CEAS 300: Literatures of the Japanese Empire
Meeting Times / Location: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:50PM~4:10PM / Fisk Hall Room 410

Instructor: Scott W. Aalgaard
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Phone: 860.685.2484
Office Location: Fisk Hall, Room 308
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:00AM to 12:00PM, or by appointment

Overview

This course will survey texts from different historical moments and geographical locations in Japan’s imperial period (generally understood as stretching from 1894 to 1945) and its aftermaths in order to consider some of the ways in which the Japanese Empire was fostered, critiqued, survived, and remembered by social actors across the realm. While the course will emphasize written texts, we will not limit our investigation to ‘literature’ as that term is commonly understood – rather, we will also grapple with music, film, and non-traditional literatures such as diaries and first-hand accounts in order to come to terms with some of the complexities and ambiguities of life under Japan’s Empire. We will also allow our investigation to spill beyond the moment of 1945, when the Japanese empire came to its geopolitical end, in order to consider some of the ways in which the experience of empire continued to inform and haunt cultural production well into the post-war moment.

Our aim in this course is not to theorize literature or other forms of cultural production, but rather to deploy text as a means to peer into the historically- and geographically-specific conditions of Empire, and to familiarize ourselves with this important period in Japan’s history from a multiplicity of standpoints. While geopolitical context and contingencies will necessarily play a role in framing our understanding, this is not a course dedicated to analyzing military campaigns, for example, or unpacking state priorities or prerogatives. Rather, we will grapple proactively with some of the voices that are not always readily included in histories of empire, in order to reflect on some of the desires and experiences that may not always be self-evident in official histories of the period.

Course Methodology:

This is a discussion-based, seminar-style course. While limited lecture components will feature periodically throughout the Semester as a means to familiarize students with historical and other contextual information, the success of the course rests upon sustained individual and collective student engagement with the materials (text, music, and film) at hand. Note: there is no single authoritative or ‘correct’ answer when it comes to grappling with textual materials of the type to be addressed in this course. Rather, students are expected, through close, careful readings of the assigned materials, to develop their own analytical interpretations thereof, and to share of these unselfishly with their class colleagues.
Course Objectives:

The primary objective of this course is for students to gain familiarization with disparate experiences and manifestations of the Japanese Empire, and with some of the ways in which the historical experience of Empire has haunted – and continues to haunt – cultural production. We will pursue this objective by considering notable texts that take up (explicitly and otherwise) the experience of empire and its aftermaths. Note that textual responses to Empire are disparate and many – the course does not claim to be a comprehensive overview of all, or even most, of the writerly, filmic, and musical interrogations of Japan’s empire, nor does it purport to be able to treat all of the sites of Japanese colonialism with equal (or even adequate) thoroughness. Rather, the course should be understood as an introduction to a limited number of voices through which the disparate experiences of empire and its aftermaths can begin to be revealed and considered in productive ways. By the end of the course, students should be comfortable with mounting critical, analytic interventions into various texts by attending to narrative and rhetorical strategy, the deployment of tropes, the use of language, and so on.

Required Texts:

No textbook purchases are required for this course. All readings will be made available via physical and/or electronic reserve at the Wesleyan Library, and/or via the course Moodle site.

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation: Attendance and participation means not only physical presence in class, but also active engagement with the discussion at hand, and the proactive sharing of individual insights, opinions and ideas. Students are responsible for all readings, and may be asked to provide oral or written summaries of assigned text(s) in class (prior notification of this will not be given). Vigorous, constructive discussion based upon an engagement with the text(s) at hand and with the ideas of colleagues is warmly encouraged. Grandstanding and criticism for the sake of criticism, however, are not conducive to an atmosphere of respect for the text and for each other, and will not be tolerated.

Evaluation of class participation

a) Attentive listening—Are you alert and actively engaged in thinking about the material under discussion? Are you respectful of the ideas of your fellow students and as prepared to learn from them as from the instructor?

b) Frequency and clarity of your oral contributions—Are you adequately prepared for each class discussion? Do you make a consistent effort to contribute to the class discussion?

c) Knowledge of the reading matter under discussion and the ability to grasp its central themes—Have you read the material carefully and critically?
d) The ability to take an independent stance towards the ideas under discussion and to develop the position reflectively—Have you thought through the issues and come to your own conclusions?
e) The overall development of your power of oral expression during the course of the quarter—Has your ability to contribute to the class grown during the semester?

Each unexcused absence will incur a 2% (point) deduction in the Attendance & Participation grade.

Discussion Questions: Over the course of the semester, students will formulate four discussion questions that address the assigned readings/texts, and submit these prior to the pertinent class meeting. These questions should reflect the student’s own understanding of the materials, and be formulated in a way that helps propel class discussion toward a deeper grappling with the text in question. Discussion questions will be assigned on a rotating basis, in consultation with the instructor. Semester scheduling of the discussion questions will be completed by the end of Week Three.

External Reading/Text: Each student will select and “assign” to class colleagues and the instructor one outside reading pertaining to questions of the Japanese Empire that is not included in the syllabus. The student will ‘teach’ the text, preparing discussion questions, and leading discussion thereof. Students should be prepared to lead their colleagues in discussion for a minimum of thirty minutes. The timing of each student’s contribution will be arranged in consultation with the instructor, and should be determined by the end of Week Three. The texts themselves must be circulated to class colleagues no later than one week prior to the pertinent class meeting.

Mini-Analysis/Final Paper Groundwork: In the final class prior to Spring Break, students will submit a ‘mini-analysis’ that pursues a deeper analysis of one or more of the texts and/or themes that we have addressed in the course to that point. This is an opportunity to begin developing a detailed and nuanced reading of one or more text(s) on the basis of the tropes, devices, language, and so on that it deploys, and can/should be viewed as a preparatory exercise for the Final Comparative Analysis, to be submitted at the conclusion of the course. Students may, if they wish, continue to build on the mini-analysis for the purposes of the final paper, rather than starting final paper research anew.

Final Comparative Analysis: At the end of the course, students will submit a final paper (10-12 pages) that grapples with two or more of the texts that we have addressed in the course, and develops a synthesized reading that helps to deepen and complicate discussions of life under the Japanese Empire. How, for example, does reading the two (or more) selected texts together help to reveal or clarify certain aspects or experiences of life under empire? Alternatively, how might the texts treat a certain shared trope or experience differently, thereby complicating our
understandings of life under empire, and forcing us to think in new directions? *The final paper is due in class Wednesday, May 9.*

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<td>Attendance &amp; Participation:</td>
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<td>Discussion Questions (5% each X 4)</td>
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<td>Outside Reading/Discussion Leading:</td>
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<td>Final Comparative Analysis:</td>
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Statement on Plagiarism

The Wesleyan University Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows:

“[Plagiarism is] the presentation of another person’s words, ideas, images, data, or research as one’s own. Plagiarism is more than lifting a text word-for-word, even from sources in the public domain. Paraphrasing or using any content or terms coined by others without proper acknowledgment also constitutes plagiarism.”

Plagiarism is a serious offence that undermines the very purpose of scholarship, and violates the Wesleyan University Honor Code. *Any instance of plagiarism will be grounds for failure in this course,* and will result in referral to University disciplinary bodies for further action. Consult the Wesleyan University Student Handbook for more on plagiarism, the Honor Code, and University disciplinary procedures.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible (no later than the 2nd week of the semester) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please see [http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html) for more information.

Instructor Policies

1) **Late assignments are not accepted.** Extensions on assignments will be granted only in extenuating circumstances (hospitalization, family emergencies such as funerals, etc.), and only with supporting documentation.
2) All written assignments are to be submitted electronically, by e-mail, in Word (.doc, .docx) format. This is to facilitate commenting and feedback.

3) A university class is a living, breathing, evolving entity. I reserve the right to make adjustments to readings as the Semester unfolds, in accordance with the evolution of our class experience.

3) Gadgets: In the interests of environmental responsibility and to help students save money on printing, students may bring laptops or tablets to class for the purposes of note-taking, or to refer to readings provided in electronic format. Cellular/smartphones must be turned off and put away for the duration of our class session. If laptops/tablets are used for purposes other than class-related tasks, this policy will be amended accordingly.

4) I will be in class on time for you. I expect you to be in class on time for me.

5) Share knowledge, not germs. If you are ill, contact me ahead of time to facilitate your absence from class.
Week One

Thursday, January 25

Introductions and syllabus review

Introductory Reading:


Week Two

Key Concepts and Orientations

Tuesday, January 30

Class Reading:

Andrew Gordon, A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present (2009), Chapter 8: Empire and Domestic Order

Thursday, February 1

Class Reading:

Natsume Soseki, “The Civilization of Modern-Day Japan” (1911)
Kita Ikki, Fundamental Principles for the Reorganization of Japan (1919), Chapters 1, 7, and 8
Tanaka Chigaku, What is Nippon Kokutai? Introduction to Nipponese National Principles (1935), Chapter 2
Terry Eagleton, How to Read a Poem (2003), Section 1.2, “Politics and Rhetoric”
Week Three

*Empire as Enduring Home Front: Okinawa*

Tuesday, February 6

*Class Reading:*

Ikemiyagi Sekiho, “Officer Ukuma” (in Michele Mason and Helen Lee, Eds., *Reading Colonial Japan: Text, Context, and Critique*)

Thursday, February 8

*Class Reading:*

Kushi Fusako, “Memoirs of a Declining Ryukyuan Woman” (1932)
Kushi Fusako, “In Defense of ‘Memoirs of a Declining Ryukyuan Woman’” (1932)
Linda Isako Angst, “Rape of a Schoolgirl” (2003)

Week Four

*The Earliest Colony: Taiwan*

Tuesday, February 13

*Class Reading:*

Faye Kleeman, *Under an Imperial Sun* (2003), Chapter 1 & Chapter 5
Yang Kui, “Paperboy” (1932)

Thursday, February 15

*Class Reading:*

Leo Ching, “Colonial Nostalgia or Postcolonial Anxiety: The Dosan Generation In Between ‘Restoration’ and ‘Defeat’” (2012)
Class Listening:


Week Five

The Korean Peninsula, Part I

Tuesday, February 20

Class Reading:

Yom Sangsop, “On the Eve of the Uprising” (1924)
Yi Yon-suk, The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan (2010), selections

Thursday, February 22

Class Reading:

Na Hye-sok, “Kyonghui” (1918)
Yi Sang, “Wings” (1932)

Week Six

The Korean Peninsula, Part II

Tuesday, February 27

Class Reading:

Kim Saryang, “Tenma” (1940)
Ken C. Kawashima, The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan (2009), Chapter 5

Thursday, March 1

Class Reading:

Kang Kyong-ae, “The Underground Village” (1936)
KH Choi, “Impaired Body as Colonial Trope” (2001)
Week Seven

Tuesday, March 6

Visit by Dr. Joshua Solomon, Hirosaki University, Aomori, Japan

Class Reading:

TBA (translated reading to be assigned by Prof. Solomon)

Note: Japanese shamisen master Michiyoshi Sato will visit Wesleyan for a performance at the World Music Hall at 7:00PM on Tuesday, March 6. Attend and write a response for extra credit!

Thursday, March 8

Class Reading:

Michele Mason and Helen Lee, Eds., Reading Colonial Japan: Text, Context, and Critique (2012), “Chapter Seven”
Annika A. Culver, “Manchukuo and the Creation of a New Multi-Ethnic Literature: Kawabata Yasunari’s Promotion of ‘Manchurian’ Culture, 19419-1942” (2012)

~spring break~

Week Eight

The Battle for Hearts and Minds: China

Tuesday, March 27

Class Reading:

Yiman Wang, “Affective Politics and the Legend of Yamaguchi Yoshiko/Li Xianglan” (2012)

Thursday, March 29

Class Viewing:

China Nights [Shina no Yoru] (1940), dir. Osamu Fushimizu (to be confirmed)
Week Nine

Empire in Music and Performance

Tuesday, April 3

Class Reading:

Michael K. Bourdaghs, “Japan’s Orient in Song and Dance” (2012)
Chapter 4: The First K-Wave”

Class Listening:

Arirang (2 versions)

Thursday, April 5

Class Reading:

Michael K Bourdaghs, Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-Pop
(2012), “Chapter 2: Mapping Misora Hibari – Where Have All the Asians Gone?”

Class Listening:

Misora Hibari, Kanashii Sake [Sad Sake]
Kim Yongja, TBA
Week Ten

Defeat and the Postwar: Literary Reflections on Empire

Tuesday, April 10

Class Reading:

Takeuchi Yoshimi, “What is Modernity?” (1948)
Nakano Shigeharu, “Five Cups of Sake” (1947)

Thursday, April 12:

Nakano Shigeharu, “The Role of the Writer as National Citizen” (1946)
Arakawa Akira, “The Colored Race” (1956)

Week Eleven

Where Empire Never Ends: Okinawa Revisited

Tuesday, April 17

Class Reading:


Thursday, April 19

Class Reading:

Oshiro Tatsuhiro, “Turtle-Back Tombs” (1966)
Week Twelve

Empire’s Descendants: Literature by Korean Residents of Japan

Tuesday, April 24

Class Reading:

Kim Tal-Su, “In the Shadow of Mt. Fuji” (1951)
Ri Kaisei, “The Woman Who Fullest Clothes” (1972)

Thursday, April 26

Noguchi Kakuchu, “Foreign Husband” (1958)
Yu Miri, “Full House” (1996)

Week Thirteen

Restless Ghosts: Imperial Hauntings of Modern Moments

Tuesday, May 1

Class Reading:

Ryoko Otomo, “‘The Way of the Samurai’: Ghost Dog, Mishima, and Modernity’s Other” (2001)
Yukio Mishima, Patriotism (1966)

Class Viewing:

Yukio Mishima, Patriotism

Thursday, May 3

Class Reading:

Kawabata Yasunari, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, “Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself” (1968)
Kenzaburo Oe, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, “Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself” (1994)

Class Viewing:

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “Fuji-no-Kuni [The Fuji Nation],” live at Mt. Fuji, 2015
Week Fourteen

Tuesday, May 8

Wrap-Up and Post-Mortem – final comparative analyses due in class.