

Course description (syllabus) & other information

Course title: J7A, Introduction to Premodern Japanese Literature & Culture
Semester: Fall 2013
Instructor: John R. Wallace
Meets: TuTh 11–12:30PM

Course prerequisites

None.

Course description & goals

Coverage: ninth to eighteenth century Japan literature (prose, poetry and drama), aesthetic concepts, other relevant cultural concepts and some other “high art” cultural activities of Japan. The historical periods emphasized are Nara, early and late Heian, Kamakura, Northern & Eastern Hills culture of the Muromachi, and Genroku Edo.

Approach: Through lecture, discussion and project or essay submission we read and analyze literary content and some other high art activities via specialized aesthetic terms, with attention to the cultural / historical contexts. Students are expected to master a range of factual and conceptual information as well as produce interesting and credible analysis on relevant texts or other topics. This class is part lecture-style and part discussion-style during the regular sessions conducted by me, and of course active discussion in the discussion sections taught by GSIs.

Goals: The student will develop skills in reading premodern literary works with some sophistication and will become versed in a wide range of cultural concepts that are an important part of the cultural history of the country and/or relevant to contemporary Japanese culture. The student will have a good overview of major historical events relevant to culture, will read and analyze some of the major literary texts, will consider and try to apply to reading analysis some of the major religious / philosophical / aesthetic / ethical positions.

Texts: We read from a very wide range of texts (more than twenty) but place special emphasis on *Tale of Genji*, *Tale of Heike*, *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, plays by Chikamatsu, several of the major imperial poetry collections, and haiku.

Primary aesthetic concepts: *okashi*, *mono no aware*, *yūgen*, *sabi* & *wabi*

Other concepts: details of *Shintō*, Confucian, and Buddhist religious concepts; *soto-uchi* / *omote-ura* (private-public); content-form (*kotoba-kokoro*); lyricism; *mujō* (transience); *michi* (“the Way”); *giri-ninjō* (obligation and human feeling); *shinjū* (double suicide of lovers); *bushidō* (Warrior Ethic).

Course materials

Some of the assigned reading is available through the below two books which should be at University Press Books (2430 Bancroft Way, ph 510-548-0585 / 800-676-8722, upb@universitypressbooks.com www.universitypressbooks.com).

These are the books that need to be purchased for this class:

Classical Japanese Prose: An Anthology edited by Helen Craig McCullough and published by Stanford UP. It is in both hardback and paperback.

In theory you can find other translations of the material in this work. However, since it is excerpts from full texts, when I assign a portion in this book, you will need to match it to whatever other translation you are using. This is not always easy since section numbers and such are not stable. Further, the Table of Contents is not at enough detail to do the matching using only that. You need to dig through the pages of the assigned segment one-by-one.

Genji & Heike: Selections from The Tale of Genji and The Tale of Heike. edited by Helen Craig McCullough and published by Stanford UP. It is in both hardback and paperback.

BUT, you might find that buying the unabridged versions of one or both of these works (*Genji*, *Heike*) is a better

value in your case, since extra credit is possible in the case of these texts but requires reading the full version. Details on this issue should on the Web site sidebar tab “What texts to purchase”.

In addition to these books there will be other readings of short stories, poems and secondary material. They will be provided as pdf files or web links.

Communication

How to reach me

Office hours: Please use the link on the **Start Page** (see below). The current information is there.

My office is **Dwinelle 5110**.

My **email** is jwallace@berkeley.edu.

◆ **ALL emails for this class should use this as a subject line template:**

J7AFa13 LASTNAME classname keyword

✧ **classname** = your first name as you have asked me to use for learn it

✧ **keyword** = an irregular string of letters I used to filter my emails into manageable units

- ✧ **Two important keywords:** 1) **gradeissue**: (any concern you have about your grade, explanations of absences, etc. — I review all of these at the end of the term and take them into consideration when calculating the final grade. 2) **eeearned**: this is my signal to you that you have earned general or major extra credit for something. — As above, I review all of these at the end of the term and take them into consideration when calculating the final grade.
- ✧ **Other keywords:** You do not need to use a keyword when writing me for a random reason. However, if you put **question** or **randomcomment** or something like that in the subject line it is likely to catch my eye and cause me to read it ahead of other emails.

The **Fa13 means “Fall 2013”. The **Fa13** helps me not accidentally capture emails from previous version of the class. The rest of that first unit helps me keep my classes sorted out, since I teach several at the same time and sometimes students take more than one of my classes at the same time.*

I usually do not check email after 9:30PM and check less frequently during weekends.

I use two Web sites for this course

I use a primary and secondary Web site. Off-campus individuals following my class via podcast, please email me. I might be creating a special site for this group since you do not automatically have access to the secondary site.

The **primary Web site** access is public and can be accessed via the **Start Page**. It has **announcements, deadlines, schedules** (including session topics, **assignment notices**, and so on), **resources, course policies**, links to resources, other miscellaneous information.

▶▶ **Always visit your course Web pages by passing though the Start Page.**

The **secondary Web site** is the repository for informal grade reporting and assignment materials. It is available only to those enrolled in the course.

I hope to make a “companion” Web page that contains information that I can release to the general public, for those who follow the course via its podcasts. If such a site is made, the address will be accessible via the Start Page.

Class announcements

I do not make many announcements in class, even important ones. Visit the Start Page regularly.

Where to look for announcements?

Once the class is up and running, go here:

Start Page — <http://www.tabine.info/~tabine/99aa130809/calcrses/annc/text/annc1308.html>.

However, in the days and weeks *before* class begins, I might contact students via bSpace.

After class stops meeting and until grades are submitted, I continue to use the **Start Page**. Once I submit grades, I will soon switch back to bSpace for additional announcements, if there are anyway.

When to check for announcements?

- ◆ **Please check the Start Page frequently** beginning a few days before the start of the course until the end of finals week.
- ◇ **Any announcements that are less than 24 hours before class will not include any required material.** However, I very often add material to a Web page just before or after the class. Your class experience is probably enhanced if you are able to follow any of the new information. **For exams, you should definitely review the pages since there may well be relevant changes.**
- ◆ **Remember to refresh your browser** to insure you are seeing the updated version of the page.
- ◆ Reporting Web page errors to me usually earns some extra credit, since it benefits the learning experience for everyone and indicates the care you are spending with the course's processes.

Policies

General policies I have in place for all my courses

Please navigate to my various polices from the **Start Page**. **Read these policies ASAP—some of the information there affects your grade, sometimes dramatically.** They are in effect beginning the second week of the term.

A note on how I usually handle academic dishonesty

I am very attentive to issues about plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, both in the production of assignments and essays and during quizzes and exams.

Dishonesty during quizzes or exams usually is penalized by an "F" on the question involved or the entire exam. It also triggers a review by me of all other material a student has submitted. **I reserve the right to rescore material that I once thought was honest but given later actions by the student appears more suspicious under a second review.** For material that is done at home on the honors system, **dishonesty on one assignment can generate an "F" on all other similar assignments and, when severe, might disqualify the student from submitting any more of that type of assignment.**

Plagiarism is difficult to define. **All students are expected to read my statement on these issues and ask questions if they are not clear.** Access my Academic Honesty page through the **Start Page**. **Please read it in full by the end of the first week of the term.** Ask questions. **After a week I will assume you are fully aware of, and have understood thoroughly, its contents including the penalties described.**

Please note that "I'm sorry, I won't do it again" does not release you from the penalties incurred due to academic dishonesty.

UC Berkeley's New Honor Code

"As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." I fully endorse this statement and I know that, as students, you are required to endorse it as well. I will conduct my classes in this spirit and expect my students to do likewise. For more information go to: [UC Berkeley Honor Code](#).

I have pulled from the Berkeley Law Web site the following. Although this was written for a sub-community of our campus, it is a very exact statement of my sentiments on the issue of academic honesty and I want to quote a paragraph of it here:

"Primary responsibility for respecting the appropriate rules rests with each individual student and with the student body as a whole. Students, faculty and staff are urged to bring apparent violations to the attention of the instructor and/or the dean. The Honor Code can be successful only to the extent that it has the overwhelming support of student and faculty opinion and is taken seriously by everyone." ([Academic Honor Code Appendix A—Law School Academic Honor Code, In General](#))

Accommodation of students with disabilities

If you need accommodations for a disability, or if you want me to have emergency medical information, please email me, or speak to me anytime.

Here is the URL for the main Web page of the Disables Students' Program: <http://dsp.berkeley.edu/>. Here is their primary contact number: 510-642-0518. I have had many occasions to work with the DSP and with students who have worked with the DSP. They do excellent work.

Here is the URL for those who might need assistance in evacuating a building during an emergency. It is a good idea to have a plan in place in case there is an unforeseen emergency. I encourage you to contact them: <http://access.berkeley.edu/>

Grades

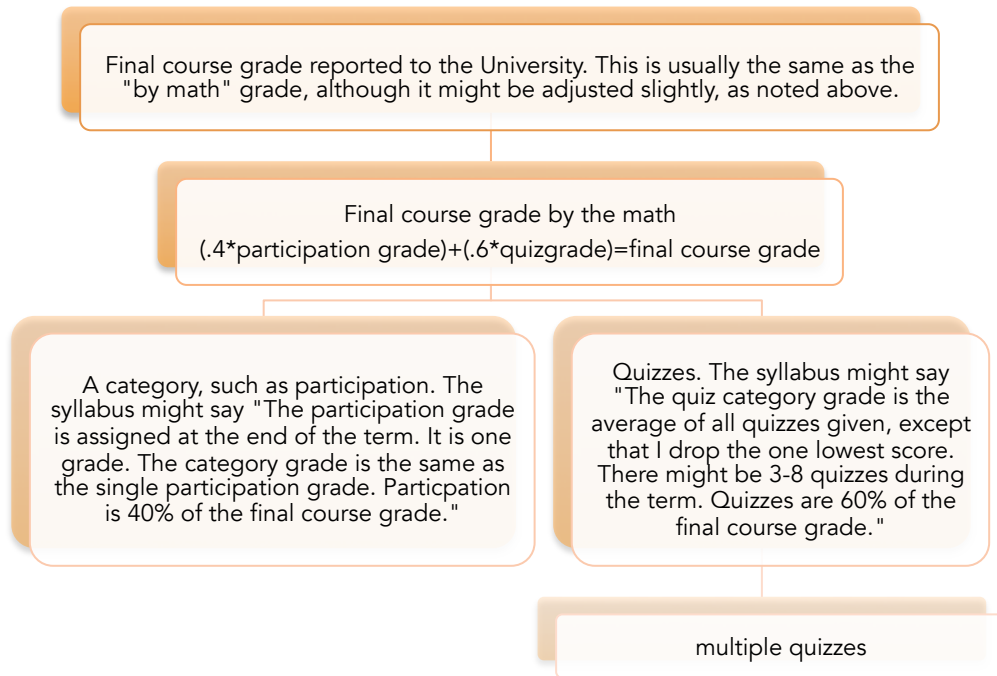
General comments

- ◆ Students are always welcome to discuss with me concerns about grades. If you use "gradeissue" as a keyword in the email subject line your emails will be reviewed again before assigning a final course grade. I recommend this.
- ◆ **Some grades are reported to bSpace**, though this report might be several sessions after the grade is determined. bSpace is NOT the official grade book record. Also, **when I have discussed a grade with a student and changed it, these changes are almost never uploaded to bSpace.** (It is time inefficient to upload grades on an individual basis.)
- ◆ **Travel plans:** Students or their parents sometimes schedule travel plans very close to class sessions. I do not consider missed flights, delayed or cancelled flights or inexpensive tickets to be excusable reasons for absences.
- ◆ **Leaving early or arriving late because of midterms in other classes:** I do not consider this a valid reason for missing part of the class.
- ◆ **Job interviews:** I am ambivalent about job interviews. If you seem otherwise to be fully engaged in the class, I will probably consider missing class as inevitable but I will regret that you have missed the material. You should make extra effort to participate in the sessions you are able to attend. When the student seems otherwise relatively uninvolved in the class, I do sometimes wonder if the interviews might have been able to be scheduled at a better time.
- ◆ **I consider the final exam period a firm date.** Please do not ask to take an exam early because you have travel or moving plans. (This is a general statement—some of my classes do not use the final exam period.)
- ◆ **I basically never give incompletes in a class.**

If you are curious, this is how I calculate grades

My process for calculating grades. I give letter grades, not points, for all evaluated activities (assignments, quizzes, tests, participation, etc.).

Using letter grades, not points, means that I work with average or weighted averages, not total points. If you want to know where you stand, grade-wise, in a class, you need to calculate grades the way I do. Evaluated events are collected together to give a letter grade on a category, then categories are calculated using a weighed average ("grade weights") to give what I call in my gradebook a "grade by the math". That grade is usually your final grade but might be adjusted due to special circumstances such as health issues, extra credit, or academic dishonesty. Example (not realistic as to actual grade categories, there would be more than these two):



This syllabus gives details on how evaluated activities (quizzes, tests, participation, etc.) are managed to generate the category grades, and the weights of the various grade categories that generate the final course grade.

Towards the end of the semester, when there is time, I post to the Web site a “grade estimator” — an excel sheet with the same formulas on it that I use to calculate the final course grades.

Using letter grades, not points, also means that I must convert letter grades to points in order to report grades to bSpace, since it does not accept letters as grades. **The conversion chart is at the end of this syllabus.**

Grade category weights & grade category descriptions

Midterm

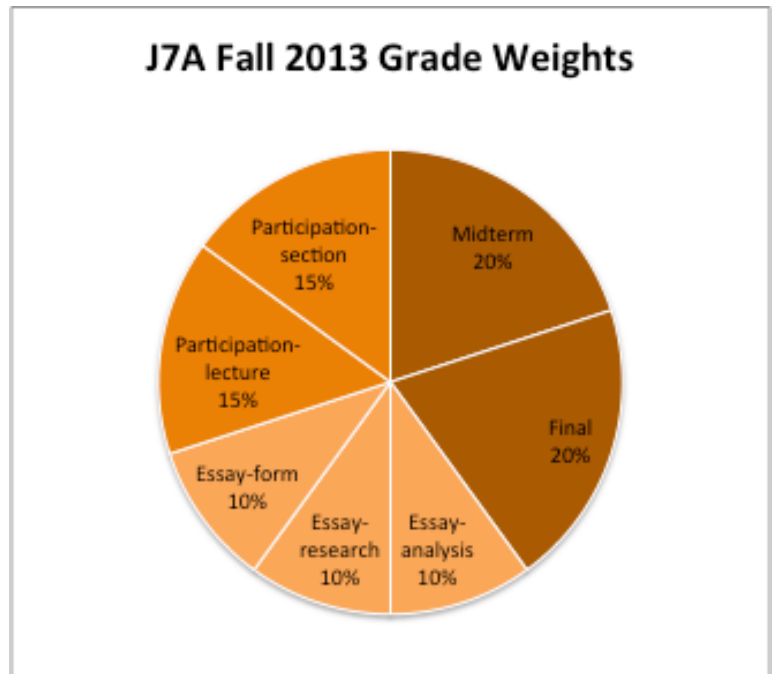
In-class. Details to be announced later.

Final

During the final exam period. Cumulative. Details to be announced later.

Essay

There will be two essays. The second essay will be graded closely for its analysis, the quality of research located, the use of research, and formal matters which include organization and MLA style. The first essay does not receive a grade. It is the same format and length, and will receive considerable feedback, to prepare the student for the grading of the next essay. Topic areas will be assigned. Students will need to develop a more specific topic within that area. Students are welcome to develop their own topic instead. The first essay is due mid-term, the second near the end of the term.



Engaging materials and lecture content

Various methods will be used to check a student's preparation for and participation in the lecture sessions. This includes pop quizzes on materials assigned, irregular (random) taking of attendance, participation in lecture session discussions when they occur, and so on.

Section participation

Based on attendance, preparation, and discussion participation. This grade is assigned by the GSI.

Extra credit

I usually but not always offer three types of extra credit in my classes—

Assignment-specific extra credit

This is a type students are used to—the opportunity on tests to answer more challenging questions or include information beyond the usual expectations of the assignment.

This type of extra credit influences directly the grade on the quiz or test.

General extra credit

These are little things that you do that indicate an enthusiasm for the class, or more than the usual attentiveness to assignments, or acts that help the teaching environment. This might be Web links you find that are of special value, or an extended comment you send by email about something that interested you, or finding an error in my Web site or other instructions. I acknowledge these things with an email that includes the keyword **“ecearned”**. **This type of extra credit is grade-relevant only if, on the whole, you seem to be participating very well in the class. It cannot replace assignments. Indeed, it might work against you if I conclude that you are only interested in your grade and believe the extra credit can substitute for work on the regular assignments. This is an opportunity to show enthusiasm and share ideas and help others, not polish your grade although, indirectly, it does have that effect sometimes.**

Major extra credit

Some of my classes have additional assignments that are quite challenging. I offer these as optional, for “Major Extra Credit.” Completing Major Extra Credit in **good-to-excellent form** will add .2 to .4 to your final course grade point average. For example, if you had, as a final course grade according to the math, a 3.1 (a “B-minus”) your total increases to somewhere between 3.3 and 3.5 (a “B”). “Somewhere” is because the nature of the assignment and the quality of the work submitted isn’t uniform. The “.2 to .4” value is meant to make it *likely* that your final course grade will move up one step (“B+” to “A-minus”, “C” to “C+”, whatever) but to not create a letter grade change when you are very low in a particular grade step (just barely in the “B” bracket, etc). Exception: the “A” to “A+” move is more limited. I give only one or two “A+”s in a course. Even if your grade average is higher than 4.0, it does not necessarily covert to an “A+”. On the other hand, doing major extra credit assignments is always an excellent way to distinguish yourself and strengthen your candidacy for an “A+”.

Completing Major Extra Credit **mechanically as if only done for the course grade** will not change your final grade cutoff lines.

Tables

Equivalents of 4-pt scale numbers to letter grades

When a “4-pt scale” grade is reported on bSpace or elsewhere, the letter grade equivalent to that number is:

4.1-4.3 / A+	3.3 / B+	2.3 / C+	1.3 / D+
4 / A	3 / B	2 / C	1 / D
3.7 / A-	2.7 / B-	1.7 / C-	0.7 / D-
			0 / F

Conversion of 4-pt scale course average to letter grades for the final course grade

As noted above, at the end of the term, the 4-pt scores for each grade category are averaged, according to weight. That mathematical result is then converted to the appropriate course letter grade. Below are the cutoffs for each final course letter grade. (May 20, 2012: I have noticed that my end-term grade statistics indicate fewer grades in the "A" band and, for those grades in the "A" band, the vast majority are "A-minus" not "A"—for example, 3 "A"s compared to 15 "A-minuses". I have been adjusting, when it seems appropriate, the basic scale below generate final grades that are closer to an equal number of "A"s and "A-minuses". I don't seem to have the same phenomenon in the case of the "B" or "C" band.)

Course 4pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 4pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 4pt average	letter grade reported to the university	Course 4pt average	letter grade reported to the university
When given, usually highest 1-2 class averages, with EC and other factors taken into consideration	A+	≥ 3.15	B+	≥ 2.15	C+	≥ 1.15	D+
≥ 3.85	A	≥ 2.85	B	≥ 1.85	C	≥ 0.85	D
≥ 3.5	A-	≥ 2.5	B-	≥ 1.5	C- (↑ ↓ P/NP)	≥ 0.5	D-
						< 0.5	F

Start point in defining cutoffs for letter grades when "percent correct" is the criterion used to determine a letter grade (multiple-choice tests and such)

≥ 100	A+	≥ 86.5	B+	≥ 76.5	C+	≥ 66.5	D+	< 60	F
≥ 93	A	≥ 83	B	≥ 73	C	≥ 63	D		
≥ 90	A-	≥ 80	B-	≥ 70	C-	≥ 60	D-		