

Sophia University –Summer Session 2026

July 1 – July 22, 2026 *July 1: Orientation. *July 3: No class day

Date: December 2025

Course Title	Japanese Literature and the City
Course Code	LIZ 334
Instructor	Alisa Freedman
Class Period	1st Period (9:00-10:40)
Course Format	In-Person
Language of Instruction	English
Maximum class size	50
Course Description	<p>In this survey course, we will read a variety of Japanese literary works about cities written by both canonized and so-called “popular” authors from the years right after World War II to the present. The class will examine different ways Japanese writers creatively depicted urban growth, conveyed aspects of human nature, and devised aesthetic forms through which to respond to social, cultural, and political issues. We will examine depictions of the many kinds of people who have lived in Tokyo and other Japanese cities and the values authors and poets have associated with urban and rural Japan.</p> <p>Students will become familiar with important writers who have come to represent key literary movements and who have helped to construct Japan’s global image. We will explore Japanese publishing industries and discuss the politics of literary translation and the impact of economics on cultural production. We will question what books will be like in the future. Importantly, we will consider how stories help us to understand more about the world and our own places in it.</p>
Course Objectives	Become familiar with Japanese literature, notable authors, and the role of Tokyo in literary production; practice analyzing literature; learn to express ideas orally and in writing; build class community through discussions about Japanese literature
Expected work outside of class	Read assigned texts (mostly short stories) before class discussions. Study for tests. Around 1-2 hours per day.
Course Materials	PDFs available through Moodle. One textbook below costing less than 1,000 yen is required to purchase. Kitchen (Banana Yoshimoto), ISBN-13: 978-0571342723
	Purchase of textbook. Mandatory
	e-book: acceptable. Any version is fine.
Moodle	Moodle is an important site for the class. The day-to-day syllabus, readings, class outlines, assignment sheets, and other course materials will be posted on Moodle. Students can also reach the professor through

	Moodle.
Contact Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • via Moodle message or email (both ways are okay) <p>*The email address will be available at CGED office or informed by the instructor in the first class if needed.</p>
Evaluation (Attendance, Class participation, in-class assignments, final exam, quizzes, etc.)	<p>Tentative assignments: (Total of 166 points. Lots of points mean many chances to get a good grade!)</p> <p>2 Tests (each 50 points, total of 100 points)</p> <p>Attendance and Participation (3 points per class, total of 36 points)</p> <p>Class Engagement Activities (30 points)</p>
Other comments	
Class schedule	<p>*July 1: Orientation</p> <p>*July 3: No-Class Day</p> <p>[DAY 1] Course introduction</p> <p>[DAY 2] Japanese literature and war</p> <p>[DAY 3] Japanese literature from the 1950s</p> <p>[DAY 4] Japanese literature from the 1960s</p> <p>[DAY 5] Japanese literature from the 1970s</p> <p>[DAY 6] Japanese poetry</p> <p>[DAY 7] Japanese literature from the 1980s</p> <p>[DAY 8] Japanese children's books</p> <p>[DAY 9] Japanese literature from the 1990s</p> <p>[DAY 10] Japanese literature from the 2000s, I</p> <p>[DAY 11] Japanese literature from the 2000s, II</p> <p>[DAY 12] Japanese literature from the 2000s, III</p> <p>[DAY 13] Final discussion, review, and synthesis</p> <p>[DAY 14] Final examination</p>

*Course format, evaluation methods and class schedule may be subject to change.

[Important Note Regarding Class Capacity]

Course enrollment in each course is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be aware that once the maximum capacity is reached, you will no longer be able to select that course.

If you plan to transfer the credits to your home university, please consider alternative courses as well when making your study plan, in case the courses you want to take are full.