



Demonic Women in Japanese Fiction

EALC 2251 – Spring 2024

Tuesday and Thursday, 1:45–3:15

Classroom TBA

Demonic women have stabbed and slithered their way through the pages of Japanese fiction ever since people began to write stories in the Japanese language more than a thousand years ago. This ghostly heritage still manifests itself in the twenty-first century, with all manner of disturbing apparitions haunting the airwaves and the internet. Where are these strange and creepy women coming from, and what do they want? In this course we will investigate both the paranormal and the psychological in an attempt to understand the cultural themes and issues underlying the literary trope of the demonic woman in Japan.

We will begin our journey into the realm of the mysterious with the romances and folklore of premodern Japan before moving forward to the postwar era, a time of changing social roles and hidden resentments. As we progress from the 1950s to the 2010s, we will examine the political ideologies that cast women as miscreants, deviants, and villains. We will also delve into theories concerning abjection and the uncanny, which render women as strangers in their own bodies. Along the way we will explore constructions of gender and sexuality as we study demonic men, queerness that resists binary categorization, and posthuman technophobia. By the end of this course, students will have developed a better understanding of how history and society inform the stories we tell about what frightens and fascinates us.

Instructor

Kathryn Hemmann
khemmann@gmail.com
Williams Hall 710
office hours by appointment

Course Texts

Masks, by Fumiko Enchi
Now You're One of Us, by Asa Nonami
Fragments of Horror, by Junji Itō
Audition, by Ryū Murakami
Real World, by Natsuo Kirino

Grading and Assignments

Eight Quizzes: 40%
Four Short Responses: 40%
In-Class Final Exam: 20%

Quizzes

There will be eight quizzes administered and graded on Canvas. Each quiz will contain five short answer questions based on the week's assigned reading. These quizzes are completely open-book, and students are encouraged to read and research as necessary. The quizzes are untimed, but no late submissions will be accepted. Each week's quiz will be available on Monday morning and must be submitted **no later than 5:00pm on Thursday** afternoon.

Short Responses

There will be four short responses due over the course of the semester. These short responses will be administered and graded on Canvas in a format similar to the quizzes. A set of prompts will be provided for each response, but students should feel free to write about whatever they wish. A response should be approximately 250 to 600 words, or about two to four paragraphs. The due dates are **February 8, February 29, March 28, and April 18**.

In-Class Final Exam

The final exam for the class will consist of a selection of identification terms and short answer questions intended to test retention of knowledge and proficiency in textual analysis. Spelling and grammar will not factor into scoring. The exam should take 30 to 45 minutes to complete, and it will be administered in class on **Thursday, April 25**. A comprehensive study guide will be provided in advance, and blue books will be distributed at the beginning of the exam.

Course Policies

Required Readings

Students must purchase the five books required for this class, but all of the short stories will be available on the course site on Canvas. Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Please note that all of the novels will take some time to read. It is recommended that you begin reading each novel at least a week in advance.

Attendance

Each student is allowed **two unexcused absences**, no questions asked and no excuses necessary. If you would like to excuse an absence, you must submit at least one form of written proof of legitimacy (photocopies and email attachments are fine). Please note that absence notices generated by Canvas do not count as proof of legitimacy. **Each unexcused absence after the second will result in half a letter grade being deducted from your final course grade.** Please be aware that obligations for other classes (such as exams or labs) do not count as a valid excuse.

Disability Accommodation

I'm happy to grant deadline extensions and accommodations to anyone who asks regardless of an official declaration of disability. Please feel free to request whatever you need, and please know that it's not necessary to share private or personal information with me. Still, please be sure to send a request in writing via email so that I have a means of following up with you if necessary.

Plagiarism and ChatGPT

I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism, which includes machine-generated text. If you submit work that isn't your own for any assignment for any reason, you will fail the assignment. You are being graded primarily on your good faith effort and engagement with the course material, so there should be no need for you to submit work that is not your own.

Respect

Each student is expected to be respectful of the instructor and their peers. No speech or behavior demonstrating or encouraging discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, age, body shape, or disability will be tolerated. Cultural essentialism, or the reduction of a large and diverse group of people into a set of stereotypes, is open to discussion, but its uncritical reproduction is counter to the purpose of this course.

Content Warnings

As many of the assigned readings fall into the genre of horror, students should be aware that we will encounter violent and graphic imagery. I will try to warn for such content in advance, but students should note that they will be responsible for alerting me to any special accommodations.

Week One: Course Introduction

Thursday, January 18

Please familiarize yourself with the syllabus.

UNIT ONE: THE GHOSTS OF THE PAST

Week Two: The Roots of Evil

Tuesday, January 23

Noriko Reider, “*Yamauba and Oni-Women: Devouring and Helping Yamauba Are Two Sides of the Same Coin*,” from *Asian Ethnography* 78, pp.403-427

Thursday, January 25

Minako Ohba, “The Smile of a Mountain Witch,” from *Japanese Women Writers*, pp.194-206

Week Three: Demonic Possession

Tuesday, January 30

Murasaki Shikibu, “Yūgao: The Twilight Beauty,” from *The Tale of Genji*, pp.53-80

Thursday, February 1

Yukio Mishima, “The Lady Aoi,” from *Five Modern Nō Plays*, pp.143-171

Week Four: A Garden of Flowers at Night

Tuesday, February 6

Fumiko Enchi, *Masks*, pp.3-59

Thursday, February 8

Fumiko Enchi, *Masks*, pp.61-141

SHORT RESPONSE #1 DUE BY 5:00PM ON THURSDAY, 02/08

UNIT TWO: TERRIBLE PEOPLE

Week Five: Ghosts of Old Edo

Tuesday, February 13

Akinari Ueda, “A Serpent’s Lust,” from *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*, pp.155-185

Thursday, February 15

Miyuki Miyabe, “Cage of Shadows,” from *Apparitions*, pp.45-65

Week Six: The Tiny Deaths of Small Things

Tuesday, February 20

Takako Takahashi, "The Oracle," from *Lonely Woman*, pp.33-62

Thursday, February 22

Mieko Kanai, "Rabbits," from *Rabbits, Crabs, Etc.*, pp.1-16

Week Seven: The Uncanny Family

Tuesday, February 27

Asa Nonami, *Now You're One of Us*, pp.5-126

Thursday, February 29

Asa Nonami, *Now You're One of Us*, pp.127-239

SHORT RESPONSE #2 DUE BY 5:00PM ON THURSDAY, 02/29

SPRING BREAK

March 2 – March 10

UNIT THREE: MURDER

Week Eight: Haunted Houses and Haunted People

Tuesday, March 12

Randy Taguchi, "Jamila," from *Fujisan*, pp.98-147

Thursday, March 14

Takashi Shimizu, *Ju-On: The Grudge*

(available on YouTube Movies and Amazon Prime Video)

Week Nine: The Spectacle of Blood

Tuesday, March 26

Junji Itō, "Tomio · Red Turtleneck," from *Fragments of Horror*, pp.41-74

Junji Itō, "Gentle Goodbye," from *Fragments of Horror*, pp.75-104

Thursday, March 28

Mamoru Kanbe, *Elfen Lied*, Episode 1

(available on Amazon Prime Video and Apple TV)

Week Ten: A Descent into Madness

Tuesday, March 19

Ryū Murakami, *Audition*, pp.7-86

Thursday, March 21
Ryū Murakami, *Audition*, pp.87-190

SHORT RESPONSE #3 DUE BY 5:00PM ON THURSDAY, 03/28

UNIT FOUR: SOCIAL DYSFUNCTION

Week Eleven: Dangerous Schoolgirls

Tuesday, April 2
Natsuo Kirino, *Real World*, pp. 3-110

Thursday, April 4
Natsuo Kirino, *Real World*, pp.111-208

Week Twelve: The End of the Life Cycle

Tuesday, April 9
Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, "Rashomon," from *Rashomon and Other Stories*, pp. 26-34
Masatsugu Ono, "A Breast," from *At the Edge of the Woods*, pp.3-26

Thursday, April 11
Yōko Ogawa, "Afternoon at the Bakery," from *Revenge*, pp.1-12
Yōko Ogawa, "Pregnancy Diary," from *The Diving Pool*, pp.57-105

Week Thirteen: Difference and Disruption

Tuesday, April 16
Yukiko Motoya, "The Lonesome Bodybuilder," from *The Lonesome Bodybuilder*, pp.3-20
Yukiko Motoya, "Fitting Room," from *The Lonesome Bodybuilder*, pp.21-29

Thursday, April 18
Meera Viswanathan, "In Pursuit of the Yamamba: The Question of Female Resistance," from *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing*, pp.239-261

SHORT RESPONSE #4 DUE BY 5:00PM ON THURSDAY, 04/18

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, April 23
Open office hours

Thursday, April 25
In-class final exam