

**Asian Studies / History 390G**  
**Fall Term, 2011**  
**Bates College**

**East Asia: Crimes of Modernity**

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Class:                                      TuesThurs 9:30—10:50 a.m.  
   Roger Williams 215

**Purpose of the course:**

This course marks the beginning of a department plan to offer single seminars in the East Asian area which are broad enough in theme to serve the interests of any student looking for an advanced offering involving an individual research project, rather than directing people to courses that are restricted to topics specific to China or Japan.

**Structure of the course:**

The course begins with everyone reading several novels that focus on social tensions in modern East Asia. We will take them up in reverse chronological order, moving from the contemporary world back to the early 1930s, the last moment at which it seemed possible that East Asia might modernize without a military or revolutionary cataclysm.

This will sensitize everyone to the pressures working themselves out across the region, and provide a broad context within which students will select individual topics for research projects.

### Attendance & Participation

These two are quite distinct, though often misunderstood by students, and even confused with each other. **Both are a big deal in my classes.**

“Attendance” means that you arrive on time, remain awake, at least *seem* to be focused on what’s officially occurring in the classroom, and don’t drift in and out of the room attending to personal business. Regularly coming late, dozing, chatting with your neighbor, allowing your cell phone to go off in class, wandering out of class, burying yourself in a personal data device of any type, etc., can move you into the “did not attend” category, even if you left some of your DNA in the room that day. (If you have a specialized disability requiring notes to be taken on a computer, the college can supply a notetaker for that purpose – you are supposed to be paying attention to the classroom, not an electronic screen.)

“Participation” means that you took advantage of at least some of your opportunities to advance the classroom discussion of the assigned reading material. This can be quite simple and short, so long as it is done in good faith and reflects an actual encounter with the assignment. Merely glorying in the sound of your own voice, unmediated by any honest encounter with the course work, does not qualify, unless you are extremely clever indeed.

Not enjoying the process of speaking up in class is no excuse for lack of participation. Although your education so far may have emphasized written work, the world which you will enter after your departure from Bates increasingly functions on the basis of flexible small project teams, which can’t always wait for your input in written form. Thinking and speaking on the fly in a supportive environment, which I certainly intend any classroom of mine to be, is a gentle transitional step toward the situations in which you are likely to find yourselves.

### Office Hours

These are subject to endless adjustment, as other responsibilities/crises/confusions surface during the semester, so I encourage people to make an appointment for some mutually convenient time either in person or by leaving me a voicemail message. My E-mail account tends to get swamped with outside communications, so it is not the most efficient way to find me. There is also a box on my office door (in which tiny scraps of paper immediately vanish from sight—use a standard sheet of paper). I am in and out of my office all week long, getting here early in the morning. My class schedule this semester blocks out the period before 10:00 a.m.(MWF) or 11:00 a.m. (TuTh). Early afternoon (1:30 p.m. --) is often a promising time.

Late afternoons tend to get lost in committee meetings. The easiest way to be sure of finding me is to call ahead. I spend a good deal of time in my office, but I often have my Chocolate Labrador Retriever, Molly, with me – if you are a person who is uncomfortable with animals, please let me know, so that I can be sure not to put you in a difficult situation. (She is medium in size, friendly in disposition, and can be banished to a latched crate in the far corner of the office, but I understand that none of this matters at all to someone with a deepseated fear of dogs. You have a right to meet with me in the total absence of Molly, but you’ll have to let me know ahead of time so that I can make alternative arrangements for her.)

### Class Schedule

#### Week One:

Thurs 08 Sep C1 Orientation

#### Week Two

Tues 13 Sep C2 Corpse in the Koryō, Pts. I-III (pp. 1-132)

Thurs 15 Sep C3 Corpse in the Koryō, Pts. IV-VII (pp. 133-280)

***Turn in sheet bearing your current thoughts on a research project for the term – East Asian country? time period? topic? key sources? unanswered questions?***

#### Week Three

Tues 20 Sep C4 Death of a Red Heroine, Chaps. 1-10  
***(get back my initial comments on your preliminary thoughts)***

Thurs 22 Sep C5 Death of a Red Heroine, Chaps. 11-20  
***Turn in sheet with revised proposal, plus some bibliographic suggestions***

#### Week Four

Tues 27 Sep C6 Death of a Red Heroine, Chaps. 21-29  
***(get back further comments on your revised proposal)***

Thurs 29 Sep C7 Death of a Red Heroine, Chaps. 30-41  
***Turn in outline for your project, with draft bibliography***

#### Week Five

Tues 04 Oct C8 All She Was Worth, Chaps. 1-15

Thurs 06 Oct C9 All She Was Worth, Chaps. 16-29

#### Week Six

Tues 11 Oct C10 “Introduction” to Two Japanese Colonial Novels  
***Brief presentations to class of project ideas – Part I***

Thurs 13 Oct C11 “Kannani” in Two Japanese Colonial Novels  
***Brief presentations to class of project ideas – Part II***

#### Week Seven

Tues 18 Oct ***NO CLASS***

Thurs 20 Oct ***NO CLASS -- October recess***

## Week Eight

## Week Nine

## Week Ten

## Week Eleven

## Week Twelve

## Week Thirteen

**Scheduled Final Examination \* Wednesday 16 December at 10:30 a.m.**

## **Grading**

Attendance: If you don't come to class, you don't pass. If you are routinely late or absent, you do your grade grievous harm, unless you have some compelling explanation. On the other hand, I do understand that you have a life outside my classroom, in which you may be ill, job-hunting, dealing with other educational opportunities, etc. Let me know if there's a problem.

Participation: If you are not a reliable participant in class discussion, don't come to me at the end of the semester expressing surprise that you didn't receive an 'A.' This holds true no matter what the grades are that you received on your written work. If you are not actively contributing to dealing with the class material in the group setting, you are not doing excellent work.

Written work: In a seminar, this consists of the final version of your research project, plus whatever immediate work products have been assigned. Obviously, the final project is extremely important, but developing or improving your research and writing techniques is a crucial goal, so the intermediate steps are significant as well. Don't expect a triumphant concluding effort to make up for any and all earlier omissions or shortcomings. (In that the earlier steps are designed to contribute to the effectiveness of the ultimate product, this should not come as a surprise.)



### Reading List

‘James **Church**’ (born ?), A Corpse in the Koryō (N.Y.: St. Martin’s Press, 2006).  
(Pseudonym of American CIA employee.)

**Qiu** Xiaolong (born 1953), Death of a Red Heroine (N.Y.: Soho Press, 2000).

Miyuki **Miyabe** (born 1960), All She Was Worth (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999)  
Translated by Alfred Birnbaum from Kasha (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992).  
*(The Sino-Japanese term kasha, also read in “pure” Japanese as hi [no] kuruma, literally means “fire chariot,” and has Buddhist overtones. Idiomatically, it can refer to a state of extreme poverty, presumably because the poor person is as tormented by their situation as a suffering demon whirled along in a blazing cart. The English title presumably is meant to echo such phrases as “they took her for all she was worth.”)*

**Yuasa** Katsuei (1910-1972), Kannani (1934), and  
Document of Flames (1935),  
in Kannani and Document of Flames: Two Japanese Colonial Novels, translated and with  
an introduction and critical afterword by Mark Driscoll (Durham, NC: Duke U. P., 2005).

**Boldface** indicates the author’s surname (which comes first in traditional East Asian practice, but is often reversed by Western publishers to coincide with English-language readers’ expectations).