

**Japanese 370: Introduction to Japanese Literature (JPN 370)**  
**Fall 2009 Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Stephen Filler, 422 Wilson Hall  
**Office Hours:** MW 2:30-3:30, or by appointment

**Contact:** filler@oakland.edu, 248-370-2070  
**Class held:** MWF 12:00-1:07, 166 South Foundation

**Catalog Description:**

**JPN 370:** Introduction to Japanese literature (4 credits). A critical approach to selected readings of classical and modern Japanese literature. Some texts are in English translation, others will be read in Japanese. Conducted both in Japanese and English. Prerequisites: **JPN 314 and 355**.

**I. Texts:**

1. *Breaking Into Japanese Literature*, Giles Murray, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003.
2. Dazai Osamu, *No Longer Human* (on order at bookstore).
3. Other readings – on Electronic Course Reserves for JPN 370 on Kresge Library homepage, or as handouts, or on Moodle course page. Natsume Sōseki's *Sanshirō* will be available online due to being out of print, but you may wish to purchase a secondhand copy for your personal use.
4. Kanji writing handbook giving all daily use Kanji with readings, compounds, and handwritten forms. A good one is *Kanji and Kana*, Wolfgang Hadamitzky and Mark Spahn, Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1997.
5. A comprehensive Japanese-English dictionary and *Kan'ei jiten* (English Chinese character dictionary), or electronic dictionary. A good one is *The New Nelson Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, revised by John Haig, Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1997.

**II. Course Content and Objectives:**

We will study representative works of Japanese literature from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the 1990s, with the main emphasis being on modern literature. Literary movements and genres covered will include *monogatari*, Edo-period prose and drama; naturalism, proletarian literature, modernism, decadent literature, and postmodernism. We will also watch two films with themes relevant to the literary issues we are concerned with.

While using translated texts to gain an understanding of the “big picture,” students will develop skills in reading modern Japanese literary prose through readings of modern short stories. About 2/3 of the readings will be in English translation, and discussion will be in English. About 1/3 of the readings will be in Japanese, with discussion conducted in Japanese and English.

**III. Requirements:**

Grading: your final grade will be determined according to the following factors. *This formula may be modified, and other factors may be considered, at the discretion of the instructor.*

**Attendance – 10%.** One absence will be allowed without penalty; additional undocumented absences will be penalized. If you miss more than four classes, you will automatically fail the course.

**Discussion, participation – 10%.** You should be prepared for every class and participate actively in all activities, including discussion moderation. (See Class Procedure notes below.)

**First paper (*Sanshirō*) (5 pages) – 10%.**

**Final project (8-10 page paper or alternate approved project) – 20%.**

**Response papers – 20%.** (See Class Procedure notes below.)

**Japanese tests (2) – 30%.** There will be two tests covering the vocabulary, grammatical structures, and other content of the Japanese readings.

**IV. Class Procedure:**

**Readings in English translation:** All classes will include a mixture of lecture and discussion, with discussion heavily emphasized.

**Lectures** will cover topics relevant to the assigned readings, such as cultural history, intertextuality, and literary, artistic, and political movements. During the lectures, I will stop several times to solicit your questions and comments. This assumes that you have prepared for class by reading all assigned material, as well as giving thought to the topics outlined in the course schedule. You are strongly encouraged to take notes during the lecture and questions and answers, and as you read.

**Response papers:** For most readings, questions for class discussion will be assigned in advance. Before class, and after completing the reading assignment, wrote your (typed) response to the questions. Questions will cover basic factual content as well as analysis and reactions to the text being studied.

**Discussion:** At least 15 minutes of class will be group discussion. For each class for which a response paper is assigned, two students will serve as moderators for discussion. They will go through the questions on the response paper, calling on various students and otherwise ensuring that everyone participates. Each student will then ask an additional, open-ended question (not on the response sheet) dealing with the larger meaning of the work.

*Response papers will be turned in at the end of class.* During discussion, refer to your own response paper to remind you of your reaction to the reading.

**Japanese sections:** Classes identified as Japanese sections will involve the close, careful reading of Japanese texts. These sections will be conducted in Japanese, although time will be set aside for English discussion of grammar points and issues of translation. These sections will be led by the instructor, although students may be assigned to lead a discussion in Japanese at the instructor's discretion.

Although English translations are available for most readings, you should come prepared to read and understand the text without referring to these translations. The instructor will provide copies of the text or project it on the screen for this purpose. *Audio tracks are available online for the Breaking into Japanese Literature text, and should be used extensively in your preparation.*

**V. Use of Texts in Class:** Because the discussion of texts is a core activity of this class, you are required to have a copy of the text assigned for each class on hand. Since many of the readings are provided electronically, you should plan on printing out a copy or bringing the file on a laptop. If the cost of printing is a problem, you may arrange to share copies with one or two classmates.

## VI. Grading Scale

Module for score and grade (points: grade):

**A+: 99, 100: 4.0, 96, 97, 98: 3.9**

**A : 94, 95: 3.8,**

**A- : 92, 93: 3.7, 90, 91: 3.6**

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B+: 89: 3.5, 87, 88: 3.4

B : 85, 86: 3.3, 83, 84: 3.2

B-: 81, 82: 3.1, 80: 3.0

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C+: 79: 2.9, 78: 2.8, 77: 2.7

C : 76: 2.6, 75: 2.5, 74: 2.4,

73: 2.3

C- : 72: 2.2, 71: 2.1, 70: 2.0

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D+: 69: 1.9, 68: 1.8, 67: 1.7

D : 66: 1.6, 65: 1.5, 64: 1.4,  
63: 1.3

D-: 62: 1.2, 61: 1.1, 60: 1.0

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F: 59.9 to 0: 0.0

**Japanese 370: Introduction to Japanese Literature (JPN 370)  
Fall 2009 Syllabus (tentative)**

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Date</u>                                   | <u>Items covered</u>   |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1           | Friday, September 4                           |  |
| 2           | Monday, September 7<br>Wednesday, September 9 | No Class – Labor Day Holiday   |
|             | Friday, September 11                          | <u>Topic:</u> Old Tales; “What is Literature?”<br><u>Reading:</u> <i>The Woodcutter’s Tale</i> ; <i>Tales of Ise</i>   |
| 3           | Monday, September 14                          | <u>Topic:</u> Edo Period Drama and Literature<br><u>Reading:</u> <i>Love Suicides at Amijima</i> * <b>Response paper 1 due.</b>                                    |
|             | Wednesday, September 16                       | <u>Reading:</u> <i>The Almanac Maker’s Tale</i> * <b>Response paper 2.</b>   |
|             | Friday, September 18                          | <i>Japanese section: Kaguya hime</i> (Handout)   |
| 4           | Monday, September 21                          | <u>Topic:</u> Early Meiji Realism <u>Reading:</u> “Troubled Waters”<br>* <b>Response paper</b>   |
|             | Wednesday, September 23                       | <u>Topic:</u> Historical Fiction. <u>Reading:</u> “The Abe Family”   |
|             | Friday, September 25                          | <u>Topic:</u> Melodrama. <u>Reading:</u> <i>The Gold Demon</i> . Intro. <i>Dai-ichiya</i>  |
| 5           | Monday, September 28                          | <i>Japanese section: Dai-ichiya (Breaking into Japanese Literature)</i>  |
|             | Wednesday, September 30                       | <i>Dai-ichiya</i>  |
|             | Friday, October 2                             | <i>Dai-sanya</i> . Study sheet for Oct. 12 test handed out.  |
| 6           | Monday, October 5                             | <u>Topic:</u> Natsume Sōseki. <u>Reading:</u> <i>Sanshirō</i> , p. 1-96 * <b>Response</b>  |
|             | Wednesday, October 7                          | <u>Reading:</u> <i>Sanshirō</i> , p. 97-180. Assignment for <i>Sanshirō</i> paper handed out.  |
|             | Friday, October 9                             | <u>Reading:</u> <i>Sanshirō</i> , p. 181-248.  |
| 7           | Monday, October 12                            | <b>Test on <i>Kaguya hime</i>, <i>Dai-ichiya</i>. Japanese <i>Sanshirō</i>.</b>  |
|             | Wednesday, October 14                         | <u>Topic:</u> Naturalism. <u>Reading:</u> “The Quilt” * <b>Response paper</b>  |
|             | Friday, October 16                            | <u>No classroom meeting today.</u> (Instructor at Southwest Conference on Asian Studies, Austin, TX). Begin <i>Yabu no naka</i> and work on <i>Sanshirō</i> paper. |
| 8           | Monday, October 19                            | <i>Japanese section: Yabu no naka</i> (Murray). <b>Paper on <i>Sanshirō</i> due today.</b>   |
|             | Wednesday, October 21                         | <i>Yabu no naka</i>  |
|             | Friday, October 23                            | <i>Yabu no naka</i>  |
| 9           | Monday, October 26                            | Film: <i>Rashōmon</i> .  |
|             | Wednesday, October 28                         | Film: <i>Rashōmon</i> .  |
|             | Friday, October 30                            | Discussion of <i>Rashōmon</i> , and <b><i>Rashōmon</i> response due today.</b>   |
| 10          | Monday, November 2                            | <u>Topic:</u> Modernism. <u>Reading:</u> “Feelings Atop a Cliff” * <b>Response</b>   |
|             | Wednesday, November 4                         | “The Jesus of the Ruins”   |

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|    | Friday, November 6   | <i>Japanese section: “Hana”(The nose)</i>                                    |
| 11 | Monday, November 9   | <i>“Hana”</i>  |
|    | Wednesday, November 11   | <i>“Hana”</i>  |
|    | Friday, November 13  | Topic: Decadent literature. <i>Japanese section: <u>Ningen shikkaku</u></i>  |
| 12 | Monday, November 16  | <i>No Longer Human</i> * <b>Response paper</b>                               |
|    | Wednesday, November 18   | <i>No Longer Human</i>   |
|    | Friday, November 20  | <i>No Longer Human</i>   |
| 13 | Monday, November 23  | <b>Test on Yabu no naka, Hana.</b>   |
|    | Wednesday, November 25   | More Historical Fiction. <u>Reading</u> : “The Fox-Horse” * <b>Response</b>  |
|    | <i>Thursday, November 26 - Sunday, November 29 – Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS</i> |  |
| 14 | Monday, November 30  | Topic: Contemporary Fiction. <u>Reading</u> : “Honey Pie.” * <b>Response</b> |
|    | Wednesday, December 2  | <u>Film</u> : “I Just Didn’t Do It” (tentative)                              |
|    | Friday, December 4   | <u>Presentation of final paper or project.</u> <b>Response to film.</b>      |
|    | <b>Wednesday, December 9</b>   | <b>Final Paper or Project due.</b> <i>No final exam will be given.</i>       |