

***The Tale of Genji* as World Literature 16:217:570:01**
Cross-listed with *Topics in Non-Western Literature* 16:195:521:01
Spring 2022 Syllabus

Instructor: Professor Paul Schalow
Office: Scott Hall Rm. 330
Office hours: M/TH 11am-12noon
Email address: schalow@rutgers.edu

Seminar Description: In this seminar we will read the unabridged translation by Royall Tyler (2001) of *The Tale of Genji*, a fictional work by the Japanese court lady Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 978-1015), as well as critical essays that shed light on it. Completed somewhere around the year 1010 C.E., in the imperial court of Heian-kyō (present-day Kyoto), the work is considered to be, in the words of Donald Keene, “the supreme masterpiece of Japanese literature.” *The Tale of Genji* is also a major work of world literature, drawing on classical Chinese literary models in the way the story is framed in the first chapter, and subsequently finding receptive readerships in contemporary Japan through modern-Japanese translations and throughout the world in translations into other languages. We will study this work in detail, as a text of world literature and as a masterpiece created by a woman writer. All assigned readings are in English translation.

Meets: Every Thursday 6-9pm, ALC Seminar Room, Scott Rm. 232 from Jan. 20-April 28, 2022; except March 17 for Spring Break.

Requirements: Weekly discussion posts on Canvas and regular class participation; three in-class reports; and one 15-page final paper.

Texts: (required) Murasaki Shikibu. *The Tale of Genji*. Trans. Royall Tyler. Unabridged. Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition. New York: Penguin, 2001. ISBN 978-0-14-243714-8

- (not required; selected chapters will be posted on Canvas in PDF format) Harold Bloom, ed. *Murasaki Shikibu's The Tale of Genji*. Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004. ISBN 0-7910-7584-2
- (not required; selected chapters will be posted on Canvas in PDF format) Thomas Harper & Haruo Shirane, eds. *Reading The Tale of Genji: Sources from the first millennium*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-231-16658-4
- (not required; selected chapters will be posted on Canvas in PDF format) Paul Gordon Schalow, *A Poetics of courtly male friendship in Heian Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-8248-3020-5

Schedule

Jan. 20 Introduction

Reading: Ōba Minako “Without beginning, without end,” pp. 19-40, *The Woman’s Hand: Gender & Theory in Japanese Women’s Writing* (PDF).

- Class discussion: A brief comparison of Chapter 1 in six English translations of *The Tale of Genji* by Suematsu (1895), Waley (1933), Seidensticker (1976), McCullough (1986), Tyler (2001), and Washburn (2015).

Jan. 27 Language and style

Reading & discussion post 1: Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 1-5, pp. 1-109.

- Student report: Richard Bowring, “Language and style” (pp. 73-91, Bloom’s modern critical interpretations, PDF), followed by class discussion.

Feb. 3 Kingship and transgression

Reading & discussion post 2: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 6-11, pp. 111-226.

- Student report: Haruo Shirane, “Kingship and transgression,” 295-309 (Bloom’s modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Feb. 10 Courtly male friendship (I)

Reading & discussion post 3: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 12-17, pp. 227-330.

- Student report: Paul Gordon Schalow, “Two cranes flying wing to wing,” 116-162, *A Poetics of Courtly Male Friendship in Heian Japan* (PDF), followed by class discussion.

Feb. 17 The making of the hero

Reading & discussion post 4: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 18-21, pp. 331-404

- Student report: Norma Field, “Three heroines and the making of the hero,” 93-108 (Bloom’s modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Feb. 24 Surrogates and *The Tale of Genji*

Reading & discussion post 5: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 22-25, pp. 407-464.

- Student report: H. Richard Okada, “Speaking For: Surrogates and *The Tale of Genji*,” 183-205 (Bloom’s modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Mar. 3 *The Tale of Genji*

Reading & discussion post 6: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 26-33, pp. 465-559.

- Student report: Donald Keene, “The Tale of Genji,” 9-42 (Bloom’s modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Mar. 10 The search for things past

Reading & discussion post 7: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 34-35, pp. 561-671.

- Student report: Doris G. Barga, “The search for things past in the *Genji monogatari*,” 43-72. (Bloom’s modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

-----Spring Break: Saturday Mar. 12-Sunday Mar. 20-----

Mar. 24 Genji and Murasaki

Reading & discussion post 8: *The Tale of Genji*, chap. 36-41 (pp. 673-781).

- Student report: Royall Tyler, "I am I: Genji and Murasaki," pp. 243-294 (Bloom's modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Mar. 31 Operation of the lyrical mode

Reading & discussion post 9: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 42-46, pp. 829-926.

- Student report: Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, "The operation of the lyrical mode in *Genji monogatari*," 207-241 (Bloom's modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Apr. 7 Courtly male friendship (II)

Reading & discussion post 10: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 47-49, pp. 869-972

- Student report: Paul Gordon Schallow, "Maidens of the Bridge," in *A Poetics of Courtly Male Friendship in Heian Japan*, pp. 163-187, followed by class discussion.

Apr. 14 The role of poetry

Reading & discussion post 11: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 50-52, pp. 973-1074

- Student report: Amy Vladeck Heinrich "Blown in Flurries: The Role of the Poetry in 'Ukifune,'" pp. 109-125 (Bloom's modern critical interpretations, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Apr. 21 Hidden in clouds

Reading & discussion post 12: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 53-54, pp. 1075-1124.

- Student report: Thomas Harper, "The six 'hidden in cloud' chapters" pp. 233-272 (Reading *The Tale of Genji*: sources from the first millennium, PDF) followed by class discussion.

Apr. 28 Value of vulnerability

Reading & discussion: Margaret H. Childs, "The Value of vulnerability: sexual coercion and the nature of love in Japanese court literature." *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1999) pp. 1059-1079, PDF.

- Reports on final paper topics

[May 11 15-page seminar paper due]

Attendance. Please let me know in advance if you cannot attend class in person so that we can make arrangements for you to join via Zoom.

Participation. Class discussions is based on your discussions posts. I will ask you individually to explain and expand on your ideas. I will grade your participation in these

discussions based on how well you were prepared and how well your contributions added to the class's understanding of the topic.

In-class reports. Students will have three opportunities to give in-class reports on scholarly essays dealing with various aspects of *The Tale of Genji*. In the report, students should summarize the scholarly argument from the essay and apply it to the assigned chapters from *The Tale of Genji*. Often, the essay will cover material from chapters we have not yet read in the seminar, but you should always be able to apply the essay's thesis to some chapters we have covered. All students are expected to offer comments or ask questions and respond to the report during class discussion.

Final paper. A final paper of 15 pages will be due on May 11, 2022. Students should present an outline of their ideas for their final paper topic at the last class on April 28.

Note: You do not need to use sources besides the *Genji* text and articles and materials assigned during the semester. If there are outside sources that you would like to use in the final paper, please discuss it with me so that I can approve them. Include a Works Cited page, in the proper format, at the end of your paper. Follow MLA style and format in referencing and in the Works Cited, a model for which can be accessed here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

Grading:

Discussion posts (12 x 2 pts; drop two lowest) 20%
In-class discussion (12 x 2pts; drop two lowest) 20%
In-class reports (3 x 10 pts.) 30%
Final paper 30%
Total: 100%

Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism can include using information from published materials (including the internet) without acknowledging the source, teaming up with a classmate to write papers, and having someone else write some or all of the paper for you. In this seminar, I am interested in your ideas. If I should discover evidence of plagiarism I will pursue it following the university regulations on academic integrity, which can be found at this web site:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity/shtml>.