

JAPANESE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Course Description

This course covers autobiographical writings in Japan from the early classical times, through medieval, Tokugawa, Meiji, Imperial, World War, Post-War, and Modern / Postmodern times.

About the Author

Marvin Marcus is a professor in East Asian Studies at Washington University specializing in Japanese literature. Marcus's area of specialization is modern Japanese literature of the prewar (so-called *kindai*) period, and his research has focused on personal narrative and 'life writing'—memoir, reminiscence, essay, diary, and autobiography. He also researches aspects of the Tokyo literary community—the *bundan*—and the literary journalism that was its lifeblood. Marcus has extensively researched and written on authors such as Mori Ōgai, Natsume Sōseki, Shimazaki Tōson, Futabatei Shimei, and Uchida Roan. Literary translation has been an essential component of this work over the years. *Paragons of the Ordinary* (Hawaii, 1993) concerns Ōgai's biographical writings. *Reflections in a Glass Door* (Hawaii, 2009) centers on Sōseki's wide-ranging personal writings. Marcus's current book project, entitled *Writing in the Margins*, brings together a number of interrelated perspectives on *kindai* literature through the 'marginal' endeavors of major writers.

Contents

Unit I: Selfhood and Autobiographical Writing in Japan: An Overview (week 1)

Overview

Unit II: Classical and Pre-modern Autobiography (weeks 2, 3, and 4)

Autobiographical Writings of the Heian Court

Medieval Autobiography: Writing the Self in an Era of Buddhist Selflessness

Autobiographical Voices in Tokugawa Japan

Unit III: Meiji and Pre-War Autobiography and the Dilemma of Modern Selfhood in Imperial Japan (weeks 5, 6, and 7)

A Civilizing Mission: The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi

Landmarks of Autobiographical Fiction: The Burdens of Interiority

Challenging the State and the Gender Code: Radical Voices of Dissident Women

Unit IV: Witnesses to Cataclysm: Accounts of the Pacific War and the Atomic Bombings (weeks 8 and 9)

Valor, Defeat, Captivity: Bearing Witness to Japan's Final War of Empire

Genbaku : Bearing Witness to the Atomic Bomb and its Aftermath

Unit V: A Kaleidoscope of Family Reminiscence: On Growing Up, Growing Old, And Honoring Those We Love (weeks 10-13)

Capturing a Child's Imagination: Kita Morio's *Ghosts*

Fathers and Daughters: The Remembrances of Japanese Literary Women

The Dignity of Old Age: Inoue Yasushi's *Chronicle of My Mother*

The Dignity of Disability: A Father's Tribute to His Son

Unit VI: Voices from the Margins: Autobiographical Writings by Japanese-Americans and Foreigners in Japan (weeks 14 and 15)

Writing the Hyphenated Self: The Polite Lies of Kyoko Mori

Writing the Japan Experience: From Bemusement to Enlightenment

Japanese Autobiographical Literature: Course Syllabus

Course aims:

Japan has long been regarded as a hierarchical, group-oriented society, whose people learn to fall in line with the prescribed agenda and avoid self-assertion and 'boat-rocking.' And its culture has been seen as uniquely 'traditional,' as its ubiquitous cultural icons attest— geisha, Zen meditators, sword-wielding samurai, and the like. At the other extreme, we have the Japan of J-pop, *anime*, and Hello Kitty— a wired, tech-savvy, high-fashion, state-of-the-art Asian superpower. What, then, of the Japanese people, who appear to have vanished under the weight of long-held stereotypes and media-generated caricatures?

Japanese have written of themselves and their world for some fourteen centuries. This course is meant to introduce a broad selection of their autobiographical writings, and to place these in their respective historical and social contexts. One objective here is to counter the pernicious view of the Japanese as automatons created in an Orwellian group-think mode. As a way to 'humanize' our understanding of Japan and its people, we will explore the meaning(s) of selfhood that conditioned their thinking and the manner in which they wrote of themselves and their world, in different forms and voices, over the centuries.

We will read works across the spectrum of personal narrative forms— essay, memoir, diary, and 'formal' autobiography. In the final analysis, our readings will provide a nuanced and multi-faceted portrayal of what can be called the 'Japanese character'— one that reflects both the local qualities and complexities of Japanese society and culture and the universals of the human condition.

Course requirements:

Two short papers (1000 words each); one final research paper (3000-4000 words).
Details below.

Readings:

Required Texts:

- *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*; tr. Eiichi Kiyooka (Columbia, 1968).
- Cook, Haruko and Theodore Cook (eds.). *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New Press, 1992).
- George, Donald and Amy Carlson (eds). *Travelers' Tales Japan: True Stories* (Travelers' Tales, 1999).
- Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford, 2009; 2nd edition).
- Hane, Mikiso. *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan* (Pantheon, 1988).
- Inoue, Yasushi. *Chronicle of My Mother* (Kodansha International, 1982).
- Kita, Morio. *Ghosts* (Kodansha International, 1991).
- McCullough, Helen. *Classical Japanese Prose: An Anthology* (Stanford, 1995).
- Mori, Kyoko. *Polite Lies* (Fawcett, 1997).
- Ôe, Kenzaburô. *A Healing Family* (Kodansha International, 1996)
- _____ (ed). *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (Grove, 1985).
- Varley, Paul. *Japanese Culture* (Hawaii, 2000; 4th edition).

Note: The Gordon and Varley texts will provide the historical and socio-cultural context.
Other readings will be provided in pdf form, as noted below.

Unit I: Selfhood and Autobiographical Writing in Japan: An Overview (week 1)

This introductory unit will orient us to the study of Japan and its autobiographical literature. Context is key, and we will begin with a consideration of the origins and rise of Japanese civilization— the crucial role of Chinese cultural imports and models (its language and writing system, arts and technology, centralized government, Confucianism, and Buddhism); the deep-rooted native Shinto faith and its significance as a wellspring of Japanese identity; the establishment of imperial rule and the notion

of imperial divinity; and the importance of family, clan, and lineage. (Varley)
Additionally, our readings touch upon the personal essay genre (Lopate), the domain of Japanese autobiography and 'life writing' (Jolly and Saeki), and an introduction to Japanese literature (Marcus).

Week 1 Overview

- Topics to consider: (Note: these will be ongoing concerns)
 - What is 'autobiography' and how should we begin thinking of it *vis a vis* Japanese texts? How does 'autobiography' relate to 'personal narrative' and 'life writing'? (Note: genre borders here are notoriously vague.)
 - How to assess the interplay of 'tradition' and 'modernity'?
 - What of the interplay among elites (imperial and warrior) and the role of commoners in a hierarchical society?
 - Autobiography as a Western genre, and its relationship with the domain of Japanese autobiography (We need to recognize the hegemony of Western genre definitions. Smith and Watson's *Reading Autobiography* will be helpful here.)

 - Readings:
 - Margaretta Jolly (ed), *Encyclopedia of Life Writing* (selections on Japanese life writing) [**pdf**]
 - Phillip Lopate (ed), *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology* (Introduction) [**pdf**]
 - Marvin Marcus, *Japanese Literature: From Murasaki to Murakami* (Introduction, Chap 1) [**pdf**] [Note: This and other chapters are taken from the draft manuscript of a forthcoming book in the *Key Issues in Asian Studies* series published by the Association for Asian Studies]
 - Saeki Shôichi, 'Japanese Autobiography' [**pdf**]
 - Varley, pp 1-47.
 - Recommended:
 - Epstein, *The Norton Book of Personal Essays*
 - Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*
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Unit II: Classical and Pre-modern Autobiography (weeks 2, 3, and 4)

This unit will explore the domain of classical and pre-modern Japanese autobiography in the context of three major epochs— the Heian era (800-1200), the medieval period (1200-1600), and the Tokugawa era (1600-1868). Representative readings from each will constitute both an overview of Japanese cultural history to the mid-19th century and

a microcosm of Japanese literary selfhood as it developed in distinctly different social and historical contexts over the course of nearly a millennium. The significance of this literary heritage is a fraught issue— with some arguing for a uniquely Japanese literary tradition that persists to the present day, and others who reject such essentialist claims.

Week 2 Autobiographical Writings of the Heian Court

The Heian period (800-1200), centered in the imperial court in Kyoto, is Japan's classical era. Heian Japan is associated with a culture of courtly elegance, refinement, and exquisite lyrical and aesthetic sensitivity— a world removed from the ordinary lives of the vast majority of Japanese. A defining product is the 31-syllable poetic form— the *waka*— which remained the centerpiece of literary production into the 20th century.

Our readings will tap into a rich vein of personal narrative written by Heian court literati— both men and women. They include, in chronological order: a) *A Tosa Journal* (*Tosa nikki*, 935), a poetically-dense account of a sea voyage written in the voice of a woman by a major court poet, Ki no Tsurayuki; b) *The Gossamer Diary* (*Kagerô nikki*, ca 970), a moving and convincingly 'modern' account of the loveless marriage of a courtier wife who reflects, with spite and malice, upon her philandering husband and on the difficulties of raising her son; c) *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shônagon (*Makura no sôshi*, ca 1010), a famous collection of brilliantly-crafted personal essays on the coming-and-goings of the Heian court by a woman of indomitable spirit and wit, and a penetrating sense of style.

- Topics to consider:
 - The interface of 'superficial' concerns for style and decorum and 'deeper' personal concerns; in other words, how to negotiate the 'style vs substance' conundrum?
 - How does Shônagon's work compare with that of the *Gossamer* diarist (known to us only as 'the mother of Fujiwara Michitsuna')?
 - How does the *Tosa Journal* compare with the female-authored works? What of the persona of the diarist?
 - How 'insulated' does such court-based writing seem, given the larger context of Japanese society?

- Readings:
 - McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose* [abbrev *CJP*], pp 1-26, 70-199
 - Varley, pp 48-76
 - Marcus, *Japanese Literature*, Chap 2 [**pdf**]
 - Recommended:
 - Arntzen, *Gossamer Diary* (entire text)
 - Bowring, *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*

Week 3 Medieval Autobiography: Writing the Self in an Era of Buddhist Selflessness

Japan's medieval period, which witnessed the waning of the Kyoto aristocracy and the rise to power of the warrior (*bushi*) class, is marked by the spread of Buddhism, especially the Zen sect. Suffused with the spirit of ephemerality and the achievement of enlightenment (*satori*), much of this literature is deeply meditative and hinges upon a Buddhistic renunciation of the ego and its incessant cravings and desires. Yet this seemingly 'anti-autobiographical' milieu did not prevent writers from discovering suitable vehicles for self-expression. As with the Heian period, much of this literature is essayistic and fragmentary, which reflects what would become a dominant feature of Japanese life writing to the present day.

Our readings will include canonical works of the medieval essay and diary tradition, which reflect both the classical literary aesthetics established during the Heian period and a new introspective spirit that marks the medieval age: a) Two important medieval memoirs by literary women (*Confessions of Lady Nijô* [1310] and *The Journal of the Sixteenth-Night Moon*, [1280]) present nuanced perspectives on family relations and the complex political milieu; these will bear comparison with their Heian counterparts; b) Kamo no Chômei's *Account of My Hut* (*Hôjôki*, 1212) is a classic of minimalist narrative, in the reclusive vein, which speaks to the virtues of the simple life and a casting off of needless attachments and cravings; yet it speaks in a convincingly personal voice that will recall Thoreau; c) *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*, 1330) is the work of a Kyoto literatus, Yoshida Kenkô, who muses on his world, expresses a deep longing for the past, and seeks to perpetuate notions of elegance and propriety in the face of a declining aristocratic culture; d) By way of contrast, the anonymous diarist of *Journey to the East* (*Azuma kikô*, 1242) recounts a trip to the Shogunal capital of Kamakura, one that incorporates a number of *waka* poems.

- Topics to consider:
 - Give thought to the backdrop of an ascendant warrior elite and its embrace of Buddhist-inspired ego-decentering, stoic minimalism, and a new aesthetics of ephemerality.
 - Compare the female memoirists with their Heian predecessors and the reclusive, introspective male persona that emerges in these medieval works. Is there a discernible gender divide here?
 - How do the male essayists (Chômei and Kenkô) compare, in terms of self-presentation, and how do they relate to the diarist of *Journey to the East*?

- Readings:
 - McCullough, *CJP*, pp 288-446
 - Varley, pp 77-139
 - Marcus, *Japanese Literature*, Chap 3 [pdf]

Week 4 Autobiographical Voices in Tokugawa Japan

The Tokugawa period (1600-1868) stands as a unique epoch in world cultural history. Dominated by a powerful Shogunal regime based in Edo (modern-day Tokyo), the period was marked by a regimented and often repressive social order and an isolationist policy that effectively insulated Japan from the world for centuries on end. Yet the Tokugawa served, paradoxically, as Japan's gateway to the modern era— and to its emergence as an empire. The period marks the odd intersection of rigid social hierarchy, traditional Confucian ethics, and a sprawling, entertainment-driven urban culture that catered to a wealthy merchant class (*chônin*). Its cultural products— centering on kabuki theater, geisha houses, and a host of artists, literati, and craftsmen— are enduring icons of 'traditional Japan.'

Our readings, which point to the variety of autobiographical voices that flourished during the Tokugawa, include: a) *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (Oku no hosomichi, 1689) by the great haiku poet Bashô, who crafts a memorable persona that both celebrates traditional Japanese culture and presents a deeply reflective and moving self portrayal; b) *Told Round a Brushwood Fire* (Oritaku shiba no ki, 1717) by Arai Hakuseki. Arguably Japan's first 'genuine' autobiography, Hakuseki's work tells of his rise in the world and presents himself as a staunch proponent of Confucianist virtue and samurai elitism; c) *Musui's Story* (Musui dokugen, 1843) by Katsu Kokichi, the delightfully down-to-earth autobiography of a 'failed' samurai and his picaresque exploits and misadventures.

- Topics to consider:
 - The tension between samurai authority/ austerity and chônin exuberance.
 - How to compare the lyrical, poetic core of Bashô's narrative, the proud dignity of Hakuseki's autobiography (which is essentially an apologia for his official career), and the comic self-deprecation of Katsu Kokichi?
 - In what sense is Katsu Kokichi's work a gateway to 'modern autobiography'? (Be sure to explain the criteria you would apply to a definition of 'modern autobiography'?)
- Readings:
 - McCullough, *CJP*, pp 510-551
 - Selections from Hakuseki, *Told Round a Brushwood Fire* [pdf]

- Selections from Katsu Kokichi, *Musui's Story* [pdf]
 - Varley, pp 140-234
 - Gordon, pp 3-59
 - Marcus, *Japanese Literature*, Chap 4 [pdf]
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First Short Paper (Due after completion of Unit II): 1000 words

Write a paper on ONE of the following topics. Whichever you choose, support your argument with citations from the relevant texts. (If longer excerpts, these should be relegated to an appendix and are not to be included in the word count)

1. What do you regard as the chief similarities and differences among the three historical categories of pre-modern autobiographical writing?
 2. How does the poetic content of our classical and pre-modern readings serve as a vehicle of autobiographical expression? Does the author's gender play a role here? Cite relevant examples to support your argument.
 3. Which of the readings thus far do you regard as the most interesting and informative? Which are the least? Cite at least two in each category (i.e., most and least), and be sure to include illustrative excerpts.
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Unit III: Meiji and Pre-War Autobiography and the Dilemma of Modern Selfhood in Imperial Japan (weeks 5, 6, and 7)

This unit concerns modern autobiographical writings produced during the pre-war period, which was ushered in by the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The Meiji period (1868-1912) corresponds to Japan's remarkable transition from a samurai-centered feudal backwater to a modern nation-state— and an empire that would rival the West. Meiji writers and intellectuals, equally interested in absorbing Western literary and cultural influences and retaining aspects of their native literary tradition, explored many avenues of self-expression. (Note the parallel with pictorial artists learning new Western styles of self-portraiture while retaining traditional styles.) In particular, they embraced a Western-inspired concern for individualism and for the autonomy and agency of the individual in modern society, while understanding the restrictions imposed by the imperial state and its dogma of loyal service and duty to a 'divine' emperor. The unit will collectively survey the rise of formal autobiography— including works that both

support the new order and that directly challenge it— and a body of autobiographical fiction that blurs the line between ‘factual’ and ‘fictive’ aspects of the self.

- General readings for the unit:
 - Gordon, pp 61-223
 - Marcus, *Japanese Literature*, Chap 5 [pdf]
 - Varley, pp 235-303
 - Recommended:
 - Dodd, *Writing Home*
 - Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*
 - Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*
 - Tomonari, *Constructing Subjectivities*

Week 5 A Civilizing Mission: The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi

The Meiji educational mission mandated modern schools and a Western curriculum in the arts and sciences for the nation’s young people. English language proficiency was considered *de rigueur*, and foreign texts in all disciplines were made available through translation. Biography and autobiography became valued sources for learning of the West, especially its window upon new conceptions of individualism and narrative constructions of selfhood. Yet the intellectual elite included many who had been raised as samurai in the later years of the Tokugawa and who retained a sense of samurai privilege and a Confucianist ethic of duty and service to the state. For them, autobiography would be a challenging endeavor.

Our focal reading is Japan’s first modern autobiography, written by Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901). Fukuzawa pioneered the Meiji ‘civilization and enlightenment’ (*bunmei kaika*) movement, which sought to introduce Western-style rationalism, empiricism, and egalitarianism to the new nation. His unrivalled stature as public intellectual, journalist, and educator bears comparison with Benjamin Franklin. In fact, Fukuzawa’s autobiography, which encapsulates his long and illustrious career while underscoring the civic virtues he so ardently promoted, is modeled upon Franklin’s own. By way of comparison, we will read excerpts from the autobiography of another Meiji pioneer— Shibusawa Eiichi (1840-1931)— who relates the rags-to-riches account of his rise in the Japanese business world.

- Topics to consider:
 - How does Fukuzawa portray his upbringing and his transition from samurai to modern man? How does he incorporate his ethical and moral credo?

- Note the overtly didactic quality of Fukuzawa's account. What is he teaching, for what purpose, and how does it tally with the more personal details of his life?
- Compare and contrast the Fukuzawa and Shibusawa accounts and their respective narrative voices. How effectively is social context incorporated into these two works?
- Readings:
 - *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*
 - Shibusawa Eiichi, *From Peasant to Entrepreneur* (Introduction and Chapter 1) [pdf]
 - Marcus, 'The Impact of Western Autobiography on the Meiji Literary Scene' [pdf]
 - Recommended: Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought*

Week 6 Landmarks of Autobiographical Fiction: The Burdens of Interiority

The challenge of imbuing literary narrative with an authentic and compelling sense of individuality and interiority was a preoccupation of the Tokyo literary community (*bundan*) beginning in the 1880s. Western literature, from Shakespeare to Dostoevsky, would provide narrative models of interiority and personal reflection, but Japanese writers struggled to create an analogous personal voice in their own work.

A turning point was the emergence in the 1890s of the *Bungakkai* coterie of young literary romantics, who crafted a new discourse of the liberated individual and unbridled emotional expression. Moreover, the modern disciplines of psychology and psychiatry were quickly taking hold, and with it a new awareness of deviance and disturbed states of mind. Inspired by these developments, a group of writers of the so-called Naturalist school forged a genre of personal narrative expressing their own anxieties and frustrations in a convincingly 'artless' manner— a form of literary psychoanalysis. And so it was that the first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed an outpouring of autobiographical fiction, which in effect displaced formal autobiography as the preferred vehicle of self-presentation.

Our readings will survey this literature through four examples of major authors whose fiction was unmistakably— and pointedly— autobiographical: a) Tayama Katai's short story, *Girl Watcher*, is a prototypical Naturalist account of the author-surrogate as a sexually-repressed, obsessive 'stalker,' who meets an unfortunate end; b) Futabatei Shimei's *Mediocrity* is an autobiographical novel whose protagonist wallows in ineffectuality and self-pity; c) Mori Ôgai's *Vita Sexualis*, which purports to be a frank account of sexual maturation, is in effect a

parody of the confessional credo of the Naturalist group; d) Natsume Sôseki's *Grass on the Wayside* is a brutally honest account of the author's troubled marriage and the willful miscommunication and rancor that marked the couple's relationship.

- Topics to consider:
 - How to construe the line between 'fact' and 'fiction'? Are they inevitably intertwined?
 - Given that the Meiji *bundan* served in effect as an experimental laboratory for constructing versions of literary selfhood, how do our readings compare? What kinds of 'self' emerge here?
 - Does the concern for 'interiority'— in particular, anxiety and irresolution— come at the cost of sacrificing a larger social dimension? Does it sacrifice intrinsic literary qualities?

- Readings:
 - Futabatei Shimei, *Mediocrity* (Heibon, 1907), selections [pdf]
 - Mori Ôgai, *Vita Sexualis* (1909), selections [pdf]
 - Natsume Sôseki, *Grass on the Wayside* (Michikusa, 1915), selections [pdf]
 - Tayama Katai, *Girl Watcher* (Shôjyô, 1907) [pdf]
 - Marcus, 'The Writer Speaks: Late-Meiji Reflections on Literature and Life' [pdf]
 - Recommended:
 - Fowler, *Rhetoric of Confession*
 - Fujii, *Complicit Fictions*
 - Suzuki, *Narrating the Self*
 - Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*

Week 7 Challenging the State and the Gender Code: Radical Voices of Dissident Women

Under the guise of political freedoms and the rule of law, the Meiji imperial state instituted an authoritarian and repressive regime. Political dissidence was always suspect, and a pervasive censorship system monitored the work of writers, artists, and intellectuals. Nonetheless, the early twentieth century witnessed a burgeoning left-wing political movement in Japan, inspired by international currents of socialism and communism. These movements appealed to young and disaffected Japanese. Among their number was a large cadre of women drawn to anti-establishment and liberationist politics as a challenge to the state-sponsored code of 'good wife, wise mother' (*ryôsai kenbo*).

This official credo aimed at segregating the genders and confining women to the household and to compliant subservience to men.

The Hane text concerns the radicalized political women of prewar Japan— their personal accounts of involvement in ‘the movement’ and the consequences of their bold stand. The authoritarian, male-centered regime looms in the backdrop here, but the powerful voices of brave, principled women are very much in the foreground. Their accounts bear comparison with male ‘anti-establishment’ counterparts such as Ôsugi Sakae, whose own autobiography is recommended.

- Topics to consider:
 - How does the Hane work reflect upon gender stereotyping and the contribution of dissident women to challenging it?
 - How does it present the endemic conflict of the prewar authoritarian state and the prerogatives of individual citizens?
 - How do these accounts of political radicals compare? How does class background figure in here?
 - How do such accounts compare with personal writings by female political dissidents in the West?
 - Compare these accounts with the five autobiographical accounts presented in Loftus’s *Telling Lives* (recommended).

 - Readings:
 - Hane, *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan*
 - Recommended:
 - *The Autobiography of Ôsugi Sakae*
 - Loftus, *Telling Lives: Women’s Self-Writing in Modern Japan*
 - Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals*
 - Schalow and Walker, *The Woman’s Hand*
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Unit IV: Witnesses to Cataclysm: Accounts of the Pacific War and the Atomic Bombings (weeks 8 and 9)

The Japanese experiment with empire lasted fifty years and culminated in an eight-year war (1937-45) that witnessed the horrendous fire-bombings of Tokyo and Osaka and the nuclear obliteration of two major cities. In a manner that parallels the Holocaust and its testimonial legacy, the Pacific War has inspired reminiscence and reflection on the part of front-line soldiers and ordinary citizens who experienced the ravages of war, the agony of defeat, and the brave struggle to survive in the aftermath of the unthinkable.

The collective eye-witness account of the fall of the Japanese empire and its myths of grandeur and invincibility is both a cautionary tale and a deeply moving record of human endurance and the healing powers of remembrance.

Week 8 Valor, Defeat, Captivity: Bearing Witness to Japan's Final War of Empire

The war that was meant to bring the fruits of a superior and benevolent Japanese civilization to its beleaguered Asian neighbors suffering under the yoke of Western colonial rule took a dramatic turn with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The Japanese military would become beleaguered by the superior might of the Allied forces, and by 1944 the situation was hopeless. Japan's surrender in August 1945 and the subsequent American occupation both ended the war and empowered the 'losing side' to tell its story— a freedom of expression that did not exist during the war itself. The victors and the vanquished will understandably have categorically different stories to tell, but the 'defeated' Japanese would write of their wartime experience in a variety of voices.

Our readings provide a range of personal perspectives on the war. In 1947, Ôoka Shôhei published a memoir of his prisoner-of-war experience in the Philippines. *Taken Captive* is a meticulously-crafted account of the transition from soldier in the imperial army to the abject status of prisoner. A writer who would go on to a distinguished literary career, Ôoka combines a sharp eye for detail and a keen understanding of the 'psychology of duress.' His brilliant novel, *Fires on the Plain* (1951), is a fictionalized account of his experience. In sharp contrast, the nearly eighty oral narratives in Cook & Cook's *Japan at War* provide a chorus of voices testifying to the broad spectrum of Japanese wartime experience, and they endow ordinary people with the voice they so richly deserve.

- Topics to consider:
 - How to compare the crafted account of defeat and captivity, related by a writer with a clear literary agenda, and the oral testimonies in *Japan at War*?
 - Which of the oral narratives did you find especially moving? Why? Do you detect an editorial agenda at work in the selection and arrangement of these narratives? Explain.
 - How do these 'Japan-side' oral narratives compare with Studs Terkel's *The Good War*, a much-admired oral history told from the 'other side'?

- Readings:
 - Ôoka Shohei, *Taken Captive* (selection) [[pdf](#)]
 - Cook & Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*

- Recommended:
 - Dower, *War Without Mercy*
 - Ôoka, *Fires on the Plain*
 - Sakai, *Samurai! The Autobiography of Japan's Fighter Ace*
 - Terkel, *The Good War*

Week 9 Genbaku : Bearing Witness to the Atomic Bomb and its Aftermath

The atomic bombing (*genbaku*) of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945 effectively ended the war— summarily, spectacularly, and at great human cost. This ‘uniquely Japanese’ victimization, albeit precipitated by the belligerence and inhumanity of its own military regime, has yielded a trove of witnessing— spanning exquisitely-crafted literature and art, at one extreme, and the scribbles, doodles, and material remains of countless anonymous souls, at the other. The collective record of Japan’s nuclear victims— the so-called *hibakusha*— are a treasured property of Japan’s collective memory, even though many of the *hibakusha* themselves were marginalized and ostracized on account of the radiation stigma. The recent Fukushima debacle has raised this horrifying specter for modern-day Japanese.

How, then, to express the ineffable, to convey some sense of an actuality that beggars the imagination? Again, the Holocaust provides an analogous challenge to the creative imagination and to the ethical imperative to remember, to bear witness, at all costs. As an autobiographical topic, then, *genbaku* witnessing has a privileged place. But it also presents formidable challenges. And many *hibakusha* have opted for stoic silence as their response. Our readings, a small sampling of *genbaku* testimony, pay homage to these individuals and speak to the legacy of widespread anti-nuclear sentiment in Japan. Ôe Kenzaburô, Japan’s Nobel Prize laureate and a long-standing anti-nuclear advocate, has edited a selection of nine ‘bomb stories,’ predominantly autobiographical, which present varying perspectives upon these singular events. They bear comparison with the selection of oral narratives in Cook & Cook.

- Topics to consider:
 - How do the selections from Ôe’s *Crazy Iris* anthology (especially pp 9-112) tell the ‘untellable’ story of the atomic bombing? How are narrative point of view and the use of incident and detail deployed here?
 - How to compare the direct testimony of those near ground zero with accounts of those not directly affected and those whose testimony is second- or third-hand? Does the immediacy of experience carry a certain authority, by definition?
 - Which of the anthologized stories do you find most compelling? Why?
 - How do such accounts compare with Holocaust narratives?

- Readings:
 - Cook & Cook, pp 382-399
 - Ôe, *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath*
 - Recommended:
 - Minear, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*
 - Treat, *Writing Ground Zero*

Second Short Paper: (Due after completion of Unit IV) 1000 words

Write a paper on ONE of the following topics. Whichever you choose, support your argument with citations from the relevant texts. (If longer excerpts, these should be relegated to an appendix and are not to be included in the word count)

1. How does the 'modern selfhood' that presumably emerges in the Unit III readings compare with the pre-modern version(s) of self? Be sure to discuss your understanding of 'modern selfhood' and its key literary markers.
2. How do the Unit III readings, written in the context of Imperial Japan, compare with the Unit IV readings, all of which reflect upon the ashes of empire from the post-war perspective?
3. With an eye upon our readings, compare oral and written narrative as vehicles of autobiographical expression. Would you argue for the primacy of direct, oral narration over the 'craftedness' (i.e., dissembling) of written accounts? What of the simulation of orality through narrative artistry?
4. Choose two readings from Unit III and two from Unit IV and compare them. Consider criteria such as theme, imagery, autobiographical voice, and storyline. Is there a reading (or readings) that stood out for you? Which? Why?

Unit V: A Kaleidoscope of Family Reminiscence: On Growing Up, Growing Old, And Honoring Those We Love (weeks 10-13)

Postwar Japan came to an official end with the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty in 1972. But its early years, which coincided with the American Occupation (1945-52), witnessed the establishment of a new regime meant to eliminate the vestiges of militarism and Emperor-worship. While the ravages of war would take years to heal, a deeper process of healing was set in motion. First, an American-style Constitution,

promulgated in 1947, created a radically-leveled societal playing field. Women were enfranchised for the first time in history, and equality was the new mantra. The 1950s emerged as a veritable golden age of Japanese culture. Freedom of expression reigned in the arts, and a new spirit of self-assertion manifested itself in literature. Even the privation of the postwar years and the nation's inferiority complex *vis a vis* the American occupiers became a favorite literary subject.

The autobiographical topics in this unit focus upon family as a nexus of autobiographical writing, and they privilege the work of Japan's 'long' postwar period (1945-72). To be sure, there are many other available topics and an abundance of more recent and contemporary work. Playing up the centrality of family and the integrity of family relationships can be said to play into the 'groupist' stereotype of Japan and to ignore other contexts and themes for autobiography. For one thing, there are numerous accounts of dysfunction, deviance, and general despair among a segment of the population.

The readings here are not meant as a catechism of social virtue. They point to very real challenges facing us on a global scale, and they need to be read with an open mind and an eye upon the narrator's view of his/her world. They comprise a stunning autobiography by Kita Morio that recreates a child's imagination; stories by important women writers who recall their fathers; Inoue Yasushi's moving account of a senile mother and her gradual demise; and a tribute by Japan's 1996 Nobel laureate in literature, Ôe Kenzaburô, to his disabled son Hikari.

- General readings for the unit:
 - Gordon, pp 224-288
 - Varley, pp 304-351
- Recommended readings for the unit:
 - Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*
 - Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*
 - Dower, *Embracing Defeat*
 - Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*
 - Stewart, *On Longing*

Week 10 Capturing a Child's Imagination: Kita Morio's *Ghosts*

Writers in Japan, as elsewhere, have fashioned accounts of childhood and youth— both fictive and autobiographical, in prose and verse— over the centuries. Yet most earlier accounts fail to privilege the child's point of view, and rather cast the child as a kind of homunculus, awaiting adult maturation. The postwar period opened up the national literary imagination, as it were. And it liberated children from their subservient status— which had paralleled that of women— both in terms of their education and upbringing and their

representation in works of literature. Childhood reminiscence also fits within the larger frame of postwar retrospection on what would be cast as an idyllic, 'pre-lapsarian' prewar topos, where memories of one's upbringing could be suffused with a romantic, lyrical aura no longer accessible in the fast-paced, competitive world of the postwar.

Kita Morio would achieve precisely this, with his 1954 autobiographical novel, *Ghosts*. The son of celebrated Meiji poet Saitô Mokichi, Kita recreates the world of an exquisitely sensitive and observant boy and his relationship with family and with the mystery and majesty of the natural world— wondrously wrought through the recreated child's imagination. Kita's work bears comparison with notable recommended works— an analogous childhood memoir of the late Meiji period, Naka Kansuke's *Silver Spoon*; Yukio Mishima's controversial autobiographical 'coming out,' *Confessions of a Mask*; and a more formal autobiography written by one of modern Japan's greatest authors, Tanizaki Jun'ichirô. Finally, it bears mention that Kita Morio wrote an expansive fictionalized memoir of several generations of his family, *The House of Nire*.

- Topics to consider:
 - How does Kita's child protagonist relate with his parents? With the physical world? How would you describe his personality?
 - How does the war serve as a turning point in the protagonist's development? How is social/ historical context evoked?
 - Is Kita's characterization convincing? How so?
 - What is the significance of the various 'iconic objects'— a carpet, eyeglasses, books, insects— that figure in Kita's work?

- Reading: Kita Morio, *Ghosts*
 - Recommended:
 - Kita, *The House of Nire*
 - Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask*
 - Naka, *Silver Spoon*
 - Tanizaki, *Childhood Years*

Week 11 Fathers and Daughters: The Remembrances of Japanese Literary Women

Thanks to the 'Americanization project' and the demise of the male-centered *bundan*, the postwar period afforded unprecedented opportunities for women to embark on a literary career. Fiction and poetry were the preferred vehicles, but many women turned to reminiscence. In a sense, the postwar milieu of artistic freedom and its 'tabula rasa' of collective memory in the wake of the defeat and the nation's social reformation unleashed a torrent of memory.

Women writers were simply riding the current. But their example opened the way for generations of talented women to enter the field. In recent years, women writers have risen to the forefront of the Japanese literary world, and gender-based studies of this (and other) literature represent the mainstream.

Our readings draw on the reminiscence of gifted writers who recall their prewar roots and, in particular, their fathers. Some were the daughters of distinguished writers and intellectuals, who told of their heritage in a mixed voice of pride and prejudice, owing to the discrimination they faced as young women with a literary gift but a politically-incorrect gender. Our focus will be upon two writers— Uno Chiyo (1897-1996) and Kôda Aya (1906-1990)— and their ‘paternocentric’ reminiscences. Of the two, we will privilege Aya, whose reminiscences of growing up as daughter of one of Japan’s most celebrated authors, Kôda Rohan (1867-1947), are exceptional.

- Topics to consider
 - What is the ‘law of the father,’ which forms the subtitle of the Copeland & Ramirez-Christensen study?
 - How would you construct a feminist, gender-based interpretation of these readings? How would you argue against taking this approach?
 - How are social class and pedigree revealed in the work of Uno and Kôda?
 - How do Kôda’s reminiscences serve as a ‘portrait of the artist as a young girl’?
- Readings:
 - Copeland & Ramirez-Christensen (eds), *The Father-Daughter Plot*, Introduction and Chaps 8 and 9 [Copeland on Uno; Sherif on Kôda] [pdf]
 - Selection of four stories by Kôda Aya, from Sherif, *Mirror*. [pdf]

Week 12 The Dignity of Old Age: Inoue Yasushi’s *Chronicle of My Mother*

Literary reminiscence of family entails a host of shifting narrative perspectives and positions. Aside from childhood/ youth reminiscence by the adult narrator, there are parental reminiscences of one’s children, one’s siblings, and eulogistic reminiscences of departed family— not to mention related accounts of one’s friends, acquaintances, encounters with total strangers, and much more. The subject at hand— reminiscence of aging parents by a now mature ‘child’ narrator— has generated a good deal of recent interest, in part owing to our rapidly graying societies and issues relating to care for the elderly. How, then, do we write about our aging parents?

Our main reading provides one answer to the question. Inoue Yasushi (1907-91) is a writer of the very highest stature, having achieved mastery of the demanding

genre of historical fiction. A devoted father and husband, Inoue began writing about his aging mother in 1964. In two sequels written at five-year intervals, he traced his mother's decline into dementia and her final demise. His *Chronicle of My Mother* is a masterful and dignified reminiscence and, ultimately, an act of filial piety, which seeks both to honor and protect the aged mother, whose senility proves so frustrating to her extended family. Incidentally, Inoue also wrote a highly-regarded childhood reminiscence, *Shirobamba*, which bears comparison with his *Chronicle*.

Inoue's inspiring account contrasts strongly with the work of his contemporary, Yasuoka Shôtarô (1920—), whose transparently autobiographical postwar fiction offers a darkly comic and sardonic view of postwar family dysfunction and parents who are stripped of dignity and a secure hold on reality. We will read several representative stories, which evoke the bleak postwar scene and its sense of anomie and dislocation.

- Topics to consider:
 - How do the three sections of Inoue's work interrelate? How does the narrative position shift over the five-year intervals?
 - How does Inoue's narrator interact with his family in their collective interaction with the mother/ grandmother?
 - Are there points of comparison between Inoue and Yasuoka?
- Readings:
 - Inoue Yasushi, *Chronicle of My Mother*
 - Yasuoka Shôtarô, selected stories [pdf]
 - Inoue, *Shirobamba*
 - Yasuoka, *A View By the Sea*

Week 13 The Dignity of Disability: A Father's Tribute to His Son

Following upon Inoue's reminiscence of a mother descending into dementia, we turn to an account by a father writing about his mentally-disabled son. The father in question is arguably Japan's most respected living writer, Ôe Kenzaburô (1935—). And the son, Hikari, born in 1963 with a damaged brain, went on to become an acclaimed musical composer. This is no ordinary father, in other words, and no ordinary son. In fact, Ôe wrote a landmark autobiographical novel— *A Personal Matter* (1964)— centering on the brain-damaged infant son and the young father torn between abandoning the baby and assuming parental responsibility, together with other stories on this theme. And he went on to write a series of novels on the theme of the father-son relationship and its many levels of meaning. Our reading, Ôe's 1996 memoir *A Healing Family*, presents a

father's retrospection upon his son's remarkable career, and it is written with pride and a deep commitment to family.

As with the topic of aging, disability— be it physical or mental— has emerged as a prominent social issue, and the topic has generated its share of autobiographical recounting and reflection. In *A Healing Family*, Ôe frames the issue, and his clear advocacy position, in the context of his own family. He thus personalizes what might otherwise tend toward 'social problems' abstraction and punditry. Ôe's deeply engaged and principled voice points to one of the burdens of modern autobiography— to give human shape and substance to matters that demand our attention.

- Topics to consider:
 - How does the author frame the father-son relationship? The larger family unit?
 - Compare this family-centered reminiscence with Inoue's.
 - In what sense is this a *healing* family?
 - Does the son, notwithstanding his disability, emerge in the text as a fully-wrought character?

- Readings
 - Ôe, *A Healing Family*
 - Recommended: Ôe, *A Personal Matter*

Unit VI: Voices from the Margins: Autobiographical Writings by Japanese-Americans and Foreigners in Japan (weeks 14 and 15)

This unit will move us away from the Japan-centered paradigm and explore autobiographical writings in two 'tangential' categories— Japanese-Americans and foreigners who write of their Japan experience. Both categories are quite complex, in terms of historical context, narrative approach, and the profile of the respective writers. What these writings share, though, is their perspective upon Japan from the outsider's point of view. Of course the Japanese-American is both outsider and insider, and it is precisely this complex dynamic that marks the 'hyphenated' identity.

As for foreigners in Japan— the Chinese and Koreans were the first 'significant' foreigners to visit and (in some cases) settle, and there has been a steady influx of these groups over the centuries, with many individuals having written of their experience. As for Westerners— we have read of the Portuguese, Spanish, British, and Dutch who enjoyed a century of contact with the Japanese, which ended dramatically in the early

17th century. The Dutch were allowed to remain, in small numbers, and some would write extensively of the exotic, bamboo-curtained realm.

Modern Japan— which is to say, post-Perry (1853)— has been marked by open borders and wave upon wave of foreign visitors, with the exception of the war years. Our foray into their writings will focus on those who wrote of their experiences in English, from many different perspectives and in many voices.

Week 14 Writing the Hyphenated Self: The Polite Lies of Kyoko Mori

The rise of American cultural studies as a discipline has promoted ‘identity studies’ of all stripes. We are of course cognizant of efforts to recognize and empower minority communities and their collective memories and stories. Falling under the larger Asian-American category, writings by Japanese-Americans constitute a large and growing body of literature that speaks to a long and often contentious modern history of Japanese immigration and naturalization. The wartime internment of many tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans (and Canadians, too) is well known, and many wrote of their bitter experiences— Julia Otsuka’s award-winning *When the Emperor Was Divine* is a recent case in point. The subject is very rich and indeed begs a course of its own.

What does it mean to possess a dual (or triple, or quadruple) identity? Do we inevitably privilege one over the other? How does language condition our perception? What of the emotional and tangible connections that one makes— or chooses not to make— with one’s roots? All of these concerns figure into Kyoko Mori’s memoir, *Polite Lies*. Mori, who is bilingual, bicultural, and a regular commuter between Japan and the U.S., can legitimately claim two identities. But the narrator of her memoir essentially rejects her ‘native’ identity in favor of her acquired ‘American’ identity. *Polite Lies* is itself a hybrid work that is part autobiography— a recounting of the author’s past and a reflection upon the present— and part cultural polemic— an attempt to educate its readers as to the ‘true story’ of modern-day Japan and its people. The book will usefully complicate our understanding of what it means to hold two distinct ‘identity passports.’

- Topics to consider:
 - What exactly are Kyoko Mori’s ‘polite lies,’ and is she herself guilty of purveying them?
 - How would you describe the persona(lity) of Mori’s narrator? Is she a sympathetic character?
 - How does Mori’s mother serve as the centerpiece of her account?
 - Give thought to how a Japanese readership might respond to this book.
 - What are the stereotypes that Mori attributes to the Japanese?

- Readings:
 - Kyoko Mori, *Polite Lies*
 - Recommended:
 - Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar*
 - Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*
 - Julia Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*
 - Cynthia Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance*

Week 15 Writing the Japan Experience: From Bemusement to Enlightenment

Since the late-19th century, Japan has been a preferred destination for those seeking a taste (or a full plate) of Oriental exoticism and ‘timeless tradition’— or the standard tourist flyby of temples, shrines, gardens, and sushi joints. In point of fact, we all have our own reasons for going anywhere— including Japan. And as we change and grow, the destination itself— whatever one imagines it to be— will have undergone its own transformation.

That said, our concern is simple— how do visitors to Japan write of the time they spent (or continue to spend) there? What is the range of ‘Japans’ that visitors experience? The Japan available to visitors in the 1870s, together with the ‘demographic’ of those who made the trip, is a world apart from the Japan of today and the profile of those who get on the plane and end up in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, or a remote island in Okinawa. And just to reverse our polarity here— imagine how Japanese visitors to the U.S. write of their experience with this wild and crazy land! (There is a library of such writing, by the way.)

Our course concludes, then, with a book that anthologizes writings on the Japanese experience. Part of a series of such first-hand accounts of noteworthy foreign places, *Travelers’ Tales Japan* provides a virtual smorgasbord of Japan encounters. From Dave Barry’s riffs on ‘those wacky Japanese’ to the very sober and serious pronouncements of savvy *gaijin* (foreigners) who have ‘been there and done that,’ the book will both amuse and educate. And the editors’ commentary and sidebar citations are of real value. Those looking to be informed will not be disappointed. Those looking to be amused will be equally rewarded.

Travelers’ Tales Japan is more than a bit of ‘dessert’ following the main course (literally and figuratively). It limns out an important sub-genre of personal narrative and may even inspire you to get on that plane bound for Narita Airport. Enjoy!

- Topics to consider:
 - Which items in the anthology proved most instructive? Most enjoyable? Did any do both simultaneously?
 - How would you categorize the contents of the book— over and above the ‘poles’ of comic lampoon and the insider wisdom of the resident *gaijin*?
 - What of the gender factor here? Do men appear to construct a different Japan than women?
 - How do the city-based accounts (Tokyo/ Osaka/ Kyoto) compare? How do these collectively compare with the depictions of/ reactions to rural Japan and its natural beauty?

- Readings:
 - George and Carlson (eds). *Travelers’ Tales Japan*
 - Recommended:
 - Feiler, *Learning to Bow*
 - Kerr, *Dogs and Demons*

Unit VII: Preparation and submission of final research paper

- Assignment: You are to write a research paper of 3000-4000 words— double-spaced, 12-point font.
 - The paper will be due by the end of Week 16.
 - The paper must be annotated, using one of the standard citation styles, and include a bibliography.

Recommended Readings:

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Arntzen, Sonja. *The Gossamer Diary: A Woman’s Autobiographical Text From Tenth-Century Japan* (Michigan, 1997).

Bowring, Richard. *Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs* (Princeton, 1982).

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2002).

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- Dower, John. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (Norton, 1999).
- _____. *War Without Mercy Race and Power in the Pacific War* (Pantheon, 1986).
- Epstein, Joseph (ed). *The Norton Book of Personal Essays* (Norton, 1997).
- Feiler, Bruce. *Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan* (Ticknor & Fields, 1991)
- Fowler, Edward. *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishôsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (California, 1988).
- Fujii, James. *Complicit Fictions: The Subject in the Modern Japanese Prose Narrative* (California, 1993).
- Gluck, Carol. *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, 1985).
- Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki. *Farewell to Manzanar* (Houghton Mifflin, 1973).
- Inoue Yasushi. *Shirobamba* (Peter Owen, 1991).
- Karatani Kôjin. *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Duke, 1993).
- Kerr, Alex. *Dogs and Demons: Tales From the Dark Side of Japan* (Hill & Wang, 2001).
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- Kogawa, Joy. *Obasan* (Anchor Books, 1994).
- Loftus, Ronald. *Telling Lives: Women's Self-Writing in Modern Japan* (Hawaii, 2004).
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- Minear, Richard. *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* (Princeton, 1990).

Mishima Yukio. *Confessions of a Mask* (New Directions, 1958).

Mostow, Joshua (ed). *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature* (Columbia, 2003).

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Ôe Kenzaburô, *A Personal Matter* (Grove, 1969).

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Parini, Jay (ed). *The Norton Book of American Autobiography* (Norton, 1999).

Postman, Neil. *The Disappearance of Childhood* (Vintage, 1982).

Rimer, J. Thomas. *A Reader's Guide to Japanese Literature* (Kodansha International, 1999).

Rimer, J. Thomas and Van C. Gessel (eds). *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature* [Volume 1: 1868-1945; Volume 2: 1945-present] (Columbia, 2007).

Rubin, Jay. *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State* (Washington, 1984).

Sakai Saburo. *Samurai! The Autobiography of Japan's Fighter Ace* (iBooks, 2001).

Sherif, Ann. *Mirror: The Fiction and Essays of Kôda Aya* (Hawaii, 1999).

Shirane, Haruo, ed. *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900*. (Columbia, 2002).

_____. *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (Columbia, 2012).

_____, ed. *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*. (Columbia, 2007).

Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minnesota, 2004).

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- Yasuoka Shôtarô, *A View by the Sea* (Columbia, 1984).
- Yoshikawa Eiji. *Fragments of a Past: A Memoir* (Kodansha International, 1992).

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 - *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*; Bowring, tr. Bowring (Princeton, 1982).
 - *The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon* (selection in CJP); tr. Morris (Columbia, 1991).
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 - *Essays in Idleness* (selection in CJP); tr. Keene (Columbia, 1967).
 - *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams: Recollections of a Woman in Eleventh Century Japan*; tr. Morris (Oxford, 1971).
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- *The Spiritual Autobiography of Zen Master Hakuin*; tr. Norman Waddell (Shambhala, 2010).
- Modern (Meiji to the present)
 - *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*; tr. Eiichi Kiyooka (Columbia, 1968).
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 - Nakazawa Keiji. *The Autobiography of Barefoot Gen* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).
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 - Ôoka Shôhei. *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story* (Wiley, 1996)
 - Saga Jun'ichi. *Memories of Straw and Silk: A Self-Portrait of Small-Town Japan* (Kodansha International, 1990).
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- Varley, Paul. *Japanese Culture* (Hawaii, 2000, 4th edition).
- Wong, Sau-ling Cynthia. *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance* (Princeton, 1993).

* CJP: Helen McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose*

Syllabus

General Course Objectives: For Specific Learning Objectives, Refer to the Study Guide

- O1. Identify major works and to analyze them from different critical stances.
- O2. Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the works by responding to questions focusing on the context, authors, themes, and motifs.
- O3. Compare works and documents from different periods, traditions, and sub-genres.
- O4. Apply critical reading strategies to determine alternative interpretive possibilities, as well as motifs, figurative language, and potential interpretive possibilities,
- O5. Discuss the historical, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of the works' production
- O6. Compare and contrast themes, genres, and movements.

General Program Objectives

1. To provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to world humanities and an understanding of the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.
2. To provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse traditions in the humanities the course focus and to express this deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.
3. To provide an overview of textual analysis and interpretation methods at a graduate level and help students apply these skills in writing essay examinations and a critical essay.
4. To read widely and critically in a variety of literary forms found in different genre studies and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in a critical essay.
5. To conduct graduate-level library research on a particular text or body of work, an individual writer, or an issue in the area of genre studies and to write a critical essay which incorporates their research.

Course Content:

1. Texts that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.
2. Discussion of the historical, social, cultural and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.
3. Literary movements in various periods.
4. Discussion of the theoretical issues and questions related to historical, social, cultural, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.
5. Historical contexts.
6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in literature.
7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary global issues.
8. Critical analysis and interpretation.
9. Scholarly research on and off-line.

Course Outline:

For the detailed course outline, please see the Study Guide.

Course Readings:

For a list of course readings, please see the Readings page on the Study Guide

Course Preparedness:

This course is a graduate-level literature course. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in world literature and does not address remedial writing issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level.

This course focuses on literary texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

However, in some cases, students who have not yet completed a bachelor's degree may be allowed to take the course.

Course Workload:

For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 6 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework. If students are taking the course in an accelerated 8-week mode, they can expect to devote a minimum of 12 hours per week of study.

Assessment Strategy

Learners will demonstrate their knowledge of the subject and their ability to engage in critical thinking and problem solving activities.

- *Journal Entries/Discussion Questions.* Designed to help students identify authors, their works, literary terms, and concepts. Students will also analyze texts, connect the authors, texts, and critical concepts. Finally, students look at texts from multiple perspectives in order to evaluate their own thought processes.
- *Synchronous Online Activities.* Designed to help learners apply the concepts in the course to texts, and to share their insights.
- *Essay / Research Paper.* Designed to help students write scholarly papers and engage in literary analysis. Students will develop a clear thesis which they support with literary citations, a close reading of the text, application of critical theories and perspectives. Students will focus on developing multiple interpretations of a single text, or will look at multiple texts within a movement, genre, or author's oeuvre.