

EAST 493:
THE TALE OF GENJI

Tuesday & Thursday 2:35-3:55; 688 Sherbrooke 491

Instructor: Thomas LAMARRE
688 Sherbrooke 274

Office Hours: M 1-4, or by appointment

Objectives:

We will read and discuss *The Tale of Genji* (in English translation) as well as secondary literature related to it. Secondary literature is intended not only provide sufficient historical and cultural background for understanding the text but also to present different paradigms for developing a project from the readings — such as sensory anthropology, transmedial narratology, sensory geography, and affect theory.

Methodology:

This is a lengthy and detailed book, and so we will read only about 100 pages each week in order to give different aspects of the book sufficient attention. In addition there are short essays providing background information on the Heian court (art, architecture, media, urban space, religious practices, ritual, etc) as well as some parameters for analysis (media studies, sensory anthropology, experiential geography, narratology, anthropology of exchange, etc). Class time will be devoted to discussion, which means that students must read the materials in advance and come to class prepared to discuss them. Note that Japanese names are presented last name first.

Each student will also select a set of two to four keywords or themes to trace throughout the book — from the outset. This means that students will have to focus their interests to some extent from the first chapters. This keyword or theme research should form the basis for the proposal (3-5 pages), which will provide the basis for the draft of the final paper (5-10 pages), and then final paper (15-20 pages). Students will also do a short presentation on their topic (10-15 minutes), in order to receive input from other students.

Book:

Copies of the Tyler translation of *The Tale of Genji* will be available at Paragraphe.

Evaluation:

Participation: Keyword 10%; Presentation 10%

Papers: Proposal 15%; Draft 25%; Final Paper 40%

McGill requires that the following two statements be included in course outlines:

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).”

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

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READING SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

Sept 8 Introduction

UNIT 1: MEDIA & NARRATIVE

Sept 10 *Genji*, chapters 1-5

Sept 15 *Genji*, chapters 6-10
Translation
—Midorikawa Machiko, ‘Coming to Terms with the Alien: Translations of *The Tale of Genji*’

Sept 17 **Serialization and Narration**
—Aileen Gatten, ‘The Order of the Early Chapters in the *Genji monogatari*’
—Porter Abbot, ‘Defining Narrative’
—Inoue Eimei, ‘The Truth in Patterns of Oral Tradition’

Sept 22 *Genji*, chapters 11-14

Sept 24 **Transmedial Storytelling**
—Andrew Piper, “Turning the Page” and “Letting Go of the Book”
—Yukio Lippit, “Figure and Fracture in the *Genji Scrolls*”
—David Herman, ‘Toward a Transmedial Narratology’

Sept 29 *Genji*, chapters 15-21

Oct 1 **Sensory Communication**
—Tomiko Yoda, ‘Fractured Dialogues: Mono no aware and Poetic Communication in *The Tale of Genji*’
—Paul Rodaway, ‘The Character of Sense’
—David Howes and Constance Classen, ‘Sounding Sensory Profiles’

UNIT 2: TOPOLOGIES & POWER PLAYS

Oct 6 *Genji*, chapters 22-28

Oct 8 **Space and Place**
—Tim Creswell, ‘Place’
—Bruce Coates, ‘Buildings and Gardens in *The Tale of Genji*’
—Nicolas Fievé, ‘The Urban Evolution of the City of Heiankyō,’ 91-96

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—Figures 1-4, from the appendices to *Ōkagami*
—Figures 10.15-19 from *The Princeton Guide to Classical Literature*

- Oct 13 *Genji*, chapters 29-33 **Proposal Due**
- Oct 15 **Movements**
—Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, “Chess and Go,” 352-53.
—Lucia Dolce, ‘Review: Bernard Frank, *Kata-imi et katatagae*’
—Yi-Fu Tuan, ‘Mythical Place and Space’
—Masuo Shin’ichirō, ‘Chinese Religion and the Formation of Onmyōdō’
- Oct 20 *Genji*, chapters 34-36
- Oct 22 **Filiations and Alliances**
—Peter Nickerson, ‘The Meaning of Matrilocality’
—Wakita Haruko, ‘Marriage and Property in Premodern Japan,’ 73-87
—‘Part Nine: Ranks, Offices, and Certain Incumbents’
- Oct 27 *Genji*, chapters 37-42
- Oct. 29 *Genji*, chapters 43-46
(Format TBA)
- Nov. 3 **Gifts and Exchanges**
—David Graeber, ‘On the Moral Grounds of Economic Relations’
- Nov 5 Break to write Draft

UNIT 3: NON-PERSONAL EXPERIENCE & END-TIMES

- Nov 10 *Genji*, chapters 47-49 **Draft Due**
- Nov. 12 **Fabulation**
—H. Mack Horton, ‘They Also Serve’
—Amanda Stinchecum, ‘Who Tells the Tale?’
- Nov. 17 *Genji*, chapters 50-52
- Nov 19 **Depression**
—Julie Kristeva, ‘Life and Death of Language,’ *Black Sun*, 33-68.
—Motoori Norinaga, ‘The Intentions of the Novel’ (*Ōmune*)
- Nov. 24 *Genji*, chapters 53-54

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- Nov 26 **Salvation**
—Heather Blair, ‘Religion and Politics in Heian-Period Japan’
—Robert Rhodes, ‘Ōjōyōshū, Nihon Ōjō Gokuraku-ki, and the Construction of Pure Land Discourse in Heian Japan’
- Dec 1 **Trans-incarnation**
—Porter Abbot, ‘Closure’
—Nicholas Abraham, ‘Notes on the Phantom’
—Paul Reasoner, ‘Reincarnation and Karma’
- Dec 3 TBA
- Dec 7 **Final Paper Due**