

【Course Description】

We will read a wide range of Japanese literature from a global perspective. What can and can't be translated successfully? Are traditional Japanese ways of telling a story peculiar to Japan, characteristic of other Asian literatures, or found in narratives world-wide? We will study how Japanese story-tellers use fictional and factual techniques that are widely found in narratives around the world. The key themes of this course are (1) "universality"; (2) "translatability"; (3) fiction vs. fact.

【Class Goals】

To read works that are enjoyable in themselves and raise interesting points for discussion about Japanese culture and society, as well as universal themes of human experience. To think about literature from the perspective of linguistic and cultural background, considering problems of translation and reception (appreciation, influence, adaptation).

【Course Schedule】

- 【第1回】 Introduction to Japanese literature and its special characteristics.
- 【第2回】 Fact and fiction in early "history": the tale of Yamato Takeru.
- 【第3回】 Realism and fictionality in poems of the Man'yōshū. "Translatability."
- 【第4回】 Invented stories (fictional) presented as "fact" (realistically). Short examples.
- 【第5回】 Autobiographical diaries and memoirs: The Kagerō Diary.
- 【第6回】 Autobiographical diaries and memoirs: Sei Shōnagon's Pillow Book.
- 【第7回】 Early fictional narratives: The Bamboo Cutter's Tale / Taketori monogatari. Universal motifs.
- 【第8回】 Early fictional narratives: The Tale of Ochikubo / Ochikubo monogatari. "Cinderella" stories.
- 【第9回】 Medieval narratives ("setsuwa") and their techniques: realism and fantasy. Comparisons.
- 【第10回】 Edo-period narratives and their techniques. Contrast with Meiji-period writing. Presentations.
- 【第11回】 The Tale of Genji / Genji monogatari: introduction to the work. ("Firefly" chapter)
- 【第12回】 The Tale of Genji. Excerpts from chapters 1-2. Topic: reception.
- 【第13回】 The Tale of Genji, Chapter 4 (Yugao / Evening Faces) (1).
- 【第14回】 The Tale of Genji, Chapter 4 (Yugao / Evening Faces) (2).
- 【第15回】 The Tale of Genji, Chapter 5 (Wakamurasaki / Young Murasaki) (1).
- 【第16回】 The Tale of Genji, Chapter 5 (Wakamurasaki / Young Murasaki) (2). Presentations.
- 【第17回】 War narratives: mixing history with fiction. The Tale of the Heike / Heike monogatari (1).
- 【第18回】 War narratives: mixing history with fiction. The Tale of the Heike / Heike monogatari (2).
- 【第19回】 War narratives: mixing history with fiction. The Tale of the Heike / Heike monogatari (3).
- 【第20回】 War narratives: mixing history with fiction. The Tale of the Heike / Heike monogatari (4). Presentations.
- 【第21回】 Noh dramas based on semi-factual narratives and fictional narratives. Introduction.
- 【第22回】 Noh dramas based on semi-factual narratives (1)
- 【第23回】 Noh dramas based on fictional narratives (2)
- 【第24回】 Noh dramas (3). Presentations.
- 【第25回】 20th century writers mixing fact and fiction
- 【第26回】 20th century writers mixing fact and fiction. Presentations.
- 【第27回】 Modern narratives and their techniques. Presentations.
- 【第28回】 Modern narratives and their techniques.
- 【第29回】 Looking back at writers discussed. Comparing original and translation.
- 【第30回】 Exam and follow up lectures.

【Preparation for Class】

All texts can be read in Japanese or English. Answers must be written in English using the e-learning site. You will need to prepare by doing the set readings BEFORE each class as well as completing any written assignments.

【Review of Class】

When there is no new assignment, read through the text and translation again, comparing some passages in detail. Additional questions will sometimes be assigned via the e-learning site.

【Remarks for Class】

Good attendance is required, but above all, you will be expected to READ carefully, DISCUSS actively, and WRITE thoughtfully and clearly.

【Texts】

Some texts will be available on reserve in the library. See "Reference Books."
Most other texts will be available in the "Discussions" section of the e-learning site.

【Reference Books】

See e-learning for details of the volumes on reserve: A four-volume anthology of Japanese literature in translation and a collection of essays and translations of noh: Like Clouds or Mists: Studies and Translations of No Plays of the Genpei War, ed. Oyler and Watson.

【Evaluation Criteria】

Active participation in class (20%), oral presentations (20%), e-learning assignments (20%), midterm report (20%), final report (20%).

【Notes】

Japanese reading ability is NOT required for this class. All texts can be read in English translation.
授業は原則的英語で行うが、必要に応じて、日本語も使用する。必ずしも高度な英語力は必要ないが、ある程度の四技の英語力があるのが望ましい。