

# **The Stanford University-J. F. Oberlin University Commemorative Lecture Series**

## **15TH LECTURE**

グローバル・コミュニケーション学群・大学院国際学研究科 共催



## **The Film Theory Complex and the Problems of Studying Japanese Intellectual History**

**Aaron Gerow, Professor of East Asian Cinema and  
Culture, Yale University**

Japan has witnessed a long history of deep and rich thinking about the modern medium of film, pursued by a wide range of thinkers from Tanizaki Junichiro to Tosaka Jun, from Nakai Masakazu to Hasumi Shigehiko. Not only has this history been largely ignored within the canon of film theory, however, which remains Euro- and American centric, it has mostly been forgotten within Japan itself. What does it mean when many have thought about cinema in Japan, but most today refuse to acknowledge that there has been film theory in that nation? This contradictory phenomenon is what I call the “theory complex” and says much about not only the status of theory in the film world, but also the place of cinema in Japanese modernity and the place of Japan within transnational intellectual flows. It also, I argue, offers a self-reflexive counter to canonical histories of film theory, questioning the definition of theory precisely at a time when the existence of cinema itself is in question.



Aaron Gerow

Language: English (Q&A may be in Japanese)  
Date and time: January 18 (Thursday), 16:10–17:40  
Place: Sūteikan Room 6H, Machida Campus

Aaron Gerow is Professor of East Asian cinema and culture at Yale University and has published widely on variety of topics in Japanese film, media, and popular culture. His books include *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation, and Spectatorship, 1895-1925* (2010); *A Page of Madness: Cinema and Modernity in 1920s Japan* (2008); and *Kitano Takeshi* (2007).

This lecture series was established within the framework of an Agreement of Academic Cooperation between J. F. Oberlin University and Stanford University. Speakers are non-Japanese scholars who studied, earlier in their careers, at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies (IUC). The IUC, founded in 1963 and administered by Stanford University on behalf of sixteen U.S. and Canadian universities, is located in the Minato Mirai district of Yokohama.