

# JAPN 3500 MODERN JAPANESE LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION (3 credit hours)

Elmira College

SPRING 2025

## Required Text:

1. Natsume Sôseki, *Kokoro*, trans. by Edwin McClellan, Gateway Edition, Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1996.
2. Tanizaki Jun'ichirô, *Naomi*, trans. by Anthony Chambers, New York: Vintage, 2001.
3. Kawabata Yasunari, *The Snow Country*, trans. by Edward Seidensticker, New York: Vintage, 1996.

Supplemental readings will be provided on Moodle.

**Pre-requisites:** None.

## Course Description

This course offers an introduction to modern Japanese literature, exploring a variety of genres including fiction, poetry, memoir, and short stories. Students will study the cultural, historical, and political contexts that influenced these works, focusing on key themes such as identity, modernity, and the changing role of tradition in Japanese society. Through lectures, student presentations, and discussions based on the assigned readings, students will gain a deeper understanding of how literature reflects and shapes Japan's evolving narrative in the modern world.

## Course Objectives and Goals

- Analyze and interpret key literary texts within their cultural and historical contexts.
- Identify and discuss major themes, styles, and movements in Japanese literature from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.
- Critically engage with literary criticism and theory as applied to Japanese texts.
- Communicate insights effectively through written assignments and presentations.

## Evaluation of Performance

Your grade will be based upon your performance on exams, assignments, and participation.

6 Response Papers	60%
Final Paper and presentation	20%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	10%
Total	100%

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A 93% and above	B- 80 - 82%	D+ 67 - 69%
A- 90 - 92%	C+ 77 - 79%	D 63 - 66%
B+ 87 - 89%	C 73 - 76%	D- 60 - 62%
B 83 - 86%	C- 70 - 72%	F 59% or below

**Withdrawal Policy:** Please see Elmira College Bulletin for information on this policy.

**Academic Honesty:** Please read the section on Academic Honesty in the [Code of Conduct](#). Briefly, academic dishonesty includes: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Ask if you have any questions on whether something constitutes as academic dishonesty. All work must be original and new. Past assignments from current or other courses will not be accepted. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will result in zero on the assignment, and a report will be filed with the school. Continued practice will result in failure of the class. Institutional penalties may also apply with repeated acts of academic honesty.

**Student Responsibility:**

- It is your responsibility to keep track of assignments and due dates.
- You should ask questions concerning assignments and lectures, if you need any clarifications.
- If you are struggling in class, have concerns, and/or unsure about expectations, please stop by during office hours or make an appointment for another time.

**Tentative Schedule of Topics**

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Tasks &amp; Evaluations</u>
Introduction to Modern Japanese Literature	Chapter 1	
The Meiji Restoration and Literature	Chapter 2	
Natsume Sōseki's <i>Kokoro</i> : Themes of Isolation and Change	Chapter 3	Response Paper 1
Naturalism in Japanese Literature	Chapter 4	
The Rise of Modern Poetry	Chapter 5	
Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's <i>Naomi</i>	Chapter 6	Response Paper 2
Yasunari Kawabata's <i>Snow Country</i> : Beauty and Tragedy	Chapter 7	Response Paper 3
Yukio Mishima: Identity and Conflict	Chapter 8	
Post-War Literature: Trauma and Recovery	Chapter 9	Midterm Exam
The Influence of Western Literature	Chapter 10	
The Contemporary Japanese Novel	Chapter 11	Response Paper 4
Japanese Short Stories: Form and Function	Chapter 12	
Manga and Graphic Novels as Literature	Chapter 13	Response Paper 5
Literature of the Ainu and Indigenous Voices	Chapter 14	
The Role of Literature in Social Movements	Chapter 15	Response Paper 6
The Women of Modern Japanese Literature	Chapter 16	
The Role of Memory in Japanese Literature	Chapter 17	Final Paper and presentation
Japanese Literature in Translation: The Challenges of Cross-Cultural Narratives	Chapter 18	Final Exam