

EAST 212
Introduction: East Asian Culture: Japan
Fall 2022

Wednesday 2:35-3:55pm
DUFF THTR 1

Friday 2:35-3:55pm
ENGTR 0100

Please note that the course meets in two different rooms on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Marianne Tarcov
marianne.tarcov@mail.mcgill.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays 5:35-6:35 pm
Wednesday 4:15-5:15pm
Room 276 in Sherbrooke 680 or by Zoom
The Zoom link for office hours is available on MyCourses.
If you cannot attend my regular office hours, please contact me and we can make an appointment.

Teaching Assistants

Karen Ren

zhiyi.ren@mail.mcgill.ca

Emma Wang

jiarong.wang@mail.mcgill.ca

Course Description

This class interprets Japanese culture as a heterogeneous phenomenon with multiple different strands that change over time, not a monolithic, single entity removed from the vicissitudes of history. We will learn about Japan as a multicultural society affected by capitalism, empire, and settler colonialism. We will also think about how these complex realities fit with the images Japan puts forth into the world.

The course is structured by thematic topics, with material that bridges the modern and premodern periods. As we study the different units, we will sort through the chronologically disparate material, with an eye to how our understanding of premodern Japanese culture is shaped by the lens of the modern, and vice versa. For example, we will start with: how do premodern depictions of warriors mesh with the history of modern Japanese nationalism and contemporary ideas about the samurai? We will also explore gender, everyday life, and food as major components of Japanese culture.

Course Format and Delivery

Due to the size of course enrollment, this course will heavily feature lectures.

On Fridays, we will have small group exercises. A prompt will be available during class, and students will form small groups of 4-5 people to discuss.

Email Policy

I do my best to respond to emails in a timely manner. Please allow some time before you receive a response, especially on weekends and holidays.

Please use emails for short questions and concerns. For anything requiring more substantive discussion (such as paper ideas or help with other assignments), please use office hours instead.

Readings

Readings will be posted to MyCourses.

Two books are required for you to obtain yourself. Copies are available at LeJames Bookstore. Electronic copies are also fine:

Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, *My First Book of Haiku Poems* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2019).

Murata Sayaka, *Convenience Store Woman: A Novel*, translated by Ginny Tapley Takemori (United States: Grove Atlantic, 2018).

Assignments

--Group Writer (1-8 times)

The Group Writer is responsible for a one-paragraph response based on what their group came up with during the small-group exercises on Fridays. There may be more than one Group Writer per group. The response is due Monday at 5pm to the Discussions Forum on MyCourses.

--Discussion Question (1-8 times)

Write a 1-2-paragraph discussion question based on the reading material for your chosen date. The Discussion Question is due the night before class at 10pm.

--You must have a total of 8 posts to the Discussions tool on MyCourses. Within those 8 posts, you may do any combination of Discussion Questions and Group Writer Responses. $8 \times 5 = 40\%$

--2 times per semester: Take Home Quiz ($30\% \times 2 = 60$)

This course features two quizzes. Both will be open book. There will be a combination of short-answer, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple-choice questions. The quizzes will feature material from both readings and lecture.

Quiz 1 will be available on Friday Oct. 14 and due Tuesday October 18. Quiz 2 will be available on Thursday December 8 and due Monday December 12.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

Weekly Schedule

Note: Japanese names are written family name first, given name second, unless the writer is publishing the original text in English, in which case I have chosen to go with Western name order. So, for example, Mishima Yukio goes by Japanese name order, but Inazō Nitobe, who publishes in English, goes by Western name order.

Wed. Aug. 31

Introduction

Japan's National Image and Warriors

Fri. Sept. 2

--Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Bushido in Modern Japan* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-10 and 15-26.

--Inazō Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 1969), 1-6 and 95-107.

Recommended:

---Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "Zen and Samurai Values," in *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2000), no page numbers.

-Wed. Sept. 7

--Gavin Walker, "The Political Afterlives of Yukio Mishima," *Jacobin* (November 25, 2020): <https://jacobinmag.com/2020/11/yukio-mishima-far-right-anniversary-death>

-- Mishima Yukio, "Patriotism," in *Death in Midsummer and Other Stories* (New Directions, 1966), 93-118. (Content Warning for violence, suicide, and sexuality)

Recommended:

--Debito Arudou, "White Supremacists and Japan: A Love Story," *Japan Times* (May 7, 2018): <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2018/03/07/issues/white-supremacists-japan-love-story/>

--Itō Hiromi, "Harakiri," in *Killing Kanoko: Selected Poems of Hiromi Itō* (Notre Dame, IN: Action Books, 2009), 1-3. (poem, Content Warning for violence, suicide, and sexuality)

Monsters, Memories, and Myths

Fri. Sept. 9

--Murasaki Shikibu, "Evening Faces," *The Tale of Genji*, translated by Edward Seidensticker (New York: Vintage International, 1978), 58-78.

-----"Aoi," in *The Tale of Genji*, translated by Dennis Washburn (New York: Norton, 2015), 477-556.

Wed. Sept. 14

--Reginald Jackson, "Chivalry in Shambles: Fabricating Manhood Amid Architectural Disrepair," in *A Proximate Remove: Queering Intimacy and Loss in the Tale of Genji* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 64-86.

--Norma Field, *The Splendor of Longing in the Tale of Genji* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 45-51.

Fri. Sept. 16

--Rebecca Copeland, "Mythical Bad Girls: The Corpse, The Crone, and the Snake," in *Bad Girls of Japan* (Palgrave, 2005), 15-31.

--"How a Monk of the Dōjōji Temple in the Province of Kii Copied the Lotus Sutra and Brought Salvation to Serpents," in *Traditional Japanese Literature*, 542-545.

--In class: *Dōjōji Temple*, directed by Kawamoto Kihachirō, 1976. (Short Film)

Wed. Sept. 21

--David B. Lurie, "Orientomology: The Insect Literature of Lafcadio Hearn," in *JAPANimals: History and Culture in Japan's Animal Life*, edited by Gregory Pflugfelder and Brett L. Walker (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2005), 245-273.

--Lafacadio Hearn, "Insect Studies," *Kwaidan*

Fri. Sept. 23

--Deborah Shamoan, "The Yokai in the Database: Supernatural Creatures and Folklore in Manga and Anime," *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 27, no. 2 (2013): 276-289.

--Azuma Hiroki, "The Animalization of Otaku," translated by Yuriko Furuhashi and Marc Steinberg, *Mechademia* 2 (2007): 175-187

Time, space, and poetics

Wed. Sept. 28

– Stefan Tanaka, "Prelude: Time, Past, History," *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1-26.

-Fri. Sept. 30

--Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, *My First Book of Haiku Poems*

--Steven D. Carter, "Introduction," in *How to Read a Japanese Poem* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019), 1-17.

Wed. Oct. 5

--J. Keith Vincent, "Better Than Sex: Masaoka Shiki's Poems on Food," in *Devouring Japan: Global Perspectives on Japanese Culinary Identity*, edited by Nancy K. Stalker (UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 221-237.

Fri. Oct. 7

--Emiko Ohnuki Tierney, "Cherry Blossoms and Their Viewing: A Window onto Japanese Culture," in *The Culture of Japan as Seen Through its Leisure* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), 213-236.

-----"The Militarization of Cherry Blossoms: Cherry Blossoms as the Souls of Foreign Soldiers," in *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 102-125.

Wed. Oct. 12

NO CLASS

Fri. Oct. 14

NO CLASS (Tuesday Schedule, see [Key Academic Dates](#) for more information.)

Wed. Oct. 19

--Marilyn Ivy, "Itineraries of Knowledge: Trans-Figuring Japan," in *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 29-65.

Fri. Oct. 21

--Jordan Sand, "The Housewife's Laboratory," *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space and Bourgeois Culture 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 55-94.

Recommended:

--William H. Coaldrake, "Authority in Architecture: Container and Contained," in *Authority in Architecture in Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 1-16.

Japan's Settler Colonialism

Wed. Oct. 26

--Youtube, Al Jazeera, "Japan's Ainu," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA7BILX-q4I> (watch on your own)

--Kayano Shigeru, "My Father's Arrest" and "Lucky Is the One Who Dies First," *Our Land Was A Forest: An Ainu Memoir*, trans. Kyoko Seldan and Lili Seldan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 57-69 and 97-109.

--Chiri Yukie, "The Song the Owl God Himself Sang: An Ainu Tale," *Japan Focus* 7, Issue 4, Number 5 (January 12, 2009): 13 pages (unnumbered).

Fri. Oct. 28

--Katsuya Hirano, "Settler Colonialism In the Making of Japan's Hokkaidō," *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds. Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London: Routledge, 2016), 327-338.

Recommended

--*Ainu Mosir* (dir. Fukunaga Takeshi, 2020, 74min). The film is available on Netflix

The Emperor as National Symbol

Wed. Nov. 2

--Takashi Fujitani, "Electronic Pageantry and Japan's 'Symbolic Emperor,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, v51 n4 (November 1, 1992): 824-850.

--Norma Field, "Prologue," in *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1987), 5-32.

Women, Bodies, Nation

Fri. Nov. 4

--Miriam Silverberg, "The Cafe Waitress Sang the Blues," in *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 73-108.

Wed. Nov. 9

--Alisa Freedman, "Bus Guides Tour National Landscapes, Pop Culture, and Youth Fantasies" in *Modern Girls on the Go: Gender, Mobility, and Labor in Japan*, edited by Alisa Freedman, et al. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 107-128.

Fri. Nov. 11

--Yi Yang-ji, "Koku," translated by Ann Sherif, in *Into the Light: An Anthology of Literature by Koreans in Japan*, edited by Melissa L. Wender (USA: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 233-241.

--Sonia Ryang, "Visible and Vulnerable: The Plight of Koreans in Japan," in *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, edited by Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 62-81.

The environment, trauma, and food

Wed. Nov. 16

--Ibuse Masuji, "Chapter 4," in *Black Rain*, translated by John Bester (Japan: Kodansha International, 1969), 7 pages (unnumbered).

--Katarzyna Cwiertka, "Culinary Culture and the Making of a National Cuisine," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan*, edited by Jennifer Roberts (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 415-428.

Food and Drink, Consumer Culture, and Everyday Life

Fri. Nov. 18

- Marc Steinberg, "Candies, Premiums, and Character Merchandising: The Meiji-Atomu Marketing Campaign," in *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 37-85.
- clips in class, *Tampopo*, directed by Itami Jūzō, 1987.

recommended:

- Barak Kushner, "Ramen Popular Culture," in *Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen* (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 229-256. (Content note for sexuality)

-- Extra Credit Snack Swap: Let's think about the role that food and drink play in our daily lives! Bring in a favorite snack to share with your small discussion group. Extra credit will only apply if you make a Group Writer post to Discussions on MyCourses. Extra credit takes the form of 1 point added to your final grade.

Wed. Nov. 23

- Merry White, "Coffee in Public: Cafes in Urban Japan," in *Coffee Life in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1-19.

recommended:

- Kristin Surak, "Creating Tea: The National Transformation of a Cultural Practice," *Making Tea, Making Japan: Cultural Nationalism in Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 57-90.

Fri. Nov. 25-Wed. Nov. 30

- Murata Sayaka, *Convenience Store Woman*, whole book

---recommended: Gavin H. Whitelaw, "Konbini Nation: The Rise of the Convenience Store in Post-Bubble Japan," in *Consuming Life in Post-Bubble Japan: A Transdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Katarzyna Cwierka and Ewa Machotka (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 69-88, doi: 10.5117/9789462980631/ch03

Conclusion

Fri. Dec. 2

Review, last Group Writer response