

Japanese Studies course descriptions 2020-21

Part II (fourth year)

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

Students take the following:

Compulsory courses:	J.11 Modern Japanese 3 J.12 Modern Japanese Texts 3 J.O Japanese Oral
Students choose two optional courses ² :	J.15 Modern Japanese Cultural History J.17 Topics in Modern Japanese History J.20 Premodern Japanese literature and culture K.1 Modern Korean Reading and Writing
Students write a dissertation	

Descriptions

Part II (fourth year)

J.11 Modern Japanese 3 (Dr Kawabata, Mrs Boulding)

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 52 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.

² Two papers chosen from the papers announced by the Faculty Board under Regulation 8, with the proviso that J.13 cannot be combined with K.1. **The Department reserves the right not to offer a paper that is undersubscribed.**
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The Handbook is revised constantly. For the latest version see the Faculty intranet.

J.12 Modern Japanese Texts 3 (Dr John Nilsson-Wright, Dr Batts)

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.O Japanese Oral (Dr Kawabata, Mrs Boulding)

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 2020-21]

J.14 Premodern texts [Not offered 2020-21]

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 2020-21]

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 the three 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 2020-21]

J.19 Contemporary Japanese Society [Not offered 2020-21]

J.20 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 challenge our expectations vis-à-vis the literary and asks us to rethink how we read. 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 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.

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 presentations on the essay topics.

Topic for 2020-21: Early modern *kusazōshi* picturebooks

Lectures and Classes

Total of 16 two-hour seminars and a minimum of 4 supervisions.

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.1 Modern Korean Reading and Writing (Dr Harker)

Supplementary Regulation

This course is designed to enable students to comprehend elementary-level Korean texts and write simple essays in Korean. Students are introduced to the Korean alphabet, Hangeul and distinctive features of Korean grammar. They will learn to read and understand various Korean texts, and ultimately to produce essays in Korean.

Form and Conduct

This paper tests candidates' knowledge of Korean grammar, comprehension of Korean texts and ability to produce an essay in Korean in three sections. Candidates' grammatical knowledge is tested in Section A (40 marks), their comprehension in Section B, where they are required to translate Korean passages into English (30 marks), and their ability to write an essay on a topic in Section C (30 marks).

EAS.2 The East Asian Region (Dr Nilsson-Wright)

Supplementary Regulation

A seminar-based course 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), and also Southeast Asia, as well as the role of the United States in East Asia. The course runs over two 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, depending on the research interests of the teaching officers involved, but an indicative list of subjects covered in the course would include some, but not necessarily all of the following issues: the Cold War as a historical phenomenon; conflict and war in East Asia and contemporary security challenges; comparative models of economic development in East Asia and the role of 'plan-rational' policy-making; the role of the nation-state and competing models of historical identity; multilateralism, the emergence of trans-national actors and economic integration in East Asia; political legitimacy, contrasting models of authoritarian rule, and democratization as a

political movement; demographic change; energy and environmental policy and technological change. 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.