Japanese Studies course descriptions 2022-23

Part II (fourth year)

Students are required to have spent a period of at least eight months in Japan during their third year.

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Students write a dissertation

Descriptions

Part II (fourth year)

J.11 Modern Japanese 3 (Japanese Language Teachers)

Supplementary Regulation

The main aims of the course are that students: (a) acquire the ability to understand advanced written and spoken Japanese; (b) acquire the ability to discuss, in Japanese, a wide range of topics; (c) increase competence in written skills.

Lectures and Classes

Taught in Michaelmas, Lent and Easter

Total of 56 language classes and 18 hours of supervisions

Form and Conduct

The paper will consist of three questions: (1) a short unseen passage for translation from English into Japanese; (2) an unseen Japanese text to be summarized in Japanese; candidates will also be asked to answer in Japanese questions based on the text; and (3) a short composition in Japanese. Candidates will be required to attempt all three questions.
J.12 Modern Japanese Texts 3 (Japanese Studies Staff)

Supplementary Regulation

This course consists of reading texts in advanced modern Japanese with much attention given not only to grammar and syntax but also to context. Supplementary reading will also be expected.

Lectures and Classes

Taught for 16 weeks over Michaelmas, Lent and/or Easter terms.

Language classes twice a week. No supervisions.

Form and Conduct

This paper consists of two sections which have equal value. Section A consists of unseen passages for translation from Japanese into English. Section B consists of longer unseen passages in Japanese with comprehension questions answered in English. Students must answer both sections. Students are permitted the use of jisho.org and weblio.jp in support of their translations; the use of any other resource or site is prohibited.

J.0 Japanese Oral (Japanese Language Teachers)

The oral examination consists of three sections and all oral tests will be recorded.

Supervisions: see under J.11

Form and Conduct

The oral examination will consist of three sections. Section (a), Speech, will be taken at the beginning of the fourth year and sections (b) and (c), listening comprehension and oral précis, will be taken at the end of the fourth year.

(a) Speech: candidates will be asked to give an oral presentation based on an essay in Japanese that they have worked on during their year abroad. The speech itself should last no more than ten minutes; notes are allowed but the speech must not be read aloud from a prewritten text. A short conversation may follow (40 marks).

(b) Listening comprehension: candidates will listen to a selection of recorded passages of Japanese and answer questions in Japanese and/or in English (20 marks).

(c) Oral précis: candidates will prepare a passage in English with the aid of dictionaries, the content of which will be summarized in Japanese before the examiners. A short conversation in Japanese on the topic may follow (40 marks).

Optional courses (additional Regulation 8 papers)

J.13 Advanced Japanese Texts [Not offered 2022-23]

J.14 Classical Japanese Texts [Not offered 2022-23]

J.15 Modern Japanese Cultural History (Dr Young)

Supplementary Regulation

This seminar-style paper will explore specific facets, approaches and methodologies of modern and contemporary works of Japanese literature and culture.
Course Description

A recent ‘boom’ in English translations of Japanese literary works suggests that the future is bright. Reading lists and syllabi are no longer limited to the same, predominantly male list of usual suspects while the international success of writers such as Murakami Haruki proves that Japanese literature now reaches beyond the classroom walls. In the wake of renewed interest in ‘world literature’, the story of Japan’s ‘national literature’ has gone global, aided by a new generation of multilingual ‘transborder’ writers. At the same time as exports of Japanese literature are becoming more visible in the world, however, works by Okinawan, ethnic Korean and other writers ‘from the margins’ remain side-lined by these popular flows.

To provoke: despite current demands within other literary fields to incorporate more curricular diversity in the name of ‘decolonisation’, Japanese literary studies have reached an impasse wherein the transgressive ideals of globalisation serve only the national agenda, driving an even greater wedge between contemporary fiction and the (colonial) past. How, then, can we speak of ‘decolonisation’ in relation to Japanese literature? How can we diversify without fetishizing those texts that appear ‘different’? What do the terms ‘nation’, ‘world’ and ‘margins’ even mean in this contemporary context? And, what has translation got to do with it?

To approach these questions, we will read selected works of fiction and literary essays that interrogate the borders and margins of contemporary Japanese fiction. We will examine the historical, social, and political backdrops that inform such writing and carry out close readings of themes and motifs aided by relevant critical theories. As these texts regularly play with linguistic difference in multiple and intriguing ways, we will also consider translation in both theory and practice. All required readings will be available in English, supplemented occasionally by original Japanese texts in order to probe further. Ultimately, this course presents an opportunity to read a fascinating range of lesser-studied works of Japanese literature designed to broaden your awareness of the kinds of texts produced in Japanese, and train you to engage with key questions at the heart of contemporary Japanese literary studies.

Aims

- Introduce key modern and contemporary literary works that bring into focus the borders and margins of Japanese literature.

- Understand the historical contexts and socio-cultural themes that inform these literary works.

- Learn to read and discuss literary works critically by drawing on central concepts and theories relevant to the field of contemporary literary studies within and beyond Japan.

- Explore how these texts engage questions of translation, bordering, and intertextuality to question objectively what it means to speak of ‘Japanese literature’ in an era of globalisation.

Structure

The course is a discussion-based seminar that meets in 2-hour sessions for 16 weeks across the three terms, allowing students enough time to prepare readings and work on their projects.

Meetings will usually begin with a student presentation (either individually or in pairs) focused on the primary literary text. This duty will rotate fairly among the students in the seminar. Presentations should last around 15-20 minutes and should stimulate discussions about the literary texts and the issues that they raise. The presenting student(s) will also be responsible for chairing a follow-up Q&A. The second part of the seminar will build into a general discussion of the assigned texts paying attention to relevant aspects of literary analysis, theory and methodologies. This regular format will be varied through the inclusion
of a specific workshop each term on translating multilingual texts (Michaelmas), reading critical theory (Lent), and student presentations of their research essays (Easter).

**Requirements**

All students must read the weekly primary text(s) plus a minimum of two secondary readings and be prepared to participate in the seminar discussion. Where available, students should also seek out literary reviews to see how the primary works are popularly received. In Michaelmas, students will be asked to submit a book review, commentary or text-based close reading of a literary work, which will be followed by a supervision. There will be a second supervision before Christmas for which students will be asked to submit a one-page proposal and provisional bibliography that defines the topic for their research essay. Additional supervisions will be given during Lent to support students as they develop their essays. There will be a minimum of four supervisions throughout the year.

**Form and Conduct**

The coursework that constitutes this paper’s assessment will consist of one research essay, of between 6,000 and 7,500 words, including footnotes and excluding bibliography. Each student will develop the topic of the essay in consultation with the instructor. An outline plus a bibliography will be due at the beginning of Lent Term. Two hard copies and one electronic copy (pdf) of the research essay shall be submitted to the Programmes Administrator in the Faculty Office so as to arrive not later than the division of Full Easter Term.

**J.16 Topics in Pre-modern Japanese History [Not offered 2022-23]**

**J.17 Topics in Modern Japanese History (Professor Kushner)**

**Supplementary Regulation**

This advanced seminar-based course will explore approaches to and topics in recent scholarship of modern Japanese history.

**Course Description**

The story of the Japanese empire's surrender in August 1945 is well known but we understand much less about what followed this downfall during the process of “de-imperialization” and the reordering of East Asia after war. How did power and authority in postwar East Asia transform and what forces shaped the regional postwar hierarchy when Japanese power and command dissolved? How were political and social stability re-established and within what framework, employing what ideology to gain public support? With the end of Japan's empire, approximately nine million people, almost a tenth of Japan's imperial population, needed to repatriate in one of the largest human migration moments in history and one hundred million Chinese were uprooted as well. The situation was anything but stable or predictable. For too long Japanese, Chinese and Korean histories have been written within a national framework and within such narrow confines the larger and more important key regional narrative has been lost. Most Japanese imperial aggression took place on and around the Chinese mainland, not in Japan proper, yet Hiroshima and the Tokyo Trial are what is most remembered about Japan's war domestically and in the West. Precisely how the political realm was restructured in postwar East Asia and the impact of that legacy needs to be examined beyond the national history paradigm. Our overemphasis on national history and its connection to ideas of justice have blinded us to what was happening regionally and an acknowledgement of the fact that victors are not the only ones who write history or the history of justice reminds us of the ignored story of the history of defeat in East Asia. The legal restructuring of East Asia and Japan’s relations with its
neighbors played a vital function in redressing former imperial relations in the Cold War and the class will also analyze those important aspects.

Structure

The course is a discussion-based seminar that meets in 2-hour sessions for 16 weeks across two terms, allowing students enough time to prepare readings and work on their projects. The meetings will begin with a critical summary of the reading by one or two students, who will also offer a supplemental bibliography of western language readings relevant to the theme. This duty will rotate among the students in the seminar. We will then hold a general discussion of the assigned texts, paying particular attention to research methods, theories and approaches used, the scholarly relevance of the works themselves and how they contrast with more standard treatments of the same period. Some of the seminars will be devoted to student presentations of their research projects.

Requirements

All students are expected to read and discuss the issues raised in the assigned readings, and they will take turns in making presentation. In order to get familiar with the historiographical setting, it is also important to look at book reviews of the works assigned. In addition, students will produce one book review or review article for one of the sessions in Michaelmas, which will be followed by a supervision. By the end of Michaelmas, there will be an additional supervision, where students will be asked to define a topic for their research essay. During Lent, there will be additional supervisions pertaining to the essay, and the course will finish with individual presentations on the essay topics. There will be a minimum of four supervisions for the paper.

Form and Conduct

The coursework that constitutes this paper’s assessment consists of one research essay, of between 6,000 and 7,500 words, including footnotes and excluding bibliography. Each student will develop the topic of the essay in consultation with the instructor. Two hard copies and one electronic copy (pdf) of the research essay shall be submitted to the Programmes Administrator in the Faculty Office so as to arrive not later than the division of Full Easter Term.

J.18 Japanese Politics and International Relations [Not offered 2022-23]

J.19 Contemporary Japanese Society (Dr Steger et al.)

This is an advanced seminar-based course focusing on contemporary Japanese society. The focus will vary from year to year, such as questions of learning and education, family, time, space, gender or the like, investigating these topics from a wide range of angles. In each instance the emphasis will be on situating the study of Japan within the disciplinary context of Social Anthropology and Sociology. In the academic year 2021-2022 the topic is ‘cleanliness’. The course is aimed at deepening students’ understanding of (selected aspects of) Japanese society as well as developing research and writing skills. It will involve working with both secondary and primary source material.

Taught in Michaelmas, Lent and Easter

Total of 32 seminars and 2 supervisions.

Form and Conduct

The coursework that constitutes this paper’s assessment consists of one research essay, of between 6,000 and 7,500 words, including footnotes and excluding bibliography. Each student will develop the topic of the essay in consultation with the instructor. A one-page topic and paper outline plus a bibliography will be due during the first class session of Lent.
Term. Two hard copies of the research essay shall be submitted to the Programmes Administrator in the Faculty Office so as to arrive not later than the division of Full Easter Term.

**J20 Premodern Japanese literature and culture (Dr Moretti)**

**Supplementary Regulation**

This seminar-style paper explores facets of classical, medieval and/or early modern literature and culture.

**Course Description**

Japanese premodern literature often confronts us with texts that discomfort, challenging our expectations vis-à-vis the literary and asking us to rethink how we read. Literary histories have often silenced the voices that such texts unlock, deemed too alien for us, twenty-first century readers, to make sense of them. Yet, engagement with such early modern texts allow us to question the modern assumptions of what literature should be and prompt through-provoking question on how we view literature.

The topics and the genres covered in this seminar-style paper may vary from year to year, but the focus will be on early modern prose with a view to develop analytical skills that prove adequate in probing this corpus. Attention will be given to issues that include the epistemic function of literature, intertextuality, multimodality, humour, playfulness, and storyworlds among others. We will also reflect upon how the literary canon is constructed and what is at stake in the process. While gaining solid knowledge about the historical development of specific genres of early modern prose and reading a wide variety of primary sources in English translation, this paper trains students to question claims made by secondary literature and fosters reflection on important methodological issues that apply to the study of written texts regardless of culture and epoch.

The topic for 2022-23 revolves around early modern graphic narratives (*kusazōshi* or “grass books”). Early modern Japan (1600-1867) was home to a phenomenal publishing industry that engaged a wide gamut of readers by packaging products geared toward diverse literacy skills. Graphic narratives—a term adapted here from Hillary Chute (2008) and defined as commercially published, book-length works where text and image inhabit the same space and share in the production of meaning—featured heavily in this rich and diverse landscape of commercial publishing. Known as *kusazōshi* (lit. "grass books"), thousands of titles were issued over the course of three centuries, from the 1680s to the beginning of the twentieth century. A staple product of booksellers and circulating libraries, they were cherished by readers of all ages, across genders, transcending the allegedly rigid social system of the time.

Graphic narratives have never been as relevant as today. Galvanized by the so-called visual or pictorial turn as defined by influential art historian W.J.T. Mitchell (1995), where pictures emerge “as a central topic of discussion in the human sciences in the way that language did,” the past twenty years have seen a surge in studies that problematize any divide between the visual and the verbal. Inquiries into the “visual language” marshalled by Neil Cohn have combined with an increasing interest in multimodality—here defined as the combination of the visual and the verbal modes, asking us to fully engage with texts that are delivered in a combination of different modes of communication, text and image being a case in point. Research on picture books, comic books and graphic novels have been fuelled by this theoretical interest in intersemiotic texts. Japan is an important part of this vibrant academic work, with a vast number of volumes and articles devoted to the study of manga within and outside Japan. While acknowledging the need to avoid the trap of “teleological readings as well as exaggerated accounts of cultural origins” (Millier in Tabachnick 2017), the times are ripe to investigate the imposing body of graphic narratives produced in early
modern Japan and explore how they expand our understanding of how graphic narratives work. This is precisely what we will be exploring in our journey together. We will be reading a wide selection of early modern graphic narratives translated into English. The aims are multiple:

1. Understand how graphic narratives (kusazōshi) developed from the 1680s to the end of the nineteenth century.
2. Explore how early modern writers depicted the historical development of this textual typology and fostered a form of genre consciousness.
3. Gain knowledge about key publishers, authors, and illustrators invested in the creation of kusazōshi.
4. Appreciate how the idea of authorship is problematized by works produced by a team of professionals.
5. Learn how to discuss these multimodal texts on their own term as well as by making effective use of theoretical discourse developed within and without Japan, including scholarship on graphic narratives and postmodern literature.
6. Reflect on how kusazōshi differ from contemporary forms of graphic narratives, including manga.

Ultimately this paper presents a unique opportunity to read a fascinating selection of early modern sources that will broaden your understanding of the literary and train you to ask relevant questions to make sense of Japanese texts that challenge our views of the literary.

Structure

This paper is a discussion-based seminar that meets in 2-hour sessions for 16 weeks across two terms (Michaelmas and Lent). Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings, both primary and secondary sources, and ready to discuss them. All primary sources will be available in English translation. Occasionally students may be asked to give presentations. In Michaelmas Term students will produce a short essay (ca. 1500-2000 words) on a specific text assigned by the instructor. This essay does not count toward the final mark. During the winter break and in Lent Term on top of preparations for the classes, students will be asked to start working on their research essay and there will be supervisions geared toward this. The course will finish with individual, unmarked presentations on the essay topics.

Lectures and Classes

Total of 16 two-hour seminars and a minimum of 4 supervisions. Taught in Michaelmas and Lent Term.

Form and Conduct

The coursework that constitutes this paper’s assessment will consist of one research essay of between 6,000 and 7,500 words, including footnotes and excluding bibliography. Each student will develop the topic of the essay in consultation with the instructor. An outline plus a bibliography will be due at the beginning of Lent Term. Two hard copies and one electronic copy (pdf) of the research essay shall be submitted to the Programmes Administrator in the Faculty Office so as to arrive not later than the division of Full Easter Term.

K.2 Modern Korean 2 (Dr Harker)

Supplementary Regulation
Students wishing to enrol in K2 would normally be expected either to have taken K1 or have a level of Korean language ability equivalent to that achieved from having taken K1.

Course Description

The main aims of this course are to enable students to: (a) review, consolidate and further develop knowledge of the main aspects of the Korean language; (b) acquire the ability to understand written and spoken Korean in a variety of contexts; (c) acquire the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing on a range of topics such as society, politics, history etc.; (d) foster a further understanding of contemporary Korean society and culture. The course will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of cultural norms and practices in South Korea.

Form and Conduct

This paper consists of an oral examination (50%) and a written examination (50%). The written assessment comprises three sections: Section A tests candidates’ grammatical knowledge; Section B reading comprehension; and Section C writing ability in Korean.

Lectures and Classes

A total of 60 hours of classes; and a number of supervisions as appropriate over Michaelmas, Lent and Easter terms

EAS.2 The East Asian Region: The Cold War and its Aftermath in East Asia (Dr Nilsson-Wright)

Supplementary Regulation

This is seminar-based course, open to both undergraduates and graduate students, that extends the comparative approach adopted in EAS.1. It concentrates on thematic and policy issues relevant to understanding Japan, the Korean peninsula, China (broadly defined), the Soviet Union (and its Russian successor state), India, and also Southeast Asia, as well as the role of the United States in East Asia. In particular, it analyses the tensions between security and the national interest on the one hand, and values and the promotion of democracy on the other, not only in the United States’ policy toward the region, but increasingly in the policy of other nation-states in the region. The course considers the strengths and limitations of different disciplinary approaches in addressing this issue.

The course runs over three terms and draws explicitly on historical research and social science methodology in addressing how best to conceptualize 'East Asia' as a region. Topics addressed will vary from year to year, but an indicative list of subjects covered in the course includes some, but not necessarily all of the following issues: the Cold War as a historical phenomenon; methodological differences and similarities between history and international relations, the US “loss” of China and the emergence of the People’s Republic of China; the Korean War; the first, second and third Indochina Wars; the Sino-Soviet split; US alliance diplomacy with Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK); Indian foreign policy and the non-aligned movement; ASEAN in regional diplomacy; the North Korean nuclear crisis; new regional security architectures in East Asia; the European role in regional diplomacy; territorial disputes in East Asia, including the status of Taiwan and conflict over the South China Sea; populism as a phenomenon in East Asia; regional economic integration and economic and human security frameworks of analysis. Taught in Michaelmas, Lent and Easter.

Lectures and Classes

Total of 16 sessions of 2-3 hours and 2 supervisions
Form and Conduct

This paper will contain ten essay questions, of which candidates will be required to attempt three.
Combining two East Asian languages at Part II

Students who have passed either Chinese or Japanese Part IB may choose to study the other language at Part II. Note, however, that the usual year abroad will NOT be available and a Preliminary Examination for Part II must be sat at the end of the third year.

The Faculty Board must grant permission to take Chinese with Japanese or Japanese with Chinese. Students wanting to take either option must apply for permission from the Faculty Board by the division of Lent term in their second year.

Students are reminded that AMES language papers have an oral component and a separate entry needs to be made for each oral. The oral entry codes are Chinese oral exam (CO) and Japanese oral exam (JO).

Papers for the Preliminary Examination for Part II

Chinese with Japanese

Papers J.1–3;

One paper chosen from J.9, AMES.1, and C.7–8 or both half-papers of J.6A/B, and J.10A/B [but not one already taken at Part IB];

Japanese oral.

Japanese with Chinese

Papers C.1–3;

One paper or two half-papers chosen from C.7–8, AMES.1, and J.7–10 [but not one already taken at Part IB];

Chinese oral.

Papers for Tripos Part II

Chinese with Japanese

Papers J.4, J.5A and J.5B;

Paper C.12;

either Paper C.11, or Paper C.13, when it has been announced by the Faculty Board under the provisions of Regulation 8;

two further papers chosen from the papers announced by the Faculty Board under Regulation 8, provided that only papers prefixed with C may be chosen;

Japanese oral.

Japanese with Chinese

Papers C.4–5;

Paper J.12;

Three papers chosen from the papers announced by the Faculty Board under Regulation 8, provided that only papers prefixed with J., EAS., or K. may be chosen.

Chinese oral.