

**EAST 212**  
**Introduction to EAS Culture: Japan**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Brian Bergstrom  
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Office hrs.: Mondays 10:00 – 12:00, or by appt.

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**TIME/PLACE:** RPHYS 112 // WF 13:05-14:25

**CLASS OVERVIEW:** An overview of Japanese history and culture, the course aims to familiarize students with fundamental issues pertaining to the study of Japan. This course will pay particular attention to how constantly reconfiguring notions of what constitutes Japan and Japanese-ness affect articulations of national identity, gendered selfhood, and everyday citizenship throughout the various historical and social contexts discussed in class.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Students who complete this course will become familiar with critical aspects of Japanese culture and history from the classical era onward. They will develop critical thinking skills applicable to a broad swath of humanities disciplines, including anthropology, history, literary studies, cultural studies, media studies, and art history. Students who complete this course will develop preliminary skills in discussing primary texts within a historical context using secondary sources and their own powers of argumentation. They will also acquire skills in speaking peer-to-peer about developing a thesis for short-form expository writing.

**ASSESSMENT AND ATTENDANCE:** Due to large enrollment, instruction will take place in a lecture format, although question/answer give-and-take will be encouraged and sometimes solicited. Students are expected to keep up with readings, and lectures will assume familiarity with the assigned texts for that day. There will be two short response papers to write during the course, with opportunities for small-group and peer-to-peer discussion of their writing before turning them in. Attendance and participation in these small group discussions will also be assessed as part of the final grade. Lastly, a final take-home exam consisting of essay questions dealing with the content of the class as a whole will be given out at the end of class to be completed during the exam period.

Quiz and Response Papers (15% x 3) = 45%  
Participation in Discussions = 15%  
Take Home Final Exam = 40%

**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 <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/> for more information). 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.

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et procédures disciplinaires. (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill: <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/>).

**STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI TOOLS:** I do not encourage the use of generative AI by students (except potentially in the case of polishing the grammar of already human-written work), as it undermines the point of written assignments in an academic setting and is also extremely damaging to the environment, but I also cannot forbid it.

Please keep in mind, though, that students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit, including any “hallucinations,” errors, or plagiarism generated by such tools that make it into the submitted work, or aspects of the writing that do not conform to the assignment’s rubric, which focuses on strong, distinctive argumentation and thorough use of in-class materials.

#### **READING SCHEDULE:**

W 1/8 – Introduction: In-class screening and discussion

In class screening: *My Irezumi / The Eyes of Others* (dir. Yuki Kasai-Paré, 2016, 25min.)

Youtube URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5AeknSUuuU&feature=youtu.be>

F 1/10 – Tessa MORRIS-SUZUKI, “Japan,” *Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998)

HANAZAKI Kōhei, “Ainu Moshir and Yaponesia: Ainu and Okinawan Identities in Contemporary Japan,” Mark Hudson, trans., in *Multicultural Japan: Paleolithic to Postmodern*, Donald Dendoon et al., ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117-131.

**IN-CLASS FILM:** *The Way Forward II* (Ainu Cultural Preservation Association/NHK, 2000, 30 min.)

W 1/15– Laura HEIN and Mark SELDEN, “Culture, Power, and Identity in Contemporary Okinawa,” *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, Hein and Selden, ed., (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 1-31

F 1/17 – OSHIRO Tatsumi, “The Cocktail Party,” Steve Rabson, trans. *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas*, (Berkeley: Center for Japanese Studies, 1989).

- KUSHI Fusako, “Memoirs of a Declining Ryukyuan Woman,” and “In Defense of ‘Memoirs of a Declining Ryukyuan Woman,’” Kimiko Miyagi, trans. *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa*, Steve Rabson and Michael Molasky, eds., (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000)
- W 1/22 – Ō no Yasumaro, *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters*, Gustav Heldt, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1-41.
- Laura Miller, “Precious Carved Beads,” *Occult Hunting and Supernatural Play in Japan*, (Honolulu: U of Hawai’i 2024), 126-149.
- F 1/24 – Jonathan STOCKDALE, “The Radiance of Exile: The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter and The Tale of Genji,” *Imagining Exile in Heian Japan: Banishment in Law, Literature and Cult* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015), 43-63.
- “Tale of the Bamboo-Cutter,” Donald Keene, trans. *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (January 1956), 329–55.
- W 1/29 – Pierre François SOUYRI, “Social Dynamics in the Late Heian,” in *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society*, Käthe Roth, trans., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 17-28.
- IN-CLASS SCREENING:** *Kwaidan* (KOBAYASHI Masaki, 1964) (excerpt)
- F 1/31 – **IN-CLASS QUIZ**
- IN-CLASS SCREENING:** *Kagemusha* (KUROSAWA Akira, 1980) (excerpt)
- W 2/5 - Mary Elizabeth Berry, “Play,” in *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 242-244, 259-284.
- IN-CLASS SCREENING:** *Rikyū* (dir. TESHIGAHARA Hiroshi, 1989) [excerpt]
- F 2/7 – Elise TIPTON, “Tokugawa Background: The Ideal and the Real,” *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History 2nd Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1-20.
- W 2/12 – BASHŌ, “Introduction,” and “The Narrow Road to the Deep North,” in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, 9-49, 97-143.
- F 2/14 – FŪRAI Sanjin (HIRAGA Gennai), “On Farting,” trans. William Sibley, in *Readings in Tokugawa Thought: Select Papers, Volume No. 9* (Chicago: Center for East Asian Studies, University of Chicago), 1993, pp. 149-56.
- Jippensha IKKU “Kokkeibon: Comic Fiction for Commoners: excerpts from *Travels on the Eastern Seaboard*,” *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology*, Haruo Shirane, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)
- W 2/19 – Takashi FUJITANI, “The Monarchy in Japan’s Modernity,”

- Splendid Monarchy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 155-194.
- F 2/21 – TAWADA Yoko, “Berlin,” *Exophony: A Journey Outside the Mother Tongue* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 14-21. (unpublished translation by Brian Bergstrom).
- Mori OGAI, “Under Reconstruction,” Ivan Morris, trans., in *Modern Japanese Stories: An Anthology*, Ivan Morris, ed. (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1962), 35-44 [opd: 1910].
- W 2/26 – HIRATSUKA Raichō, “In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun,” *The Bluestockings of Japan*, trans. and ed. Jan Bardsley, (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2007), 94-103
- KISHIDA Toshiko, “Daughters in Boxes,” trans. by Rebecca L. Copeland and Aiko Okamoto MacPhail in *The Modern Murasaki: Writing by Women of Meiji Japan*, eds. Rebecca L. Copeland and Melek Ortabasi (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 62-71.
- F 2/28 – **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OF RESPONSE PAPER 1**
- SPRING BREAK: March 3-7
- W 3/12 – **RESPONSE PAPER 1 DUE AT START OF CLASS**
- Gennifer WEISENFELD, “Expanding Arts of the Interwar Period,” *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011)
- F 3/14 – HORI Tatsuo, “Aquarium,” Stephen Snyder, trans. *Three-Dimensional Reading: Stories of Time and Space in Japanese Modernist Fiction*, Angela Yiu, ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i , 2013), 108-122.
- Edogawa RAMPO, “The Caterpillar,” Michael Tangeman, trans., *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan 1913-1938*, William J. Tyler, ed. (Honolulu: U of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 406-422.
- W 3/19 – **READINGS:** Tessa MORRIS-SUZUKI, “Race,” *Re-inventing Japan*, 79-109.
- IN-CLASS SCREENING:** SEO Mitsuyo, *Momotaro: Sacred Sailors* (1945)
- F 3/21 – Chunghee Sarah SOH, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Tragedy as Structural Violence,” in *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experience*, 17-35.
- KIM Saryang, “Into the Light,” Christopher D. Scott, trans., in *Into the Light*, Melissa Wender, ed., (Honolulu: U of Hawai’i Press, 2011), 13-38

W 3/26— Edward FOWLER, “The *Buraku* in Modern Japanese Literature: Texts and Contexts”, *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 26:1 (Winter, 2000), 1-39.

F 3/28 –KIM Tal-su, “In the Shadow of Mount Fuji,” Sharalyn Orbaugh, trans., in *Into the Light*, Melissa Wender, ed., (Honolulu: U of Hawai’i Press, 2011), 39-65.

W 4/2– Anne ALLISON, “In the Mud” *Precarious Japan*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 180-206.

KAWAKAMI Hiromi, “God Bless You, 2011,” Ted Goossen and Motoyuki Shibata, trans., *The March Was Made of Yarn: Reflections on the Japanese Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Meltdown*, Elmer Luke and David Karashima, eds., (New York: Vintage, 2012)

F 4/4 – **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OF RESPONSE PAPER 2**

W 4/9 - **RESPONSE PAPER 2 DUE AT START OF CLASS**

Anne McKNIGHT, “At the Source (Code): Obscenity and Modularity in Rokudenashiko’s Media Activism,” *Media Theory in Japan*, Marc Steinberg and Alexander Zahlten, ed. (Durham: Duke UP, 2017)

F 4/11 – Conclusion & **TAKE-HOME EXAM** handed out

4/20 **TAKE HOME EXAM DUE**

## Guidelines for Response Papers

Roughly 600 words, or two double-spaced typed pages, in length (+bibliography), response papers are meant to be **a way of organizing your thoughts** as the class goes along, as well as **a way to find your own relation** to the (sometimes vast amounts of) material presented and discussed in class.

In other words, it's an exercise in guided conversation – a way of becoming active in your engagement with the material, allowing you to marshal **a critical relation to secondary texts** and **a direct relation to primary texts** to participate in the intellectual conversation of the class on your own terms.

It is not meant to demonstrate a comprehensive mastery of everything or to simply summarize secondary sources, but rather be **a clearly articulated engagement with something specific** – a theme, issue, text, historical case, theoretical question, etc. – within the material and the class as a whole, one that **presents an original argument (aka: a thesis)** and uses **evidence** derived from class materials to substantiate it.

There will be **prompts** posted on myCourses at least a week previous to the Response Paper Small Group Discussion days. Students are to pick **one** to respond to as they shape their papers.

These are not meant to be questions to be answered; rather, they are meant to be possible jumping-off points for students to use when coming up with a subject/thesis for their paper.

Again, the scale of the paper is **small**, so **start specific**, then show how your example/inquiry relates to larger issues (theoretical, etc.) in the formulation of your thesis.

### EVALUATION OF RESPONSE PAPERS:

We will be looking at your paper in terms of:

Argument or thesis (5 pts)

*Is it valid? Well-articulated? Original? Clearly stated?*

Use of evidence, both primary and secondary (5 pts)

*Does it support the thesis? Is it accurate, free of mischaracterization and contextualized properly? Are both secondary and primary sources handled appropriately as such?*

We will discuss secondary and primary sources in class, but for a quick-n-dirty rundown (admittedly written for children – but the definitions are valid!), look here: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/education/008-3010-e.html>

Organization/clarity (3 pts)

*Is the paper laid out in a logical, clear fashion? Does each body paragraph relate clearly to the argument laid out in the thesis paragraph? Does the conclusion sum up and bring to satisfying close the intellectual journey signified by the preceding argument and evidence?*

On time (2 pts) — **1 point will be subtracted if it is handed in later that day, and 2 points will be subtracted if handed in the next day. It will not be accepted at all after that, which will mean a loss of all points for the assignment.**

**LENGTH:** Essays are to be approximately 600 words in length. We will tolerate only slight variation from this ideal; papers that are significantly longer (or shorter) will not be well received.

Submissions will be electronic.

**CITATIONS:**

Use MLA—in-text citation format; guidelines are available at:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/>

Please provide a bibliography/Works Cited page -- use bibliographic information provided in the syllabus. This is **not** included in the response paper's word or page count.