AS/JA125 Japanese Literature & Society Fall 2013 (CRN: 90253)

M W 2:40 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Pettengill 151

Instructor: Hisaaki Wake (hwake@bates.edu)
Office: Roger Williams 211 Phone: x5938
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. or by appointment

This course examines major trends in Japanese literature and society from its beginnings to the modern period. Students consider well-known stories, plays, and novels from the classical, medieval, early modern, and modern periods, placing each text within its unique socio-historical contexts. All readings are in English.

The goals of this course are to:

1. Familiarize yourself with key literary works from different periods in Japanese history. In addition to literary and critical readings, we will draw upon images and audiovisual materials to understand the specific contexts in which literary works were authored.
2. Consider how literary works have been interpreted, and reinterpreted, over time. What significance do they hold for us as modern English-language readers? What values or meanings might they have had for contemporary audiences?
3. Formulate your own interpretations of primary texts based on our class discussions and individual research, and effectively present them in writing. This course fulfills the W2 requirement for those taking it in their sophomore or junior years.

Primary Texts Available at the Bates Store:

You are required to bring copies of these key primary texts to class on the days where we discuss them. It is NOT acceptable to use an alternative translation as your primary text – e.g. Arthur Waley’s translation of The Tale of Genji rather than Royall Tyler’s, or free Internet translations of Botchan (that use archaic language), rather than the recent translation by Joel Cohn. However, feel free to consult other translations in addition to the translations used in class.


Secondary Materials on Reserve:

(Sections for required reading are also available on Lyceum.)
VHS Tale of Genji (Anime)
VHS Bunraku
DVD *Botchan, School Days*
DVD *Rashōmon*

*DVD Noh Dōjōji is on order, and available via ILL from Bowdoin and Colby Libraries until it arrives in Ladd.

**Course Requirements:**

- Attendance, Preparation, Participation: 15%
- Three Writing Assignments*
  1) Précis (500 words): 5%
  2) Genji paper (5-6 pages): 25%
  3) Research/Analysis paper (5-6 pages): 30%
- Final Exam: 25%

*All assignments must be turned in at the date and time specified. You will lose one half of a grade point per day for lateness.

**For each written assignment, a detailed instruction sheet will be provided and discussed in class.

**Academic Honesty:**

Acknowledge your sources in your writings whenever you are borrowing ideas, words, and expressions from other people’s works. You must put all borrowed languages in quotation marks and indicate its source. Remember that citations are also necessary when summarizing someone else’s ideas in your own words.

**Schedule of Classes:**

(“D” denotes sessions focusing on discussion of texts; “W” denotes part of sessions devoted to watching a DVD or a video.)

**Week 0 (Sept. 4): Introduction (1): Modern Reinterpretations of Medieval Tales**

Wed. Introduction to this course. **W. Kurosawa’s Rashōmon (1)**

**Week 1 (Sept. 9): Introduction (2): Modern Reinterpretations, continued; The Ancient Period**

Mon. **D.** Readings: Excerpts from *Tales of Things Now Past;* Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, “In a Grove” & “Rashōmon” (Lyceum) **W.** Kurosawa’s *Rashōmon (2)*

Week 2 (Sept. 16): The Heian Period: The Aristocratic Culture of Sensibility (1)


First Written Assignment (500-word Précis on Fukumori’s article on The Pillow Book) due at 11:59 p.m., Sept. 18.

Week 3 (Sept. 23): The Heian Period: The Aristocratic Culture of Sensibility (2)


Week 4 (Sept. 30): The Heian Period: The Aristocratic Culture of Sensibility (3)


Week 5 (Oct. 7): Genji Conclusion; The Ascendancy of the Warrior Class


Guest visit: Lauren Vidal, Ph.D., Writing Specialist, Bates College


**Week 6 (Oct. 14): The Medieval Noh Drama**


Guest visit: Brooke O’Harra, Assistant Professor in Theater, Bates College


**Fall Recess**

**Week 7 (Oct. 21): The Edo Period: The Culture of the Townspeople (1)**


Wed. D. Readings: Saikaku, *Five Sensuous Women* (Excerpts), 60-82; *Life of a Sensuous Woman* (Excerpts), 82-120; *Great Mirror of Male Love* (Excerpts), 120-127; *Tales of Samurai Duty* (Excerpts), 127-131; Timon Screech, “Ch. 2, Time and Place in Edo Erotic Images” in *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan: 1700-1820*. (Lyceum)

**Week 8 (Oct. 28): The Edo Period: The Culture of the Townspeople (2)**


Genji paper due at 11:59 p.m., Oct 31.

**Week 9 (Nov. 4): The Meiji Period: the Modern Nation-State and the Individual Self (1)**


**Week 10 (Nov. 11): The Meiji Period: the Modern Nation-State and the Individual Self (2)**


**Proposal for Research/Analysis Paper due at 11:59 p.m., Nov. 7.**

**Week 11 (Nov. 18): The Meiji Period: the Modern Nation-State and the Individual Self (3)**


**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 12 (Dec. 2): Conclusion**


**Final Exam: 1:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m., Tuesday, December 10 at PGILL 151**

**Research/Analysis Paper due: 12:59 p.m., Saturday, December 14**