

Spring 1-1-2014

## Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture: constructions of religious and historical identity

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### Recommended Citation

Green, Ronald S., "Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture: constructions of religious and historical identity" (2014). *Philosophy and Religious Studies*. 51.  
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## Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture:

### constructions of religious and historical identity

RELG 491



Spring 2016 / Heisei 28

M-W-F 1:00-1:50

EHFA 252

Instructor: Dr. Ron Green

Office: EHFA 279

Phone: 843-349-2782

Office hours in EHFA 279: M-W-F 10:50-11:50 and 12:00-1:00.

This course is a survey of modern Japanese literature and visual culture since the Meiji Restoration (1868). It focuses on constructions of identities within historical contexts. In it we analyze ways in which writers and artists have positioned their subjects and re-imagined culture to create particular portrayals. The class examines a selection of *shōsetsu* (the Japanese novel) of Natsume Soseki, Kawabata Yasunari, Mishima Yukio, and Murakami Haruki, films of Kurosawa Akira, Miyazaki Hayao, and Miike Takashi, and important anime.

The course promotes critical methodologies and interdisciplinary or comparative studies, combining, for example, literature with film, visual culture, gender studies, cultural history, Buddhist studies, and so forth. Students are encouraged to work closely with the instructor and simultaneously with professors in other programs and fields to create term papers and presentations for the term project in the class. These should be of a quality presentable at a professional conference or publishable in an academic journal. Professors working in digital humanities should be particularly valuable resources.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will have:

1. Demonstrated knowledge of the philosophical, religious, literary, ethical, cultural and other humanistic concepts through which educated people interpret and judge themselves and their world
2. Demonstrated the ability to *recognize* varieties of humanistic thought and expression
3. Demonstrated the ability to *interpret* varieties of humanistic thought and expression
4. Demonstrated the ability to *evaluate* varieties of humanistic thought and expression
5. Demonstrated the ability to identify important works and writers of modern Japanese literature
6. Demonstrated the ability to discuss Japanese popular culture and globalization

### Required texts

1. Natsume Soseki. *Kokoro*, Gateway Editions, ISBN: 0895267152
2. Kawabata Yasunari. *Thousand Cranes*, Vintage, ISBN: 0679762655
3. Mishima Yukio. *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, Vintage, ISBN: 0679752706.
4. Murakami Haruki. *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, Vintage, ISBN: 0679743464
5. William M. Tsutsui. *Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization*. Association for Asian Studies, ISBN: 9780924304620

### Required films

1. Kurosawa Akira. *Dreams*. 1990.
2. Miyazaki Hayao. *Spirited Away*. 2001.
3. Miike Takashi, *Gozu*. 2003.

### Required anime, etc.

- Rurouni Kenshin*  
*Aoi Bungaku*  
*Spirited Away*

*Astro Boy* (episode 1)  
*Cowboy Bebop: The Movie*  
*Serial Experiments Lain*  
(and more chosen by the class)

## Grading

1. There will be **two tests**. Each test is worth 30% of your final grade for the term. On the two quizzes, you will be asked to provide short-essay answers to ten questions. Some questions will be on the readings, others on the lectures.

2. Completion of the **term project** is worth 30% of the grade for the term. This term project should be a ten-page academic paper or the equivalent using another media approved by the instructor. Class presentations are encouraged. For those writing papers, it must be at least ten pages in length to be accepted for a grade, double-spaced in 12-point type, in a font such as Times New Roman or Courier New. [*You may work in teams of two!*] Chicago or MLA styles are acceptable. You must use and fully cite at least two reputable academic sources. Web sources are not acceptable unless you can show they are academically sound, such as online peer-reviewed academic journal. That is to say, you may use any web source that furthers your paper, but you must also use at least two academic sources. If you prefer web research, consider using *jstor*, available through the library.

3. There will be an oral **final exam**. It will cover the content of the anime movie *Metropolis*. Students must attend the screening of *Metropolis* during the scheduled exam time and afterward, successfully discuss its content in the context of constructions of religious and historical identity in Japan since the Meiji Period. The final exam is worth 10% of the grade for the term.

We will spend several classes throughout the semester discussing, arranging, and working on this project together. Details will be made clear in class.

<i>Summary of grading:</i>	Test 1	=	30%
	Test 2	=	30%
	Term Project	=	30%
	Final Exam	=	10%

Based on this, students will earn a letter grade for the term according to the following system:

A = 91 - 100%	C = 71 - 77%
B+ = 88 - 90%	D+ = 68 - 70%
B = 81 - 87%	D = 61 - 67%
C+ = 78 - 80%	F = below 60%

## Attendance policy

Following the guidelines posted in the *CCU Student Handbook*, students who have absences for **25%** of the regularly scheduled class meetings will receive a final grade of **“F”** for the term.

## Class Schedule

### **Week 1**

Monday – Introduction to the topic, what to expect from the course, and what is expected of you

Wednesday – Historical background: Meiji Restoration

Friday – *Rurouni Kenshin: Trust & Betrayal* (aka: *Samurai X: Trust & Betrayal*, first half)

Reading for next two weeks: *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki

### **Week 2**

Monday – Life and Legacy of Natsume Soseki.

Wednesday – Writings of Natsume Soseki

Friday – *Rurouni Kenshin* (concluded)

### **Week 3**

Monday – Discussion of *Kokoro*

Wednesday – Literary development of the Taishō and Shōwa periods

Friday – *Aoi Bungaku*

Reading for next two weeks: *Thousand Cranes*

### **Week 4**

Monday – Life and Legacy of Kawabata Yausnari

Wednesday – Writings of Kawabata

Friday – Kurosawa Akira. *Dreams* (partial)

### **Week 5**

Monday – Discussion of *Thousand Cranes*

Wednesday – Neo-impressionism and Kawabata

Friday – Miyazaki Hayao. *Spirited Away* (first half)

### **Week 6**

Monday – **TEST 1**, Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa *Bunkaku*

Wednesday – Historical developments, war, art, and literature in Japan

Friday – *Spirited Away* (concluded)

Reading for next two weeks: *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*,

### **Week 7**

Monday – Mishima Yukio

Wednesday – *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*

Friday – *Life of Mishima Yukio* (film)

### **Week 8**

Monday – Discussion of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*

Wednesday – Cyborg motif in construction of identity – Metropolis

Friday – *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atamu*), episode 1

Reading for next two weeks: *Hard-Boiled Wonderland*

### **Week 9**

Monday – Historical developments including AUM and *Space Battleship Yamato*

Wednesday – Murakami Haruki

Friday – *Gozu*

### **Week 10**

Monday – Discussion of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*

Wednesday – Watanabe Shinichirō and globalization

Friday – *Cowboy Bebop: The Movie*

Reading for next week: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Intro & Chapter 1

### **Week 11**

Monday – **TEST 2**

Wednesday – Discussion: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Intro & Chapter 1

Friday – *Serial Experiments Lain* (beginning)

Reading for next week: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 2 & 3

### **Week 12**

Monday – Discussion: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 2 & 3

Wednesday – Discussion of *Serial Experiments Lain*

Friday – *Serial Experiments Lain* (concluded)

Reading for next week: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 4 & 5

### **Week 13**

Monday – Discussion: Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization, Chapters 4 & 5;

Wednesday – Student presentations

Friday – *Fullmetal Alchemist* or other anime/game of choice

### **Week 14**

Monday – Student presentations

Wednesday – Student presentations

Friday – *Inuyasha* or other anime/game of choice

### **Week 15**

Monday – Student presentations

Wednesday – Student presentations

Friday – *Bleach* or other anime/game of choice

FINAL EXAM: *Metropolis*

