

Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture:



constructions of religious and historical identity

RELG 491

Spring 2016 / Heisei 28 M-W-F 1:00-1:50 EHFA 252
Instructor: Dr. Ron Green Office: EHFA 279 Phone: 843-349-2782
Office hours in EHFA 279: M-W-F 9:55-11:55

Final Exam: Friday, April 29 at 1:30 in our regular classroom

Course Description and Objectives

This course is a survey of modern Japanese literature and visual culture since the Meiji Restoration (1868). It focuses on constructions of identities within historical contexts. Our objective is to analyze ways in which writers and artists have positioned their subjects and re-imagined culture to create particular portrayals. The class examines a selection of *shōsetsu* (the Japanese novel) of Natsume Soseki, Kawabata Yasunari, Mishima Yukio, Murakami Haruki, and Ogawa Yōko, films of Miyazaki Hayao, and important anime.

The course promotes critical methodologies and interdisciplinary or comparative studies, combining, for example, literature with film, visual culture, gender studies, cultural history, Buddhist and Shintō studies, and so forth. Students are encouraged to work closely with the instructor and simultaneously with professors in other programs and fields to create term papers and presentations for the Celebration of Inquiry. Professors working in digital humanities should be particularly valuable resources.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will have:

1. Demonstrated knowledge of the philosophical, religious, literary, ethical, cultural and other humanistic concepts through which people interpret and judge themselves and their world
2. Demonstrated the ability to *recognize*, *interpret*, and *evaluate* varieties of humanistic thought and expression
3. Demonstrated the ability to identify important works and writers of modern Japanese literature
4. Demonstrated the ability to discuss Japanese popular culture and globalization

Required texts

1. Natsume Soseki. *Kokoro*, Gateway Editions, ISBN: 0895267152
2. Kawabata Yasunari. *Thousand Cranes*, Vintage, ISBN: 0679762655
3. Mishima Yukio. *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, Vintage, ISBN: 0679752706.
4. Murakami Haruki. *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, Vintage, ISBN: 0679743464
5. Ogawa Yōko. *The Diving Pool: Three Novellas*. Picador, ISBN: 0312426836
6. Tsutsui, William M. *Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization*. Association for Asian Studies, ISBN: 9780924304620

Required films and anime

Rurouni Kenshin
Samurai Champloo
Spirited Away
Aoi Bungaku

Kill la Kill
Astro Boy (episode 1)
Neon Genesis Evangelion
Serial Experiments Lain

Fullmetal Alchemist
Death Note
Metropolis

Students are encouraged to review this list and make suggestions for alternatives that fit the theme of the course.
Your input is also sought on episode selection, subs or dubs, etc.

Grading

1. There will be **two tests**. Each test is worth 30% of your final grade for the term. On the two quizzes, you will be asked to provide short-essay answers to between ten and twenty questions. Some questions will be on the readings and anime, others on the lectures.

2. Completion of the **term paper or presentation** is worth 30% of the grade for the term. The term paper should be a seven-page academic essay. A presentation must be the academic equivalent of this. If you are doing a presentation, you must do it **during the Celebration of Inquiry**, preferably as a part of our group, April 12-14. The deadline to submit a Celebration of Inquiry proposal is February 11. So, if you plan to do a presentation, you must have it approved by the instructor by the class **deadline: Monday, February 8**.

For those writing a paper, it must be at least seven pages in length to be accepted for a grade, double-spaced in 12-point type, in a font such as Times New Roman or Courier New. Chicago or MLA styles are acceptable. You must use and fully cite at least two reputable academic sources. Web sources are not acceptable unless you can show they are academically sound, such as an online peer-reviewed academic journal. That is to say, you may use any web source that supports your thesis, but you must also use at least two academic sources. If you prefer web research, consider using *jstor*, available through the library.

3. There will be an oral comprehensive **final exam**. It will cover the content of the anime movie *Metropolis* as related to what we covered this term. That is to say, students must attend the screening of *Metropolis* during the scheduled exam time **Friday, April 29 at 1:30 in our regular classroom** and afterward, successfully discuss its content in terms of constructions of religious and historical identity in Japan since the Meiji Period. The final exam is worth 10% of the grade for the semester.

Extra Credit: There will be several chances throughout the term to earn extra credit by attending a film or talk scheduled outside of class time. Each of these chances is worth an extra five percent on one of the tests. Announcements of these opportunities will be made in class.

Summary of grading:	Test 1	=	30%
	Test 2	=	30%
	Term Project	=	30%
	Final Exam	=	10%

Based on this, students will earn a letter grade for the term according to the following system:

A = 91 - 100%	C = 71 - 77%
B+ = 88 - 90%	D+ = 68 - 70%
B = 81 - 87%	D = 61 - 67%
C+ = 78 - 80%	F = below 60%

Attendance policy

Following the guidelines posted in the *CCU Student Handbook*, students who have absences for **25%** of the regularly scheduled class meetings will receive a final grade of **"F"** for the term.

Class Schedule

Week 1 January 11-15

Monday – Introduction to the topic, what to expect from the course, and what is expected of you

Wednesday – Historical background: Modern periods in Japan; Meiji Restoration

Friday – *Rurouni Kenshin: Trust & Betrayal* (aka: *Samurai X: Trust & Betrayal*, first half)

Reading for next two weeks: *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki

Week 2 January 20-22

Monday – No Classes

Wednesday – Historical background: Bakumatsu – guest speaker: Dr. Brandon Palmer, Dept. of History

Friday – *Rurouni Kenshin* (concluded)

Week 3 January 25-29

Monday – Discussion of *Kokoro*

Wednesday – Life and Legacy of Natsume Soseki

Friday – *Samurai Champloo* (the *bungaku* episodes)

Reading for next two weeks: *Thousand Cranes*

Week 4 February 1-5

Monday – Life and Legacy of Kawabata Yasunari

Wednesday – Japanese Buddhism and art

Friday – Shintō

Week 5 February 8-12

Monday – Discussion of *Thousand Cranes*

Wednesday – *Spirited Away* (first half)

Friday – *Spirited Away* (concluded)

Week 6 February 15-19

Monday – Discussion of *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki Hayao, and Studio Ghibli

Wednesday – **TEST 1**, Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa *Bungaku*

Friday – *Aoi Bungaku*

Reading for next two weeks: *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*,

Week 7 February 22-26

Monday – Mishima Yukio

Wednesday – *Kill la Kill* (critique of *ecchi* genre)

Friday – *Kill la Kill* and the exportation of Japanese Culture – guest speaker Lanessa Salvatore, English graduate

Week 8 February 29-March 2 (no class on Friday due to the ASIANetwork Conference)

Monday – Discussion of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*

Wednesday – *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atomu*), episode 1 - Cyborg motif & *mecha* genre in construction of identity

Friday – no class on Friday due to the ASIANetwork Conference

Reading for next two weeks: *Hard-Boiled Wonderland*

SPRING BREAK, March 7 - 12, 2016

Week 9 March 14-18

Monday – Historical developments including AUM and *Space Battleship Yamato*

Wednesday – Murakami Haruki

Friday – *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (critique of *mecha* genre)

Week 10 March 21-23

Monday – Discussion of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*

Wednesday – Magical Realism– guest speaker: Dr. Anna Oldfield, Dept. of English

Friday – no class, student holiday

Reading for next week: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Intro & Chapter 1

Week 11 March 28-April 1

Monday – **TEST 2**, post WWII developments

Wednesday – Discussion: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Intro & Chapter 1

Friday – *Serial Experiments Lain* (part 1)

Reading for next week: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 2 & 3

Week 12 April 4-8

Monday – Discussion: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 2 & 3

Wednesday – *Serial Experiments Lain* (part 2)

Friday – Discussion of *Serial Experiments Lain* (comparisons with *Akira*, *Eva*, etc.)

Reading for next week: *The Diving Pool: Three Novellas*

Cherry Blossom Festival – Washington, DC

Week 13 April 11-15

Monday – Discussion: *The Diving Pool*

Wednesday – **Celebration of Inquiry – class redirected to presentations**

Friday – Ogawa Yōko and Konkōkyō religion

Reading for next week: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 4 & 5

Week 14 April 18-22

Monday – Discussion: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 4 & 5

Wednesday – *Fullmetal Alchemist*

Friday – Discussion of *FMA*

Week 15 April 25-27

Monday – *Death Note*

Wednesday – Concluding discussion of learning outcomes

FINAL EXAM - *Metropolis* - Friday, April 29 at 1:30 in our regular classroom

Go to Japan!

