

**JPNS 391 Special Topic
Spirituality and Modern Japanese Literature**

Time: Tues./Thurs. 12:30-1:50 pm

Meeting Place: CHEM123

Instructor: Michihiro Ama (michihiro.ama@mso.umt.edu)

Office: LA320

Office Hours: 9:00-9:50 pm on Monday; 11:00 am-11:50 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; or by appointment

Course Description

This course explores the religious significance of modern Japanese prose literature. Taking Nagai Kafu's *The Fox*—which depicts both changing and unchanging aspects of Japanese religious practice at the turn of the twentieth century—as our point of departure, we will examine literary representations of Buddhism and Christianity in modern Japan, authors' religious experiences, the genre of I-novels, and self-transformation as a popular theme. Prior knowledge of Japan or Japanese is desirable but not required, as we read all texts in English.

Student Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- 1) Describe how traditional Buddhist values are re-evaluated and represented in modern Japanese literature
- 2) Characterize the modern development of Japanese Buddhism
- 3) Describe the characteristics of Japanese Christian novels and the issues related to the acculturation of Christianity in Japan
- 4) Explain the causes of the spiritual crises among modern Japanese people, as seen through fictional characters, and in the nature of selfhood characterized as being full of uncertainty
- 5) Explain the relationship between author, narrator, and hero, based on their religious experiences.

Organization

The class meets twice a week and consists of lectures, oral presentations, and discussions.

Course Requirements

Students must attend class regularly and prepare for class discussion (10% of the grade). Anyone with more than two unexcused absences will have great difficulty passing the course. There are five assessments:

- 1) Five quizzes related to the readings (25% of the grade)
- 2) Two oral presentations* (10% of the grade)

- 3) A book report on a work by Natsume Sōseki** (10% of the grade)
- 4) Mid-term examination (20% of the grade)
- 5) Final examination (25% of the grade)

There will also be a number of small group discussions, and students will be required to summarize their contributions to these discussions and submit them to the instructor at the end of classes.

*Oral presentations: Students must 1) present a brief summary of a course text assigned to them and come up with several questions related to the text and 2) present a brief summary of an additional reading assigned to them.

**Book report: Students are required to write a five-page book report on any of Natsume Sōseki's works and describe how the fictional characters experience the modern development of Japan.

Course Texts

- Endō, Shūsaku. 1980. *Silence*. New York: Taplinger Publishing Co. First published in 1969 by Monumenta Nipponica. Originally published in Japanese as *Chinmoku* in 1966.
- Sono Ayako. 2003. *No Reason for Murder*. New York: ICG Muse, Inc. Originally published in Japanese as *Tenjō no ao* in 1990.
- Nagai, Kafū. 1994. "The Fox." In *Autumn Wind: And Other Stories*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing. Originally published in Japanese as *Kitsune* in 1909.
- Natsume, Sōseki. 2000. *The Gate*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing. First published in 1972 by Peter Owen. Originally published in Japanese as *Mon* in 1910.
- Natsume, Sōseki. 2000. *The Three-Cornered World*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing. Originally published in Japanese as *Kusamakura* in 1906.
- Niwa, Fumio. 2000. *The Buddha Tree*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing. Originally published in Japanese as *Bodaiju* in 1966.
- Takeyama, Michio. 2001. *The Harp of Burma*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing. First published in 1966 by Tuttle Publishing. Originally published in Japanese as *Biruma no tategoto* in 1948.

Additional Readings (Articles and Book Chapters)

- Ama, Toshimaro. 2007. "The Eyes of Pure Objectiveness: Natsume Sōseki's Search for the Way." *The Eastern Buddhist Journal* n.s. 38, nos. ½: 112-144. (Read, pp.112-129)
- Bayer, Achim. "Silence: The Cannon and the Cross" (Review on the film *Silence*)
<https://networks.h-net.org/node/20904/discussions/169705/silence-沈黙-cannon-and-cross>
- Figal, Gerald. 1999. *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan*. Durham, Duke University Press. (Read, pp.92-104)
- Ives, Christopher. "The Mobilization of Doctrine: Buddhist Contributions to Imperial Ideology in Modern Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26-1/2 (1999):

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- 83-106. Available online (Read, pp.83-97)
- Furuta, Takehiko. 1994. "Shinran." In *Shapers of Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Yusen Kashiwabara and Koyu Sonoda, 87-96: Tokyo: Kosei publishing.
- Maeda, Ai. 2004. "The Spirits of Abandoned Gardens: On Nagai Kafū's *The Fox*." In *Text and City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, ed. James A. Fujii. 91-106. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mase-Hasegawa, Emi. 2004. *Spirit of Christ Inculturated: A Theological Theme Implicit in Shūsaku Endō's Literary Works*. Lund: Lund University. (Read, pp. 59-73)
- Odin, Steve. 2001. *Artistic Detachment in Japan and the West: Psychic Distance in Comparative Aesthetics*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. (Read, pp. 240-249)
- Richie, Donald. 2003. *Japanese Literature Reviewed*. New York: IGG Muse. (Read, "Natsume Soseki," 193-204)
- Scheiner, Irwin. 2002. *Christian Converts and Social Protests in Meiji Japan*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (Read, pp. 7-25)
- Seidensticker, Edward. 1990. *Kafū the Scribbler: The life and writings of Nagai Kafū, 1879-1959*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (Read, pp. 3-17)
- Sunami, Toshiko. 2011. "An Essay on Sono Ayako." In *Xavier's Legacies: Catholicism in Modern Japanese Culture*, ed. Kevin M. Doak. 134-144. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press.
- Tsuruta, Kin'ya. 1988. "Sōseki's *Kusamakura*: A Journey to 'The Other Side.'" *The Journal of Association of Teachers of Japanese* 22, no. 2: 169-188. (Read, pp. 169-180)
- Williams, Mark. 1996. "From Out of the Depths: The Japanese Literary Response to Christianity." In *Japan and Christianity: Impacts and Responses*, eds. John Breen and Mark Williams. 156-174. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- _____. 2003. "Endō Shōsaku." In *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature* ed. Kirk A. Denton, Bruce Fulton, and Sharalyn Orbaugh. 207-211. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Unknown author. 1990. "Fox Possession in Japan," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol.13, no. 50: 222-225. Available online

Schedule

8/31 (Th): Introduction to the Course

WK1: 9/5 (T) & 9/7 (Th)

Buddhism in Medieval and Early Modern Japanese Literature, and Changes in the Religious Landscape of Modern Japan

Readings: Nagai Kafū, *The Fox (Kitsune)*; Maeda's article

Presentations: Kafū (Seidensticker's introduction), Figal's article

WK2: 9/12 (T) & 9/14 (Th)

A "Haiku" Novel and I-Novels

Readings: Natsume Sōseki, *The Three-Cornered World*

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Presentations: Sōseki (Marcus's introduction), Odin's article, *The Three-Cornered World*

WK3: 9/19 (T) & 9/21 (Th)

Literary Representation of Zen Buddhism

Readings: Natsume Sōseki, *The Gate*

Presentations: Tsuruta's article, *The Gate*

Quiz 1: *The Three-Cornered World*

WK4: 9/26 (T) & 9/28 (Th)

Natsume Sōseki's Buddhist Experience

Readings: Natsume Sōseki, *The Gate*

Presentations: *The Gate*, Ama's article

Quiz 2: *The Gate*

WK5: 10/3 (T) & 10/5 (Th)

Book Report Project

WK6: 10/10 (T) & 10/12 (Th)

Japanese Buddhism and the Pacific War

Readings: Takeyama Michio, *The Harp of Burma*

Presentations: Ives's article, *The Harp of Burma*

WK 7: 10/17 (T) & 10/19 (Th)

Film: *The Principles and Practice of Zen*

Mid-term papers Due on 10/19

WK8: 10/24 (T) & 10/26 (Th)

Shinran and Pure Land Buddhism

Readings: Niwa Fumio, *The Buddha Tree*

Presentations: Furuta's article, *The Buddha Tree*

WK9: 10/31 (T) & 11/2 (Th)

Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Japan

Readings: *The Buddha Tree*

Presentations: *The Buddha Tree*

Quiz 3: *The Buddha Tree*

WK10: 11/7 (T) & 11/9 (Th)

Christianity Japanized

Readings: Endō Shūsaku, *Silence*

Presentations: Endō Shūsaku (Williams's article), Scheiner's article, *Silence*

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WK11: 11/14 (T) & 11/16 (Th)

Christianity Japanized—Continued

Readings: Endō Shūsaku, *Silence*

Presentations: *Silence*, Mase-Hasegawa's article, Williams's article

Quiz 4: *Silence*

WK12: 11/21 (T) & 11/23 (Th---No Class)

Film: *The Coming of the Barbarians*

WK13: 11/28 (T) & 11/30 (Th)

Christianity in Crime Fiction

Readings: Sono Ayako, *No Reason for Murder*

Presentations: Sono Ayako (Sunami's article), *No Reason for Murder*

WK14: 12/5 (T) & 12/7 (Th)

Christianity in Crime Fiction—Continued

Readings: Sono Ayako, *No Reason for Murder*

Presentations: *No Reason for Murder*

Quiz 5: *No Reason for Murder*

WK15: 12/12 (T)

Review of Religion and Literature in Modern Japan

Final Exam Essays Due on 12/19 (T)

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is mandatory as class participation is a vital part of language acquisition and affects the students' grades. They can improve their participation and make the class more interesting by coming to class prepared; interacting with the instructor and classmates in Japanese; and asking questions, commenting on discussion topics, and volunteering answers and sharing ideas in group activities. *Student attendance will be noted at the beginning of each class. Anyone with more than three unexcused absences will have great difficulty in passing the course.* Late arrival to class will be counted as 1/2 an absence. Early departure from class will be counted as one-day absence. To keep up to date, it is highly recommended that students keep in contact with their classmates when they miss the handouts and information given on a class day.

Moodle

Students are responsible for obtaining updated course information by checking Moodle.

Please log in at <https://login.umt.edu/idp/profile/cas/login?execution=e1s1>

and visit “Moodle 101 for Students” for tutorial instruction.

Grading Policy

Grading

The following is used as a guideline. Final grades will be adjusted taking into consideration the grade curve (the distribution of all the students’ grade points).

A+ =97-100, A =93-96, A- =90-92

B+ =87-89, B = 83-86, B- =80-82

C+ =77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72

D = 60-69

F = Below 60

- If a student drops the course, s/he is responsible for the paperwork. Otherwise, the student will receive an F as the final grade. If a student wishes to change grade option, s/he must register this request. See **Official Dates and Deadlines for Autumn Semester 2017**.

Changing the status after the official dates and deadlines is NOT permitted.

- *Incomplete grades will NOT be granted*, unless the student has progressed satisfactory but incidents beyond the student’s control prevent him/her from pursuing the goal.
- When long absences and emergencies are expected, consult with the instructor immediately. *Do NOT wait until the incident is over.*
- *Make-up tests will NOT be permitted* unless the student has a legitimate excuse and contacts the instructor 12 hours prior to a quiz/exam day. However, it will be left to the instructor’s discretion as to whether or not a make-up is granted.
- Students are required to maintain all of their work, including tests, quizzes, homework, and artifacts, which may include business cards, a video recording of a presentation, business letters, etc.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to follow ethical standards such as integrity and honesty in preparing and presenting materials that demonstrate their level of knowledge and that is used to determine their grades. When an act of academic dishonesty is detected, the instructor is obliged to speak to the student and report it to the Department. For more detailed information, see the **section V Academic Conduct in the University of Montana Student Conduct Code** (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

Student Service Policies

- **Emergency Procedures:** In case of an emergency evacuation, students will take all their personal belongings and move to a safe area outside the building.
- **Disability Accommodations:** “Students with disabilities, faculty, and Disability Services for Students have rights and responsibilities related to reasonable modifications. Collaborative efforts among these three parties ensure equal access.”

“Faculty expects the student to initiate modification requests and provides reasonable modifications to ensure equal access. Faculty also refers students to Disability Services when necessary and refrains from retaliation against individuals advocating for accessibility.” (Cited from <http://www.umt.edu/dss/Faculty/default.php>)

It is highly recommended that students with certified disabilities make a specific request to the instructor at least one week prior to the particular need.

- **Disruptive and Improper Behavior:** Cell phones must be turned off when a class is in session. No chewing of gum or eating in class is allowed. The dress code should be in accord with the learning place.