

EAST 305 (Topics in Japanese Studies)
The Imagination of the Urban:
From Edo to Contemporary Tokyo

INSTRUCTOR: Brian Bergstrom
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Office: Sherbrooke 680 / Rm. 262
Office Hours: Mondays 10:30-12:30 or by appointment

TIME/PLACE: Class: MW 4:05 p.m.-5:25 p.m. // Sherbrooke 680 / Rm. 355

COMMUNICATION PLAN: Please email the instructor with any questions or concerns related to the class, but allow up to 48 hours to receive a response due to high volume of emails (not including weekends).

CLASS OVERVIEW: This class focuses on structures of modernity as they emerge in the Tokugawa (aka: Edo) Period (1600-1868), particularly in woodblock prints and other popular media that arose in the context of rapid urbanization, and then trace those structures as they are reconfigured in subsequent periods. Particular focus will be paid to interactions between so-called “high” and “low” or “popular” arts as we move from Tokugawa into the present day, as well as theoretical debates over the nature of modernity, modernism, and the imagination of urban space. Texts will introduce students to fundamental issues of cultural and media theory, the historicity of cultural products like visual art, literature, and film, along with the specific issues that arise when considering these in the context of Japan. There will also be two Field Trips to the Rare Books Library at McGill to view rare materials: woodblock prints from the Tokugawa Period, and photobooks and magazines from the 1960s and 70s featuring photographers associated with *Provoke* magazine.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students who complete this course will become familiar with critical aspects of Japanese culture and history across the early modern and modern eras. They will also develop critical thinking and close reading skills applicable to a broad swath of humanities disciplines, including literary studies, cultural studies, media studies, and art history. Students who complete this course will develop more advanced skills of discussing primary texts within a historical context using secondary sources and their own powers of argumentation.

REQUIRED COURSE BOOKS
(AVAILABLE AT PARAGRAPHE BOOKSTORE)

Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai: A Novel*, Dennis Washburn, trans. (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2001).

Yū Miri, *Tokyo Ueno Station*, Morgan Giles, trans. (New York: Riverhead Books, 2019).

All other readings will be available on MyCourses, and most are also available electronically or physically at the library. Shanghai is available at the library in print form only; Tokyo Ueno Station is available at the library in e-book form.

ASSESSMENT AND ATTENDANCE: Assignments will take the form of two short midterm papers (approx. 5 pages each; specific guidelines to be distributed during class) and a final paper (10-15 pages) built around the topic of the student's choosing, dealing with class materials but perhaps including material from outside the class as well, either as secondary or primary text(s). Students must arrange to meet with the instructor no later than Week 10 to propose possible final paper topics and methodologies. Because discussion and participation are part of the grade, attendance is also mandatory, and roll will be taken at every class.

Midterm Papers (2 x 15%) 30%
Discussion and Participation 30%
Final Paper 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 makes 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.

SCHEDULE: All readings are expected to be completed before each class session.

Week 1: Introduction

- M 1/6 Introduction: Modernity, Modernism, and Urban Life
- W 1/8 In-Class close reading exercise: Tayama KATAI, "The Girl Watcher," Kenneth G. Henshall, trans., in *The Quilt and Other Stories*, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981) 167-181.

Week 2: Early Modernity – Edo as Milieu

- M 1/13 James L. McClain and John M. Merriman, "Edo and Paris: Cities and Power," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and State in the Early Modern Era*, (Ithaca: Cornell U Press, 1997), 3-40.
- W 1/15 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), 149-56.

Week 3: Into the Floating World – Woodblock Prints

- M 1/20 Sandy KITA. "Some Technical Information on Woodblock Prints" and "From Shadow to Substance: Redefining *Ukiyo-e*." *The Floating World of Ukiyo-e: Shadows, Dreams, and Substance*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001. 20-23, 27-79.
- Henry D. Smith. "Hokusai and the Blue Revolution in Edo Prints." *Hokusai and His Age: Ukiyo-e Painting, Printmaking and Book Illustration in Late Edo Japan*. Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005.
- W 1/22 H. D. Harootunian, "Cultural Politics in Tokugawa Japan," in *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1991).

Week 4: Visuals + Text: The Question of 'Manga'

- M 1/27 John M. ROSENFELD. "The Anatomy of Humor in Hokusai's Instruction Manuals." *Hokusai and His Age: Ukiyoe Painting, Printmaking and Book Illustration in Late Edo Japan*. Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005.
- Adam KERN. "Introduction: A Little Yellow Comicbook" and "The Rise and Pratfall of *Kibyōshi*." *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006.

W 1/29 FIELD TRIP to the Rare Books Library (Prints Viewing)

Week 6:—Edo to Tokyo: Growing Up

M 2/3 Higuchi Ichiyō, “Child’s Play,” Robert Lyons Danly, trans., in *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyō, A Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan*, (New Haven: Yale U Press, 1981), 254-287.

MIDTERM PAPER ONE DUE IN CLASS

W 2/5 Robert Lyons Danly, “The Yoshiwara” [excerpt], *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyō, A Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan*, (New Haven: Yale U Press, 1981), 109-132.

Maeda Ai, “Their Time as Children: A Study of Higuchi Ichiyō’s ‘Growing Up’* (*Takekurabe*),” Edward Fowler, trans., in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, (Durham: Duke U Press, 2004), 109-144.

**also known in English as “Child’s Play”*

Week 7: Dark City: Imagining Exploitation and Revolution in Modernizing Tokyo

M 2/10 Maeda Ai, “The Utopia of the Prisonhouse: A Reading of *In Darkest Tokyo*,” Seiji Lippert and James Fujii, trans., in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, (Durham: Duke U Press, 2004), 21-64.

Matsubara Iwagorō, “*In Darkest Tokyo* [excerpt],” Charles Shirō Inouye, trans., in *A Tokyo Anthology: Literature from Japan’s Modern Metropolis, 1850-1920*, (Honolulu: U of Hawai’i Press, 2017), 253-267.

W 2/12 Brian Bergstrom, “Revolutionary Flesh: Nakamoto Takako’s Early Fiction and the Representation of the Body in Japanese Modernist and Proletarian Literature,” *positions: east asia critique*, 14:2 (2017)

Nakamoto Takako, “The Female Bell-Cricket,” Yukiko Tanaka, trans., *To Live and to Write: Selections by Japanese Women Writers 1913-1938*, (Seattle: Seal Press, 1987), 127-144.

Nakamoto Takako, “Red,” Brian Bergstrom, trans., *For Dignity, Justice, and Revolution: An Anthology of Japanese Proletarian Literature*, (Chicago: U of Chicago, 2016), 25-33.

Week 8: Erotic Grotesque Modern – Taishō Popular and Avant-garde Art

- M 2/17 Miriam SILVERBERG. “Japanese Modern Times” *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. 13-50.

Screening: KINUGASA Teinosuke, *Kurutta Ippēji (A Page of Madness)*, 1926

- W 2/19 Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, “The Secret,” Anthony Chambers and Paul McCarthy, trans., in *The Gourmet Club: A Sextet*, (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 2017), 39-58

Edogawa Rampo, “The Man Traveling with the Brocade Portrait,” Michael Tangeman, trans., in *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938*, 376-393.

Week 9: The Semi-Colonial Urban: Yokomitsu Riichi’s Shanghai

- M 2/24 Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai*, Dennis Washburn, trans. (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, U of Michigan, 2001), 3-127.

- W 2/26 Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai*, Dennis Washburn, trans. (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, U of Michigan, 2001), 128-217

Dennis Washburn, “Postscript,” in *Shanghai*, (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, U of Michigan, 2001), 219-240.

READING WEEK (NO CLASS): 3/2 — 3/6

Week 10: Devastation and Reconstruction: Postwar Tokyo

- M 3/10 John W. Dower, “Cultures of Defeat,” in *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (New York: W. W, Norton, 1999), 121-167

MIDTERM PAPER TWO DUE IN CLASS

- W 3/12 Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, “Stray Dog,” in *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), 147-178.

Screening: Kurosawa Akira, dir. *Stray Dog*, 1949.

Week 11: Streets as Subject: Provoke Magazine and Postwar Urban Photography

- M 3/17 Miryam Sas, “The *Provoke* Era: New Languages of Japanese Photography,” in *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan*, (Cambridge: Harvard U Press, 2011), 180-200.

“The *Provoke* Moment: An Interview between Tsuyoshi Itō and Simon Baker, March 15, 2017, *Aperture* Magazine Website: <https://aperture.org/editorial/provoke-simon-baker/>

- W 3/19 FIELD TRIP to the Rare Books Library (*Provoke* Magazine and other photobooks viewing)

Week 12: Surfaces, Networks, Movements: Animation and the City

- M 3/24 Thomas LAMARRE. “Cinematism and Animetism,” “Animation Stand” and “Compositing.” *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009. 3-44.

Marc STEINBERG. “Inventing Intervals: The Digital Image in *Metropolis* and *Gankutsuō*.” *Mechademia 7: Lines of Sight*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. 203-221.

Rintarō, dir. *Metropolis*, 2001.

- W 3/26 Kotani Mari, “The Purehearted Major: On *Innocence*,” Nishimura Keiko and Brian Bergstrom, trans., *Mechademia: Second Arc*, 14:1 (Fall 2021), 62-76.

Oshii Mamoru, dir. *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, 2004.

Week 13: The Urban Experience as Palimpsest in Tokyo Ueno Station

- M 3/31 Yu Miri, *Tokyo Ueno Station*, Morgan Giles, trans. (New York, Riverhead Books, 2019), 1-82

- W 4/2 Yu Miri, *Tokyo Ueno Station*, Morgan Giles, trans. (New York, Riverhead Books, 2019), 83-180.

Week 14: Mapping the Past in the Present: Kobayashi Erika

- M 4/7 Kobayashi Erika, “Precious Stones,” Brian Bergstrom, trans., in *Sunrise: Radiant Stories*, (New York: Astra House Books, 2023), 17-74

- W 4/9 Wrap-up / Discussions of Final Paper Topics

FINAL PAPER DUE (electronically) BY MIDNIGHT, TUESDAY, APRIL 21