This course will introduce students to the study of culture and modernity in the Japanese context over the past two centuries. Issues to be examined will include the role of the novel and historical narrative in the production of modern, nationalized consciousness, continuities and ruptures among individual, national, and colonial subjectivity, and the roles of translation and communication in the construction and destruction of cultural difference. Readings will include literary and other texts that give an understanding of the massive changes wrought by the advent of modernity in Japan and also shed light on the common characteristics of the modern experience everywhere. Students will be expected to read these texts with a critical eye; not only as sources of information, but also as motivated and reflexive interventions in the ongoing articulation and contestation of the story of Japanese culture.

Requirements:

Each week students will post a one-page response paper on the course Blackboard site no later than 5:00 on the day before their recitation section. These papers should discuss issues raised by one or more of the week’s readings. They should not be summaries, but critical engagement with the texts. They should also serve as entry points for discussion during the recitation sections.

There will be one in-class midterm exam and one final exam. Questions for the exam will be selected from a list of potential essay questions made available in advance. Midterm and final exams will each count for one third of the final grade. The remaining third will be determined according to attendance and participation as reflected in discussions and response papers.

Tuesday, September 6
Introduction

Thursday, September 8
The “Disembedding” of Time and Space
Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*
Chapters I and III
Tuesday, September 13
Trust, Symbolic Tokens, and Expert Systems
Giddens, Chapters IV and VI

Thursday, September 15
Premodern Japan and the *Bakuhan seido*

Tuesday, September 20
*Musui’s Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*

Thursday, September 22
*Musui’s Story*, cont’d.

Tuesday, September 27
Masao Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them*
Chapters I and II (55-95)

Thursday, September 29
Miyoshi, Chapter III (97-141)

Tuesday, October 4
“The Japanese Enlightenment”
Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Good-bye Asia” and “An Encouragement of Learning”

Thursday, October 6
Selections from the *Meiroku Zasshi*
“Conjectures on an Imaginary Closed Country”
“Asia Should not be Despised”
“On Changing the Character of the People”
“Hiragana”
“Creating Good Mothers”

Tuesday, October 11
Review

Thursday, October 13
Midterm

Tuesday, October 18
Gender and Literary Modernity
Miyake Kaho, “Warbler in the Bush”

Thursday, October 20
Shimizu Shikin, “The Broken Ring”
Higuchi Ichiyo, “The Thirteenth Night”
Tuesday, October 25
Translated Modernity
Futabatei Shimei, *Ukigumo*

Thursday, October 27
The Inward Turn
*Ukigumo*, cont’d

Tuesday, November 1
Selections from
Natsume Soseki, *I am a Cat*

Thursday, November 3
*I am a Cat*, continued

Tuesday, November 8
Natsume Soseki, *Botchan*

Thursday, November 10
*Botchan*  cont’d.

Tuesday, November 15
Natsume Soseki, *And Then*

Thursday, November 17
*And Then*, cont’d.

Tuesday, November 22
Tempest in a Teacup
Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea*

Thursday, November 24
Thanksgiving

Tuesday, November 29
Modernism and Modern Girls
Tanizaki Jun’ichiro, *Naomi*

Thursday, December 1
*Naomi*, cont’d

Tuesday, December 6
Getting over Japan
Tawada, Yoko, *Where Europe Begins*
Read “The Bath”
Thursday, December 8
Getting over the Novel
Tawada Yoko, *Where Europe Begins*
Read “A Guest”

Tuesday, December 13
Review

Tuesday, December 20
FINAL EXAM
8:00-9:50

Books for Purchase at Shakespeare and Co., 716 Broadway. ASK THE ATTENDANT DOWNSTAIRS IN THE TEXTBOOK SECTION.


*As We Saw Them, Ukimono*, and Soseki’s *And Then* WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN XEROX FORM FROM ADVANCED COPY CENTER, 552 Laguardia Place. All other texts will be posted on the Blackboard site under “Course Documents.”