Literary, Cultural, and Political Imagination in Modern Japan

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You can find the readings at:

https://extranet.eap.ucop.edu/course_materials/Shared%20Documents/Academic%20Year%202012-13/China/JPIS/Modern_Japan

To access the readings, you will need to enter the following:

Username: UCEAPStudent
Password: CourseMaterials

Course Goals:

This course provides a broad survey of Japanese literary, cultural and political imagination from the end of the Edo period and the beginning of the Meiji era in the mid-nineteenth century (circa 1868) through the early twentieth century and into the postwar decades until the 1970s. Focusing our attention primarily at literary texts, it aims to provide a historical and cultural perspective to the understanding of one of the most dynamic intellectual and literary traditions in East Asia. Modern Japanese literary imagination will be explored in its cultural and historical context by examining its complex relationship with modern Japanese life, politics, thought, social and political ideology, language, and Japan’s relationship with the outside world.

Since students will be required only to read major works of modern and contemporary Japanese literature in English translation, there is no language prerequisite.

Students will study a rich array of social, cultural, and political themes with which modern Japanese literary narratives engage with the conditions of modern Japanese life, society, sense of self and nation, war, and Japan’s changing political realities. The writers studied include Natsume Sōseki, Akutagwa Ryūnosuke, Tanizaki Junichirō, Ōoka Shōhei, Hino Ashihei, Ishikawa Tatsuzo, Abe Kōbō, and Mishima Yukio, writers who practiced their craft from the turn of the twentieth century to the postwar period. As such, the class will critically analyze Japanese texts produced in the post-1945 period as well, as the country gradually emerged from war devastation before entering into a period of high economic growth, increasing political ambiguities, cultural confusions, and continuing intellectual soul-reaching during the post-1945 decades.
Classes will be conducted in a variety of formats including lectures, individual or group presentations, overhead projection slide presentations, video and film screenings, and open discussions. The instructor actively incorporates into his lectures and class discussions his most recent research on many of the topics under discussion, along with what contemporary scholarship reveals. If possible and depending on the availability of lecturers, guest lectures may be introduced to give students different perspectives in understanding the complex human, literary, intellectual, and social dynamics of modern Japan.

Expectations from Students:

1. Students should complete various reading assignments by the date listed on the teaching schedule. The readings must be done before the scheduled date for class discussion.
2. Students must also submit written assignments on time without delay. No later papers will be accepted.
3. Everyone is expected to come to class well-prepared to participate actively in class discussions.
4. Attendance is crucial. Poor attendance will negatively impact on your final grade.
5. Midterm and final exam dates cannot be changed without very compelling reasons.

Grading:

Grades will be determined by the combined results of a mid-term, a final examination, paper assignments, class performance, presentation, and attendance.

- Midterm Examination: 25%
- Final Examination: 25%
- Attendance, class presentation & class participation, etc.: 25%
- Writing Assignments: 25%

Again, no late papers or alterations of the original examination dates will be permitted without compelling reasons. Personal inconveniences or overlaps with other examinations on the same day will not be regarded as compelling reasons.
REQUIRED TEXTS:

ISBN: 0895267152
Title: Kokoro
Author: Natsume, Soseki
Publisher: Gateway (paperback)

ISBN: 0375724745
Title: Naomi
Author: Tanizaki, Junichiro
Publisher: Vintage (Paperback)

Title: Fires on the Plain
Author: Ooka, Shohei
Publisher: Charles Tuttle (paperback)

ISBN: 0-394-71814-3
Title: The Woman in the Dunes
Author, Abe, Kobo
Publisher: Vintage Books (paperback)

ISBN 0720612004
Title: Kappa
Author: Akutagawa, Ryunosuke
Publisher: Peter Owen Modern Classic (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-399-50489-3
Title: The Sailor who Fell from Grace with the Sea
Author: Yukio Mishima
Publisher: Perigee Books
Required
Or from Random House
ISBN 0-679-75015-0

Articles/Chapters from Books


“Natsume Soseki.” pp. 305-54;


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TEACHING SCHEDULE

Week 1  Introduction to the course and general course outline; course requirements, grading policy and importance of attendance and class participation. Class discussion logistics, themes for discussion, grading criteria et al.

Week 2  LECTURE & DISCUSSION:
Pre-Meiji Society, Politics & Literature: Transition from Tokugawa (1603-1867) to the Meiji period (1868-1912): Politics, Society & Culture. Dutch Learning, Nativist Discourse of Motoori Norinaga, the bakumatsu period and the coming of the West. Representations of Edo literary works (ukiyo-zōshi, jōruri [puppet theatre], gesaku [playful compositions] et al.). Works of Ihara Saikaku, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Matsuo Bashō, Santō Kyōden, etc. as the curtain-raiser to Meiji literary culture.

Week 3  LECTURE & DISCUSSION:
The Role of Early Meiji Translations, from Adam Smith to Henry Wheaton. Meiji-Taishō Writers in brief survey, from language reform (Tsubouychi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei) to Meiji social realism (Taoka Reiun, Uchida Roan), romanticism (Takayama Chogyū) and Meiji and post-Meiji naturalism (Shimazaki Tōson, Tayama Katai, Shiga Naoya, Dazai Osamu et al.)

SCREENING: Dejima, Dutch Learning, Battleship Island, Meiji Japan, Modernization and Its Response to the West.

Week 4  LECTURE & DISCUSSION:
On Natsume Sōseki: His Works and His Milieu
Natsume Sōseki as the Pioneer of Modern Japanese Psychological Fiction: I am a Cat through Sorekara to Light and Darkness: From social satire to sokuten kyoshi (“Follow the will of heaven and obliterate the self”).

Week 5  CLASS PRESENTATION:
Natsume Sōseki's Kokoro

Week 6  LECTURE & DISCUSSION:
Tanizaki Junichirō and the World of the Taishō Women: Ero, Guro, Nonsensu: [Eroticism, Grotesque, and Nonsense] From Modern Girl (moga) to Café Waitresses and the transformation of Taishō society in the 1920s; The Works and Significance of Tanizaki Junichirō
Week 7  CLASS PRESENTATION:  
Tanizaki Junichirō’s *Naomi*

Week 8  **LECTURE & DISCUSSION:**  
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and the Taishō Generation: Intellectual ambiguities, cultural skepticism, & the radicalization of literary culture

**FIRST 5-PAGE BOOK REVIEW DUE: ON NATSUME SōSEKI’S KOKORO**

Week 9  **CLASS PRESENTATION:**  
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s *Kappa* and “In a Grove”

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Week 10  **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
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**POSTWAR WORKS AND WRITERS:**

Week 11  **LECTURE & DISCUSSION:**  

Week 12  **SCREENING:**  
Kamei Fumio’s Documentary: *Tragedy of Japan*  
Class discussion follows.

**SECOND 5-PAGE BOOK REVIEW DUE: ON TANIZAKI’S NAOMI**

Week 13  **VIDEO SCREENING:**  
Fires on the Plain (by Ichikawa Kon)  
**CLASS PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION:**  Ōoka Shōhei: Fire on the Plain

Week 14  **LECTURE & DISCUSSION:**  
Postwar Writer: Abe Kōbō & Film Screening: *Woman in the Dunes*

Week 15  **LECTURE & DISCUSSION:**  
Postwar Writer: Yukio Mishima  
Video Screening: Samurai Writer

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Week 16  **FINAL EXAMINATION/FINAL PAPER**