INSTRUCTOR: Jodie Beck  
Email: jodie.beck@mcgill.ca  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:35-1:35pm (or by appointment)

TIME/PLACE: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:35pm - 12:35pm meeting on Zoom (60 minutes)  
(plus pre-recorded lecture of up to 20 minutes per class)

COURSE OVERVIEW
This course traces the development of the modern Japanese novel, starting in the Meiji Period (1868~), as a dynamic process of invention and reinvention, both as affirmation and resistance to the West and the Western novel. We will examine the ways in which the national community and the national language (distinctly “modern” phenomena) have been constructed and critiqued through fictional narratives, exploring how different writers at different times have approached “modern” problems of the self, gender, sexuality, family, labor, militarism, technological change, ethno-national identity, and more.

OBJECTIVES
Knowledge:
- Students will develop and integrate literary, cultural, and socio-historical knowledge of some of the major figures, forms, themes, challenges, and debates surrounding the modern Japanese novel. Students will thus gain competencies in situating literature in its social-cultural, political, ideological, and historical context, and in critically assessing its relationship to other works and movements.

Critical thinking:
- Students will develop critical thinking skills through textual, historical, and socio-cultural analysis, through a variety of activities including close reading, class discussion, summary and response, formulating and responding to peer questions, and longer written analyses.

Effective communication:
- Students will obtain and provide information, engage in discussion, and share opinions with others through their study of Japanese literature. They will acquire the terminology and understanding of literary form and theme that will enable them to formulate and communicate their ideas more effectively through regular interaction with others and individual written analyses.

METHODOLOGY
Teaching and learning will be done by remote delivery. The course will be organized around a combination of lectures and discussions, as well as some video material. For each day listed on the course schedule, students are expected to complete the required readings, watch the pre-recorded lecture video (up to 20 minutes), do any other required preparation, and participate in the Zoom meeting. It is suggested that students complete the readings before watching the lecture video for each class, in order to formulate their own initial thoughts and opinions about the readings and in order to fully understand the contents of the lecture. Zoom meetings will be 60 minutes in length (11:35-12:35) and may involve a combination of lecture, discussion and/or other activities. For students who may have difficulties attending Zoom meetings (e.g. due to time differences), please see “Daily Preparation and Participation”.

EVALUATION

Grading scheme:
Daily Preparation and Participation (10%)
Online Discussion Exercises (15%)
Japanese Literature Exploration Project (Presentation) (15%)
Mid-term Paper (30%)
Final Paper (30%)

Daily Preparation and Participation (10%)
Students are expected to come to Zoom meetings prepared to discuss the lectures/readings and to contribute to group and class discussions by sharing questions, comments, thoughts and ideas. Therefore, all readings must be completed and the pre-recorded video lecture must be viewed before class on the date for which they are assigned.

Zoom meetings will not be recorded. Students who have not attended the Zoom meeting will be expected to access the slides posted on MyCourses after class and submit a short response as directed.

Detailed guidelines/rubrics will be provided.

Online Discussion Exercises (15%)
For each class, students will be required to submit one question based on the readings and/or lecture, and to respond to two questions posted by other students, on the MyCourses “Discussion” board. Discussion exercises are to be submitted before class start time (11:35) on the date for which they are assigned. The discussion exercises thus function as a way for students to practice identifying areas of significance, developing thoughtful questions, engaging with peers, formulating ideas, and developing critical reading and response competencies, which can then be demonstrated in longer papers. A detailed guideline/rubric for discussion exercises will be provided.

Japanese Literature Exploration Project (Presentation) (15%)
For this assignment, students will present to the class a summary, analysis, and response of a short story or novel of their choice from outside the syllabus. Presentations should be approximately 5 minutes in length, either live on Zoom, or by showing a pre-recorded video on Zoom. Students are expected to prepare a slide presentation to introduce the work, and will choose their presentation date by filling in a sign-up sheet. Detailed guidelines and a rubric will be provided.

The aim of this assignment is:
• To broaden student exposure to and engagement with modern Japanese literature through student-directed exploration and sharing
• to practice skills such as summarizing key ideas, identifying points of significance, organizing information and presenting it in a clear and concise manner.

Mid-term and Final Papers (30% each): For the mid-term paper, students will have the option of choosing their own topic, or choosing from a selection of options provided by the instructor. For the final paper, students should choose their own topic in consultation with the instructor. Guidelines and a detailed rubric will be provided.

Late submissions: Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible if they think they will have trouble meeting a deadline. Papers submitted late without prior permission of the instructor will be accepted at a rate of 10% penalty per day late (including weekend days). Late submissions will not be accepted more than one week after the deadline. Late submissions of online discussion exercises will not be accepted for points (although students are free to continue posting as much as they wish).
REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students should have a webcam, microphone, and stable internet connection. If you think you will have difficulty accessing these technologies, please contact the instructor to discuss options.

Books for purchase:
1. NATSUME Sōseki, Sanshiro (Penguin Classics, 2010)
2. YOSHIYA Nobuko. Yellow Rose (digital edition)
3. MORI Ōgai Vita Sexualis. (Tuttle Classics, 1989, digital edition) *There are now unlimited digital editions of this book in the McGill Library if you prefer not to purchase

Paperback copies of Sanshirō and Naomi have been pre-ordered and are available through Paragraphe Bookstore (pick-up or delivery options, contact 2220 McGill College Avenue 514-845-5811, www.paragraphbooks.com). These books are also available in digital (e.g. Kindle) format online if you prefer. Yellow Rose and Vita Sexualis are available in Kindle format through www.amazon.ca (the Kindle app can be downloaded for free). You are free to use any other digital format that may be available to you (e.g. Kobo). All other readings will be available on MyCourses or through digital editions in the library.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction: What is the ‘modern’ ‘Japanese’ ‘novel’?

Thursday, September 3
- Course introduction
- Brief historical background to “modern Japan”
- Discussion of key themes and concepts

Week 2: The Encounter with the West and the New Meiji State

Tuesday, September 8


Thursday, September 10


Week 3: The I-Novel and the Rhetoric of Confession

Tuesday, September 15


Thursday, September 17


• Film: The Broken Commandment. Kon Ichikawa, 1962. (please watch on your own time before class). Available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLjMtFNUlac

Week 4: Coming of Age in the City: Natsume Sōseki’s Sanshiro

Tuesday September 22


Thursday, September 24


Week 5: The “New Woman”: Women Writers and Feminist Thought in the Early 20th Century

Tuesday September 29


Thursday October 1


Week 6: Youth, Sexuality, and the Boarding School

Tuesday, October 6


Thursday, October 8


• YOSHIYA Nobuko. Yellow Rose (excerpt from Flower Tales, [Hanamonogatari 1916-1924]). Translated by Sarah Frederick. Kindle Edition.

Week 7: Proletarian Literature

Tuesday, October 13

Thursday, October 15


Week 8 Modernist Experiments of the 1920s-1930s

Tuesday, October 20

Mid-term Paper Due


Thursday October 22


Week 9: Modernist Experiments of the 1920s-1930s

Tuesday, October 27


Thursday, October 29


Week 10: Narrativizing War and Occupation

Tuesday, November 3


Thursday, November 5


Week 11: Entering the “Post-War”

Tuesday, November 10

• Film: *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, 2014. (please watch on your own time before class). E-video available through McGill Library at: https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/897772560
Thursday, November 12


**Week 12: Zainichi and Buraku Narratives**

**Tuesday, November 17**


**Thursday, November 19**


**Week 13: Rethinking the “Modern” “Japanese” “Novel”**

**Tuesday, November 24**


Thursday, November 26


Week 14: Wrap-up and Peer Workshopping

Tuesday, December 1
Wrap-up and peer workshopping

Final Paper Due by Monday, December 14

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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

Language of Submission:
“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. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and Evaluation.)

“As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.”