



## ***Modern Japanese Literature***

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*This option covers topics in modern Japanese literature from the **early 1900s to the present day.***

*The option will be taught in Hilary Term.*

*It will consist of 1 lecture and 1 tutorial per week.*

*Lectures will be held in HT on Tuesdays from 1300-1400; tutorials will be by arrangement with instructor.*

\*Note: In Michaelmas Term a lecture series covering topics in modern Japanese literature from the end of the Edo period to the early 1900s runs on Tuesdays from 1300-1400. Students taking the Hilary Term option on the MSc are welcome to **audit** the Michaelmas Term lecture series.

### **Course Description:**

This option is designed to acquaint students with some of the key themes, styles and discourses in modern and contemporary Japanese literature and culture. We will discuss topics such as the advent of Japanese modernity, nation-building, self and community, war and memory, disaster and trauma, and gender and sexuality issues.

### **Course Assessment:**

The main assessment will be through a three-hour examination in Trinity Term.

Students will submit two essays. Essays are due by midnight, Friday of week 4 and week 9 of Hilary Term. Essay topics are as follows:

Essay 1: Discuss portrayals of the body in *either* proletarian literature, *nikutai bungaku*, atomic bomb literature *or* post war women's writing.

Essay 2: Choose one of the following: How do Tawada Yoko's stories portray notions of "travel," "borders," and the new reality of post-3.11 Japan? Discuss the treatment of gender and/or sexuality in Matsuda Aoko's stories.

### **Selected readings:**

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: "In a Bamboo Grove" (1922) and "Rashomon" (1915) in *The Essential Akutagawa: Rashomon, Hell Screen, Cogwheels, A Fool's Life, and Other Short Fiction*, New York: Marsilio, 1999.

Bullock, Julia. *The Other Women's Lib: Gender and Body in Japanese Women's Fiction, 1960-1973*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010.

DiNitto, Rachel. *Fukushima Fiction: The Literary Landscape of Japan's Triple Disaster*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019

- Dodd, Stephen. *The Youth of Things: Life and Death in the Age of Kajii Motojirō*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.
- Ericson, Joan E. *Be a Woman: Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women's Literature*. University of Hawaii Press, 1997.
- Field, Norma and Bowen-Struyk, Heather, eds. *For Dignity, Justice, and Revolution: An Anthology of Japanese Proletarian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Gardner, William O. "Mongrel Modernism: Hayashi Fumiko's "Hōrōki and Mass Culture". *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 29, no.1, 2003: 69-101.
- Geilhorn, Barbara and Iwata-Weickgenannt, Kristina eds. *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*. Routledge, 2017.
- Itō Hiromi: "Killing Kanoko" and other poems in *Killing Kanoko: Selected Poems of Itō Hiromi*. Translated by Jeffery Angles. Notre Dame: Action Books, 2009.
- Iwamoto Yoshio. "Aspects of the Proletarian Literary Movement in Japan." In *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy*, ed. Silberman and Harootunian, 156-182. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Kajii Motojiro. "Lemon" in *The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*, edited by Theodore W. Goosen, Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Kobayashi Takiji: *Kani Kōsen* (The Factory Ship) in "*The Factory Ship*" and "*The Absentee Landlord*," translated by Frank Motofuji, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973.
- Lippit, Seiji. *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Luke, Elmer and Karashima, David James eds. *March Was Made of Yarn: Writers Respond to Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami*. Harvill Secker, 2012.
- Matsuda Aoko. *Where the Wild Ladies are*. Translated by Polly Barton. London: Granta Books, 2019 (Selected stories).
- Ōe Kenzaburō: *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (1994). New York: Grove Press, 1985.
- Rubin, Jay, ed. *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*, introduced by Haruki Murakami, Penguin Random House, 2018.
- Schalow, Paul Gordon, and Janet A. Walker, eds. *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Shimazu, Naoko. "Popular Representations of the Past: The Case of Post-war Japan," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Redesigning the Past. (Jan., 2003): 101-116.
- Slaymaker, Douglas. *The Body in Post-war Japanese Fiction*. London: Routledge Curzon, 2004.
- Takahashi, Takako, and Amanda C. Seaman. "A Boundless Void." *Massachusetts Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, Sept. 2010, pp. 456–81.
- . "A Boundless Void." *Massachusetts Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, Sept. 2010, pp. 456–81.
- Treat, John Whittier. *Writing ground zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

**Draft syllabus, subject to change**

**Week 1: Proletarian Literature**

Reading: Kobayashi Takiji. *Kani Kōsen* (The Factory Ship) in *"The Factory Ship" and "The Absentee Landlord,"* translated by Frank Motofuji, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973 OR Kobayashi Takiji. "The Crab Cannery Ship" in *The Crab Cannery Ship and Other Novels of Struggle* (translated by Željko Cipriš). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013.

Iwamoto Yoshio. "Aspects of the Proletarian Literary Movement in Japan." In *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy*, ed. Silberman and Harootunian, pp.156-182. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Field, Norma and Bowen-Struyk, Heather, eds. *For Dignity, Justice, and Revolution: An Anthology of Japanese Proletarian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. (Read "Introduction" (pp. 1-13); Hayama Yoshiki's "The Prostitute" (pp. 53-67); Sata Ineko's "Leafleting" (pp. 231-232)

Recommended: Aoyama, Tomoko. "Proletarian Eating and Writing: Sata Ineko and Kobayashi Takiji." *Reading Food in Modern Japanese Literature*, University of Hawaii press, 2008, pp.66-70.

**Week 2: Japanese Modernism**

Reading: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: "In a Bamboo Grove" (1922) and "Rashomon" (1915) in *The Essential Akutagawa: Rashomon, Hell Screen, Cogwheels, A Fool's Life, and Other Short Fiction*, New York: Marsilio, 1999.

Kajii Motojiro. "Lemon" in *The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*, edited by Theodore W. Goosen, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Lippit, Seiji. *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. ("Introduction" (pp. 1-7) and "Disintegrating Mechanisms of Subjectivity: Akutagawa Ryunosuke's Last Writings" (pp. 50-85)).

Dodd, Stephen. *The Youth of Things: Life and Death in the Age of Kajii Motojirō*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. ("Introduction" (pp. 1-6) and "Modernism and Its Endings"(pp. 36-71)).

Recommended:

Tyler, William Jefferson. *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Kurosawa Akira, *Rashomon* (1950, 88 minutes) FILM

Goodwin James, "Modernist Narrative and Intertextuality" in *Akira Kurosawa and Intertextual Cinema* (1994).

**Week 3: Realism and Modernism in Showa Japan**

Reading: Hayashi, Fumiko. *Diary of a Vagabond (Hōrōki 1930)* in Ericson, Joan E, *Be a Woman: Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women's Literature*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

Gardner, William O. "Mongrel Modernism: Hayashi Fumiko's "Hōrōki and Mass Culture". *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 29, no.1, 2003: 69-101.

**Week 4: Atomic Bomb Literature: Negotiating Trauma**

Reading: Ōe Kenzaburō: *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (1994). New York: Grove Press, 1985.

Ōta Yōko. "Hiroshima, City of Doom" in *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*, edited by Jay Rubin, Penguin Random House, 2018, pp.354-372.

Treat, John Whittier. *Writing ground zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. ("Introduction" and Chapter 1 "Atrocity into Words").

**Week 5: Post-war Literature**

Reading: Nosaka Akiyuki. "American Hijiki" in *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*, edited by Jay Rubin, Penguin Random House, 2018, pp.406-444.

Shimazu, Naoko. "Popular Representations of the Past: The Case of Post-war Japan," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Redesigning the Past. (Jan., 2003): 101-116.

Slymaker, Douglas. *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, selected chapters London: Routledge Curzon, 2004. ("Introduction" (pp. 1-7) and Chapter 3: "Tamura Tajirō" (pp.43-70)). Recommended: Chapter 6: "When women write postwar Japan."

**Week 6: Women's writing in the 60s and 70s and the *ribu***

Reading: Bullock, Julia. *The Other Women's Lib: Gender and Body in Japanese Women's Fiction, 1960-1973*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010. ("Introduction" and "Chapter 1")

Takahashi Takako: "Holy Terror" (*Kodomo-sama*) and "A Boundless Void" (*Byōbo*), translated by Amanda Seaman in *The Massachusetts Review* 51/3 (Fall 2010): 439-55 and 456-81.

Recommended: Itō Hiromi: "Killing Kanoko" and other poems in *Killing Kanoko: Selected Poems of Itō Hiromi*. Translated by Jeffery Angles. Notre Dame: Action Books, 2009.

Seaman, Amanda C. "A Womb of One's Own: Takahashi Takako's Women Apart." *Massachusetts Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, Sept. 2010, pp. 482-85.

**Week 7: Literature After 3.11**

Reading: Tawada, Yoko. "To Zagreb" (*Granta Magazine*, 2001) and "The Island of Eternal Life" in *March Was Made of Yarn: Writers Respond to Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami*, edited by Elmer Luke and David Karashima. London: Harvill Secker, 2012.

DiNitto, Rachel. *Fukushima Fiction: The Literary Landscape of Japan's Triple Disaster*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019 (Read "Introduction: Disaster

Strikes, Literature Responds” (pp. 1-21) and Chapter 1: “Voices from the Debris: Cultural Trauma and Disaster Fiction” (pp. 22-56).

Recommended: Young, Victoria. "Beyond “Transborder”: Tawada Yōko’s Vision of Another World Literature." *Japanese Language and Literature* [Online], 55.1 (2021): 1-33. Web. 16 Aug. 2022

### **Week 8: Feminist Contemporary Fiction**

Reading: Matsuda Aoko. *Where the wild ladies are*. Translated by Polly Barton. London: Granta Books, 2019 (Selected stories).

Recommended: Barton, Polly. 2020. “On Aoko Matsuda’s Deceptively Delightful Call for Systemic Change.” Literary Hub, October 21, 2020 <https://lithub.com/on-aoko-matsudas-deceptively-delightful-call-for-systemic-change/>

Moro, Daniela. 2023. “A Silent Fight to Challenge the Norm in Matsuda Aoko’s ‘Sutakkingu Kanō’ (2012).” *Japan Forum* 35 (4): 410–33. doi:10.1080/09555803.2023.2248156.

### **Statement of Coverage**

This document applies to students starting the MSc and/or MPhil in Japanese Studies in Michaelmas Term 2024. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

### **Disclaimer**

The information in this document is accurate as at 19 September 2024, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges). If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.