

**HUMA2202**

## **THE MODERN JAPANESE NOVEL**

Summer 2024

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2:00 – 4:50 pm

Room 2407, Lift 17-18

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Baryon Tensor Posadas

Room 2355

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is about the origins and subsequent historical development of the modern novel as a literary form in Japan, covering the period between the end of the nineteenth century until the Second World War. Paying attention to the social forces that gave way to the novel's rise and its subsequent transformations, discussions in class will revolve around the question of how particular literary forms and genres constitute their readers to mediate the historical experience of Japanese modernization. Through the examination of these fictions—attentive not only to the stories they tell and the images and tropes they deploy, but also to modes of reading and the structuring of desires, affects, and horizons of expectation that their narrative forms engender—we will track the transformations in the historical unconscious of literary narration.

Every week, we will discuss one novel by a Japanese author. Interspersed between these sessions will be discussions that cover a range of critical materials to provide a historical and critical framework for working through these literary fictions. Topics of discussion will include: the relationship between the narrative form of the novel and the imagination of the nation-state, gender and literary genre, the fragmentation of narrative in modernist writings, the demarcation between “pure” and “mass” literature, and the role of translation in constructing conceptions of “Japanese literature.” In the course of our conversations, participants will be expected not only to gain a familiarity with the literary history of modern Japan, but more importantly, to be able to articulate the social and political forces shaping the very construction of this national literary history.

As all the texts will be made available in English translation, no prior Japanese language proficiency is required.

### **CLASS FORMAT**

To facilitate the active engagement of all in our discussions in class, from Week 3 onwards, we will make use of a quasi-seminar discussion format for the weeks in which we cover each of the assigned novels. We will divide the class into ten groups of about 20 members each. Beginning in Week 3, on the Tuesday session, we will have a different group of students conduct a live discussion in front of the rest of the class. During these Tuesday sessions, the class is conducted as if it were small seminar, with the students engaging in a sustained discussion of the assigned material for the first two hours, after which we will open up the conversation by addressing questions coming from the rest of the class in a form of panel discussion. Every week, a different set of students will participate in the seminar session, with every student doing so once during the semester.

During the first week of class, students are asked to sign up as a seminar participant for one of the sessions (between Weeks 3 and 7). Students may sign up for any session of their choosing.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Attendance and participation	15%
Seminar session	10%
Critical reflection	15%
Session review	15%
Final paper	45%

### **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance is mandatory and active participation in the discussions is expected. Please come to the virtual class sessions having already read both the literary texts and the critical materials assigned for that session and be prepared to critically discuss them in class.

### **Critical Reflections**

On the week wherein you are scheduled to participate in the seminar, you are required submit a 1-2 page (single-spaced) response one day before the session in question (due Monday evening before midnight). In these critical reflections, students are asked to write on one or more of the assigned theoretical readings and how they relate to the novel to be discussed that week in response to prompts distributed ahead of time. These reflections should go beyond mere summaries of the texts; instead, they should raise questions for discussion, highlight important critical points, and demonstrate a grasp of the key issues at hand. The purpose of these responses is to facilitate our subsequent discussions in class by serving as signposts and frames of reference.

(Due one day before the assigned Tuesday seminar session)

*No late critical reflections will be accepted.*

### **Session Reviews**

In addition to the critical reflection, students are also required to submit one 1-2 page (single-spaced) review of a discussion seminar other than the one in which you participate. In these reviews, students will provide a brief summary of the key points raised in the discussion, followed by further commentary and an articulation of their own perspectives on the topics at hand. Reviewers are encouraged to ask questions of the seminar participants during the Q&A session following the seminar discussion and use the ensuing conversation as a point of departure for articulating a response to the discussion as a whole that took place during the seminar session. As with the critical reflections above, these build upon the preceding discussions by raising further questions and inquiries or by highlighting relevant related critical issues. You are encouraged to make use of these reviews as a space to articulate your own particular interests in relation to the course material and topics of discussion at hand. Students are free to choose which seminar sessions they wish to write their review on.

(Due one week after the seminar session reviewed)

*No late session reviews will be accepted.*

### **Final Paper**

Using one specific Japanese literary text as a focal point, produce a solid original analysis of selected critical issues arising from how the text in question illuminates and is informed by the development of the form of the novel in relation to the history of modernity and empire in Japan. Final papers should be around 1500 words (between 4-6 pages) in length, provide a close textual analysis of a literary work, and be rigorously documented and well-organized. While students are expected to make use of the relevant theoretical and critical materials covered in class, the specific choice of text and focus of the

paper is for the student to determine, in close consultation with the instructor. A set of guide questions will be provided a few weeks in advance of the due date for the paper

(Due 8 August 2024)

*Late final papers will be subject to a 5% penalty per day.*

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Natsume Sôseki, *Sanshiro*. 1907. Trans. Jay Rubin. Penguin Classics, 2010.

Tanizaki Jun'ichirô, *Chijin no ai*. 1924. *Naomi*. Trans. Anthony Chambers. Knopf, 1985.

Edogawa Ramapo, *Injû*. 1928. *The Black Lizard and the Beast in the Shadows*. Trans.: Ian Hughes. Kurodahan Press, 2006

Kawabata Yasunari, *Asakusa kurenaidan*. 1930. *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*. Trans.: Alisa Freedman. University of California Press, 2005.

Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai*. 1928. Trans. Dennis Washburn. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2001

All other materials listed below will be made available through the course website

## SCHEDULE

### Week 1 Literary Modernization in Japan

June 18 Orientation

Anderson, Benedict. "Introduction" and "Cultural Roots." *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1983. 1-36.

Jun 20 Suzuki, Tomi. "The Position of the Shôsetsu: Paradigm Change and New Literary Discourse." *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*. Stanford University Press, 1997. 15-32.

Maeda Ai. "Modern Literature and the World of Printing." In *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*. Ed. James A. Fujii. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. 255-272.

Excerpt from Tsubouchi Shoyo's "The Essence of the Novel." Donald Keene, ed. *Modern Japanese Literature*. Grove Press, 1956. 55-58.

### Week 2 Interiority and the I-novel

Jun 25 Mori Ôgai, "Maihime: The Dancing Girl." Richard Bowring, trans. J. Thomas Rimer, ed. *Youth and Other Stories*. University of Hawaii Press, 1994. 6-24.

Hill, Christopher. "Mori Ogai's Resentful Narrator: Trauma and the National Subject in the 'Dancing Girl'." *positions: east asia cultures critique* 10, no. 2 (2002): 365-397.

Maeda Ai. "Berlin 1888: Mori Ôgai's 'Dancing Girl.'" Trans. Leslie Pincus. In *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*. Ed. James A. Fujii. Durham, NC: Duke University

Press, 2004.295-328.

June 27 Tayama Katai. "Girl Watcher." Kenneth G. Henshall, trans. *The Quilt and Other Stories*. Columbia University Press, 1981.

Fujii, James "Intimate Alienation: Japanese Urban Rail and the Commodification of Urban Subjects." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11:2 (Summer 1999): 106-133

Suzuki, Tomi. "The Furor over the I-Novel: The Question of Authenticity." *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*. Stanford University Press, 1997. 48-65.

### **Week 3 Railways, Visual Culture, and Urban Space**

Jul 2 Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshiro*

Freedman, Alisa. *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Road*. Stanford University Press, 2011. 68-115.

Jul 4 Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. "Spinning Gears." *Rashōmon and Seventeen Other Stories*. Penguin, 2006. 206-236.

Lippit, Seiji M. "Introduction: Fissures of Japanese Modernity." *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. Columbia University Press, 2002. 1-36.

Harootunian, Harry D. "The Fantasy of Modern Life." *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. 3-33.

### **Week 4 The Modern Girl and the Movies**

Jul 9 Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. *Naomi*.

Silverberg, Miriam. "The Modern Girl as Militant (Movement on the Streets)." *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. University of California Press, 2006. 51-72.

July 11 Satō Haruo. "Fingerprint." Trans. Francis Tenny. *Beautiful Town: Stories and Essays by Sato Haruo*. University of Hawaii Press, 1996. 64-105.

Silverberg, Miriam. "Japanese Modern within Modernity." In *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006.

Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives, and Early Cinema" in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, ed. University of California Press, 1996, 15-45.

### **Week 5 Detective Fiction and Urban Ethnography**

- Jul 16           Edogawa Rampo, *The Beast in the Shadows*
- Tzvetan Todorov "The Typology of Detective Fiction," *Modern Criticism and Theory: a Reader*. Ed. David Lodge. (London: Longman, 1988), 157-65.
- July 18           Hori Tatsuo. "Aquarium" In Angela Yiu, ed. *Three-Dimensional Reading: Stories of Time and Space in Japanese Modernist Fiction, 1911-1932*. University of Hawaii Press, 2013. 109-122.
- Anke Gleber. "Women on the Screens and Streets of Modernity: In Search of the Female Flâneur." In *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flânerie, Literature, and Film in Weimar Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999. 171-189, and 254-258.
- Anne Friedberg, "The Mobilized and the Virtual Gaze." *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. 11-38.
- Week 6           Experiments in Literary Modernism**
- Jul 23           Kawabata Yasunari, *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*.
- Driscoll, Mark. "All That's Solid Melts into Modern Girls and Boys." *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, the Dead, and Undead in Japan's Imperialism, 1895-1945*. Duke University Press, 2010. 135-159.
- Jul 25           Ericson, Joan. "The Origins of the Concept of Women's Literature." Paul Gordon in Schalow and Janet A. Walker, eds. *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing*. Stanford University Press, 1996. 74-115.
- Hayashi Fumiko, "Diary of a Vagabond." Trans. Joan Ericson. In *Be a Woman: Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women's Literature*. University of Hawaii Press. 1997. 123-220.
- Week 7           Imperial Spaces**
- Jul 30           Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai*.
- Seiji Lippit. "Topographies of Empire: Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai*." *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. New York, NY: Columbia UP, 2002. 73-115.
- Aug 1           Shih, Shu-mei "Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition." *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 119 no. 1 (2004): 16-30.