei (1926-2006) was one of Japan’s most highly acclaimed film directors, twice awarded the Cannes’ Golden Palm award. This course will explore three of his films, The Insect Woman, Pigs and Battleships, and Vengeance is Mine, each of which takes a hard look at the seedy side of modern Japanese society, depicting, respectively, a prostitute, gangsters, and a serial murderer. We will support our film viewings with analytic treatments of the films.

Course Requirements:
Attendance and participation 20%
Presentation 20%
3 papers (20% each) 60%

This class meets once a week for only seven sessions. Any unexcused absence will negatively impact your grade. Late papers will be accepted, but progressively penalized for tardiness.

Papers: Take one scene from each film and using a formal syntactical analysis, show how the film “signifies” its message in that scene. Papers should be approximately 3 pages in length.

Statement on Plagiarism
Plagiarism means: presenting as your own someone else’s words, ideas, opinions, and/or argument. You must be sure to cite your sources, include a bibliography, and use quotation marks when you incorporate another person’s words or language verbatim. This includes buying a paper! Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action(s).

Students are required to bring a copy of the assigned readings to class.
Course Objectives: To familiarize students with the filmmaker Imamura Shohei and to teach students the analytic and technical skills required for academic film interpretation.

Required Books
For sale at Shakespeare and Co., 716 Broadway.


The rest of the readings are on NY Classes. They are listed below.


Schedule

1. March 26: Introduction. Short lecture on film semiotics 101, clips on video. Short lecture: Freud, the drives; Metz, systemics.

2. April 2: How To Read a Film
   In class: Watch Pigs and Battleships

3. April 9: Pigs and Battleships
   Student Presentation 1
   First Paper Due

4. April 16 Insect Woman
   In class: Watch Insect Woman
   Read: Stam et al, “Psychoanalysis,” 123-183; Nygren, Time Frames, excerpt, 183-186

5. April 23 “Japanese” cinema
   Read: Nygren, Time Frames, “Thresholds,” 1-25; Chow, “Introduction” excerpt from Writing Diaspora; Chow, “Film as Ethnography,” from Primitive Passions.
   Student Presentation 2
   Second Paper due

6. April 30 Vengeance
   Watch: Vengeance is Mine

7. May 7 Women and National Cinema
   Student Presentation 3
   Paper 3
   No new readings.