

565:475 “*The Tale of Genji* as World Literature”
 Rutgers University
 Fall, 2013

Syllabus

Instructor

Paul Schalow, Professor of Japanese Literature
 Office: Scott Hall Rm. 325
 Office Hour: Mon. & Thurs. 1:00-2:00 PM
 Tel. 848-932-6490 (leave message)
 e-mail: schalow@rci.rutgers.edu

Description

In this course we will read *The Tale of Genji*, by the Japanese court lady Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 978-1015). Completed somewhere around the year 1010 C.E., during the Heian period (794-1185) 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.” Keene goes on to assert that this work in the *monogatari* (tale) form is “not only the quintessence of the aristocratic culture of Heian Japan, but has affected the aesthetic and emotional life of the entire Japanese people for a millennium.” But *The Tale of Genji* is also a major work of world literature. Sometimes compared with the Western novel form due to its intense focus on the internal lives of its many characters, the work has similarities also with the European medieval romance due to its presentation of a court-based society and its extreme focus on love in its various manifestations. We will study this work in detail, as a court romance, psychological novel, and feminist text. Readings include the unabridged text and several scholarly essays that shed light on various aspects of it.

Structure

The course is divided into three units: **Unit 1**—The first generation, chapters 1-21, Genji’s youth, political setback, and triumph; **Unit 2**—The second generation, chapters 22-41, life at Genji’s Rokujō estate, the competition to place his children advantageously at court; **Unit 3**—The third generation, chapters 42-54, the quest that leads Kaoru to Uji after Genji’s death, the Eighth Prince and his daughters.

Requirements

Each student must prepare a 2-page, double-spaced discussion sheet for the scholarly essays assigned in class. This sheet will provide a basis for discussion in the seminar and must be turned in at the end of class. The discussion sheet should address two or three specific points in the essay that the student found particularly interesting, useful, or controversial in relation to the day’s reading assignment from *The Tale of Genji*. A 10-page seminar paper is due at the end of Unit 3, exploring larger themes or scholarly debates that were raised in the seminar.

Grading

Grade based on class participation (20%), twelve discussion sheets (40%), and a final 10-page seminar paper (40%).

Texts (for purchase at Rutgers Bookstore, Ferren Mall)

1. Murasaki Shikibu. *The Tale of Genji*, translated by Royall Tyler, unabridged. Penguin Books, 2001.
2. Harold Bloom, ed. *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Murasaki Shikibu's The Tale of Genji*. Chelsea House Publishers, 2004.
3. Paul Gordon Schalow. *A Poetics of Courtly Male Friendship in Heian Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, 2007. (recommended)

Class Schedule

Unit 1—The First Generation

4 Sept. Introduction

9 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 1-5, pp. 1-109.

11 Discussion sheet #1 due: Ivan Morris, “Aspects of *The Tale of Genji*,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 161-181.

16 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 6-11, pp. 111-225.

18 Discussion sheet #2 due: Norma Field, “Three Heroines and the Making of the Hero,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 93-107.

23 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 12-17, pp. 227-330.

25 Discussion sheet #3 due: Haruo Shirane, “Kingship and Transgression,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 295-309.

30 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 18-21, pp. 331-404.

2 Oct. Discussion sheet #4 due: Donald Keene, “*The Tale of Genji*,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 9-42.

Unit 2—The Second Generation

7 Oct. Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 22-25, pp. 405-464.

9 Discussion sheet #5 due: Richard Bowring, “Language and style,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 73-91.

14 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 26-33, pp. 465-574.

16 Discussion sheet #6 due: H. Richard Okada, “Speaking For: Surrogates and *The Tale of Genji*,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 183-205.

21 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 34-35, pp. 575-671.

23 Discussion sheet #7 due: Royall Tyler, “I am I: Genji and Murasaki,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 243-294

28 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 36-41, pp. 673-781.

30 Discussion sheet #8 due: Paul Schalow, “Two Cranes Flying Wing to Wing,” in *A Poetics of Courtly Male Friendship in Heian Japan*, pp. 116-162.

Unit 3—The Third Generation

- 4 Nov. Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 42-46, pp. 783-868.
- 6 Discussion sheet #9 due: Paul Schalow, “Maidens of the Bridge,” in *A Poetics of Courtly Male Friendship in Heian Japan*, pp. 163-187.
- 11 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 47-49, pp. 869-972.
- 13 Discussion sheet #10 due: Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, “The Operation of the Lyrical Mode in the *Genji Monogatari*, in *Interpretations*, pp. 207-241.
- 18 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 50-52, pp. 973-1074.
- 20 Discussion sheet #11 due: Amanda Mayer Stinchecum, “Who Tells the Tale? Ukifune: A Study in Narrative Voice,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 127-160.
- 25 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chaps. 53-54, pp. 1075-1120.
- 2 Discussion sheet #12 due: Amy Vladeck Heinrich, “Blown in Flurries: The Role of the Poetry in *Ukifune*,” in *Interpretations*, pp. 109-125.
- 4 Reading: *The Tale of Genji*, chap 1, tr. Waley; chap. 1, tr. Seidensticker.
- 9 Discussion sheet #13 due: “Translation as Interpretation.”
- 11 Reading: *Genji Scrolls*
- 16 Dec. **Seminar paper due** (by noon in Scott Hall, Rm. 330).