Literary Adaptation in Pre-modern Japanese Literature

Every new literary work, no matter how original, relies on what has come before. Each builds on the body of literature that precedes it, and in turn serves as inspiration for the literature which follows. This process of borrowing and adapting existing themes for new audiences or in different media is one of the most prominent aspects of the Japanese literary tradition, in which the practice of expressing new ideas through innovative treatment of the familiar has long been appreciated, and an understanding of this process is thus vital to an appreciation of Japan’s literary heritage. In this course, we begin with the folk song and poetry that marks the origins of Japanese literature. On this foundation was built Japan’s literary golden age, the Heian period, and its exemplar work, the *Tale of Genji*. Eventually this golden age of refined courtiers would give way to the age of the *samurai* warrior class, its ideals preserved in the military account, the *Tale of the Heike*. These two great tales would provide inspiration for generations of later Japanese, providing basic storylines to be adapted in genres as diverse as the refined *nō* drama, the vibrant *kabuki* theater, and the coarse and frequently vulgar Tokugawa era *gesaku*.

Through reading selected works in various genres from each successive period, we will attempt to gain an understanding of the process through which the old remains fresh by being continually reinterpreted by generations of authors.

This course makes extensive use of the University of Virginia’s online Toolkit, both to distribute readings and as a forum for submitting and responding to reaction papers. Access Toolkit at http://toolkit.itc.virginia.edu, and login using your University of Virginia UserID and password. The Toolkit interface is fairly straightforward, but if you have no experience using the system or are uncomfortable with computers, let me know immediately so we can help you get started. Becoming experienced with using Toolkit is vital to your success in this course.

Evaluation will be on the basis of class attendance and participation, online reaction papers and responses, one class presentation, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Six Online Reaction Papers</td>
<td>6 x 5%     = 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Online Responses</td>
<td>10 x 2%    = 20%</td>
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<td>In-Class Presentation</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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* Note: For those students taking JPTR 556, there will be additional requirements. See me after class for details.
Most important, both to your grade and to the success of the class, is keeping up on the readings and being ready to discuss them. For each day’s readings, select at least one quote from the texts and come to class ready to discuss its significance and your reasons for choosing it. Throughout the semester you will also be required to post reaction papers and responses to the Toolkit online discussion group. A reaction paper should be approximately 1 1/2 pages long and should articulate your reaction to that day’s readings. It does not need to be a formal argumentative essay, but it should be more substantive than mere summary. It is intended to give your interpretation of the material in light of your own experience and the issues we raise in class, and should show an active engagement with the text. Reaction papers must be posted online by midnight the day before the class in which the readings are to be discussed, in order to give your fellow students time to read them before class. Late reaction papers are useless to fostering discussion and thus will not be accepted. Six of these papers are required over the course of the semester and you may choose the readings to which you wish to respond, but you may not write more than one in any given week. These reaction papers are considered a part of the required readings for all students, and you should make a point of reading the other students’ reactions, and perhaps writing an online response to them, before coming to class. The online responses are less formal than the reaction papers and should respond not only to the text itself, but to other students’ reactions. There is no set length for these responses, but they should show a willingness to engage with other students’ ideas rather than relying only on one’s own interpretation. A minimum of ten of these responses are required over the course of the semester, but you are encouraged to write more. In one class session per student during the semester, each individual student will also be required to read additional readings and present on their content in in-class presentations. We will schedule these presentations early in the course.

There are five required texts for this course:

- Steven D. Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry* (TJP)
- Helen Craig McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose* (CJP)
- Helen Craig McCullough, *Genji & Heike* (G&H)
- Karen Brazell, *Traditional Japanese Theater* (TJT)
- Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature* (EMJL)

Additional readings will be made available in pdf format in the “Materials” section of Toolkit. Readings for in-class presentations will be given directly to the responsible student.

It should go without saying that plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. There is a link to the UVA Honor Policy on Toolkit, and it is assumed that all students are bound by that policy.
Course Schedule

• Week one • Getting Started

Thursday, January 20th Introduction, Syllabus

• Week two • Heian Literature – from poetry to prose

Tuesday, January 25th
Readings:
“Poets of the Early Courts,” TJP pp. 19-23
“Kakinomoto no Hitomaro,” TJP pp. 24-30
“Yamanoue no Okura,” TJP pp. 44-50
Laurel Rasplica Rodd, Kokinshū (online) pp. 35-53
“Ariwara no Narihira,” TJP pp. 76-82
“Ono no Komachi,” TJP pp. 82-87
“Ki no Tsurayuki,” TJP pp. 100-107

Thursday, January 27th
Readings:
“Tales of Ise,” CJP pp. 38-58
Mildred Tahara, Tales of Yamato (online) pp. 93-103
“A Tosa Journal,” CJP pp. 70-80

• Week three • The Tale of Genji

Tuesday, February 1st
Readings: Richard Bowring, Murasaki Shikibu: The Tale of Genj (online)
“The Cultural Background,” pp. 1-21
“Kiritsubo” and “The Broom Tree” G&H pp. 25-58

Thursday, February 3rd
Readings: “Yûgao” and “Young Murasaki” G&H pp. 59-112

• Week four • The Tale of Genji

Tuesday, February 8th
Readings: “Autumn Leaves” and “Aoi” G&H pp. 113-159

Thursday, February 10th
Readings: “Suma” and “Akashi” G&H pp. 160-215
•Week five•

Transition to the Kamakura period

Tuesday, February 15th
“jottings” and folk tales
Readings:
“The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon,” CJP pp. 156-183
“Short Tales of Aristocratic Life,” CJP pp. 251-270
“Tales of Times Now Past,” CJP pp. 272-282
Marian Ury, Tales of Times Now Past (online) pp. 93-96, 161-171

Thursday, February 17th
The Tale of the Heike
Readings: Chapters 1-3, G&H pp. 245-304

•Week six•

The Tale of the Heike

Tuesday, February 22nd
The Tale of the Heike
Readings: Chapters 4-6, G&H pp. 305-344

Thursday, February 24th
The Tale of the Heike
Readings: Chapters 7-10, G&H pp. 345-415

•Week seven•

The Tale of the Heike

Tuesday, March 1st
The Tale of the Heike
Readings: Chapters 11, 12, Initiates’ Chapter; G&H pp. 416-458
In Class: Midterm Review

Thursday, March 3rd
Midterm Exam

•Week eight•

Spring Break – No Class

•Week nine•

Medieval poetry & prose

Tuesday, March 15th
Shinkokinshû aesthetics
Readings:
“Fujiwara no Shunzei,” TJP pp. 145-156
“Monk Saigyô,” TJP pp. 157-167
“Retired Emperor Go-Toba and Shin-kokinshû,” TJP pp. 182-192
“Fujiwara Teika,” TJP pp. 192-203

Thursday, March 17th
medieval zuihitsu
Readings:
“An Account of my Hermitage,” CJP pp. 377-392
“Essays in Idleness,” CJP pp. 393-421
•Week ten•  renga and nô

Tuesday, March 22nd  renga – linked verse
Readings: Janet Goff, Noh Drama and the Tale of Genji (online)  
“Reception of the Genji in the Middle Ages,” pp. 14-29
“Bishop Shinkei,” TJP pp. 289-296
“Monk Sôgi,” TJP pp. 297-302
“Three Poets at Minase” TJP pp. 303-326

Thursday, March 24th  introduction to nô drama
Readings: “Elements of Performance,” TJT pp. 115-125
“Izutsu,” TJT pp. 143-157
“Dôjôji,” TJT pp. 193-206
“Ashikari,” from Donald Keene (online) pp. 147-164

•Week eleven•  Nô drama

Tuesday, March 29th  nô drama and the Genji
Readings: Janet Goff, Noh Drama and the Tale of Genji (online)  
“Plays about Yûgao,” pp. 102-110
“Hajitomi,” pp. 111-114
“Yûgao,” pp. 115-119
“Plays about Lady Rokujô,” pp. 125-133
“Aoi no Ue,” pp. 134-139
“Nonomiya,” pp. 140-145

Thursday, March 31st  nô drama and the Heike
Readings: “Shunkan,” TJT pp. 179-193
“Atsumori,” TJT pp. 126-142
** Print out and bring to class the Atsumori Noh Performance Guide (online)

•Week twelve•  Muromachi tales and poetry

Tuesday, April 5th  otogizôshi
Readings: “Two Companion Booklets,” CJP pp. 495-509
“The Tale of Dôjôji,” Skord, pp. 129-155 (online)
Edward Putzar, “The Tale of Monkey Genji” (online)

Thursday, April 7th  haikai renga, haikai, and haibun
Readings: “Comic Linked Verse,” TJP pp. 331-337
“Early Haikai,” TJP pp. 338-344
“Matsuo Bashô,” TJP pp. 347-353
“Bashô and the Art of Haikai,” EMJL pp. 180-181
“Narrow Road to the Deep North,” EMJL pp. 209-230
•Week thirteen•  

Into the Tokugawa Period

Thursday, April 12th

Tokugawa parody and comic poetry

Readings:

“Kana Booklets & Emergence of Print Culture,” *EMJL* pp. 21-41
“Comic Poetry,” *TJP* pp. 407-416
“Comic and Satiric Poetry,” *EMJL* pp. 520-537

Thursday, April 14th

ukiyo zōshi

Readings:

“Ihara Saikaku,” *EMJL* pp. 42-45
“Life of a Sensuous Man,” *EMJL* pp. 45-57
“Life of a Sensuous Woman,” *EMJL* pp. 82-92
“Japan’s Eternal Storehouse,” *EMJL* pp. 131-150

•Week fourteen•  

Tokugawa drama

Tuesday, April 19th

kabuki and bunraku

Readings:

“Chikamatsu Monzaemon,” *EMJL* pp. 237-242
“The Love Suicides at Amijima.” *EMJL* pp. 313-346
“The First Note of Spring,” *TJT* pp. 364-375

Thursday, April 21st

kabuki and bunraku

Readings: James R. Brandon, *Kabuki: Five Classic Plays* (online)

“Chronicle of the Battle of Ichinotani,” pp. 165-211

•Week fifteen•  

Tokugawa drama and later fiction

Tuesday, April 26th

kabuki and bunraku

Readings:

“Shunkan on Devil Island,” *TJT* pp. 418-441
“Maiden at Dôjôji,” *TJT* pp. 506-524

Thursday, April 28th

yomihon and gôkan

Readings:

“Ueda Akinari,” *EMJL* pp. 563-599
“Ryûtei Tanehiko” *EMJL* pp. 801-842

•Week sixteen•  

Adaptation continues – into the modern period

Tuesday, May 3rd

the modern novel

Readings: Tanizaki Jun’ichirô’s *The Reed Cutter* (online) pp. 3-53

In Class: Final Exam Review

Saturday, May 14th  9:00am -12:00pm Final Exam