

**Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur**

**Proposal for a New Course**

1. Course No: ART4\*\*
2. Course Title: JAPANESE CINEMA: A HISTORICAL & CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE.
3. Per Week Lectures: 03(L), Tutorial: 0(T), Laboratory: 0 (P), Additional Hours[0-2]:       (A),  
Credits (3\*L+0\*T+P+A): 09 Duration of Course: Full Semester / Modular

4. Proposing Department/IDP: Humanities and Social Sciences.

Other Departments/IDPs which may be interested in the proposed course: None.

Other faculty members interested in teaching the proposed course: None.

5. Proposing Instructor(s): Ritwij Bhowmik

6. Course Description: Please see enclosed documents for information under No. 6. & 7.

A) Objectives:  
B) Contents (preferably in the form of 5 to 10 broad titles)

S. No	Broad Title	No. of Lectures
1.		

C) Pre-requisites, if any (examples: a- PSO201A, or b- PSO201A or equivalent):

D) Short summary for including in the Courses of Study Booklet

7. Recommended Books:

Textbooks:

Reference Books:

8. Any other remarks: None.

Dated: January 1, 2026 Proposer: Ritwij Bhowmik

Dated: January 1, 2026 DUGC/DPGC Convener: \_\_\_\_\_

**The course is approved / not approved**

**Chairman, SUGC/SPGC**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

# **JAPANESE CINEMA: A HISTORICAL & CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

(Course Proposal)

Proposed by: Prof. Ritwij Bhowmik

## **6. Course Description**

This HSS Level 2 course will provide an introduction to modern Japanese cinema for students at this institute. Along with the key focus on the noted "auteurs" of the Japanese film industry, we will align the cinema within the wider historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts that had influenced them. Not only will we be screening and discussing films in a diverse range of genres, including period and historical drama, comedy, horror, martial arts, and animation, but we will also be exploring topics that span from traditional Japanese art to the modern history of Japan. In addition, the issues of class, gender, and cultural identity will also be recurring themes in the film discourse. Throughout the course, students will be exposed to both canonical cinematic classics and lesser-known treasures to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diversity and complexity of Japanese cinema.

All readings, course materials, lectures, and evaluations in the course will be in English; no Japanese language skills are required, although memorizing Japanese names is essential. The course evaluation will include regular written quizzes, as well as mid-semester and end-semester examinations.

### **A) The Objective of this course:**

- I. The key objective of this course is to introduce students to modern Japanese cinema.
- II. To understand a cinema's artistic objectives, its perceptions of society and history as a context, and its cultural prerequisites.
- III. To teach the celebrated Japanese "auteurs," cinematic genres, and prominent films.
- IV. To understand how Japanese cinema has responded to and incorporated local traditions with global appeal.
- V. To consider the topics of visual art, history, society, war, propaganda, tradition, and integrity within the Japanese cinema.
- VI. To be able to develop a knowledgeable analysis of a film.

### **B) Contents:**

Sl. No.	Board Titles	Topics	Number of Lectures
1.	<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is Cinema an Art form?</li> <li>• Basic Cinema Study and Visual Culture.</li> </ul>	1
2.	<b>Overview of Japanese Art, Culture and Cinema</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring Japanese Modern Art and Culture.</li> <li>• Cinema in Japan.</li> </ul>	2
3.	<b>Early Japanese Cinema</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The early ear: 1920s Japanese cinema.</li> <li>• Silent Movies in Japan.</li> </ul>	3
4.	<b>Empire of Japan Era</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pre-War Japanese films.</li> <li>• The Talkie Films and the Studio Era.</li> <li>• Early masters: <u>Sadao Yamanaka</u> and <u>Yasujirō Ozu</u>.</li> </ul>	6
5.	<b>Post-War Era</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-War years: American occupation</li> <li>• Golden Age of Japanese Cinema. <u>Akira Kurosawa</u></li> </ul>	3
6.	<b>Second Golden Age of Japanese Cinema</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Second Golden Age of Japanese Cinema.</li> <li>• The <i>sararīman</i> genre: <u>Yasuzō Masumura</u>.</li> </ul>	3
7.	<b>Revival of <i>Jidaigeki</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revival of <i>jidaigeki</i>.</li> </ul>	3
8.	<b>Japanese Anime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japanese Art and Cinema after the Cold War.</li> <li>• Emergence of <i>anime</i> as modern art.</li> <li>• <u>Hayao Miyazaki</u>'s masterpiece <i>Spirited Away</i>.</li> </ul>	6
9.	<b>Japanese Cinema In the 1990s.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resurgence of the <i>J-Horror</i>.</li> <li>• Masters of Fear: The Films of <u>Kiyoshi Kurosawa</u> and <u>Hideo Nakata</u></li> </ul>	6
10.	<b>Contemporary Cinema in Japan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transgressive Cinema in Japan.</li> <li>• Contemporary Masters: Cinema of <u>Takashi Miike</u> and <u>Hirokazu Koreeda</u>.</li> </ul>	6

C) Pre-requisites: None.

D) Short summary for including in the Courses of Study Booklet:

This is a theoretical film-study/visual-culture course that provides a comprehensive historical survey of Japanese cinema, with an emphasis on both its artistic creations and its reflections and commentary on Japanese history and society. Throughout the course, students will be exposed to both canonical cinematic classics and lesser-known treasures to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diversity and complexity of Japanese cinema.

## 7. Recommended books

### Text Books:

Phillips, Alastair, and Julian Stringer (Eds.). *JAPANESE CINEMA: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS*. 1st edition. Routledge, 2007.

Stanley-Baker, Joan. *Japanese Art*. 3rd edition. Thames & Hudson, 2014.

Vick, Tom. *Asian Cinema: A Field Guide*. 1st edition. Perennial, 2008.

### Reference Books:

Galt, Rosalind, and Karl Schoonover (Eds.). *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Gray, Gordon. *CINEMA: A Visual Anthropology*. Routledge, 2010.

Martin, Sean. *New Waves in Cinema*. Kamera Books, 2013.

Okakura, Kakuzo. *The Book of Tea: A Japanese Harmony of Art Culture and the Simple Life*. BiblioLife, 1906.

Shuk-ting, Yau, Kinnia, (Ed.). *East Asian Cinema and Cultural Heritage From China, Hong Kong, Taiwan to Japan and South Korea*. 1st ed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo. *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s And 1930s*. University of Hawaii Press, 2008.

Wert, Michael. *Samurai: A Concise History*. 1st edition, Oxford University Press, 2019.