

ENGL 2091/4391—Special Topics in the Literatures of Diversity:  
*Samurai & Geisha*  
UNO Summer Study Abroad in Kyoto, Japan, May-June 2024  
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**Course Description and Learning Outcomes:** This course will examine the source, evolution, and cultural iconography of two images of Japanese culture, the samurai and the geisha. Each, in its own way, has come to represent, especially for the West, the “essence” of masculinity and femininity in Japan, and a mythology has grown up around each identity. These mythologies often present themselves as fixed, timeless phenomena, unshaped by changing historical circumstances and representing a set of transcendent Japanese values. This course will interrogate such assumptions through close reading of texts that make use of the legends of the samurai and the geisha. By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- 1-define and use the terminology and vocabulary pertinent to the phenomena of both the samurai and the geisha.
- 2-understand the history that gave rise to the samurai and the geisha within Japanese culture, as well as the myriad ways changing historical circumstances modified the roles, identities, and lived realities of samurai and geisha.
- 3-be able to interrogate the constructs “samurai” and “geisha” in historical, literary, and gender studies frameworks and to analyze the ways in which these cultural markers function in our texts.

**Course Requirements:** The student will be required to post to three online fora during the first online week of the class and to submit two essays and a final exam. Students must submit all assignments in order to pass the class. **IMPORTANT: ALL MATERIAL SUBMITTED TO THE INSTRUCTOR FOR CREDIT MUST BE THE STUDENT’S OWN ORIGINAL WORK.** All essays will be subjected to both plagiarism and AI scans, and student work found to have been plagiarized or written—in whole OR in part—by AI (e.g., ChatGPT or any other AI content generator) will receive a grade of zero with no opportunity for a “do-over.” Since students must complete all assignments in order to receive credit for the class, any commission of academic dishonesty will result in a final grade of F for the class. Should plagiarism or AI generation be detected in student work, the instructor will submit a report of academic dishonesty to UNO’s Office of Judicial & Student Assistance upon return to the United States. Assuming the student completes all required assignments, the final grade will be determined according to the following percentages:

Class participation (includes forum posts):	10%
Paper One (samurai):	30%
Paper Two (geisha):	30%
Final Exam (comprehensive):	30%

**Criteria for Assignments:** All written material produced by the student and submitted as part of an assignment should be composed in standard written English (it’s a thing, and you can look it up), which includes correct grammar, mechanics, and spelling and an appropriate voice (i.e., not casual or employing slang terms). This includes forum posts, which may be more casual than formal papers but should still use correct grammar and spelling and a respectful tone.

**Forum Posts:** Because we begin classes online a week before we arrive in Kyoto, class discussion will take the form of forum posts. Participation in TWO fora will be required, and students must post TWICE to each forum. Instructions as regards each forum can be found below in the daily schedule. Fora will appear in the class Canvas page.

**Essays:** Essays are due on the day indicated on the syllabus schedule and on the assignment itself. Essays will be submitted via Turnitin on the class Canvas page, which is also where the instructor will comment on and grade essays. Keep in mind that in order to make an argument about literature, students must QUOTE and ANALYZE text from our assigned readings, and these quotations MUST come from the texts required for class. Essays that quote from other versions of our texts will not pass. Essay grades are FINAL, but the instructor will read and respond to drafts leading up to the final version of the essay. The instructor will read essay drafts ONLY in person, by appointment. Students should speak with or email the instructor to set up an appointment at a time convenient to both parties. Essays should be typed, double-spaced in 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial preferred) with one-inch margins. The first page of the essay should include the student's name, the course name and number, the date, and an appropriate essay title.

**2091 essays:** ~4 pages

**4391 essays:** ~6 pages with at least 2 scholarly sources

**Academic Honesty:** As mentioned above in "Course Requirements," academic dishonesty is grounds for failure or worse and should be avoided at all costs. Students should familiarize themselves with the UNO Student Code of Conduct, <https://www.uno.edu/media/17427>, which explains academic misconduct and the procedures the university employs for addressing violations thereof.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory; students are expected to be in class every day of this very short summer semester. The only viable excuse for missing class is illness, and should a student be sick enough to miss class, the student is expected to report this illness to the program director, Ms. Jennifer Torres; the academic director, Dr. Noriko Ito Krenn; and the instructor.

**Student Hours:** Our situation in Kyoto is not conducive to the instructor having regular office hours during which students can simply stop by; therefore, students should email or speak with the instructor after class to set up a time convenient to both instructor and student. Likely, after lunch on class days will be the most convenient for me, but if a student is taking the afternoon Japanese language class, this will not work. The best thing is to speak with the instructor and come to a mutually convenient time and place to meet, but please bear in mind that for brief questions or discussions, I am pretty much available to talk whenever you happen to see me—during lunch, walking to class, while on field trips. Just ask if it is convenient for me to talk, and I promise I will either address your concerns/questions or let you know what time would be better for me.

**Disability Services:** University policy provides, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. As one might imagine, for a study abroad program, it is important that students who are eligible for disability services communicate their needs to their instructors and program directors as soon as possible so that accommodations may be arranged well ahead of our arrival in Kyoto. Students with disabilities should contact the

Office of Disability Services, Earl K. Long Library, Room 126E (504-280-7284 or [atadc@uno.edu](mailto:atadc@uno.edu) ) to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

**Classroom Behavior:** Students are expected to behave courteously to each other and to the instructor at all times. All electronic devices—cell phones, Ipods, handheld video games, et cetera—should be turned off and put away for the duration of the class; the sole exception to this rule is the use of laptop computers for the purpose of taking notes or consulting the text in electronic form **only**. Texting, playing video games, listening to music, checking email, posting to Instagram, and surfing the net not only prevent students from devoting their full attention to lecture and discussion but are also **profoundly rude behaviors that are a direct and personal insult to the instructor and to other students**. If the instructor detects a student texting, playing video games, or otherwise using technology for any unauthorized purpose during class, the instructor will deduct 2 points from the student's *final grade* for each infraction. In addition, the instructor does **not** give permission to have her classes videoed in any way, including with camera phones. The instructor will consent to voice recordings of discussion and lecture provided the student has asked for and received individual permission to do so. These provisions should not be taken lightly as an entire legal category, intellectual property law, is devoted to this sort of thing, and violation of the instructor's intellectual property rights is an actionable offense.

**Required Texts to be Purchased:** Note that these texts are REQUIRED and should be purchased and downloaded BEFORE students leave the United States. I suggest that students purchase the Kindle versions of the books, as I imagine most students would prefer not to haul physical copies through multiple time zones. However, if a student prefers a physical copy, they do indeed exist and can be found on Amazon under the same titles and authors. Be advised that the books listed below are the only texts required for purchase; all other required readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

#### **Required Texts:**

##### ***Books to purchase/check out of library***

Yamamoto, Tsunetomo. *Hagakure*. Trans. Alexander Bennett. Tuttle Publishing, 2014.

ISBN 978-4805311981. **Please note:** an e-version of this book is available free of charge through the library. The book is only available to check out for a set period of time (three weeks) but can be read online with a stable internet connection. Available on Kindle for \$9.99.

Iwasaki, Mineko. *Geisha, a Life*. Washington Square Press, 2002. ISBN 978-0743444293.

Available on Kindle for \$13.99.

Nagai, Kafu. *Geisha in Rivalry*. Tuttle Publishing, 2006. ISBN 978-0804833240. Available on

Kindle for \$9.99.

##### ***Texts that will be available on Canvas***

Excerpts from *The Tale of the Heike*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough, Stanford UP, 1990.

ISBN 978-0804718950.

Saikaku, Ihara. *The Great Mirror of Male Love*. Ed. and trans. Paul Schalow. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Izumo, Takeda, Miyoshi Shoraku, and Namiki Senryu. *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal*

*Retainers*. Trans. Donald Keene. Columbia UP, 1971. ISBN 978-0231035316  
Masuda, Sayo. *Autobiography of a Geisha*. Columbia UP, 2005. ISBN 978-0231129510

## Daily Schedule

### Week One (online), May 19-25

**Monday, May 20:** Read introductory PPT and class syllabus.

**Tuesday, May 21:** Read “Introduction to Samurai” PPT and complete first forum. **First post** (200 words minimum): What are your initial ideas about samurai? If you’ve thought about them at all, what assumptions did you make about them? What are you most curious about or what question(s) would you like this class to answer about them? **Second post** (200 word minimum): respond to a peer’s post in some way. If you have similar interests or concerns, tell them; if you know the answer to any question your peer posed, feel free to answer it. In short, I want you to engage with each other in a conversational way so that we will know each other at least a little bit before we meet in Kyoto. I will also be commenting on students’ posts, and you are welcome to respond to my comments as well. Feel free to post more than twice if you like; in fact, I would appreciate a more detailed conversation.

**Wednesday, May 22:** Read “Introduction to Geisha” PPT and complete second forum. **First post** (200 words minimum): What are your initial ideas about geisha? If you’ve thought about them at all, what assumptions did you make about them? What are you most curious about or what question(s) would you like this class to answer about them? **Second post** (200 word minimum): respond to a peer’s post in some way, as per instructions for first forum.

**Thursday, May 23:** All forum posts must be completed by 11:59 p.m. Recall that students must post **twice** to each forum but can contribute further to their class participation grades by posting more than the required minimum.

### Week Two, May 26-June 1 Students should come to class have already read and prepared to discuss the texts assigned for that day.

**Sunday, May 26:** Students arrive in Kyoto.

**Monday, May 27:** Check-in to dorm, campus & city tour.

**Tuesday, May 28:** First day of on-site class. Introductory lecture on *The Tale of the Heike*: introduction pp. 1-11, and appendix C, “The Heike as Literature” (McCullough).

**Wednesday, May 29:** *The Tale of the Heike*

**Thursday, May 30:** *The Tale of the Heike*

**Friday, May 31:** Kyoto field trip.

### Week Three, June 3-8

**Monday, June 3:** *Hagakure*, Yamamoto Tsunetomo

**Tuesday, June 4:** *Hagakure*, Yamamoto Tsunetomo

**Wednesday, June 5:** *Chushingura*, Izumo, Shoraku and Senryu

**Thursday, June 6:** *Chushingura*, Izumo, Shoraku and Senryu

### Week Four, June 10-14

**Monday, June 10:** *Chushingura*, Izumo, Shoraku and Senryu

**Tuesday, June 11:** “The Capacity of Chushingura,” Henry D. Smith, *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 58, no. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 1-42, lecture

**Wednesday, June 12:** From *The Great Mirror of Male Love* by Saikaku: “Though Bearing an Umbrella, He was Rained Upon” and “The Sickbed No Medicine Could Cure.”

**Thursday, June 13:** *Geisha, a Life*, Mineko Iwasaki

**Friday, June 14:** Osaka field trip.

**Saturday, June 15:** Paper one due by 11:59 p.m. via Turnitin on Canvas.

#### **Week Five, June 17-21**

**Monday, June 17:** *Geisha, a Life*, Mineko Iwasaki

**Tuesday, June 18:** *Geisha, a Life*, Mineko Iwasaki

**Wednesday, June 19:** *Autobiography of a Geisha*, Sayo Masuda

**Thursday, June 20:** *Autobiography of a Geisha*, Sayo Masuda

#### **Week Six, June 24-29**

**Monday, June 24:** *Autobiography of a Geisha*, Sayo Masuda

**Tuesday, June 25:** *Geisha in Rivalry*, Kafu Nagai

**Wednesday, June 26:** *Geisha in Rivalry*, Kafu Nagai

**Thursday, June 27:** *Geisha in Rivalry*, Kafu Nagai

**Friday, June 28:** Final exam.

**Saturday, June 29:** Paper two due by 11:59 p.m. via Turnitin on Canvas.