

EAJ210L  
SURVEY OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE LITERATURE  
Fall 2021 · Course Number 8343, 3 credits  
WF 4:30-5:50 p.m., Lecture Center 0003A

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Why are you here?

Why study Japanese literature? What connection does it have to your life as a SUNY undergraduate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? On the surface, it may seem there is no connection. But have you ever wondered why someone does something you consider odd? Have you ever wondered what it's like to be someone else, to walk in their shoes? The beauty of literature is that it wraps up history, experience, philosophy and adventure all in one package. If you read literature, you get to walk in those shoes, and to understand those people.

Course Description:

This course is a survey of traditional Japanese prose literature. Material will be presented more or less in a chronological fashion, with the aim of providing the student with an overall view of literary trends. The readings contain excerpts from prose dating from the 9th century up to the 19th century. This is a literature class. Preparation for class (i.e., doing the reading) is important! All materials are in English translation; no knowledge of Japanese is required.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify the geography and ethnography of Japan
- Students will be able to identify the outline and major periods in the history of Japan
- Students will be able to identify the major issues in the modern transformation of Japan
- Students will be able to identify major currents of literature, philosophy and/or religion in Japan.

General Education Information:

This course fulfills the General Education Categories of **Humanities** and **International Perspectives**.

Characteristics of *all* General Education Courses

The General Education Program as a whole has the following characteristics. Different courses within the Program emphasize different characteristics.

- *General education offers explicit understandings* of the procedures and practices of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields.
- *General education provides multiple perspectives* on the subject matter, reflecting the intellectual and cultural diversity within and beyond the University.
- *General education emphasizes active learning in an engaged environment* that enables students to become producers as well as consumers of knowledge.

- *General education promotes critical thinking* about the assumptions, goals, and methods of various fields of academic study and the interpretive, analytic, and evaluative competencies central to intellectual development.

## Humanities

Approved courses are concerned with defining and disputing that which is understood to be quintessentially "human:" studying language, texts, thought, and culture; their definition, interpretation, and historical development; and their reflection of human values, beliefs, and traditions. Courses in a variety of disciplines explicate the underlying assumptions, methods of study, practices, theories, and disputes appropriate to those disciplines.

Approved courses generally fall into one of three categories (all open to majors and non-majors):

1. introductions to basic materials and methods in the disciplines;
2. introductions to subfields or groupings of materials in the disciplines;
3. literature and culture courses taught in a foreign language higher than the third- semester level.

## **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.

## International Perspectives

An *International Perspectives* course develops students' understanding of the history, cultures and/or traditions of any region, nation, or society beyond the United States. Students must fulfill this requirement in one of two ways:

- participating in a study abroad program that earns University at Albany academic credit
- taking a course that meets the learning objectives below (this includes courses taught in a foreign language beyond the elementary level that addresses histories, institutions, economies, societies, and cultures beyond those of the United States)

Students will demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the history, cultures and/or traditions of any region, nation, or society beyond the United States; and how that development relates to other regions of the world, and at least one of the following:

- an understanding of the variety of cultures, societies, and countries that make up the region studied
- an understanding of a region or culture from the perspective of its people(s)
- an ability to analyze and contextualize cultural and historical materials relevant to a region
- an ability to locate and identify distinctive geographical features of a region
- an understanding of the reciprocal interactions between individuals and global systems
- an ability to use the analytic tools of a specific discipline to engage in comparative and/or historical analyses of cultures, nations, and regions
- an understanding of the economic, political, historical, and cultural relationships between different world regions resulting from contact, interaction, and/or influence

#### Required Texts:

All materials will be accessed for free through Perusall links on Blackboard. No purchase is necessary, but you will need to have *regular, reliable* internet access. I strongly recommend that you use a desktop device because annotating the reading on a tiny screen will be very difficult.

#### Testing and Grading:

- I will take attendance every day. If you are absent for good reason—illness, emergency, etc.—please e-mail me with that information. For every day that you attend, you receive “1” and for every day you are absent you receive “0.” At the end of the semester I add up all the 1s and 0s, find the average, multiply it by 100, and that is your attendance score. Excused absences are not included in the calculation.
- **This is a literature class—it’s important that you read the literature!** We’ll be using an add-on to Blackboard called Perusall to facilitate interaction with the readings. For each reading, you’ll be highlighting and commenting on various sections. The first time you log on to Perusall, there will be a tutorial to walk you through how it works.

Perusall uses an algorithm to determine your engagement with the material. It looks at various factors, including accessing the reading, finishing the reading, engaging in discussions about the reading, but **most importantly**, the quality of your annotations on the reading. You do not need to understand everything you read—asking good questions about the reading also counts as a quality annotation.

Once the due date of any reading assignment has passed, you will be able to see your Perusall score. You can reply to comments or annotate the reading during the 24 hours after the deadline, but the credit you receive will be partial. For example, comments made

three-quarters through the late annotation period will receive 25% of the credit they would have received if made on time.

Below is the timetable for the course. Generally speaking readings are due two hours before class time, which will give me time to look at your comments and questions in Perusall, and incorporate them into the lecture.

- The midterm and final exams will include short answer and essay questions on the material covered in the lectures. They will be open book, open note exams. The final exam will not be cumulative.

Course grades will be based on the following criteria:

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Attendance             | 15% |
| Perusall Average Score | 35% |
| Midterm Exam           | 25% |
| Final Exam             | 25% |

This syllabus is a contract. I agree to teach the topics listed below, and to grade you on the criteria listed above. I consider a grade of "Incomplete" to be for emergencies (death in the family, extreme illness, etc.), not for students who fail to plan ahead. **I do not curve grades. I do not give extra credit assignments.** My grading scale is as follows: 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.

I post all grades to Blackboard in a timely fashion, but I know that sometimes it is not easy to understand the bigger picture just looking at the Blackboard scores. If you want to check on your performance at any point in the semester, feel free to come to office hours or set up a Zoom meeting and we'll run through the numbers. If there are extenuating circumstances that you anticipate will unduly affect your grade (illness, emergency, etc.), it is your responsibility to speak with me as soon as you can. Do not wait until the end of the semester, when it becomes very difficult to mitigate the circumstance.

Students will not be excused from a class or an examination or completion of an assignment by the stated deadline except for emergencies, required appointments outside of the student's control (e.g. court dates, court summons, etc.) or other comparable situations. If you *choose* to miss class, no matter how compelling the reason, it is not an excused absence.

Students unable because of religious beliefs to attend class on certain days will be excused per NYS Law. See Section 224-A.

To quote the Undergraduate Bulletin:

“Although University officials will consider each student's request on its own merits and not attempt to define ahead of time the validity of all the possible reasons a student might give for missing a class or an examination, there are three types of reasons for which excuses will generally be granted: (a) illness, tragedy, or other personal emergency; (b) foreseeable time conflicts resulting from required appointments; and (c) religious observance. It shall be the student's responsibility to provide sufficient documentation to support any request. (In this

context, it should be noted that fraudulent excuses are considered violations of academic integrity and are grounds for academic or disciplinary penalties.)”

Academic Integrity:

“Every student has the responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University.....student claims of ignorance, unintentional error, or personal or academic pressures cannot be excuses for violation of academic integrity. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the standards and behaving accordingly, and UAlbany faculty are responsible for teaching, modeling and upholding them. Anything less undermines the worth and value of our intellectual work, and the reputation and credibility of the University at Albany degree.” (University’s Standards of Academic Integrity Policy, Fall 2013)

I take this seriously. If you commit a violation of academic integrity, I will fail you for the assignment and report you to the office of Undergraduate Studies. Types of violations include but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Cheating on exams
- Multiple submissions
- Forgery
- Sabotage
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Falsification
- Bribery
- Theft, Damage, or Misuse of Library or IT Resources

In the table below, the date indicated is the date by which you must complete the reading, i.e., complete your annotations on Perusall. All readings are due at 2:30 p.m. on the date indicated.

| Week* | Mo.   |      |    | Topic/Reading   |   |
|-------|-------|------|----|---|---|
| 1     | Aug.  | 25   | W  | Course Introduction (no reading)                                      |   |
|       |       | 27   | F  | Prince Shōtoku's Constitution   |   |
| 2     | Sept. | 1    | W  | <i>Kojiki</i> and <i>Nihon Shoki</i>                                  |   |
|       |       | 3    | F  | <i>The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter</i>                                  |   |
| 3     |       | 8    | W  | <i>The Tales of Ise</i>   |   |
|       |       | 10   | F  | <i>Tosa Diary</i>   |   |
| 4     |       | 15   | W  | <i>The Gossamer Years</i>   |   |
|       |       | 17   | F  | <i>The Pillow Book</i>  |   |
| 5     |       | 22   | W  | <i>A Tale of Flowering Fortunes</i>                                   |   |
|       |       | 24   | F  | <i>The Riverside Counselor's Stories</i>                              |   |
| 6     |       | Oct. | 29 | W   | <i>Tales of Times Now Past &amp; Tales of Uji</i> |
|       |       |      | 1  | F   | <i>The Confessions of Lady Nijō</i>               |
| 7     | 6     |      | W  | <i>Diary of the Waning Moon</i>                                       |   |
|       | 8     |      | F  | Optional Review Session (no reading)                                  |   |
|       | 13    |      | W  | <b>Midterm Examination</b>  |   |
| 8     | 15    |      | F  | <i>Hōjōki</i> , also known as <i>An Account of My Hut (Hermitage)</i> |   |
|       | 20    |      | W  | <i>Essays in Idleness</i>   |   |
| 9     | 22    |      | F  | Nō theater  |   |
|       | 27    |      | W  | <i>An Account of a Journey to the East</i>                            |   |
| 10    | Nov.  |      | 29 | F   | <i>The Clear Mirror</i>                           |
|       |       |      | 3  | W   | <i>The Great Peace</i>                            |
| 11    |       |      | 5  | F   | Companion booklets                                |
|       |       |      | 10 | W   | Travel Accounts by Matsuo Bashō                   |
| 12    |       |      | 12 | F   | Ihara Saikaku, <i>Five Women Who Loved Love</i>   |
|       |       | 17   | W  | <i>Love Suicides at Sonezaki</i> (Puppet theater)                     |   |
| 13    |       | 19   | F  | <i>Ugetsu Monogatari</i>  |   |
|       |       | 24   | W  | THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS                                       |   |
|       |       | 26   | F  |   |   |
|       |       | Dec. | 1  | W   | <i>Hizakurige</i>                                 |
|       |       |      | 3  | F   | Course Wrap Up (no reading)                       |

\*These “weeks” correspond to the readings/weeks listed on Blackboard

The Final Exam will take place on Wednesday, December 8, 5:45 p.m.-7:45 p.m. in our regular classroom.