



MSc and MPhil in Japanese Studies 2022/2023

Classical Japanese Texts

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This course will be taught in Michaelmas Term (8 two-hour tutorials). (Tutorial time and place TBD).

Prerequisites:

Reading knowledge of classical Japanese (previous completion of Classical Language option, or similar background by agreement with the tutor).

Course description:

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.

Course Assessment:

The main assessment will be through a three-hour 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)

Statement of Coverage

This document applies to students starting the MSc and/or MPhil in Japanese Studies in Michaelmas Term 202s. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

Disclaimer

The information in this document is accurate as at 02 September 2022, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.