

Japanese Life and Culture

Japanese 2750 (CRN 45807 Honor's College)
Fall 2013 / TR 3:30-4:45 pm / 3205 Dunbar Hall

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Office Hours: TR 2-3 pm or by appt.

Syllabus & course schedule: <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~jangles/courses/japanese2750lifeandculture.pdf>
E-learning website: <http://elearning.wmich.edu>
WMU Japanese Program Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/wmuJapanese>

GOALS OF THE CLASS

- To provide a survey of Japanese culture and history over the last thousand years through some of its cultural production (essays, writing, literature, art, film).
- To provide students with a survey of the various periods of Japanese history.
- To show Japan's many cultural transformations over the course of history, especially during the modern period.
- To reflect on the ways that Japanese have reflected their personal, religious, and national experience through cultural production.
- To introduce major genres, themes, and styles in the history of Japanese literature, art, and theater.
- To encourage students to develop close reading and empathetic skills.

ABOUT THIS COURSE

- This course fulfills the requirements for General Education Area IV (Other Cultures and Civilizations).
- This course counts toward the Japanese minor and the Japanese major.
- This course may be used (with the permission of your academic advisor) toward the Global/International Studies Major, if you have decided to focus on Japan or on Asia.
- For more information, please consult with your academic advisor.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Mutsuo TAKAHASHI, *Twelve Views from the Distance* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2012) [ISBN 978-0816679362].
- Paul VARLEY, *Japanese Culture*, 4th updated edition (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2000) [ISBN 978-0824821524].
- Elise K. TIPTON, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*, 2nd edition (NY: Routledge, 2008) [ISBN 978-0415418713].
- Jeffrey ANGLES and J. Thomas RIMER (eds.), *Japan: A Traveler's Literary Companion* (Berkeley, Whereabouts Press, 2006) [ISBN 978-1883513160].
- Other additional, shorter texts will be made available on the e-learning website.
- You are welcome to use electronic versions of the texts (Kindle, e-book, etc.).

NOTES ABOUT REQUIRED TEXTS

- All of the texts above will also be on 2-hour reserve in Waldo Library.
- When reading about Japanese history, TAKE NOTES! Make a chart of personal names and key concepts.
- When reading Japanese literature, TAKE NOTES on the roles of characters, setting, and so on. Be sure to read for detail. Characterization is often found in detail, setting, and social role.
- The instructor has designed this course on the assumption that students do not read Japanese.

GRADING

Grades will be calculated in the following fashion.

- 10% Map exam about Japanese geography
- 10% Class participation
- 10% Internet discussion
- 20% Two quizzes over reading
- 25% Midterm exam
- 25% Final exam
- Each unexcused absence will be -1% from the final grade. (See the section below on attendance.)

The following scale will be used for grades.

- A 93-100%
- BA 90-93%
- B 83-90%
- CB 80-83%
- C 73-80%
- DC 70-73%
- D 63%-70%
- E Below 63%

Grades will be visible at all times to students by clicking "My Grades" on the e-learning website.

ABOUT CLASS PARTICIPATION

The instructor requires students to make comments in class, ask questions, and respond to instructor's questions in class. At the end of the semester, students that have participated in class by coming regularly, raising their hands, asking questions, and providing reflections on the material will get full credit for the class participation portion of their grade (10%). Students who come to all classes but say nothing during class will not receive any points for class participation (0%). The reason for this policy is to encourage you to participate in your own learning. The more you think about what is being said and react to it, the more you will get out of the entire experience!

ATTENDANCE

- You have two excused absences to use as you wish. If you're smart, you will save these for absolute emergencies. Missing more than three classes will reduce your final grade by 1% off of the overall final course grade.
- Please do NOT be late. Repeated late absences will also reduce your final grade.
- If you miss more than three classes in a row without informing the professors of your status, he will assume that you have dropped the course and stop attempting to contact you.

ABOUT INTERNET DISCUSSION

Most weeks, students will be required to read a few chapters of *Twelve Views from the Distance*, a short story from *Japan: A Traveler's Literary Companion*, or some other additional readings. Students will then post their thoughts and critical reactions to it to the e-learning website. For full credit, students should post at least one brief, thoughtful paragraph. Postings are due each week on Tuesday at noon.

Possible subjects you might write about:

- What is the historical background of this story?
- In what ways does the story seem to reflect Japanese culture or historical experience?
- Do you note some differences between Japanese and American culture in the texts?
- In what ways does the story reflect themes or issues that we have talked about in class?
- What images does the story present of the particular place in Japan where the story is set?
- What do you think that the author was trying to say in this story? In other words, what themes (big messages) do you see in the story?

You are encouraged to include personal thoughts, but not just simple reactions like "I liked it," "I disliked it," or "This is a really good story that kept me reading through to the end." Such simple reactions will not earn any credit. Make sure

that your posting shows that you read the story and thought about it! Students are encouraged to read other people's postings and react to them.

How to post your discussion to e-learning

- Log into e-learning using the same BroncoNet ID and password you use to check your e-mail.
- Click on the section for our class (usually listed as JPNS 2750: Japanese Life and Culture).
- Click on "Discussions" on the left side of the screen.
- Click "Create Message" then write your posting.

MAKE-UPS/LATE WORK

- If you have to miss the final exam, please contact the professor ahead of time to make other arrangements. If you miss it because of illness, calamities in the family, and so on, you will need to provide documentation.
- Every day that an essay or homework is late, the grade will be drop by 25%, provided that there are no extenuating circumstances. If a paper is four or more days of the week late, then the work will not be accepted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- At the end of all essays, include a bibliography citing all sources you have used, including sources on the internet. "Borrowing" passages from the internet without citation is plagiarism and is a serious academic offense. For a definition of plagiarism, consult http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=9&page=09_students_rights_and_responsibilities.html.
- You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. [The policies can be found at <http://catalog.wmich.edu> under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities.] If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.
- You are encouraged to access the Code of Honor and general academic policies on issues as diversity, religious observance, student disabilities, etc. Those are available on the following two websites: <http://osc.wmich.edu> and www.wmich.edu/registrar.

COURSE READINGS & SCHEDULE

- You should complete the readings BEFORE class and come to class ready to discuss them.
- Please regularly consult the online version of the syllabus at in order to find your course readings. This is the official version of the course schedule. Any changes announced in class will be posted to the course website.
- [Readings in blue in the following chart are available electronically as PDFs through the e-learning website.](#)

SCHEDULE UPDATED 8/30/13 1:45 PM

Week 1	9/3 (T)	Introduction to class Introduction to Japanese geography & diversity
	9/5 (R)	Before class, read <i>Twelve Views from the Distance</i> , "Translator's Introduction" and the first two chapters, pp. xi-37.
Week 2	9/10 (T)	Internet discussion due at noon over the first half of the book <i>Twelve Views from the Distance</i> , pp. 1-132 [See instructions in section above about internet discussion]. The author TAKAHASHI Mutsuo, author of <i>Twelve Views from the Distance</i> , will be visiting us in class to talk about his life, work, and Japanese history as seen through his eyes. Also joining us will be the author ITÔ Hiromi, Japan's most prominent feminist poet. After class, TAKAHASHI and ITÔ will hold a join reading together on WMU's campus.
	9/12 (R)	Quiz in class over Japanese geography. For the map that the quiz will be over, see http://homepages.wmich.edu/~jangles/courses/japanmap.pdf After the quiz, class will let out early. Students are invited to come to Kalamazoo College to

		hear TAKAHASHI Mutsuo and ITŌ Hiromi give a reading.
Week 3	9/17 (T)	Internet discussion due at noon over the remainder of the book <i>Twelve Views from the Distance</i> , pp. 133-233. Read <i>Japanese Culture</i> , Chapter 1 "The Emergence of Japanese Civilization" pp. 1-18. Reading from e-learning website: Thomas P. KASULIS, "Chapter 1: Entering through the Torii," from <i>Shinto: The Way Home</i> (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), pp. 8-37.
	9/19 (R)	Reading from e-learning website: "The Earliest Japanese Chronicles," in William Theodore DeBARY, et al., <i>Sources of Japanese Tradition</i> , vol. 1: From Earliest Times to 1600 (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 13-16. Read <i>Japanese Culture</i> , Chapter 2 "The Introduction to Buddhism" pp. 19-47.
Week 4	9/24 (T)	Instead of the usual internet discussion this week, please do Quiz No. 1 due on e-learning over the reading from <i>The Tale of Genji</i> by noon. Read the material before signing onto GoWMU and completing the online quiz under assessments. You will have one hour to do the online quiz. Reading from e-learning website: MURASAKI Shikibu, "Kiritsubo: The Paulownia Pavilion" from <i>The Tale of Genji</i> , vol. 1, trans. Royall Tyler (NY: Viking, 2001), pp. 1-18.
	9/26 (R)	Read <i>Japanese Culture</i> , Chapter 3 "The Court at Its Zenith" pp. 48-76.

FOR THE REST OF THE SEMESTER, PLEASE CHECK THE ONLINE VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS AT <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~jangles/courses/japanese2750lifeandculture.pdf>