Japanese 125B: Coming of Age in Modern Japanese Literature and Film
Fall 2017 Syllabus {Tentative}

The purpose of this course is to consider images of childhood, youth, and coming of age in literature and film from modern Japan. We will examine a wide variety of texts, including short stories, novels, memoirs, and diaries. At issue will be the portrayal of youth and the meanings imposed upon coming of age at various stages in Japan's modern history. What effects do place of origin, gender, and social class have on children as they make the transition to adulthood? How has the perception of the child changed over time? Why is the maturation of the individual child such a frequent focus of writerly attention? In looking at this formally and narratologically diverse array of materials, we will consider such questions as: How does the structure of the narrative condition our experience as readers? What assumptions do we make about a text based upon its apparent consistency or inconsistency with what we know about the identity of the author? In the process, students will be introduced to some of the major Japanese writers from the 1890s down to the present day, and will learn about modern Japan's history and culture as well as contemporary Japanese society.

We will view six films in the course of the semester. These films will be available on reserve and via LATTE. Students are expected to read the assigned materials, view the films, and write brief (about 200–250 well-chosen words) response essays to the weekly readings at least three times during the semester. These are to be posted to the online discussion board far enough in advance of class meetings to allow other students to read them. In addition to active participation in class discussion, students will be required to complete one short paper (5–7 pages) and one final paper (10–12 pages). For the final paper, students will read a modern Japanese narrative concerning childhood, youth, or coming of age and write a paper comparing it to one of the texts we have read together. Some suggestions for primary texts are given at the end of the syllabus, but you are welcome to choose a text not listed; please feel free to consult with the instructor. In the final week of class, students will be asked to make short (5–10 minutes) presentations in which they share their findings.

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Attendance and class participation: 20%
- Response essays (4 electronic posts): 15%
- Short paper: 25%
- Presentation of final project: 10%
- Final paper: 30%

Instructor: Prof. Matthew Fraleigh
Mail: fraleigh@brandeis.edu
Phone: 6-3229
Class: M, W 3:30–4:50
Office: Mandel 115
Hours: M 1:00–3:00

All texts assigned are available in English translation and the films that will be screened have English subtitles. Knowledge of Japanese is not necessary for the course.
Disabilities:
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

Academic Integrity:
You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University's policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). All suspected instances of dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

Textbooks
The following are available for purchase at the Brandeis Bookstore:
Ōgai-Vita Sexualis; Mishima-Confessions; Ōe-Nip the Buds; Sōseki-Sanshirō; Murakami-Kafka; and Allison-Precarious Japan.
Yū Miri's Gold Rush is apparently out of print and thus unavailable via the Brandeis Bookstore but inexpensive used copies are widely available. Please buy a copy now so you have it by November.
All other readings are available on reserve (at Goldfarb Library and electronically, through Latte).

Week One – Virtual Meeting
Wednesday August 30: Explanation of course structure and policies, introduction to readings, major themes.

Week Two – Introduction
Monday September 4 (Labor Day): no class

Wednesday September 6
September 2: Prologue – Childhood memories

Week Three – Coming of age in Meiji Japan
Monday September 11:
Wednesday September 13:
Sōseki, Sanshirō, continued.

Week Four – Coming of Age in Meiji Japan
Monday September 18:

Wednesday September 20:

Week Five – “Diaries” and “fictions”
Monday September 25:

Wednesday September 27:


Week Six – The “confessional” mode
Monday October 2:

Wednesday October 4
Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask* (continued)
Week Seven – Children in wartime

Monday October 9:


Wednesday October 11: Brandeis Thursday (no class)

Week Eight – Children in the social (dis)order

Monday October 16:

Wednesday October 18:
Ôe continued


Paper One – Due Monday October 23

Write a short paper (5-7 pages) on one of the following topics:
1. ⋆⋆⋆ Focusing on narrative structure, how do you compare Mishima’s “confession” with Kawabata’s “diary”?
2. ⋆⋆⋆ How does Ôe portray the experience of children who live on the periphery of adult society?

Week Nine –

Monday October 23: (Papers due)


Wednesday October 25:


**Week Ten – Political and sexual awakening**

Monday October 30:


Wednesday November 1:

Ōe Kenzaburō. “Death of a Political Youth”

**Week Eleven –**

Monday November 6:

Wednesday November 8:
Murakami (continued)

**Week Twelve – Youth culture and contemporary Japan**

Monday November 13:

Wednesday November 15:
Yū Miri continued.

Week Thirteen – Shōjo
Monday November 20:


Wednesday November 22: (no class)

Week Fourteen – Family
Monday November 27:


Wednesday November 29:
Week Fifteen – Final Presentations

Monday December 4:
Final Presentations

Wednesday December 6:
Final Presentations

Final Papers due Friday December 8

Suggestions for Final Paper:


