



MSc and MPhil in Japanese Studies 2021/2022

Modern Japanese Literature

Dr L. M. Flores, Faculty of Oriental Studies

*This option covers topics in modern Japanese literature from the **early 1900s to the present day.***

The option will be taught in Hilary Term.

It will consist of 1 lecture and 1 tutorial per week.

Lectures will be held in HT on Tuesdays from 1300-1400; tutorials will be by arrangement with instructor.

Lectures and tutorials will be taught via Microsoft Teams unless otherwise indicated.

*Note: In Michaelmas Term a lecture series covering topics in modern Japanese literature from the 1600s to the early 1900s runs on Tuesdays from 1300-1400.

Students taking the Hilary Term option on the MSc are welcome to **audit** the Michaelmas Term lecture series.

Course Description:

This option is designed to acquaint students with some of the key themes and discourses in modern and contemporary Japanese literature and culture. We will discuss topics such as modernity, the nation, self and community, war and memory, trauma, and gender.

Course Assessment:

The main assessment will be through a three-hour examination in Trinity Term.

Students will submit two essays. Essays are due by midnight, Friday of week 4 and week 9 of Hilary Term. Essay topics are as follows:

Essay 1: Discuss portrayals of the body in *either* proletarian literature, *nikutai bungaku*, atomic bomb literature *or* post war women's writing.

Essay 2: Choose one of two: Does 3.11 literature represent a distinct break from pre-existing writing? Why or why not? *Or*: Does Murata Sayaka's *Convenience Store Woman* portrayal a utopian world or a dystopian world?

Selected readings:

Bullock, Julia. *The Other Women's Lib: Gender and Body in Japanese Women's Fiction, 1960-1973*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010.

Dodd, Stephen. *The Youth of Things: Life and Death in the Age of Kajii Motojirō*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.

Field, Norma and Bowen-Struyk, Heather, eds. *For Dignity, Justice, and Revolution: An Anthology of Japanese Proletarian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

- Geilhorn, Barbara and Iwata-Weickgenannt, Kristina eds. *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*. Routledge, 2017.
- Haver, William. *The Body of This Death: Historicity and Sociality in the Time of AIDS*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Itō Hiromi: “Killing Kanoko” and other poems in *Killing Kanoko: Selected Poems of Itō Hiromi*. Translated by Jeffery Angles. Notre Dame: Action Books, 2009.
- Iwamoto Yoshio. “Aspects of the Proletarian Literary Movement in Japan.” In *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy*, ed. Silberman and Harootunian, 156-182. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Karatani Kōjin. *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Kobayashi Takiji: *Kani Kōsen* (The Factory Ship) in “*The Factory Ship*” and “*The Absentee Landlord*,” translated by Frank Motofuji, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973.
- Lippit, Seiji. *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Luke, Elmer and Karashima, David James eds. *March Was Made of Yarn: Writers Respond to Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami*. Harvill Secker, 2012.
- Ōe Kenzaburō: *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (1994). New York: Grove Press, 1985.
- Schalow, Paul Gordon, and Janet A. Walker, eds. *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Seaman, Amanda. *Bodies of Evidence: Women, Society, and Detective Fiction in 1990s Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.
- Shimazu, Naoko. “Popular Representations of the Past: The Case of Post-war Japan,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Redesigning the Past. (Jan., 2003): 101-116.
- Slaymaker, Douglas. *The Body in Post-war Japanese Fiction*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.
- Treat, John Whittier. *Writing ground zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Tyler, William Jefferson. *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.
- Vlastos, Stephen, ed. *Mirror of modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Draft syllabus, subject to change

Week 1: Proletarian Literature

Reading: Kobayashi Takiji: *Kani Kōsen* (The Factory Ship) in “*The Factory Ship*” and “*The Absentee Landlord*,” translated by Frank Motofuji, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973.

Iwamoto Yoshio. “Aspects of the Proletarian Literary Movement in Japan.” In *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy*, ed. Silberman and Harootunian, 156-182. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Field, Norma and Bowen-Struyk, Heather, eds. *For Dignity, Justice, and Revolution: An Anthology of Japanese Proletarian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. (Read "Introduction" (pp. 1-13) and Hayama Yoshiki's "The Prostitute" (pp. 53-67)).

Week 2: Japanese Modernism

Reading: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: "In a Grove" and "Rashomon"

Lippit, Seiji. *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. ("Introduction" (pp. 1-7) and "Disintegrating Mechanisms of Subjectivity: Akutagawa Ryunosuke's Last Writings" (pp. 50-85)).

Or

Dodd, Stephen. *The Youth of Things: Life and Death in the Age of Kajii Motojirō*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. ("Introduction" (pp. 1-6); "Modernism and Its Endings" (pp. 36-71); choose 2 Motojirō Kaji stories from the anthology to read).

Recommended: Tyler, William Jefferson. *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Week 3: Returning to Japan

Reading: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Some Prefer Nettles*. London: Vintage, 2001.

Or

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. *In Praise of Shadows*. London: Vintage Digital, 2019.

Daisuke Nishihara, "Said, Orientalism and Japan", *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* No. 25, Edward Said and Critical Decolonization (2005) (pp. 241-253).

Week 4: Atomic Bomb Literature: Negotiating Trauma

Reading: Ōe Kenzaburō: *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (1994). New York: Grove Press, 1985.

Treat, John Whittier. *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*, (Read "Introduction" and Chapter 1 "Atrocity into Words").

Week 5: War Responsibility

Reading: Shimazu, Naoko. "Popular Representations of the Past: The Case of Post-war Japan," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Redesigning the Past. (Jan., 2003): 101-116.

Slymaker, Douglas. *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, selected chapters London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. (Read "Introduction" (pp. 1-7) and Chapter 3: "Tamura Tajirō" (pp.43-70)).

Week 6: Post War Women Writers and Women's Lib (?)

Reading: Bullock, Julia. *The Other Women's Lib: Gender and Body in Japanese Women's Fiction, 1960-1973*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010. (selected chapters)

Takahashi Takako: "Holy Terror" (*Kodomo-sama*) and "A Boundless Void" (*Byōbo*), translated by Amanda Seaman in *The Massachusetts Review* 51/3 (Fall 2010): 439-55 and 456-81.

Week 7: Literature After 3.11

Reading: Luke, Elmer and Karashima, David James eds. *March Was Made of Yarn: Writers Respond to Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami*. London: Harvill Secker, 2012.

DiNitto, Rachel. *Fukushima Fiction: The Literary Landscape of Japan's Triple Disaster*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019 (Read "Introduction: Disaster Strikes, Literature Responds" (pp. 1-21) and Chapter 1: "Voices from the Debris: Cultural Trauma and Disaster Fiction" (pp. 22-56).

Recommended: Geilhorn, Barbara and Iwata-Weickgenannt, Kristina eds. *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*. London: Routledge, 2017.

Week 8: Contemporary Fiction

Reading: Murata Sayaka. *Convenience Store Woman*. Translated by Ginny Tapley Takemori. London: Granta Books, 2019.

Thornbury, Barbara. "The Thirty-Something 'Tokyo Daughters' of Kawakami Hiromi's Strange Weather in Tokyo, Shibasaki Tomoka's Spring Garden, and Murata Sayaka's Convenience Store Woman." *U.S.-Japan Womens Journal*, (57), 57-77.

Statement of Coverage

This document applies to students starting the MSc and/or MPhil in Japanese Studies in Michaelmas Term 2021. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

Disclaimer

The information in this document is accurate as at 29 September 2021, 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.