

Introduction to Japanese Culture

Japanese 10 / AMES 13, Spring 2014

Class times: MWF, 11:15 to 12:20

x-hour, Tues 12 to 12:50

Classroom: Carson L02

Instructor: Jim Dorsey

Office: 303 Bartlett Hall

Office Hrs: Mon 2~3:30

Tu 10:30~12, Th 2~3:30

Class Description

Japanese cultural history through a broad survey of literature, art, social and political institutions, and popular culture. Modern conceptions of Japan and formations of Japanese identity have evolved under the pressures created by radical swings between periods of wholesale appropriation of foreign cultural forms and periods of extreme isolation. The course will trace the evolution of Japanese culture by examining the ways in which cultural archetypes are distinguished in Japan. Taught in English. Open to all classes. Required for the LSA+, major and minor. Dist: LIT; WCult: CI.

Required Texts

The following books are required and are available at Wheelock Books. All other readings will be posted on the course Canvas site.

- Anne Walthall, *Japan: A Cultural, Social And Political History*
- Lady Sarashina, *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams*
- Ihara Saikaku, *Life of an Amorous Woman*
- Natsume Soseki, *Sanshirô*
- Kawabata Yasunari, *Snow Country*

Films

We will consider a number of films in the course. These have been made available by Jones Media Center as streaming films. Access them via Canvas by clicking on the "Library Reserves" link within Course Menus. You must be connected to Dartmouth Secure and officially enrolled in the class. A wired ethernet connection is highly recommended. The films, in the order in which we'll consider them, are:

- "Lost in Translation," written and directed by Sofia Coppola, 2013.
- "Seven Samurai," dir. by Akira Kurosawa, 1954.
- "Princess Mononoke," dir. by Miyazaki Hayao, 1997.
- "20th Century Boys," dir. by Yukihiko Tsutsumi (based on the manga by Urasawa Naoki), 2008.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the class students should have acquired the following:

- a general understanding of the entire sweep of Japanese cultural history, including the political, social, and cultural characteristics of each epoch
- a familiarity with some of the major canonical works of the Japanese literary tradition, and an ability to interpret and explicate them in keeping with their historical and cultural context
- a knowledge of some of the general paradigms of literary theory and cultural studies, and the capability of applying those theories to texts

Teaching Methods & Expectations for Students

Japanese 10 / AMES 13 is an introductory level course and often with a large enrollment. These factors largely determine the way the course is taught. The texts are of, essentially, three types, and you should prepare them in different ways:

- Japanese history (Walthall, *Japan: A Cultural, Social And Political History*). Read the chapters before class and make note of the major trends. I will lecture on history, expanding and highlighting on the material in the textbook.
- Literary (and filmic) texts. For each one you should identify a scene or element that is the most important. This assignment is intentionally vague, and intended to make room for a wide range of approaches. At times I will provide a short list of questions to guide your reading. Come to class prepared to 1) identify an important passage *by page number* (or time for films), so that the entire class may reference it, 2) to paraphrase it in the context of the work as a whole, and 3) to state briefly why it is crucial to understanding the text or film as a whole. Students are expected

to prepare *every* literary or filmic text in this way. Be sure to have these texts with you in class, in either hard or digital copy.

- Theory. The syllabus includes a number of essays unrelated to Japan but integral to the fields of literary and cultural analysis. In preparing this material students should again pick the most important passage or idea, and be ready to both identify it by page number and summarize it in your own words. The best way to get the knack of working with theory is to re-phrase the points with vocabulary or examples that make sense to you. Students are expected to do this for *every* theoretical work we examine. Be sure to have these texts with you in class, in either hard or digital copy.

I will invite student comments on the readings and I will also call on students for input of this sort. I realize that perfect preparation is not possible on all days; if you're not prepared to comment, simply say, "I'd like to pass today." But don't play that card too often. One last note: I realize that the foreign place and people names are difficult to remember. I will do my best to minimize this burden, but in many cases there is simply no way around it.

Evaluation

- Class participation 10%
- Two 2-page interpretive essays 20%
- Two hour exams (18 April & exam period [TBA]) $2 \times 35 = 70\%$

Religious Observances Policy

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations

Student Needs

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak to me by the end of the second week of the term at the very latest. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Disabilities Coordinator may be consulted to verify the documentation of the disability. Accommodating students with unique needs is a priority for me, but I can only act on that if I have the necessary information.

Academic Honor

In the context of this class, the honor code is understood to mean that all work turned in for grading is to be the student's own. All intellectual debts are to be acknowledged by means of proper citation. See the instructor if clarification is desired.

Course Schedule

(*Note: professional responsibilities will take me out of town on two Fridays: 28 March and 18 April. The first of these will be made up during x-hour on 8 April. The second is an in-class exam and I will arrange for somebody to proctor it in my place.*)

UNIT ONE: LOST IN TRANSLATION?

24 March 2014 (Mon)

- Course Introduction, logistics

26 March 2014 (Wed)

- Read: Richard Shweder, "Introduction: The Astonishment of Anthropology"
- Read: Ian Condry, "Japanese Hip-Hop and the Globalization of Popular Culture"

28 March 2014 (Fri: no class this day; made up in the x-hour on Tues, 4/8)

UNIT TWO: PRIMORDIAL SOUP, CELESTIAL STRIPTEASE, AUGUST EMPERORS

31 March 2014 (Mon) Geography and Early Cultures

- Watch: "Lost in Translation," written and directed by Sofia Coppola, 2003.

- Read: Walthall, "Connections: Pre-History" & "Chapter One: Early State and Society"

2 April 2014 (Wed) Introduction to Semiotics (theory)

- Read: selections from Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*

5 April 2014 (Fri)

- Read: excerpts from *The Record of Ancient Matters* (Kojiki, 712), three selections: preface, Izanami & Izanagi, Yamato Takeru)

UNIT THREE: COURT CULTURE AND THE "WOMAN'S HAND"

7 April 2014 (Mon) "The Good People"

- Read: Walthall, "Connections: Buddhism" & "Chapter Two: Heian Japan (794~1180)"

8 April 2014 (Tue / x-hour) Introduction to Gender Studies (theory)

- Read: Julie Rivkin & Michael Ryan, "Introduction: 'Feminist Paradigms'"
- Read: Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"

9 April 2014 (Wed)

- Read: Ki no Tsurayuki, *The Tosa Journal* (Tosa nikki, c. 935)

11 April 2014 (Fri) Damp Sleeves on the Path of Dreams (Classical Poetics)

- Read: selections of poetry and poetic theory, from the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* (Manyōshū, c. 771), *Poems Ancient and Modern* (Kokin Wakashū, the first Imperial Anthology, c. 905, Preface and Selections), *Salad Anniversary* (1987)
- Read: selections from *The Tales of Ise* (Ise monogatari, c. 950)

14 April 2014 (Mon) Fast Times with the Shining Prince

- Read: selections from the *Tale of Genji* (Genji monogatari, early 11th century): Chpt 1 Kiritsubo / Paulownia Pavillion (Tyler), Chpt 4 Yugao / Evening Faces (Seidensticker), Chpt 9 Aoi / Heartvine (Seidensticker), Chpt 10 Akashi (Tsuboi, manga)

16 April 2014 (Wed) Those Nasty, Nasty Tales

- Read: Lady Sarashina, *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams* (Sarashina nikki, c. 1059)

18 April 2014 (Fri)

- Midterm. One hour sit-down, blue-book exam. In class.

UNIT FOUR: HERMITS, GHOSTS AND THE RISE OF THE WARRIOR

21 April 2014 (Mon) Swashbuckling Samurai

- Read: Walthall, "Chapter Three: Kamakura Japan (1180~1333)"
- Read: Excerpts from *The Tale of Heike* (Heike monogatari, c. 1218? for *written* text)

22 April 2014 (Tues / x-hour)

- Watch: "Seven Samurai," directed by Akira Kurosawa, 1954.

23 April 2014 (Wed)

- Read: Walthall, "Chapter Four: Japan's Middle Ages (1330~1600)"
- Read: Kamo no Chōmei, "An Account of My Hut" (Hōjōki, 1212)

25 April 2014 (Fri)

- Read: Linda Hutcheon, "Beginning to Theorize Adaptation" (theory)
- Read: Noh drama: "The Well Cradle" (Izutsu) and "Tomoe" (both c. 1400)

UNIT FIVE: RISE OF THE TOWNSMAN, CAPITALIZING ON CULTURE

28 April 2014 (Mon) On the Road Again

- Read: Walthall, "Chapter Five: Edo Japan (1603~1800)
- Read: Matsuo Basho, *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (Oku no hosomichi, 1702)

30 April 2014 (Wed) The Floating World

- Read: Ihara Saikaku, *The Life of an Amorous Woman* (Kōshoku ichidai onna, 1686)

1 May 2014 (Thurs) Public Lecture, 4:30, 13 Carpenter Hall

- Attend & Listen: Annual Rudelson Lecture. Yukio Lippit (Harvard University), "The Ise Shrines and the Metabolism of Japanese Architecture"

2 May 2014 (Fri) Introduction to Marxism (theory)

- Read: Julie Rivkin & Michael Ryan, "Basic Marxism: Starting with Zero"
- Read: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

5 May 2014 (Mon) It's a Nasty Job but Somebody's Gotta Do It

- Read: Hiraga Gennai, "A Treatise on Farting" (Hōhiron, 1777)
- Read: Shiba Zenko, "Thousand Arms of Kannon, Julienned" (Daihi no senrokuhon, 1785)
- Watch: "Princess Mononoke," directed by Miyazaki Hayao, 1997.

UNIT SIX: FLOATING WORLD TO MODERN STATE

6 May 2014 (Tues, x-hour)

- Listen: guest lecture by Shibata Motoyuki of Tokyo University (we might switch this and 5/7 class contents).

7 May 2014 (Wed)

- Read: Walthall, "Chapter Six: Japan in Turmoil (1800~1867)
- Read: Walthall, "The Meiji Transformation (1868~1900)

9 May 2014 (Fri)

- Read: Natsume Soseki, *Sanshiro* (1908)

12 May 2014 (Mon)

- Read: Walthall, "Chapter Eight: Rise of Modern Japan (1900~1931)" and "Chapter Nine: War and Aftermath (1931~1964)

UNIT SEVEN: CONJURING IDENTITIES FOR THE MODERN WORLD

14 May 2014 (Wed)

- Read: Kawabata Yasunari, *Snow Country* (Yukiguni, 1937/1947)

16 May 2014 (Fri) Three Accounts of the War

- Read: selections from "The Light of Asia Awakened: Beautiful Tales of the Holy War" (Kōa no hikari, 1939)
- Read: Dazai Osamu, "December 8" (Jūnigatsu yōka, 1942)
- Read: Kanbayashi Akatsuki, "An Historic Day" (Rekishi no hi, 1942)

UNIT EIGHT: POSTWAR TRENDS

19 May 2014 (Mon)

- Read: Walthall, "Chapter Ten: Contemporary Japan (1965 to the Present)

- Read: selected manga by Tsuge Yoshiharu: “Dream Walk” (Yume no sampo, 1972), “Oba’s Electroplate Factory” (Ōba denki mekki kōgyōjo, 1972), “Red Flowers” (Akai hana, 1967)
- Listen: selected folk songs of the 1960s

21 May 2014 (Wed)

- Read: Murakami Haruki, “The Elephant Vanishes” (Zō no shōmetsu, 1991)

23 May 2014 (Fri) Culture After 3.11

- Read: two stories from *March Was Made of Yarn* (TBA)

26 May 2014 (Mon): no class (Memorial Day and pre-exam break)

28 May 2014 (Wed; *last day of spring classes*)

- Watch: “20th Century Boys,” directed by Yukihiro Tsutsumi, based on the manga by Naoki Urasawa, 2008.

30 May ~ 3 June 2014: final exam period.