Literature in the Age of the Samurai

For almost seven hundred years, from the 12th to the 19th century, Japan was ruled by the samurai warrior class. However, the values that defined that class shifted radically as they were forced to adapt to changing circumstances. This class examines the ever-changing and often contradictory roles of the samurai through the lens of Japanese literature, from the early view of warriors as uncultured brutes inferior to the refined aristocracy, to their seizing of political power in the Kamakura period, to their transformation into a class of bureaucrats in the Edo. The course also focuses on the way in which the samurai have been mythologized and transformed into an ideal of virtuous behavior, both at the time of their ascendance and well into the modern period.

This course makes extensive use of the university’s Blackboard online learning environment, both to distribute readings and as a forum for submitting and responding to reaction papers. Access Blackboard at blackboard.wlu.edu, and login using your W&L Username and Password. The Blackboard 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 Blackboard is vital to your success in this course.

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

<table>
<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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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Most important, both to your grade and to the success of the class, is keeping up on the readings and being ready and willing 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 Blackboard online discussion board. A reaction paper should be approximately 1 1/2 to 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. Remember: you aren’t expected to be an expert on the topic, just an engaged reader. 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 and respond before class. Late reaction papers are
useless to fostering online discussion and thus will not be accepted. Six of these papers are required over the course of the semester and you may choose any of the readings to which you wish to respond, but you may not write more than one in any given week. Although there will be many days when you do not write a reaction paper yourself, other students’ 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 response deadline). The online responses are less formal than the reaction papers and should respond not only to the text itself, but to the 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. These online discussions will be the jumping off point for in-class discussion.

There are five required texts for this course:

*Legends of the Samurai*, Sato Hiroaki (*LOS*)
*Chûshingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, Donald Keene, trans.
*Musui’s Story*, Katsu Kokichi

Additional readings will be made available in pdf format in the “Materials” section of Blackboard. These readings are identified on the syllabus with a □ mark. Frequently used texts (and the abbreviations by which they are identified on the syllabus) are listed below, and are also on reserve at the library.

*Classical Japanese Prose*, Helen Craig McCullough, ed.       (*CJP*)
*Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1 William deBary, et. al.       (*SJT1*)
*Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2 William deBary, et. al.       (*SJT2*)
*Early Modern Japanese Literature*, Haruo Shirane, ed.       (*EMJL*)

In addition to the required readings, some days also list recommended films. These can be viewed at the Tucker Multimedia Center (TMC) at any time the week prior to that date. The films are not required (and DO NOT replace that day’s readings), but you may choose to write a reaction paper based on these films on that day.

This class encompasses time slots E & F (12:20-2:20pm), but will normally run from 12:30 until 2:00. Note, however, that on some days the discussion may run beyond 2:00 and on some days I may announce that you should arrive at 12:20 for the next session in order to accommodate extra time for film clips, midterm exam, etc. The final exam period for Fall ’06 is from December 9th-15th. Final exam envelopes will be provided by the department and must be filled out and returned to the instructor during the last week of classes. EALL final exams are distributed through the German Department on the 2nd floor of Tucker Hall, and you will be required to take the exam in designated rooms in Tucker Hall. Bring a blue book.
Course Schedule

Getting Started   Syllabus and Introduction

Thursday, September 7\textsuperscript{th}    Syllabus, Introduction to Course
               Background: The Heian Period

Week One   Oral Literature and the Military Tale

Tuesday, September 12\textsuperscript{th}   Early Kamakura Literature
Readings: \textit{Hôjôki} (\textit{CJP} pp. 377-392)
\textit{Konjaku monogatari} (\textit{LOS} pp. 19-36, 47-60, 71-92)

Thursday, September 14\textsuperscript{th}   Military Tales and Picture Scrolls
Readings: \textit{Hôgen monogatari}, \textit{Heiji monogatari} (\textit{SJT1} pp. 265-276)
“The Heiji Scroll Paintings” (Reischauer pp.447-457)
-- Also view \textit{Tale of Heiji} picture scroll – link on Blackboard --

Week Two   \textit{Heike Monogatari}

Tuesday, September 19\textsuperscript{th}
Readings: \textit{Tales of the Heike} Introduction, ch. 1-5 (pp. 1-64)

Thursday, September 21\textsuperscript{st}
Readings: \textit{Tales of the Heike} ch. 6-9 (pp. 65-100)

Week Three   \textit{Heike Monogatari}

Tuesday, September 26\textsuperscript{th}
Readings: \textit{Tales of the Heike} ch. 11, 12, Initiates (pp. 101-169)

Thursday, September 28\textsuperscript{th}   Yoshitsune & Benkei in legend
Readings: \textit{Yoshitsune} (pp. 69-87, 121-127, 153-165, 255-272, 285-292)

Week Four   The Muromachi Period

Tuesday, October 3\textsuperscript{rd}   Transition to Ashikaga Rule
Readings: \textit{Taiheiki} (\textit{CJP} pp. 472-494)
   “Kusonoki Masashige” (\textit{LOS} pp. 157-187)

Thursday, October 5\textsuperscript{th}   \textit{Yûgen}, tea, and \textit{nô}
Readings: “Vocabulary of Japanese Aesthetics II” (\textit{SJT1} pp. 364-398)
   “Elements of Performance” (Brazell pp. 115-125)
Recommended film(at TMC): \textit{Rikyu}
Week Five

Nô Drama

Tuesday, October 10th
Readings:  
Yashima (Tyler pp. 329-343)
Funa Benkei (Tyler pp. 82-95)
Ataka (Yasuda pp. 103-132)
Atsumori (Tyler pp. 37-48)

Thursday, October 12th  
••• Reading Day • No Class •••

Week Six

The Changing Role of the Samurai

Tuesday, October 17th  
••• Midterm Exam – Come at 12:20! Bring Blue Books! •••

Thursday, October 19th
Readings:  
“Law and Precepts for Warrior Households” (SJT1 pp. 413-432)
“Hôjô Sôtàn” (LOS pp. 249-253)
“The Regime of the Unifiers” (SJT1 pp. 433-440)
Hideyoshi’s Domestic Policies (SJT1 pp. 458-465)
“The Tokugawa Peace” (SJT2 pp. 1-6)
“Tokugawa: Era of Peace” (Lu pp. 203-208)

Week Seven

Into the Edo Period

Tuesday, October 24th
The Role of Samurai in the Edo Period
Readings:  
“Yamaga Sokô” (SJT2 pp. 186-194)
Code of the Samurai – entire book

Thursday, October 26th
Readings:  
“Ihara Saikaku” (EMJL pp. 42-45)
“Great Mirror of Male Love” (EMJL pp. 120-127)
“Tales of Samurai Duty” (EMJL pp. 127-131)
“Buke Giri Monogatari” (Callahan pp. 7-20)
Great Mirror of Male Love (Schalow pp. 85-96, 174-179)

Week Eight

Kabuki and Bunraku

Tuesday, October 31st
Introduction to Kabuki & Bunraku
Readings:  
“Elements of Performance” (Brazell pp. 303-313)
Kanjinchô (Scott pp. 13-44)
Recommended film(at TMC):  
Men Who Step on the Tiger’s Tail
(Tora no o o fumu otokotachi)

Thursday, November 2nd
Ichinotani futaba gunki
Readings:  
“Chronicle of the Battle of Ichinotani” (Brandon pp. 165-211)
Week Nine  The Akô Vendetta in history and literature

Tuesday, November 7\textsuperscript{th}  The Akô Vendetta
Readings:  “The Forty-Seven Samurai” (LOS pp. 304-338)
\textit{Chûshingura} Introduction (pp. 1-26)

Thursday, November 9\textsuperscript{th}  \textit{Chûshingura}
Readings:  \textit{Chûshingura} Acts 1-5 (pp. 29-86)

Week Ten  The Ideal of the Samurai in the late Tokugawa

Tuesday, November 14\textsuperscript{th}  \textit{Chûshingura}
Readings:  \textit{Chûshingura} Acts 6-11 (pp. 87-180)
Recommended film(at TMC):  \textit{Chûshingura}

Thursday, November 16\textsuperscript{th}  Ideal warriors: \textit{Hakkenden & Hagakure}
Readings:  \textit{Hagakure} (LOS pp. 287-303)
“The Eight Dog Chronicles” (EMJL pp. 885-909)

**November 20\textsuperscript{th} – 24\textsuperscript{th} • Thanksgiving Break •**

Week Eleven  The Reality of the Samurai in the late Tokugawa

Tuesday, November 28\textsuperscript{th}  A far from ideal samurai
Readings:  \textit{Musui’s Story} pp. 1-108

Thursday, November 30\textsuperscript{th}  The end of the Tokugawa
Readings:  \textit{Musui’s Story} pp. 109-157
Recommended films(at TMC):  \textit{Twilight Samurai}
\textit{Èjanai ka}

Week Twelve  (Re?)articulating the Samurai Ideal

Note:  Return the final exam envelope with your desired schedule this week

Tuesday, December 5\textsuperscript{th}  The Samurai Ideal for a New Age
Readings:  \textit{Bushidô} ch. 1, 2, 15, 16, 17 (Nitobe pp. 11-22, 97-112)
Mishima’s “Manifesto,” (Lifton pp. 233-235)
Recommended films(at TMC):  \textit{Mishima: a Life in Four Chapters}

Thursday, December 7\textsuperscript{th}  The Samurai Ideal in Modern Literature
“Patriotism,” (Mishima pp. 93-118)

Final Exam Period:  December 9\textsuperscript{th} – 15\textsuperscript{th}