Comments on your mid-term exams:

I read your mid-term exams with care. My grading is largely based on the comparison among all the exams. A purely objective grading, for this kind of exam, is not possible. I ask you to take the letter grade as the indication of my assessment of how you have been doing in this course. Below I write some comments on your exams.

Some of you used your own sense of “masculinity” and “femininity” without explaining what you mean by them. I wanted you to interrogate “your sense” through your examination of the filmmaker’s understanding of masculinity, femininity and humanity. Note again the spiral image that Reyna and Rapp discuss in the first article we read together. While you must place Kurosawa at the center, you also must place yourself at the center, instead of taking “your sense” for granted (which I do not necessarily share).

Some of you saw “the woman” as an extremely weak- “feminine”- figure. I do not think the filmmaker’s presentation of “the woman” that simple. Rather, by making different characters speak of her differently, he presents “femininity” in a complex way. In the woodcutter’s story, she appears as a manipulative woman. If YOU interpret this as a “feminine” quality, then, at least you should also discuss why you interpret it that way.

These are my major comments. Some papers demonstrated that the students hardly attended classes, and that they did not read the course materials. Please remember that “class attendance and reading of the class materials” are the MOST important criteria for FINAL grading.

To some of you, I gave the hyphenated grades, such as B+/A-. If I felt that the exam is worth A-, rather than B+, I underlined A-. What follows is the distribution.

A+, A, A- 33
B+, B, B- 23
C+, C, C- 8

Total 64 students (2 incomplete students)
Since my grading is based on the comparison among the exams, my policy is not to change your grades. Still, if you want me to reconsider your grade, please submit your paper and your written statement (I prefer poem) as to why you think you do not deserve the grade.

I have not yet figured out how to balance between the mid-term and the final exam for the final grading. Again, the class attendance and reading of the course materials are most important. I am inclined to the idea that I give the equal importance to both the mid-term and the final.