

## **Contemporary Japanese Literature (ANS 372)**

Spring 2019

Michael Kuehl – [mkuehl@utexas.edu](mailto:mkuehl@utexas.edu)

This course examines contemporary Japanese literature produced after the economic bubble in 1991 to the present. The core objective is to develop critical close reading skills which will allow us to think, discuss, and write analytically about how Japanese artists conceptualize contemporary Japan and the issues Japanese society currently faces. In addition to considering the form and style of Japanese fiction (including some examples from contemporary cinema), we will also approach such themes as family, gender relations, sexuality, race, religion, crime, the environment, natural and man-made disasters, and war memory. Through our rigorous exploration of literature, we will find out what we can learn both about and from Japan. This is a discussion-based upper level class. All students are expected to come having read the work, taken notes, and ready to participate.

### **Required Texts / Materials:**

- 1) Okuizumi Hikaru- *Stones Cry Out* - 9780156011839  
Nakamura Fuminori- *The Thief* - 9781616952020  
Tawada Yōko - *The Emissary* - 9780811227629  
*Digital Geishas and Talking Frogs* -9780887277924
- 2) Course Packet – Available for purchase and Jenn's Copy Shop **North** (2518 Guadalupe St, 482-0779)
- 3) A pack of 3"x5" index cards for in-class pop quizzes.

### **Grading:**

The grade scale is as follows:

A = 93-100; A- =90-92.9; B+ = 87-89.9; B = 83-86.9; B- =80-82.9; C+ = 77-79.9; C =73-76.9; C- = 70-72.9; D+ = 67-69.9; D = 63-66.9 = D- 60-62.9 = D-; F= <60.

### **Assignments:**

#### **Participation (10%)**

Based on your participation in active discussion during class. This requires you to contribute in a well thought out and collegial manner. The grade will be based on the quality of your additions to the discussion.

#### **Pop-Quizzes (20%)**

Throughout the course of the semester pop-quizzes will be given at the start of class to make sure you are doing the reading and attending class. The questions will not be hyper-specific (e.g. what happened on page 123 of the work), but more general plot points that should be obvious if you have done the reading carefully—but not obvious enough that they would be on Wikipedia. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

#### **Homework Assignments (30%)**

There will be several reading responses and writing assignments throughout the semester. These are designed to get you writing and analyzing works of literature/film to prepare for the final longer essay. All homework will be submitted on Canvas. Several will require you to also bring in a hard copy to class for in-class work—make sure to double-check the syllabus.

Assignment and writing guidelines can be found on Canvas.

#### Final Paper Thesis + Outline + 1~2-Page Draft (10%)

This is preparation for your 5-7-page final paper based on one to two of the works that we have analyzed in class. Write up a thesis statement, detailed outline, and a 1~2-page draft. Submit it to Canvas and also bring a hard copy to class. Your grade will be based on the submitted draft, and your participation in class. The draft does not necessarily need to be the first page of your paper. This will be your chance to get a peer advice on a part of your final paper during class time.

Instructions for the final essay can be found on Canvas

#### Final Essay (30%)

The final essay is a 5-7-page analysis of one to two of the works covered in class during the semester. You will need to use direct evidence from the text(s) to support a persuasive and original argument. This paper should not be just a plot summary. Instructions for the final essay can be found on Canvas.

The final essay is due **May 17<sup>th</sup> at Noon**. Each day late drops you a grade point (e.g. A to B)

### **Standards and Expectations:**

Careful, thorough viewing/reading of the assigned texts by the date indicated on the schedule. This requires your active engagement with the text. Detailed note taking is essential as is **bringing your notes and copies of readings to class** since you will need to refer to them frequently for group and class discussion/activities.

Active and considerate participation in/contribution to class & group discussions.

Common courtesy is expected. Sleepers & disruptive students will be asked to leave.

No one will be allowed to monopolize the class discussion or to shrink into the background. Remember you need to earn contribution points toward your grade and these are based on the quality and quantity of your participation.

Timely completion of assignments. No make-up quizzes or assignments will be given.

Extensions will be granted in only very rare cases for legitimate reasons (i.e. religious holidays, job interview), but even in these cases, arrangements must be made with the instructor **one week prior** to the due date. Last-minute family or medical emergencies will be considered, but there are no guarantees and extensions will require a note as well as e-mail or telephone notification **prior** to the class period. No exceptions.

Announcements of quizzes and/or homework assignments may be made in the previous class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what has been assigned.

## **Official Policies**

**Academic integrity:** You are expected to adhere to university requirements on academic honesty and integrity. Behaviors, such as plagiarism, copying of another student's work, or cheating on an exam, are serious offenses that **will result in the grade of an "F" for the course and will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Services**, where further disciplinary action may be taken. Please refer to the following website for information on how to avoid plagiarism in your work and/or discuss this with the instructor: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

**University Electronic Notification Mail Policy:** In this course, e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for **checking your e-mail regularly for class announcements and assignments**. As per the University Electronic Notification Policy (please see <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>), it is your responsibility to update your email address and to check your e-mail regularly.

**Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities:** Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6529 voice or 471-4641 TTY). This letter should be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made at that time. For more information, please see: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>

**Use of Canvas:** Assignments and some of our readings will be made available on Canvas. You should **print these out and bring with you to class. Please allow yourself enough time before an assignment is due**. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Canvas is available at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 during business hours on weekdays.

**Religious Holidays:** If you will need to miss class or other assignments due to the observance of a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the work you have missed provided you notify me **at least one week prior** to the absence.

(DG) = Found in *Digital Geishas and Talking Frogs*

## **Schedule**

1/22– Introduction

1/24– “Closet LLB” (Unō Koji); “What Do You Wish We Had in Japan Today?” (course packet)

HW#1 (5pts) – Write a short 1 to 2 paragraph response to “Closet LLB”. Feel free to write about anything that interested you, that you disliked, that you loved, etc. Just don’t give a summary of the work. Follow the assignment and writing guidelines found on Canvas.

1/29- *The Stones Cry Out* (Okuizumi Hikaru) – Part 1

1/31- *The Stones Cry Out* (Okuizumi Hikaru) – Part 2

2/5- *The Stones Cry Out* (Okuizumi Hikaru) – Part 3

2/7– Watch in Class - Film - *The Taste of Tea* (Ishii Katsuhito, 2004)

2/12–Film- *The Taste of Tea* (Ishii Katsuhito 2004)

2/14– Discussion – *The Taste of Tea* (Ishii Katsuhito, 2004)

HW#2 (10pts)– Write a 2 to 3-page response about *The Stones Cry Out* and/or *The Taste of Tea* based on the question found on canvas. Do not just give just a plot summary. Draw from direct evidence in the work(s). Follow the assignment and writing guidelines found on Canvas.

\*\*2/15- Douglas Slaymaker Talk (3:30 WCH 4.118)

You are required to attend. Professor Slaymaker will be giving a talk on contemporary Japanese literature directly related to the next three weeks of classes.

2/19 – NO CLASS in lieu of Slaymaker talk

Use this time to get started reading *The Emissary* (Tawada Yōko)

2/21– *The Emissary* (Tawada Yōko) 3-91

2/26 – *The Emissary* (Tawada Yōko) 91-137

2/26 – In Class documentary – *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom* (2011) (Lucy Walker)

2/5– “Super-Frog Saves Tokyo” (Murakami Haruki); “Tsunami” (Hirano Kei’ichirō) (DG)

3/7– “I Chase the Monkey and the Monkey Flees from me, The Monkey Chases Me and I flee From the Monkey” & “Monkey Child—Human Children” (Ono Masatsugu) (Course Packet)

3/12– “Lost in a Zoo” (Oyamada Hiroko); “Breathing Through Gills” (Furukawa Hideo)

3/14 – “Tales in Tanka” (Ishikawa Mina); “Cat to the Sea” (Kudō Naoko); “When Monkeys Sing” (Koike Masayo); “Monkey Tanka” (Mizuhara Shion); “Monkey Haiku” (Ozawa Minoru)

HW#3 (10pts): For this assignment pick a single quote from a work we have read in class. Using the guidelines on Canvas, provide the original quote in full, and then the quote in a paragraph that shows how you would employ this quote in an analysis. Bring a hardcopy to class

Spring Break

3/26 – *The Thief* (Nakamura Fuminori)

3/28 – *The Thief* (Nakamura Fuminori)

4/2- “Evil Flourishes but Itō encounters Jizō in Broad Daylight” (Itō Hiromi); “The Elevator and the Moon” (Makino Shin’ichi) (Course Packet)

4/4 – “Black Space, The Sound of Rain” (Comes in a box) (Course Packet)

4/9 – “The Dragon Palace” (Kawakami Hiromi) “My Baby” (Kawakami Mieko) (Course Packet)

4/11 – “The Thirteenth Month” (Kawakami Mieko) (Course Packet)

HW#4 (10pts) - Write a 2 to 3-page response comparing any of the short stories or poems we’ve read the last few weeks. Choose a single theme, subject, or style in the works and provide an analysis. Do not just give a summary. Draw from direct evidence in the works. Follow the assignment and writing guidelines found on Canvas.

4/16– “The Floating Forest” (Kirino Natsuo) (DG)

4/18– “My Slightly Crooked Brooch” (Tsujiyama Noboru) (DG)

4/23– “The Diary of a Mummy” (Shimada Masahiko) + “Delilah” (Kanehara Hitomi) (DG)

4/25– “Ikebukuro West Gate Park” (DG)

HW#5 (5pts): Write a paragraph about your plans for the final essay. Ideally this would begin with a well thought out thesis statement that will allow me to give you guidance before the group work during the final week of class.

4/30 –Film- *Tokyo Godfathers* (Kon Satoshi) (2004)

5/2 – Finish *Tokyo Godfathers* (Kon Satoshi) (2004) + Discussion

5/7 HW #6 (5pts): Come to class with an American news article about anything that reminds you of one of the issues and debates in contemporary Japanese society that we have seen in the works covered in class. Be prepared to give a short explanation of the article and why you chose it.

5/9 – Final Paper Peer Editing – (Final Paper due 5/17)

Come to class with a hard copy of your thesis statement, outline, and draft.