



1

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Jennifer M. Yoo

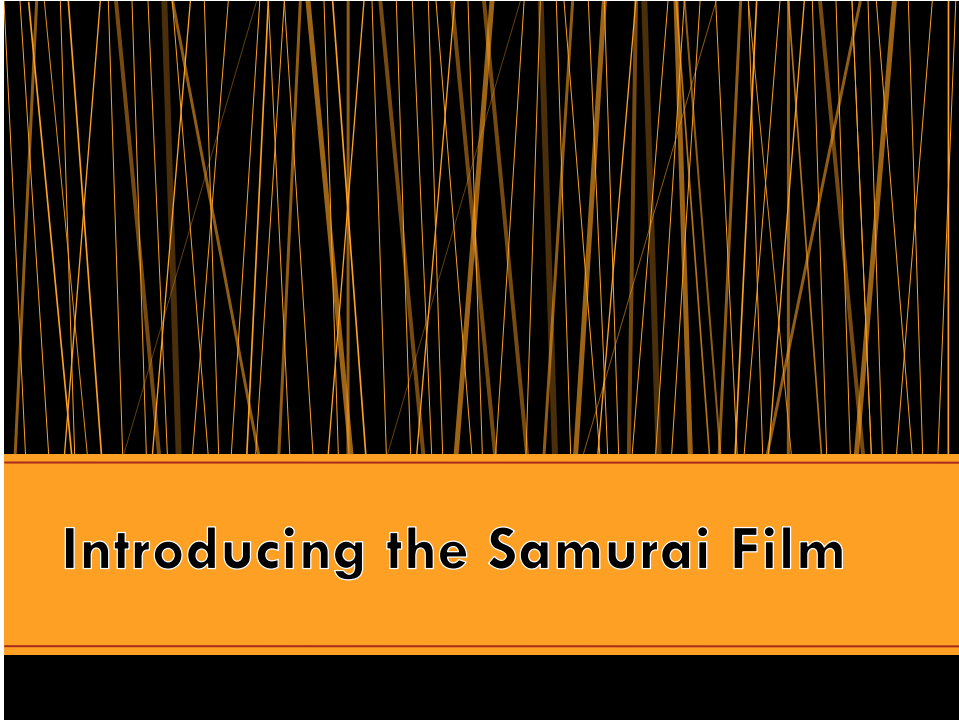
Class Introduction

What to Expect

Some Classroom Rules

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2



3

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PLEASE SHARE: About Samurai Films

Title of Samurai Film You've Seen or Know

Describing in One Word

4

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Introducing the Samurai Film: The “Warrior” Behind the Silver Screen




5

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Introducing the Samurai Film: The “Warrior” Behind the Silver Screen

- Nationalism/national pride, the traditional world in the face of modernism for Japan
- Actual history from 10th C.
 - Films tend to focus on Edo Period (1615-1868)
 - *Shi-No-Ko-Sho* – “Warrior, Peasant/Farmer, Artisan/Craftsman, Merchant”
 - Considered a model for rest of society
- *Bushido* – “Warrior’s Code”
 - Right to Kill
 - Right to Vengeance
 - Right to Clear Dishonor
 - *Seppuku* or *Harakiri* – Ritual Suicide



6

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Introducing the Samurai Film: History of the Genre

- Japanese Cinema: Strong Connection to Theatre
 - First films direct recordings
 - Many stylistic characteristics taken from Kabuki theatre
- Pre-WWII: More “Drama”
 - *Jidaigeki* – “Period Drama”
 - Not explicitly samurai
- During WWII: Samurai as Propaganda
 - *Chushingura* – The Loyal 47 Ronin
- Post-WWII: Samurai as Action “Heroes”
 - *Chanbara*
 - Primetime of samurai film production




Kabuki

7

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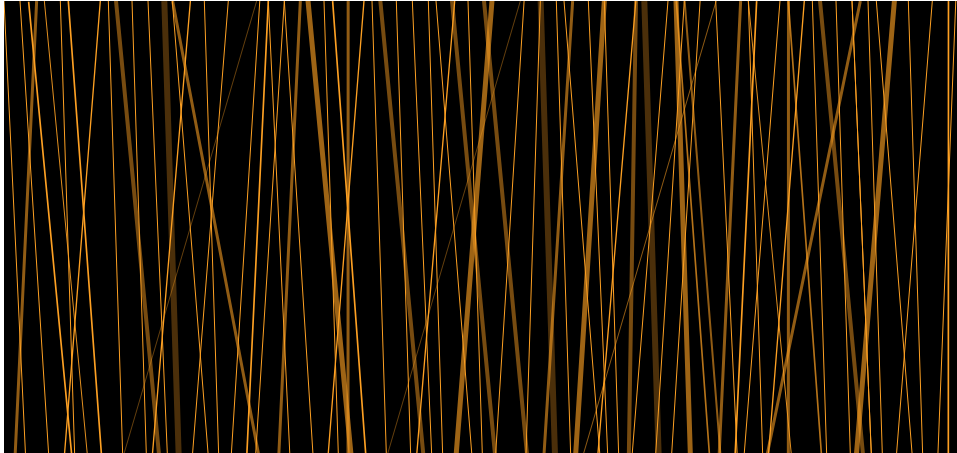
Introducing the Samurai Film: History of the Genre

- Japanese Cinema: Strong Connection to Theatre
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Samurai Rebellion (Kobayashi Masaki, 1967)

8




Defining the Samurai Film

9

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Defining the Samurai Film: Plot/Themes



Harakiri (Kobayashi Masaki, 1962)

- Bushido
 - Saving face and/or exacting vengeance as common themes/plots
- *Giri-ninjo*
 - “Duty vs. Passion”
- Significance of the Sword
 - The samurai’s “soul”
 - Symbol of dignity & honor
 - Resolving conflict through combat/duel
- Many films focus on the end of the samurai
 - Feature *ronin* (“masterless” samurai) or samurai coping with change

10

Defining the Samurai Film: Characterization

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Three Outlaw Samurai
(Gosha Hideo, 1964)

- Typically solitary, and “scarred”
- Archetypes:
 - The “Ambitious”
 - The “Losing Battle”
 - The “Noble Loser”
 - The “Band”
 - The “Alien Hero”

11

Defining the Samurai Film: Presence of Violence/Action

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Sword of Doom (Okamoto Kihachi, 1966)

12

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character




Seven Samurai (Kurosawa Akira, 1954)
Shimura Takashi as Shimada Kanbei

13

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character



The "Ambitious"

The "Losing Battle"

The "Noble Loser"

The "Band"


The "Alien Hero"

Seven Samurai (Kurosawa Akira, 1954)
Shimura Takashi as Shimada Kanbei

14

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character

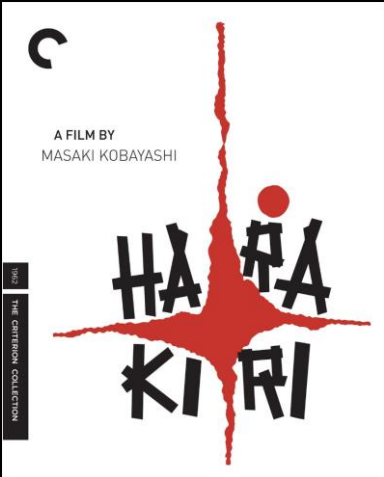


Harakiri (Kobayashi Masaki, 1962)
Nakadai Tatsuya as Tsugumo Hanshiro

15

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character



The "Ambitious"

The "Losing Battle"

The "Noble Loser"

The "Band"


The "Alien Hero"

Harakiri (Kobayashi Masaki, 1962)
Nakadai Tatsuya as Tsugumo Hanshiro

16

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LET'S TRY: Taking a Closer Look at Character

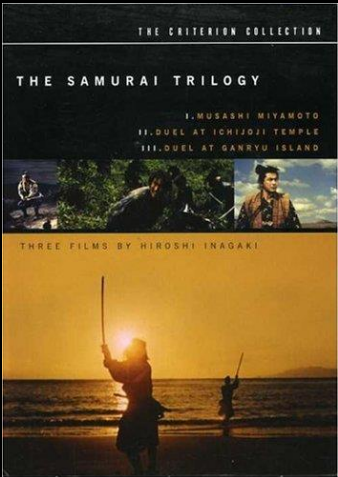


Samurai Trilogy (Inagaki Hiroshi, 1954-1956)
Mifune Toshiro as Miyamoto Musashi

17

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LET'S TRY: Taking a Closer Look at Character



The "Ambitious"

The "Losing Battle"

The "Noble Loser"

The "Band"


The "Alien Hero"

Samurai Trilogy (Inagaki Hiroshi, 1954-1956)
Mifune Toshiro as Miyamoto Musashi

18

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Taking a Closer Look at Character

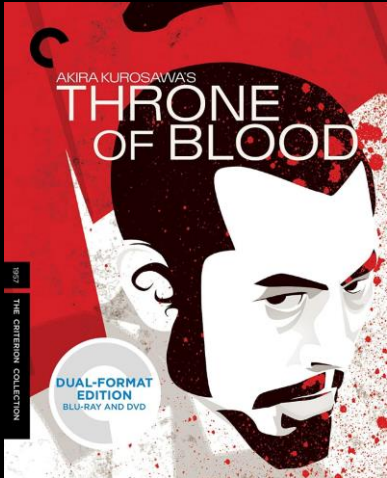


Throne of Blood (Kurosawa Akira, 1957)
Mifune Toshiro as Taketoki Washizu

19

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character



Throne of Blood (Kurosawa Akira, 1957)
Mifune Toshiro as Taketoki Washizu


- The "Ambitious"
- The "Losing Battle"
- The "Noble Loser"
- The "Band"
- The "Alien Hero"

20

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character

FUN FACT: The arrows were shot for real




Throne of Blood (Kurosawa Akira, 1957)
Mifune Toshiro as Taketoki Washizu

21

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LET'S TRY:
Taking a Closer Look at Character

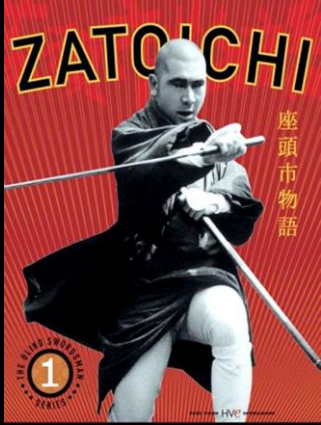


Zatoichi (1962-1989)
Katsu Shintaro as Zatoichi

22

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LET'S TRY: Taking a Closer Look at Character



ZATOICHI
座頭市物語
THE TALE OF ZATOICHI

1
THE BLIND SWORDSMAN
SERIES

The "Ambitious"

The "Losing Battle"

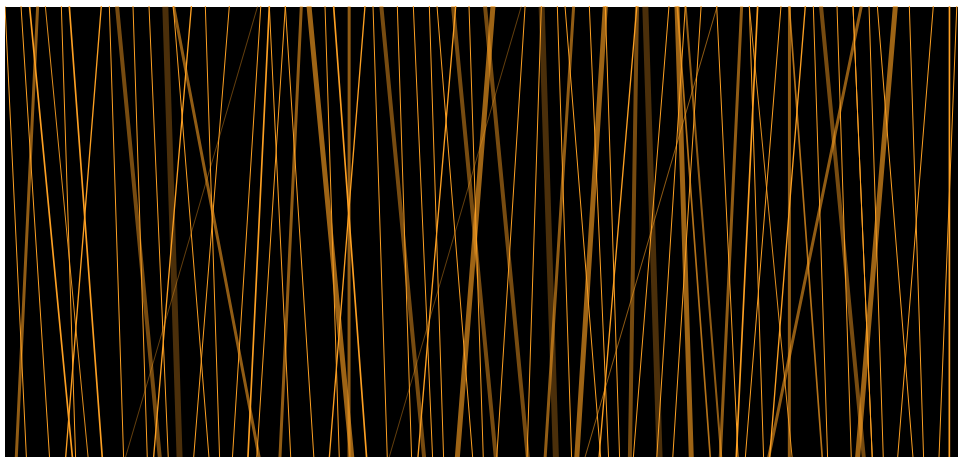
The "Noble Loser"

The "Band"

The "Alien Hero"

Zatoichi (1962-1989)
Katsu Shintaro as Zatoichi

23




Developing the Samurai Film

24

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Developing the Samurai Film: The Founding Directors

- Kobayashi Masaki
 - Harakiri (1962)
 - Samurai Rebellion (1967)



1916-1996

25

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Developing the Samurai Film: Use of Plot/Themes



Harakiri
(Masaki Kobayashi, 1962)

Harakiri (Kobayashi Masaki, 1962)
Nakadai Tatsuya




26

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Developing the Samurai Film: The Founding Directors

- Kobayashi Masaki
 - Harakiri (1962)
 - Samurai Rebellion (1967)
- Gossa Hideo
 - Three Outlaw Samurai (1964)
 - Sword of the Beast (1965)
 - Goyokin (1969)




1929-1992

27


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Developing the Samurai Film: Use of Characterization



**Three Outlaw Samurai
(Hideo Gosha, 1964)**

Three Outlaw Samurai (Gosha Hideo, 1964)
Tanba Tetsuro, Nagato Isamu & Hira Mikijiro




28

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Developing the Samurai Film: The Founding Directors

- Kobayashi Masaki
 - [Harakiri \(1962\)](#)
 - Samurai Rebellion (1967)
- Gosha Hideo
 - [Three Outlaw Samurai \(1964\)](#)
 - Sword of the Beast (1965)
 - Goyokin (1969)
- Okamoto Kihachi
 - Samurai Assassin (1965)
 - [Sword of Doom \(1966\)](#)
 - Kill! (1968)




1924-2005

29

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Developing the Samurai Film: Use of Violence/Action

WATCH: How many people does he cut down?



Sword of Doom
(Kihachi Okamoto, 1966)

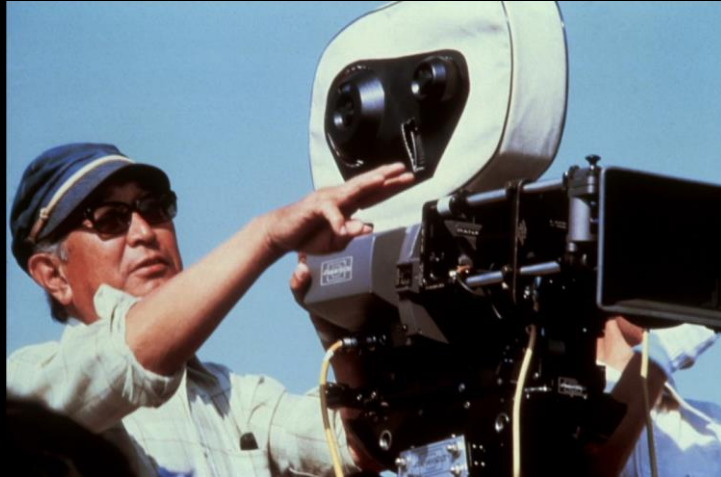
Sword of Doom (Okamoto Kihachi, 1966)
Nakadai Tatsuya



30

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Developing the Samurai Film: Kurosawa Akira as a “Founding Director”?

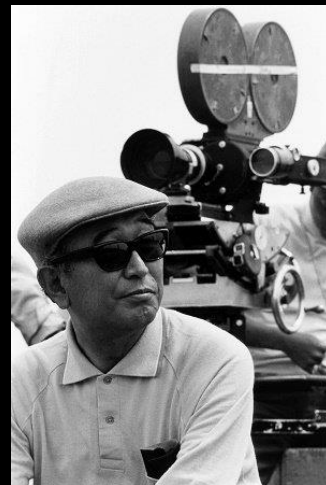


31

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Developing the Samurai Film: Kurosawa Akira as a “Founding Director”?

- First Japanese director to win international film award
 - Rashomon (1950) – Golden Lion at 1951 Venice Film Festival
- Self-proclaimed “global citizen”
 - Cinema as “international medium”
 - Influenced by Russian & Shakespearean Literature, Hollywood Westerns
- Criticized for making “un-Japanese” films within Japan
 - Western style of construction
- Some of the most iconic films for genre
 - Seven Samurai (1954)
 - [Yojimbo \(1961\)](#)




1910-1998

32

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Developing the Samurai Film: Kurosawa Akira as “Founding Director”?



Yojimbo (Akira Kurosawa, 1961)

←

Yojimbo (Kurosawa Akira, 1961)
Mifune Toshiro

33



Questions?

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Yojimbo (Kurosawa Akira, 1961)

34



THANK YOU FOR JOINING!

Next Week: Introducing the Wuxia Film (Mainland China/Hong Kong)

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Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Ang Lee, 2000)