

POLS 307H (WI, E)  
Foreign Travelers in Japan  
3 credits/ 45 contact hours  
No Prerequisites  
(To be taught in Japan)

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### **Course Description**

The popular fascination with Japan as an “unknowable” and “homogeneous” society is often embedded in contemporary studies of Japan’s immigration policy. Attention to the impossibility of being an “immigrant” in Japan leaves the social and political importance of short-term visitors to Japan unexplored. In fact, travelers in Japan have played and continued to play a significant role in the representation of Japan. We will explore this role by focusing on travel writing about Japan. The accounts of earliest encounters of Western European travelers to Japan, even before the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868), shaped understandings of Japan and have become part of the scholarly record, especially in the disciplines of Japanese history, religion, and politics. Contemporary travel writing continues to shape (and is shaped by) popular understandings of Japan while also having unacknowledged political significance. Using Debbie Lisle’s, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* to provide a theoretical framework for the significance of travel writing for global politics, we will explore the politics and ethics of travelers and travel writing in Japan. We will pay close attention to the role of race, gender and nationality of travel writers as we examine themes including imperialism, multiculturalism, globalization, democracy and others. We will examine the broad political contexts during the time when each of the texts was written and the way that politics is manifest in the texts themselves. This is an E focused course and we will attend to the ethics of travel and travel writing throughout the course. The reading for the first week of class will frame our discussions around ethical issues for the duration of the semester.

### **Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

Students will (be able to):

1. gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for cultural difference and diversity by critically reflecting on their own identity, subjectivity and positionality.
2. assess how an author’s identity impacts his/her representation of Japan’s culture, society, and politics.
3. reflect on how their identity and cultural values impacts how they experience and represent Japan, Japanese culture, society and people.
4. identify conventions of travel writing.
5. demonstrate knowledge of the limitations of the conventions of travel writing.
6. understand the ethical dilemmas of travel and travel writing.
7. demonstrate an ability to overcome ethical dilemmas in travel/travel writing.

8. discuss the political nature of travel writing and how it affects global politics.
9. understand the ethics and politics of representation in travel writing.
10. gain confidence as an independent and contentious international traveler.

### **Books and Materials**

#### Required:

Matthew Amster-Burton. 2014. *Pretty Good Number One: An American Family Eats Tokyo*. Mamster Books.

Isabella L. Bird. 2013. *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*. CreateSpace.

Florent Chavouet. 2011. *Tokyo on Foot: A Graphic Memoir and Sketchbook with Hand-drawn Maps*. Tuttle.

Hendrick Doeff. 2003. *Recollections of Japan*. Trafford Press.

Pico Iyer. 2011. *The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto*. Vintage Press.

Debbie Lisle. 2006. *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*. Cambridge University Press.

Kate T. Williamson. 2006. *A Year in Japan*. Princeton Architectural Press.

#### Suggested for further reading:

Basil Hall Chamberlain. 2013. *Things Japanese*. Lecturable Press.

Julian Street. 2013. *Mysterious Japan*. Lecturable Press.

Lafcadio Hearn. 2007. *Lafcadio Hearn's Japan: An Anthology of His Writings on the Country and Its People*. Tuttle Publishing.

Engelbert Kaempfer (Beatrice Bodart-Bailey, ed). 1999. *Kaempfer: Kaempfer's Japan Paper*. University of Hawaii Press.

Leslie Helm. 2013. *Yokohama Yankee: My Family's Five Generations as Outsiders in Japan*. Chin Music Press Inc.

Michael Cooper. 1982. *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640*. University of California Press.

### **Assignments and Grading**

#### Attendance (5%)

You will receive full points by attending class. Please arrive on time. If you arrive more than ten minutes late or leave more than ten minutes early, you will not receive credit for attending.

#### Participation (15%)

Participation in this course represents a significant part of your final grade. Students are required to actively participate in class discussions; you will be given in-class assignments including "five minute papers" that count as part of your participation. These in class assignments are designed for you to demonstrate your mastery of the

reading for the day, to analyze readings and explain them to others. At some point during each class period you might be asked to write for five minutes on a question related to the day's topic and the reading. Your written answers will provide a basis for your participation in class discussion. I also consider both the quantity and quality of your contributions, whether they are meaningful to the development of the class discussion, and demonstrate sustained engagement over the course of the semester. To earn full participation points you must regularly contribute to every class discussion and demonstrate that you have done the reading. Asking questions, offering insight, critique and analysis are all ways to participate. You should also research the political context of the time during which each of the travelogues we consider in class was written and use this to inform the discussion.

“Five Minute Papers”— At the beginning of class you might be asked to write an informal one page thought piece on a question that will require you to reflect on the course reading, discussion, and lecture in a structured way. The answers to these questions will form the basis of our class discussions. Having time to write down your thoughts will allow you to practice writing and make it easier for you to participate in discussion. This informal writing activity will enable students to experience writing without the stress and anxiety that often accompanies the start of a formal writing assignment. I will usually give students feedback on their thought piece in the course of the discussion, but I will occasionally collect them to get a better sense of how well you are grasping the material. Most students usually find that they have much more to say on a given topic than they originally thought and they often ask for more time to write so don't worry about whether you'll be able to fill one page. Just start writing!

#### Journal (30%)

You will be required to keep a journal for this course. I encourage you to journal everyday but ask that you only submit one entry per week of at least one but no more than five pages. You are welcome to write more--especially since this material will be useful when you write your final essay—but I will only read and grade one each week. Several times during the semester I will ask you to respond to a prompt that I give based on class readings and discussions. These prompts will sometimes require you to undertake and journal about activities or encounters such as unplanned wandering, a trip by train, the natural world, your encounters with Japanese people, observing a particular kind of place/environment, etc. I will also ask you to use your journal to critically reflect on issues such as your assumptions about Japanese people and culture, how your own positionality affects your interactions with Japanese and non-Japanese, etc. The journal is one way to integrate class work and experience. You will also be expected to draw from your journal in class discussion.

#### Politics of Travel Writing Styles and Conventions Essay 4-5 pages (15%)

You will write four to five page critical analysis of the styles and conventions of travel writing drawing examples from class readings. A detailed assignment sheet will be handed out in class.

#### Ethics in Travel Writing and Representation Essay 4-5 pages (15%)

Drawing from at least two of the travelogues read for this course, you will write a four to five page essay analyzing the ethics and politics of cross-cultural representation in travel writing. A detailed assignment sheet will be handed out in class.

#### Travel Essay 10-15 pages (20%)

For your final essay, you will write a 10-15 page travel essay based on the material from your journal for the course. You will choose a theme such as food, sports, the natural world, games, etc. to serve as an organizing thread for your essay. A detailed assignment sheet will be handed out in class.

#### **Field Trips**

I would like to schedule at least two field trips for this course. One of these trips will be to explore “old” Japan at a temple, shrine (such as Meiji Jingu, Yasukuni Shrine), shitamachi neighborhood, etc. One of these trips will explore “new” Japan through developments at Odaiba (development of condos, shopping on reclaimed land), Roppongi Hills, Tokyo Midtown or Omotesando Hills. I will decide the destinations in consultation with the students.

#### **Reading Schedule**

##### Week 1

Lisle, “Introduction: the global imaginary of contemporary travel writing”

Folker Hanusch. 2012. “A Profile of Australian Travel Journalists’ Professional Views and Ethical Standards,” *Journalism*, 13 (5), pp. 668-686.

John D. Barbour. 2005. “The Ethics of Intercultural Travel: Thomas Merton’s Asian Pilgrimage and Orientalism,” *Biography* 28 (1), pp. 15-26.

Elfriede Fürsich and Anandam P. Kavoori. 2001. “Mapping a Critical Framework for the Study of Travel Journalism,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 4 (2), pp. 149-171.

##### Week 2

Lisle, “Between fact and fiction: the generic boundaries of travel writing”

Iyer, *The Lady and the Monk*, “Autumn”

##### Week 3

Iyer, *The Lady and the Monk*, “Winter” and “Spring”

##### Week 4

Iyer, *The Lady and the Monk*, “Summer”

##### Week 5

Film: *Lost in Translation*

Koichi Iwabuchi. 2015. "Lost in Trans-Nation: Post-Orientalism and the Actually Existing Multicultural Reality" in *Resilient Borders and Cultural Diversity: Internationalism, Brand Nationalism, and Multiculturalism in Japan*. Lexington Books.

Lisle, "The cosmopolitan gaze: rearticulations of modern subjectivity"

Marc Gallichio. 2000. *The African-American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia 1895-1945*. University of North Carolina Press (selections)

Oneika the Traveller: Musings on Race, Travel and Traveling While Black  
<http://www.oneikathetraveller.com/musings-on-race-and-travel.html>

Travelogues of an African Girl, "The Ups and Downs of Black Female Solo Travel"  
<http://africanahgirl.com/2014/05/02/the-ups-and-downs-of-black-female-solo-travel/>

I'm Black and I Travel, "Japan in Black"  
<http://imblacknittravel.com/japan-in-black/>

Black Tokyo  
<http://www.blacktokyo.com/>

### **Due: Styles and Conventions of Travel Writing Essay**

#### Week 6

Lisle, "Civilising territory: geographies of safety and danger"  
Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks*, pp. 1-50

#### Week 7

Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks*, pp. 51-150

#### Week 8

Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks*, pp. 151-200

Lisle, "Looking back: utopia, nostalgia and the myth of historical progress"

#### Week 9

Julian Street. 2013. *Mysterious Japan*. Lecturable Press. (*selections*)

Lisle, "Engaging the political: contemporary travel writing and the ethics of difference"

### **Due: Styles and Conventions of Travel Writing Essay**

#### Week 10

Williamson, *A Year in Japan*

#### Week 11

Doeff, *Recollections of Japan*, pp. 1-100

Week 12

Doeff, *Recollections of Japan*, pp. 101-215.

**Due: Ethics in Travel Writing and Representation Essay**

Week 13

Chamberlain, *Things Japanese (selections)*

Week 14

Amster-Burton, *Pretty Good Number One*, pp. 1-116

Week 15

Amster-Burton, *Pretty Good Number One*, pp. 117-237

Week 16

Recap and Reflect

**Due: Final Paper**