

JAPAN: ITS CULTURE AND HERITAGE
AEAJ 170 (Class No. 8909)
Fall 2008

Class Time and Location: MW 4:15 – 5:35 in HU124

Instructor: Mark Blum

Office: HU 254E

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 1:00–2:00, and by appointment

Phone: 442-4183

e-mail: mblum@albany.edu

ERes login: yamato

Textbooks:

Japanese Culture by Paul Varley (4th ed., Univ. of Hawaii, 2000)

ISBN: 0824821521

In Praise of Shadows by Junichiro Tanizaki (Leete's Island Books, 1980)

ISBN: 0918172020

Electronic Reserve (ERes) files to be downloaded from university library's website.

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce the major themes of what we regard today as Japanese culture. We will progress chronologically from the ancient past to the present, looking at Japan in a variety of ways: historically, anthropologically, religiously, philosophically, artistically, musically, politically, etc. In the process the student will have the opportunity to sample well-known works of literature that represent all these aspects of Japan. Because of the broad nature of the topic, the core curriculum will be defined by the lectures themselves, with the readings providing supplemental information. Hence attendance is mandatory and will be taken daily to ensure all classes are attended. There will only be two homework assignments, but because a paper 1500 words in length based on Japanese themes is required, good students will want to begin thinking about their topic and start their research early in the semester.

General Education Information:

This course fulfills the General Education Categories of **Humanities** and **Regions Beyond Europe**.

Characteristics of all General Education Courses

- 1 General Education courses offer introductions to the central topics of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
- 2 General Education courses offer explicit rather than tacit understandings of the procedures, practices, methodology and fundamental assumptions of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
- 3 General Education courses recognize multiple perspectives on the subject matter.
- 4 General Education courses emphasize active learning in an engaged environment that enables students to be producers as well as consumers of knowledge.
- 5 General Education courses promote critical inquiry into the assumptions, goals, and methods of various fields of academic study; they aim to develop the interpretive, analytic, and evaluative competencies characteristic of critical thinking.

Learning Objectives for General Education Humanities Courses

Humanities courses teach students to analyze and interpret texts, ideas, artifacts, and discourse systems, and the

human values, traditions, and beliefs that they reflect.

Humanities courses enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the assumptions, methods of study, and theories of at least one of the disciplines within the humanities.

Depending on the discipline, humanities courses will enable students to demonstrate some or all of the following:

- 1 an understanding of the objects of study as expressions of the cultural contexts of the people who created them
- 2 an understanding of the continuing relevance of the objects of study to the present and to the world outside the university
- 3 an ability to employ the terms and understand the conventions particular to the discipline
- 4 an ability to analyze and assess the strengths and weaknesses of ideas and positions along with the reasons or arguments that can be given for and against them
- 5 an understanding of the nature of the texts, artifacts, ideas, or discourse of the discipline and of the assumptions that underlie this understanding, including those relating to issues of tradition and canon

Objectives for General Education *Regions Beyond Europe* Courses

Approved courses engage students in considerations of the "local" as opposed to the "global." Courses focus on specific cultures (other than those of the United States) or the world's regions. Courses emphasize the features and processes whereby cultures and regions gain their specific identity, offering an explicitly historical organization (i.e., one that emphasizes the narratives whereby any given region or culture has come to gain its specific identity), and balancing topical focus and chronological breadth (i.e., considering a topic of sufficient specificity for the course to be coherent, but over a period of time long enough to ensure that the relevant historical dynamic is clearly visible).

Grading:

There will be both mid-term and final exams that will require short answers and/or brief essays. A 1500-word paper (5 to 6 pages) is also required, which will be collected in two installments, to be considered initial and final drafts of the same paper.

Map Assignment	5%
5 Page Paper	30%
Mid-term Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Attendance	15%

Grading is not on a curve, and **no extra credit will be assigned or accepted**. Grades will follow a strict percentage scale: 93-100 = A, 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 73-76 = C; 70-72 = C-; 67-69 = D+; 63-66 = D; 60-62 = D-; 0-59 = E. A grade of "Incomplete" will not be considered except in cases of extreme emergencies (death in the family, extreme illness) and will require some sort of documentation. Merely not completing one's work is not grounds for receiving an Incomplete grade. Please do not hesitate to come see me about any problems concerning the lectures, readings, grades, attendance, or your ability to complete the required work. If you anticipate a potential problem, you must come see me **in advance**.

Class Schedule: Readings are from *Japanese Culture (JCulture)*, Electronic Reserve files to be downloaded from university library ERes site (*ERes*), and *In Praise of Shadows (Shadows)*

Date	Topic	Texts	ERes
Aug 25-1	Class outline		
Aug 27	Pre-history to Earliest Records	<i>JCulture</i> ch. 1	
Sept 1-2	no class (Labor Day holiday)		#1: Shōtoku Constitution
Sept 3	Film: <i>Shinto: nature, gods and man in Japan.</i> Native religion		#2: <i>Kojiki, Manyōshū</i>
Sept 8-3	Buddhist Thought & Culture I (ideas) Map Assignment Due	<i>JCulture</i> ch. 2;	#3: Buddhism outline
Sept 10	Buddhism Thought & Culture II (art); Confucianism; Taoism		#4: Chinese thought outline
Sept 15-4	Heian Court Life I: Classical Poetry and Prose	<i>JCulture</i> ch. 3	#5: <i>Genji</i> #6: <i>Kokinshū</i>
Sept 17	Heian Court Life II		#7: <i>Eiga monogatari</i> #8: <i>Makura no sōshi</i>
Sept 22-5	Medieval Japan I: samurai culture	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 77-89	
Sept 24	Medieval Japan II: new forms of Buddhism		#9: <i>Mappō tōmyōki</i> #10: <i>Ichimai kishōmon</i>
Sept 29-6	no class		
Oct 1	no class	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 90-110	
Oct 6-7	Film: Nō theatre or <i>Kwaidan</i>		#11: <i>Heike monogatari</i> #12: <i>Hōnen chokuden</i>
Oct 8	no class		
Oct 13-8	Medieval Japan III: popular religious literature	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 91-92	#13: <i>Hōjōki</i> #14: <i>Konjaku</i> #15: <i>Nō play</i>
Oct 15	Muromachi/Ashikaga culture I: Nō theatre		
Oct 20-9	Review		
Oct 22	MIDTERM EXAM		
Oct 27-10	Muromachi/Ashikaga culture II: castles, temples, painting	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 110-124; 129-139	#16: Muromachi art
Oct 29	Tea ceremony	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 124-129, 160-163.	#17: <i>The Way of Tea</i>
Nov 3-11	guest lecture		
Nov 5	Edo period I: literature (<i>haiku, ukiyozōshi</i>)	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 164-197	#18: Chikamatsu reading #19: Saikaku reading
Nov 10-12	Edo period II: ideas & images (Chikamatsu, Hakuin, Norinaga)	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 197-204; 216-218	#20: Hakuin reading #21: Norinaga reading
Nov 12	Meiji period I: transition to the modern embodied in the Emperor as national symbol	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 235-270	#22: Monarch in Japan's Modernity
Nov 17-13	Meiji period II: transition to the modern in daily lives of common people		#23: Memories of Silk and Straw
Nov 19	Modern period III: the Japanese psyche	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 271-303	#24: The World of Amae
Nov 24-14	Modern period IV: Kyoto in the modern period	<i>Shadows</i> : all	
Nov 26	no class		
Dec 1-15	Postwar I: Godzilla & manga. Research paper due	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 304-315; 318-325; 346-349	#25: Phoenix
Dec 3	Postwar II: new religions & new new religions	<i>JCulture</i> pp. 334-337	#26: Sōka Gakkai
Dec 8-16	review		
Dec 11(Th)	FINAL EXAM at 10:30 – 12:30		