

DEAL-LC New FALL 2008 Courses

JAPN 480: Lost and Found in Translation

Fall 2008

Professor Michiko Wilson

Scheduled Meetings: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:45

Classroom: New Cabell B-20

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an advanced language seminar designed to introduce students to literary analysis using selections from works by four leading contemporary Japanese fiction writers: Fumiko Enchi 円地文子(1905-1986), a master of feminine sensibility; Kenzaburo Oe 大江健三郎, (1935-), Japan's second Nobel laureate; Haruki Murakami 村上春樹(1949-) a sophisticated storyteller of urbanites; and Banana Yoshimoto バナナ吉本(1964-), a master storyteller of human emotions. We will pay close attention to their style, examining their techniques, idioms, expressions, and nuances and enhancing our appreciation by looking at translations by professionals. Students will also be asked to craft translations of their own. Literary translation is a meticulous, multi-dimensional, creative activity that demands that one capture the meaning, tone, flavor, and tempo of the original. By comparing translations, students will also learn to appreciate not only the inevitability of losing something in translation, but also the pleasure of unearthing something unintended even by the author. Translation is indeed not just a question of transferring a text from one language to another ("trans"--across, and "latus"--brought/arrived), but a lively give-and-take of items lost and found, one that requires the translator to be bicultural as well as bilingual. Besides crafting their own translations on a weekly basis, students will also be required to participate in college-level "free conversation" sessions in Japanese on topics based on our readings, and they will have the opportunity to write short essays at a college-appropriate proficiency level, to improve their Japanese writing ability.

This course fulfills: Non-Western Perspective Requirement.

JPTR 490

Sleuthing Japan's Culture and Society: Japanese Mysteries

Fall 2008

Professor Michiko Wilson

Time and Place: W 2:00-4:30 at WILSON 140

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will examine the surprisingly diverse cultural landscapes of Japan through the prism of its finest and most popular mysteries and detective fiction, which we will

read in English. Among the writers to be considered are Rampo Edogawa (pseudonym of Hirai Taro, 1894–1965), the pioneer of Japanese mysteries; Seicho Matsumoto (1909-1992), Japan's twentieth-century master of crime and historical fiction; Miyuki Miyabe (1960-), the finest writer of mystery and juvenile fiction; and Asa Nonami (1960-), the creator of Japan's first contemporary female detective, Otomichi. Taken together, the works of these authors yield a realistic portrayal of Japanese society and culture, often interlaced with wry humor, insightful social commentary, and Edgar Allan Poe-like supernatural and fantastical elements. Japan still boasts the lowest crime rate among industrialized nations; nonetheless, it has its violent criminal elements, and even ordinary people can have an accidental brush with the law. We will explore what the culturally conditioned combination of intuition, logic and detection bears on the actual sleuthing process of each mystery. Since many of the works are written by women, we will compare them to representative works by female Western mystery writers such as Dorothy Sayers (1893-1952) and Agatha Christie (1890-1976).

This course fulfills
Second Writing Requirement and Non-Western Perspective Requirement.