FOW 5934 Special Topics: 
Reading and Translating Contemporary Japanese Literature 

MW 3 - 4:15pm in GC 277 

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Office Hours: Mon/Wed 4:20-5:20pm 

COURSE DESCRIPTION 

This course offers graduate students the opportunity to engage with a wide range of literary texts in the original Japanese language, spanning across genres such as essays, short stories, poetry, lyrics, and experimental prose. In the process of closely reading and analyzing the texts, we will conduct partial translations of selected passages, examine existing English translations read side-by-side with their Japanese sources, and work on new translations of previously untranslated texts. We will also read theories and articles on translation that address some of the fundamental issues at stake in the act of translation. Ultimately, you will gain an understanding of translation as a linguistic trade that cannot be reduced to textbook definitions of grammar points or dictionary definitions of words, but rather involves a whole host of culturally, socially, and politically circumscribed decisions about how literature makes meaning. 

Prerequisite: JPN 2201 "Intermediate Japanese II" or the permission of the instructor. 

COURSE TEXTBOOKS 

Michael Emmerich, ed. Read Real Japanese Fiction: Short Stories by Contemporary Writers. Kodansha USA. Includes notes, dictionary, and CD. 

Janet Ashby, ed. Read Real Japanese Essays: Contemporary Writings by Popular Authors. Kodansha USA. Includes notes, dictionary, and CD. 

* There will be additional readings to be handed out or posted online. 

TRANSLATION THEORY 

James T. Araki, "Japanese Literature: The Practice of Transfer," Monumenta Nipponica 31/1 (Spring 1976), pp.77-85 
Readings on Professional Japanese-To-English Translation (2007) – Kano Tsutomu, etc 
Michael Emmerich, "Burning the Bridge," SWET Newsletter 116 (June 2007), pp.3-13 
COURSE GRADE DISTRIBUTION

1. Attendance & Class Participation
Regular reading, attendance, and class participation are required. Since this class consists of careful analysis and active discussions and translations of each week's readings, it is essential that students come to class having read all of the assigned materials carefully and be prepared to engage actively in the class activities.

You will be asked to give a class presentation on an assigned text of translation theory. You will present the main ideas of the article, the particular issues at stake, your interpretations and comments based on an in-depth reading of the text, and further issues or questions you would like to discuss. You presentation should serve as a springboard for discussion.

2. Weekly Response Papers & Translation Assignments
Each week, you will be required to write a one-page response paper that reflects a thoughtful engagement with the assigned text, responding to particular passages through close analysis. There will also be short translation assignments on the week's readings. These assignments will be an essential element of the class discussion.

3. In-class Exams
There will be short in-class exams throughout the semester on the assigned texts. The exams will consist of vocabulary quizzes, reading comprehension in English, and translation from Japanese to English. Exams cannot be made up.

4. Translation Workshop
These sessions will be devoted to discussing the texts that each student has selected for the final project. You will provide the class with a portion of your chosen text, along with a preliminary translation of 1-2 pages for discussion. You will give a class presentation that discusses the background to the text, why it was chosen, and the specific translation challenges it presents.

5. Translation Project or Research Paper
Your final translation project (5-10 pages) will be on a Japanese text of your choice, chosen in consultation with the instructor. The translation must be accompanied by a critical introduction that situates and analyzes the text. You will be graded on the significance of the original work, quality of the translation, and quality of the introduction.

You may also choose to write a research paper (12-15 pages) that incorporates translation as a major part of the paper. The topic of the research paper must be chosen in consultation with the instructor. You will be expected to consult historical or critical references.

A one-paragraph proposal must be submitted by email to the instructor two weeks before the paper deadline so that the instructor can reply with comments and suggestions.
COURSE GRADE DISTRIBUTION

1. Attendance & class participation (20%)
2. Weekly response papers & translation assignments (25%)
3. In-class exams (20%)
4. Translation workshop (5%)
5. Final Translation Project or Research Paper (30%)

GRADING SCALE

A 94-100    A- 90-93
B+ 87-89    B 84-86    B- 80-83
C+ 77-79    C 74-76    C- 70-73
D+ 67-69    D 64-66    D- 60-63
F 0-59
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1
1/6  Introduction
Matsuo Bashô: Frog Haiku (Thirty-one Translations)

Jay Rubin, "Translating Murakami" (audio).
http://www.newyorker.com/online/2011/09/05/110905on_audio_murakami

1/8
Murakami Haruki, "Masshiro na uso" in RRJE, pp.10-17, notes pp.50-55.
村上春樹「真っ白な嘘」

Additional reading in English: "The Elephant Vanishes."

Week 2
1/13
川上弘美「神様」

1/15
Kawakami Hiromi, "Kamisama" – continued.

Additional readings in English: "God Bless You, 2011" & "People From My Neighborhood."

Week 3
[1/20 Martin Luther King's Holiday]

1/22
乙一「むかし夕日の公園で」

Week 4
1/27
Ishii Shinji, "Nikuya oumu" in RRJF, pp.50-71, notes pp.69-77.
いしいしんじ「肉屋おうむ」

1/29
Ishii Shinji, "Nikuya oumu" – continued.

Week 5
2/3
吉本ばなな「ミイラ」

2/5
Yoshimoto Banana, "Miira" – continued.
**Week 6**
2/10
Yoshimoto Banana, "Miira" – continued.

2/12
Yoshimoto Banana, "Miira" – continued.
   Additional reading in English: "Love Songs" & "Asleep."

**Week 7**
2/17
北村薫「百物語」

2/19
Kitamura Kaoru, "Hyaku monogatari" – continued.

**Week 8**
2/24
Machida Kô, "Dô kai temo iya na yatsu wa iya na yatsu" in *RRJE*, pp.52-65, notes pp.74-79.
町田康「どう書いても嫌な奴は嫌な奴」

2/26
Machida Kô, "Dô kai temo iya na yatsu wa iya na yatsu" – continued.
   Lyrics from the official site: [http://www.machidakou.com/lyric/](http://www.machidakou.com/lyric/)

**Week 9**
3/3
Hirano Keiichirô, "Mujô to iu koto" in *RRJE*, pp.94-107, notes pp.87-94.
平野啓一郎「無常ということ」

3/5
Hirano Keiichirô, "Mujô to iu koto" – continued.

**Week 10  Spring Break**

**Week 11**
3/17
Presentation on Translation Theory by Graduate Students.

3/19
多和田葉子「かける」
   Additional reading in English & Japanese: "Soulflight."
   (http://asymptotejournal.com/article.php?cat=Fiction&id=54)
   Optional: 「声が響いているということ自体の不思議さ ～ドイツと日本での朗読～」
Week 12
3/24
Levy Hideo, "'Bungakusha' no kuni ni, boku ga iru" in RRJE, pp.108-135, notes pp.95-103.
リービ秀雄「「文学者」の国に、ぼくがいる」

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnNkwnx082w

3/26
Levy Hideo, "'Bungakusha' no kuni ni, boku ga iru" – continued.

Week 13
3/31
Translation Workshop

4/2
Translation Workshop

Week 14
4/7
Translation Workshop

4/9
Translation Workshop

Week 15
4/14
Student Presentations on Final Projects.

4/16
Peer Review of Final Projects.

** Translation Project or Final Paper due Monday 4/21 by Noon **