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Transnational Japanese Literature: Diversity And Diaspora In Modern Japanese Literature (JPNS 073) Syllabus

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JPNS 073: Transnational Japanese literature: Diversity and diaspora in modern Japanese literature

Prof. Will Gardner
Swarthmore College
fall 2021

Mondays 1:15 - 4:00 pm, Kohlberg 318
Some additional guest talks will be scheduled outside of class meeting time.

Prof. Will Gardner wgardne1@swarthmore.edu  Office phone: 610-690-6875 (x6875)
Office: Kohlberg 315 Office hours: Tuesdays 3:15 - 4:30 and by appointment

Course description:
This course will challenge the myths of Japanese ethnic homogeneity and cultural isolation and explore how modern “Japanese” literature crosses national and cultural borders. Topics to be examined include Japanese writers writing from abroad, colonial and postcolonial literatures, migration and writing in the Japanese diaspora, and the writings of ethnic minorities in Japan, including writers from Okinawa and Japan’s resident Korean community. Readings will be in English but students with reading knowledge of Japanese will be encouraged to read works in the original.

Format of the class:
This will be a seminar-style class in which students will be responsible for leading discussions and presenting secondary readings. Specifically, around two students will be appointed as discussion leaders each week. These students will post discussion questions to Moodle, lead in-class discussion (with the assistance of Prof. Gardner), and present highlights of the “Secondary Reading” in each week’s assigned readings. The “Secondary Reading” is optional for students who are not discussion leaders that week. Every student will post reflections to the Moodle discussion forum on that week’s Primary Reading(s), focusing on one aspect of the readings that they found interesting. In addition to the class discussion and summaries of the secondary readings presented by the discussion leaders, Prof. Gardner will often present brief lectures on the context and literary/linguistic qualities of the readings.

We will also have guest speakers/discussants on weeks 4, 5, and 7. Guest talks will be considered part of mandatory attendance unless an excuse is issued in advance.

Students will also work on a final research presentation and paper in consultation with Prof. Gardner. More information on presentations and papers including suggested topics will be forthcoming. The final two weeks of the class will be devoted to research presentations. Research papers will be due during the final exam period. (There will be no other final exam.)
Grading criteria:
1. Attendance and participation  20%
2. Weekly moodle discussion forum posts  25%
3. Discussion leading  20%
4. Final research project: in-class presentation  15%
5. Final research project: written paper  20%

Accommodations statement and COVID-19 protocols omitted from this copy of the syllabus

Weekly readings:

I. Modernism, Imperialism, and the Japanese diaspora

Week 1 -- August 30
Course introduction

1. Lisa Yoneyama, “Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific,” *American Quarterly* 69.3 (September 2017), 471-482.

September 6-- Labor Day-- no classes

Week 2 -- September 13
Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai*

Primary Reading:

Secondary Reading:

Week 3 -- September 20
Yi Sang, selected prose and poetry

Primary Reading:

Secondary Reading:

**Week 4 -- September 27**

Issei literature-- literature from the Pacific/American Japanese diaspora in Japanese (tanka, manga, etc.)

8:00 pm -- 9:00 pm. Discussion with Matt Sueda ‘17 via Zoom

Primary Readings:


Secondary Reading:


**Week 5 -- October 4**

The Japanese-American Internment and Nisei literature

John Okada, *No-Boy*

4:15 pm: Guest lecture by Prof. Josephine Park, University of Pennsylvania

Lecture topic: Issei and Nisei aesthetics during incarceration

Primary Reading:


Secondary Reading:


October 11 -- fall break

**II. Postwar Japan, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism**

**Week 6 -- October 18**

Introduction to Okinawan and Zainichi literature

Primary Readings:

Secondary Readings:

Week 7 -- October 25
Zainichi literature
Guest speaker/discussant: Gina Goosby ’20, co-founder of New Suns book subscription service

Primary Readings:

Secondary Readings:

Week 8 -- November 1
Okinawan literature
Primary Readings:

Secondary Readings:

III. Contemporary literature, transnationalism, and the undeath of the nation-state

Week 9 -- November 8
Karen Tei Yamashita, Circle K Cycles

Primary Reading:

Secondary Reading:

Week 10 -- November 15
Yû Miri, Tokyo Ueno Station

Primary Reading:

Secondary Reading:

Week 11 -- November 22
Tawada Yoko, short stories from Where Europe Begins

Primary Reading:

Secondary Reading:

Week 12 -- November 29
Student presentations

Week 13 -- December 6
Student presentations

5:00 pm, Thursday, December 16: Final Papers due by electronic submission