

Classical Japanese Texts 2018-2019

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This course will be taught in Michaelmas Term.

This advanced text option is designed for students who have completed the year-long Classical Japanese language course (or other students who have good reading knowledge of classical Japanese, by arrangement with the tutor). The course focuses on two of the best-known works of Heian court prose, the *Tale of Genji* and the *Pillow Book*. While reading and translating excerpts from these works, we will consider a range of topics in Heian court literature, including poetry and aesthetics; ideals of romance and other relationships; shared assumptions about literary and cultural knowledge; conceptions of death, the supernatural, and the world beyond the capital; and attitudes about gender and women's writing.

Teaching for this course will be in the form of weekly tutorials in Michaelmas Term, in which students will discuss their text translations and key issues in these texts. Students will submit an essay on an assigned topic by the end of week 4, to be discussed in tutorial, and each student will also be asked to give one brief presentation in the course of the term on a suggested work of Japanese-language secondary scholarship.

Examination will be in the form of a three-hour written examination (involving text translation and commentary) in Trinity Term.

Suggested introductory reading:

- Royall Tyler, *The Tale of Genji* (Penguin Classics, 2002)
- Meredith McKinney, *The Pillow Book* (Penguin Classics, 2006)
- Haruo Shirane, *Bridge of Dreams: a Poetics of the Tale of Genji* (Stanford University Press, 1987)
- Mark Morris, "Sei Shōnagon's Poetic Catalogues" (*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 40 no. 1, June 1980)