Objectives

This course will introduce the earliest literary styles of Japan to students with little or no prior knowledge of that country. It will cover the period from the Middle Ages until the end of the Tokugawa Period—roughly from 1400 AD to 1868 AD. This is a huge time-period, and so of course the materials presented in class will by no means exhaust the possibilities of further study. Class topics will be selective and introductory, and will concentrate on major historical developments within particular genres of writing—we will explore the sources, influences, and achievements of many different eras. Regular attendance in class and completion of all required readings (which will be assigned in class) before they are discussed are politely but strongly recommended.

In accordance with the policies of the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, students who miss more than 10% of classes (in this case, two classes) will not be permitted to write the final exam.

Many of the issues we will discuss have the potential to be controversial. I am committed to creating an equitable, inclusive, and safe educational space. Intolerant or abusive comments or behaviour will be dealt with appropriately.

Tentative Schedule

January 7: Introduction.
• Overview of the course, assignments, goals.
• What is literature in the premodern context? Poetry, prose, and everything in between

January 14: Heike monogatari
• Political Allegories of Change
• oral tradition as literature

January 21: Tsurezure gusa, Yoshida Kenkô, 1340
• writing the self in an age of feudal duty
• the problem of language, the presumption of a ‘reader’
• ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE—annotated bibliography of issues related to premodern lit

February 4: MIDTERM EXAM NUMBER 1, in class, one hour, ten points
• After the exam: discussion: From ‘self’ to ‘character’: transition in premodern literature
Part II: Dramatists

February 11:
Noh: drama for the nobility
  • “Matsukaze” and “The Sought-for Grave” by Kan’ami
  • “Komachi at Sekidera” and “Semimaru” by Zeami
  • MIDTERM ESSAY is DUE

February 18:
  READING BREAK

February 25:
 Kyōgen: drama for the nobility, remixed…
  • crazy speech for everyone? Issues of equality and social resistance
  • “The Fox and the Trapper”
  • “Busu”

February 7:
Bunraku and Kabuki: Puppets, popularity, and the diffusion of character
  • narratives and the rise of the popular
  • The plays of Chikamatsu
  • Screening portion of Lover’s Exile (From Chikamatsu’s “Courier for Hell.”)

March 4:
MIDTERM EXAM 2, in class, one hour, ten points
  • After the exam: discussion: from ‘character’ to ‘self’: poetry, nature, and emotion
  • ASSIGNMENT TWO is DUE: Term paper outline

PART III: Poetry and Popular Fiction

March 11:
Haiku: Bashō, Sorai, etc.
  • Bashō’s Conversations with Kyorai, by Mukai Kyorai
  • Bashō’s Oku no hosomichi
  • Travel writing and haiku—searching for the authentic

March 18:
Saikaku and Folk Tales—popular voices and the return of the oral tradition
  • Some Final Words of Advice
  • Tales of Justice
  • Ainu and Japanese Folk Tales
  • TERM ESSAYS DUE

March 25:
FINAL EXAM

April 1:
  Final day, material returned
  • thoughts on the transition to early-modern literature

Grading

Attendance is mandatory. Students who miss more than 10% of classes may not be permitted to write the final exam.

Midterms (2x10): 20%
Final Exam: 10%
Bibliography: 10%
Midterm Essay: 20%
Term Essay Outline: 10%
Final Essay: 30%

Mark Ranges

A+: 90% —> C+: 66-69%
A-: 80-85% C: 60-65%
B+: 77-79% D: 55-59%
B: 74-76% F: Below 54%
B-: 70-73%

Students who do not complete all course assignments may receive an N. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all course requirements are complete.
Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

Plagiarism and Cheating

The Department of Pacific and Asian Studies upholds and enforces the University's policies on plagiarism and cheating. These policies are described on pp. 22-23 of the current University Calendar. All students are advised to read this section.

Practices that are not acceptable include:

- Persuading or paying someone else to write your assignments, or otherwise presenting someone else's work as your own;
- Downloading essays or articles from the Internet, or copying passages from books or journals, and presenting them as your own work;
- Copying from another student or sharing information in examinations or tests;
- Bringing notes or other materials into an examination or test, except as authorised by the examiner or instructor.

In addition, the following kinds of behaviour, unless specifically authorised by the instructor, are unacceptable in an examination: talking or communicating by computer or other electronic device with another student; looking at the work of other students while writing an exam; consulting books, electronic materials or other sources of information.

In every course, the instructor may choose to conduct an additional oral examination, in the presence of another faculty member from the Department, so as to ascertain the level of a student's knowledge or understanding of the course material.

The possible penalties for plagiarism and cheating are outlined in the Calendar. In this department, the minimum penalty for a first offence will be an F grade (0%) for the assignment, examination or test, with a note from the instructor going on file with the Department. Students will not be permitted to rewrite an assignment, examination or test on which they have been found to be cheating. Departmental records of cheating and plagiarism will be destroyed once a student has completed a degree program without any further offence. In the case of a second offence, the department will discuss the appropriate penalty with the Assistant Dean, Arts and Science Advising.

If you have any doubts about the University's policies, or want to know if a practice is acceptable or not, you should raise your concerns with your course instructor.