

STORYTELLING IN ASIAN RELIGIONS

Term 1 (Fall)

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Lecture: Tues. 10:30–12:20, T13 106

Tutorials: Thurs. 11:30–12:20, ETB 238

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Course Description

This course provides an overview of key themes in Asian societies, cultures, and religions (particularly Buddhism) through the medium of storytelling. We will explore a variety of source materials including, but not limited to, *manga* (comics/graphic novels), Japanese *setsuwa* (Buddhist storytelling traditions), Japanese Nō theatre, Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*), previous birth stories (*jātakas* and *avadānas*), Sanskrit satirical dramas, Indian legal narrative literature and the "Bible of Tibet," and ghost stories. We will examine a number of stories in multiple versions to see how, for instance, Indian tales have been adopted and adapted to fit their new contexts in Tibet, China, and Japan.

This course counts towards the Minor in Japanese Studies (being phased out effective Sep. 2023) and the Minor in Asian Studies, both administered through the Department of Religious Studies.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be:

- familiar with a significant number of storytelling genres in Asia;
- able to identify and discuss the significance of key terms, themes, and concepts that have exerted—and continue to exert—influence in the societies, cultures, and religions of Asia (particularly those influenced by Buddhism).

Required Materials and Texts

- None. Everything needed may be accessed either through the library's e-resources, the University's Fair Dealing Policy, or elsewhere on the internet using older sources in public domain. Prepare ahead of time since some e-books only allow for one simultaneous user. As for audio/visual material, not all of this is able to be licensed through the library. You will not be tested on material not available to all students. Where available, links will be provided to commercial streaming services, as suggested here: <https://copyright.mcmaster.ca/serving-student-access-needs-as-we-rapidly-shift-to-online-course-and-exam-delivery-copyright-considerations/>.

Class Format

In order to foster engagement with the material (discussion) and build a sense of community, this class will be taught as a hybrid lecture/seminar. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Course Evaluation: Overview

1. There will be **two open-book tests**, each worth **20%** of the final grade. Students will be required to identify and explain key terms and concepts, and discuss the significance of selected passages. The tentative test dates are Oct. 4 & Nov. 22.

2. There will be **two** assigned **response papers** based on weekly readings (each worth **20%** of the final grade). To do well in these papers, students must show evidence of critical engagement with the readings. It is not sufficient simply to summarise the readings. The tentative due dates for the papers are: Oct. 28 & Dec. 9. Students who book an appointment with McMaster's Writing Centre (<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/writing-support/>) and provide me with proof of (1) attendance and (2) implementation of feedback on their draft prior to submission of the response paper will receive a 5% bump on the marked response paper.
3. There will be **8 mini quizzes**. Each quiz is worth **5%** of the final grade. You should complete 4 mini quizzes to receive **20%**. If you complete more than 4 mini quizzes, only your best 4 scores will be retained, thus allowing you to improve your grade.
4. Attendance & participation: Priceless (**0%**). Lectures may cover material not in the required readings. Students are responsible for learning and understanding this material, and may be examined on it.
5. There is **no final paper or exam**.

Course Evaluation: Details

- 1) Open-book Test 1 (20%), October 4 (week 5)
- 2) Paper 1 (20%), due October 28 (week 8)
- 3) Open-book Test 2 (20%), November 22 (week 12)
- 4) Paper 2 (20%), due December 9 (week 14)
- 5) Weekly Mini Quizzes (20%), available weeks 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

This lecture schedule is based upon current university and public health guidelines and may be subject to changes during the term. Any changes to the schedule or course delivery will be communicated on the course announcements section on Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements prior to attending class.

Week 1 (September 6)

Introduction/overview

Manga: Tezuka Osamu's *Buddha*

Readings:

- Tezuka, Osamu. 2003. "Brahmin: Chapter One." In *Kapilavastu*, 8–47. Vol. 1 of *Buddha*. New York: Vertical.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991004526019707371
- Swanson, Paul L. 2004. "Review of Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha*." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31 (1): 233–240.
<https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/2844>
- Bolton, Christopher. 2014. "Tezuka's *Buddha* at the Tokyo National Museum: An Interview with Matsumoto Nobuyuki." *Mechademia* 9, 200–215.
www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/mech.9.2014.0200

Week 2 (September 13)

Setsuwa: *Nihon ryōiki*

Readings:

- Shirane, Haruo. 2013. "Introduction." In *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan: The Nihon Ryōiki*, 1–5. New York: Columbia University Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991009762459707371
- Watson, Burton. 2013. "Preface" and translation of volume one. In *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan: The Nihon Ryōiki*, 7–57. New York: Columbia University Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991009762459707371

Week 3 (September 20): Mini Quiz 1

Setsuwa: *Konjaku monogatari shū*

Readings:

- Shirane, Haruo. 2011. "Introduction." In *The Demon at Agi Bridge and Other Japanese Tales*, ed. Haruo Shirane, 1–9. New York: Columbia University Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991009762409707371
- Watson, Burton. 2011. "Tales from India," "Tales from China," "Buddhist Tales of Japan," and "Secular Tales of Japan." In *The Demon at Agi Bridge and Other Japanese Tales*, ed. Haruo Shirane, 23–94. New York: Columbia University Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991009762409707371

Week 4 (September 27): Mini Quiz 2

Japanese Nō Theatre: *Dōjōji*

Readings:

- Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu (1435–1516). 1970. "Dōjōji." In *Twenty Plays of the Nō Theatre*, trans. Donald Keene, 237–252. New York: Columbia University Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991021584869707371

Week 5 (October 4): Open-book Test 1: 20%

Week 6 (October 11): Mid-term recess: relax!

Week 7 (October 18): Mini Quiz 3

Lives of the Buddha in Sanskrit Poetry

Readings:

- Khoroche, Peter. 2017. "Introduction" and "Prologue." In *Once a Peacock, Once an Actress: Twenty-Four Lives of the Bodhisattva from Haribhaṭṭa's Jātakamālā*, 1–10. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991028213279707371
- Khoroche, Peter, trans. 2017. "The Hare," "Rūpyāvati," "The Deer," "The Peacock," "Sudhana and the Fairy Princess," and "Nirupamā." In *Once a Peacock, Once an Actress: Twenty-Four Lives of the Bodhisattva from Haribhaṭṭa's Jātakamālā*, 33–39, 46–52, 73–79, 80–94, 147–175, 192–197. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991028213279707371
- Khoroche, Peter, trans. 1989. "Viśvaṃtara." In *Once the Buddha Was a Monkey: Ārya Śūra's Jātakamālā*, 58–74. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991028213279707371

Week 8 (October 25): Mini Quiz 4; Paper 1 due: 20%

Previous Lives: Buddhist Narrative (avadānas)

Readings:

- Rotman, Andy, trans. 2017. "The Story of Jyotiṣka," "The Story of Sahasodgata," "The Story of Rūpāvati," and "The Story of a Lonesome Fool." In *Divine Stories. Divyāvadāna. Part 2*, 45–82, 95–116, 181–195, 201–240. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991032472946607371

Week 9 (November 1): Mini Quiz 5

Sanskrit Satirical Drama

Readings:

- Bhaṭṭa Jayanta (9th century CE). 2005. "Act One: The Buddhists Defeated." In *Much Ado About Religion (Āgamaḍambara)*, trans. Csaba Dezső, 53–81 (odd pages [English translation] only). New York: NYU Press & JJC Foundation.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991003970329707371
- Śyāmilaka (9th century CE). 2009. "The Kick (Pādatāḍitaka)." In *The Quartet of Causeries*, eds. and trans. Csaba Dezső and Somadeva Vasudeva, 5–161 (odd pages [English translation] only). New York: NYU Press & JJC Foundation.
https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991017505739707371

Week 10 (November 8): Mini Quiz 6

Indian Tales of Asceticism and the "Bible of Tibet"

Readings:

von Schiefner, F. Anton, trans. 1882. "The Clever Thief," "Mahākāśyapa and Bhadrā," and "Viśvaṅtara." In *The Bible of Tibet: Tibetan Tales From Indian Sources*, 37–43, 186–205, 257–272. Translated from the Tibetan of the Kahgyur by F. Anton von Sheifner, and from the German into English by W.R.S. Ralston, with an introduction, and new edition with a preface by C.A.F. Rhys Davids. London: Routledge. Please also read the Preface (pp. i–v).

https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991013237049707371

Clarke, Shayne. 2014. "Former Wives from Former Lives." In *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms*, 78–119. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991022742809707371

———. 2014. "Reconsidering Renunciation: Family-Friendly Monasticisms." In *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms*, 150–169. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991022742809707371

Week 11 (November 15): Mini Quiz 7

Ghost Stories (1): *Ugetsu*

Readings:

Ueda Akinari (1734–1809). [1974] 2011. "The House Amid the Thickets (Asaji ga yado)" and "The Lust of the White Serpent (Jasei no in)." In *Ugetsu Monogatari, Or, Tales of Moonlight and Rain: A Complete English Version of the Eighteenth-Century Japanese Collection of Tales of the Supernatural*, 121–132, 161–184. Translated by Leon M. Zolbrod. Abingdon: Routledge.

https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991012066229707371

Watch:

Mizoguchi Kenji 溝口健二 (1898–1956), dir. *Ugetsu (Ugetsu Monogatari 雨月物語)*. 1953. Daiei Film 大映. San Francisco: Kanopy Streaming, 2014. The Criterion Collection.

https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991009756239707371

Week 12 (November 22): Open-book Test 2: 20%

Week 13 (November 29): Mini Quiz 8

Ghost Stories (2): *Kwaidan*

Readings:

Hearn, Lafcadio (1850–1904). 1904. "The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi," "Jikininki," and "Yuki-Onna." In *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*, 3–20, 65–73, 111–118. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/deno1h/alma991025487829707371

Week 14 (December 6): Paper 2 due: 20%

Conclusions/Review/Relax

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Do not submit papers by e-mail (attachments, in-line, etc.); they will not be accepted. Submit only to Avenue to Learn, following specific instructions on the course's website (Announcements in Avenue). Staff in the office of the Department of Religious Studies will not date-stamp or receive papers and other assignments.

All written work will be marked on grammar, clarity of writing, and organization, as well as content and analysis. Proofread and then proofread again. All work must be properly referenced, with footnotes and bibliography (where applicable). Students are encouraged to visit the Student Success Centre to improve their essay skills (Gilmour Hall 110). For information about the Writing Support services, visit the Centre's website: <https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/writing-support/>

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

All written work must be submitted on or before the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 5% a day (including weekends). Late penalties will generally not be waived unless your Faculty/Program Office advises the instructor that you have submitted to that office the appropriate documentation to support your inability to submit the work by the due date. If you are having trouble with a deadline, contact me, ideally before the deadline.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first

and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Courses with an On-line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses—but not mine—may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.