

ELJ201.xxxx Modern Japanese Literature

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SEMESTER

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Instructor's Information

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Preferred communication: E-mail is preferred, with which you should expect my response within 24 hours.
Class Schedule: xxx (Room: xxxx) & xxx (Room: xxxx)

Course goals and objectives

Catalog Course Description: This course will familiarize students with modern Japanese literature through selected readings of representative authors from the Meiji, Taisho, Showa, and post-war periods. The class explores, analyzes and interprets literary works in social and historical backgrounds of contemporary Japan. Authors' artistic judgments will also be discussed. All readings are in Japanese.

Section Description: By the end of the semester, students are expected to be able to: (1) identify major traditions of Japanese literature and explain them within socio-cultural and historical contexts; (2) identify and illustrate major genres in Japanese literature; (3) identify and describe characteristics of the Meiji, Taisho, Showa, and Post-War literature; (4) analyze various literary texts to highlight their major stylistic and thematic characteristics; and (5) compare and contrast thematic and stylistic similarities and differences among various periods of modern period of Japanese literary expression.

Prerequisites: Exemption Exam

Flexible Core Objectives: Individual and Society

The course bears 3 credits that count as Flexible Core (Individual and Society) of the CUNY's new general education curriculum (Pathways).

In this course students will:

- **Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.**
Students are required to interpret translated literary texts holistically in light of the Japanese anthropological facts and the historical and political backgrounds of the time when the literary works were written. Reading translated literature, especially modern works, demands integrative analyses of information collected from various sources such as texts, cultural knowledge, historical facts, political circumstances, gender orientations, geographic facts, and the writers' belief. The class exercises are designed to demonstrate their ability to synthesize and analyze information and to achieve integration of information from varieties of sources through lectures, discussions, and reflective essay writing.
- **Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.**
The class exercises focus on the development of students' analytical skills with which students read, find patterns, appreciate arbitrariness, and interpret Japanese literature. Students are expected to make systematic and critical analysis of different works of Japanese literature and coherently and logically present writers' perspectives with some evidence from both within the literary texts and outside of the texts.
- **Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.**
Students are expected to present his/her ability to make cogent arguments on selected topics of the Japanese

literature in the final paper and in the final presentation at the end of the semester. Students are required to cite appropriate evidence appropriately to support conclusions.

- **Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring relationship between the individual and society.**

Through the lecture and discussion during the class, students are expected to become familiar with Japanese culture, the history of Japan, Japanese art, and Japanese perspectives. Depending students' previous coursework, methodologies and theories drawn from anthropology, history, art, and psychology are discussed with respect to the literary texts.

- **Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.**

Through reading and analyzing various viewpoints of Japanese authors of various eras, and/ or the characters that these authors present, students will discuss and write about how specific challenges, problems, and difficulties are met by individuals within the confines of the specific cultural milieu of Japan at different times through history.

- **Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.**

Students are encouraged to analyze the literary works from their own cultural perspective and also from the Japanese perspective, with which they become familiar from class exercises and discussions. The consequences of duplicity on the present global world will be presented to students. The influence of different perspectives in societies on contemporary national and global issues will be discussed.

Textbook, grading, and other class logistics

Textbooks:

- William Theodore de Bary. (2003). *Sources of Japanese Tradition: 1600 to 2000* (Japanese Version). Columbia University Press, New York, NY.
- The works until 近代 (the pre-war era) are available for free at 青空文庫 (Aozora bunko) at <http://www.aozora.gr.jp/>.
- The following books can be purchased as references.
 - [Optional] Keene, D. (1956). *Modern Japanese Literature: From 1868 to the Present Day*. Grove Press, New York, NY, 2nd press edition. ISBN: 9780802150950; Course: ELJ250, ELJ201 (reference); Price: \$15.95.
 - [Optional] Kojin, K. (1993). *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature (Post-Contemporary Interventions)*. Duke University Press Books, Durham, NC. ISBN: 9780822313236; Course: ELJ201 (reference); Price: \$22.95.
 - [Optional] Perez, L. G. (1998). *The History of Japan* (The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations). Greenwood Press, xx. ISBN: 9780313302961; Course: ELJ201 (optional); Price: \$55.00.

Grades: Your final grade will be determined based on the following evaluation points.

- Final: 25% and Midterm paper 25%
Each paper requires a rough draft. Papers without a rough draft cannot receive higher than a C grade. 1500 word (minimum) papers, (the midterm, covering the pre-modern eras to 1868; and the final, covering texts from the Meiji era forward, 1868 to the present.). These papers will be interpretive essays using analytical methods. These analytical methods include, but are not limited to, analyzing the language and literary techniques, and/ or story elements found in the work of literature with respect to one or more of the following: 1) literary conventions; 2) other works of Japanese or world literature (either fiction or nonfiction), art, film, and/ or music; 3) Japanese history of either the era the work was produced in, or earlier or later eras of Japanese history; 4) world history of either the era the work was produced in, or earlier or later eras of world history; 5) the student's own life experiences. Possible paper topics will be discussed in class. For the midterm, students may choose to discuss any work discussed in class from weeks 1 through 6. A student may also choose to discuss any other Japanese work of literature produced from the years 700-1868. For the final, students may choose to discuss any work discussed in class from weeks 7 through 12. A student may also choose to discuss any other Japanese work of literature produced from the years 1868-present.
- Weekly Essays: 30%
This course will require the student to answer specific questions regarding the readings. These will be weekly assignments, and are expected to be written with a minimum of 500 words.*
- Participation: 10%

Participation includes participating in class discussions.

- **Grade distributions:** **A:** 95-100%, **A-:** 90-94%, **B+:** 86-89%, **B:** 83-85%, **B-:** 80-82%, **C+:** 76-79%, **C:** 73-75%, **C-:** 70-72%, **D+:** 66-69%, **D:** 63-65%, **D-:** 60-62%, **F:** -59%, **WU:** Unofficial withdraw (≈F), **W:** Withdraw

Weekly schedule (subject to change)

Week	Topic
Week 1 [Insert DATE]	Introduction Overview of Modern Japanese literature
Week 2 [Insert DATE]	Early Meiji Literature Beginning of Western influences and rapid changes in Japanese society Kitamura Tokoku, Fukuzawa Yukichi, and Nakae Chomin Essay 1 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How did the industrial boom affect literature?
Week 3 [Insert DATE]	Mid-Meiji Literature Japanese naturalism Natsume Soseki, Ozaki Koyo, Katai Tayama, Shimazaki Toson, and Higuchi Ichiyo Essay 2 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How did modernization and contact with the west affect Japanese literature?
Week 4 [Insert DATE]	Taisho Literature Intellectual aestheticism Akutagawa Ryunosuke and Izumi Kyoka Essay 3 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) Edogurononsensu and horror imagery as modernism
Week 5 [Insert DATE]	Taisho Literature Western literary modernism Kawabata Yasunari and Tanizaki Jun'ichiro Essay 4 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How do old Japanese stories inform Akutagwa's writing?
Week 6 [Insert DATE]	Showa Literature Proletarian literature Kawabata Yasunari, Kobayashi Takiji, Kuroshima Denji and Miyamoto Yuriko Essay 5 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How do writers appeal to both the old Japanese aesthetics and modernism?
Week 7 [Insert DATE]	Modern Japanese poetry Tanka, haiku, and shi Yosano Akiko, Ishikawa Takuboku, and Hagiwara Sakutaro Essay 6 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How did Japanese traditional forms of poetry transform through industrial modernization?
Week 8 [Insert DATE]	Overview of Post-War Literature Japanese nihilism Dazai Osamu and Mishima Yukio Essay 7 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How do these writers respond to American hegemony in the postwar era?
Week 9 [Insert DATE]	Post-War Literature Social and political consciousness

	Oe Kenzaburo Essay 8 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How does this writer respond to American hegemony in the postwar era?
Week 10 [Insert DATE]	Post-War Literature The avant-garde Abe Kobo and Furui Yoshikichi Essay 9 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How does this writer respond to American hegemony in the postwar era?
Week 11 [Insert DATE]	Post-War Literature Women writers Todo Shizuko Essay 10 (3%) due Discussion & Essay topic: 1) What is the influence of new feminism on modern women writers in Japan?
Week 12 [Insert DATE]	Heisee Literature Contemporary issues Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana Final paper presentation Discussion & Essay topic: 1) How does the dominant consumer culture inform these writers? 2) What problems might rapid capitalism impose on the individual in Japan?
Final [Insert DATE]	Final paper due (30%)

Policies

Classroom policies: The following policies have been instituted to ensure an optimal learning experience for all students:

- Please arrive on time.
- Please prepare for each class meeting by completing all writing/reading assignments beforehand.
- Please turn your cell phone to silence during class.
- Please turn off your cell phone during the exam and the quiz.

Valuing LaGuardia’s Diversity: As a college community we represent a world of perspectives on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and nationality, to name a few. I concur with **the College’s Declaration of Pluralism**, if you have any suggestions in helping me to create a welcoming classroom environment, please tell me.

Rules for Personal Conduct: You are expected to obey the rules and regulations of the College about conduct. Disorderly or indecent behavior is not appropriate in a college setting. It is a violation of college rules and is not acceptable.

The student attendance policy: As stated in the college catalog: "Attendance in class is a requirement and will be considered in the evaluation of student performance. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance. The maximum number of unexcused absences is limited to 15\% of the number of class hours. Note: Absences are counted from the first day of class even if they are a result of late registration or change of program" (117).

The academic dishonesty policy: As stated in the catalog: "Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties ranging from a grade of 'F' on a given test, research paper or assignment, to an 'F' in the course or suspension or expulsion from the College. Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Internet Plagiarism
- Obtaining Unfair Advantages
- Falsification of Records and Official Documents

- Misconduct in Internships (117)

Policy on assigning the grade of Incomplete: As stated in the college catalogue: "The Incomplete grade may be awarded to students who have not completed all of the required course work but for whom there is a reasonable expectation of satisfactory completion. A student who is otherwise in good standing in a course defined as complying with the college attendance policy and maintaining a passing average but who has not completed at most two major assignments or examinations by the end of the course may request an incomplete grade. To be eligible, such a student must provide, before the instructor submits grades for the course, a documented reason, satisfactory to the instructor, for not having completed the assignment on time. Instructors giving IN grades must inform students in writing of the conditions under which they may receive passing grades. Departments may designate certain courses in which no incomplete grades may be awarded." (120).

Declaration of pluralism: The Education and Language Acquisition Department embraces diversity. We respect each other regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability and social class. For detailed information regarding the policy, please refer to Student Handbook 2011-2012 (p.89).