



## **Demonic Women in Japanese Fiction**

JAPA 340 – Spring 2019

Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00PM – 4:15PM  
Thompson Hall L004

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 girls 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 and universal 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 projecting forward to the postwar era, a time of changing social roles and deeply 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 monstrous 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 scary stories we tell ourselves about what frightens and fascinates us.

## **Instructor**

Kathryn Hemmann  
khemmann@gmail.com  
Aquia Building Room 326  
office hours by appointment

## **Course Texts**

*Masks*, by Fumiko Enchi  
*Audition*, by Ryū Murakami  
*Now You're One of Us*, by Asa Nonami  
*Penance*, by Kanae Minato

## **Grading and Assignments**

Participation: 20%  
Response Papers: 30%  
Final Project: 25%  
Final Project Proposal: 10%  
Final Project Presentation: 15%

### *Participation*

Students are expected to complete all required reading assignments and to be engaged and attentive during class lectures and discussions. If a student is uncomfortable or otherwise unable to speak in class, alternate methods of performance evaluation can be arranged through a consultation with the Office of Disability Services. Repeated lack of preparation will significantly lower your participation grade, as will a demonstrated lack of respect for the instructor or the other students.

### *Response Papers*

There will be three response papers due over the course of the semester. Each response paper should be approximately 700 words (about two pages of twelve-point, double-spaced text). A paper copy of your response must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date. Deadline extensions must be requested in writing in advance. The due dates are **February 14**, **March 7**, and **April 11**.

The purpose of a response paper is to respond to the course material and class discussion in a thoughtfully considered and carefully structured short essay. A paper can take a position on an argument, expand on a specific aspect of an assigned text, relate the course material to an outside book, film, or other work, or draw an analogy to similar stories or media produced outside of Japan. Alternatively, any of these response papers can take the form of a creative project, such as a parody, an illustration or short comic, a book cover design, an imagined dialog between

characters in the form of a short screenplay, a reaction video on YouTube, and so on. The response papers are graded according to a ✓+/✓/✓- system, with three ✓ grades resulting in an “A” on the assignment.

### *Final Project*

The final project may deal with any topic relating to “demonic women” in narrative media, including but not limited to fiction, cinema, graphic novels, anime and drama series, and video games. Topics not addressed in class are welcome, and comparative approaches are encouraged, but the project must relate to Japan in some way.

Students have two options concerning this project. The first is a six-to-eight-page research paper that draws on a minimum of three academic peer-reviewed sources. The second is a creative project that incorporates the cultural themes and methods of academic inquiry covered over the course of the semester. Although students are encouraged to share their ideas with one another, each student is responsible for his or her own work, and group projects are not allowed on either the research paper option or the creative project option. The final project should be emailed to me no later than **5:00pm on Thursday, May 10**. Deadline extensions should be requested in writing by the end of the day on Wednesday, May 8.

### *Final Project Proposal*

The goal of this proposal is to explain the questions and issues you want to explore in your final project. If you are writing a research paper, your proposal should contain a thesis statement and a brief outline of the structure of your argument and how you will approach your topic. If you opt for a creative project, your proposal should state your artistic medium, provide at least one theme you wish to explore through your work, and specify the proposed length of your project (in terms of pages, blog posts, canvases, minutes of video, and so on). No matter what form your project takes, you are required to include a formal bibliographic list of at least three sources (using whatever citation style you’re most comfortable with). Your proposal should be approximately one page (about 250 words) in length, not including the list of works referenced. A paper copy of your proposal is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, April 4**.

This assignment will be graded on a sufficient/insufficient basis, with an “insufficient” grade resulting from a failure to follow the guidelines explained in the preceding paragraph. Students who receive an “insufficient” will be required to submit a revised proposal.

### *Final Project Presentation*

Each student will present their final project during the last week of class. A presentation will be no more than five minutes in length. There will be a short period for questions and comments at the end of each presentation. Plan on using a PowerPoint (or Keynote or Prezi) slideshow or some other type of visual aid, but try not to rely too heavily on video. These presentations will be graded according to a four-point rubric: (1) clarity, or ability to convey content, (2) impact, or ability to demonstrate why the project is interesting and important, (3) appropriate use of visual aids, and (4) ability to handle questions and comments.

## Course Policies

### *Required Readings*

Students must purchase the four novels required for this class, but all of the short stories will be available on the course site on Blackboard. Students are required to complete all assigned readings. You are encouraged to bring physical copies of the readings to class, but this is not strictly necessary. 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). Each unexcused absence after the second will result in half a letter grade being deducted from your final course grade, in addition to a reduction of your participation grade. Please be aware that obligations for other classes (such as exams) do not count as a valid excuse, even if they are scheduled during our class time. If such a conflict arises, please notify the professor to reschedule the commitment. Showing up to class more than fifteen minutes late will count as an absence.

### *Technology*

Tablets are permitted in their capacity as e-readers, but **laptop computers are absolutely not allowed** without a formal letter from the Office of Disability Services. If you use your smartphone in class, you will be asked to leave and will be marked as absent. Any student expecting an urgent call or text message should notify me before class begins.

### *Disability Accommodation*

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) has strict guidelines concerning the submission of accommodation requests. If your registered disability enables you to receive a specific accommodation on a class assignment or evaluation, please submit the appropriate paperwork to me in advance of the deadline, which is generally a week before the assignment due date or scheduled evaluation date. If you feel that I am not being properly sensitive to your disability, please let me know, and please don't hesitate to suggest a meeting with your officer at the ODS.

### *Plagiarism*

I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. If you submit work that isn't your own for any assignment for any reason, you will fail the class, and I will report you to the Honor Committee, which may result in your expulsion. Plagiarism is surprisingly easy to catch, so please don't try it. You are being graded 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 his or her 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 offensive and counter to the purpose of this course. The uncritical reproduction of any of these types of discourses in written assignments or class discussions will be penalized.

### *Trigger Warnings and Religious Sensitivity*

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 needs.

In our discussions of cultural taboos and constructions of philosophical concepts such as “evil,” we will touch on a number of religious themes. Students are expected to be objective, tolerant, and open-minded during these discussions. Debate is welcome, but any personal disagreement with the way these themes are handled should be addressed privately in person or via email.

### *Viewing Assignments*

For this course we will watch the film *Ju-On*, the first two episodes of the anime series *Elfen Lied*, and the first part of the anime *The Ancient Magus' Bride: Those Awaiting a Star*. There will be no screenings either before or during class, so students are encouraged to use the online streaming service of their choice. *Ju-On* and *Elfen Lied* are available on Amazon Prime Video and iTunes, and *The Ancient Magus' Bride* is available on Crunchyroll. Other officially licensed streaming options are also available. Students should be aware that *Elfen Lied* contains extremely graphic depictions of violence, and *Ju-On* and *The Ancient Magus' Bride* contain depictions of child abuse and neglect.



**Week One: The Roots of Evil**

Tuesday, January 22  
Course Introduction and Themes

Thursday, January 24  
Minako Ohba, "The Smile of a Mountain Witch," from *Japanese Women Writers*, pp.194-206

**Week Two: Demonic Possession**

Tuesday, January 29  
Murasaki Shikibu, "Yūgao: The Twilight Beauty," from *The Tale of Genji*, pp.53-80

Thursday, January 31  
Yukio Mishima, "The Lady Aoi," from *Five Modern Nō Plays*, pp.143-171

**Week Three: A Garden of Flowers at Night**

Tuesday, February 5  
Fumiko Enchi, *Masks*, pp.3-59

Thursday, February 7  
Fumiko Enchi, *Masks*, pp.61-141

**Week Four: Ghosts of Old Edo**

Tuesday, February 12  
Akinari Ueda, "A Serpent's Lust," from *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*, pp.155-185

Thursday, February 14  
Miyuki Miyabe, "Cage of Shadows," from *Apparitions*, pp.45-65

RESPONSE PAPER ONE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

**Week Five: Outsiders**

Tuesday, February 19  
Taeko Kōno, "Toddler-Hunting," from *Toddler-Hunting*, pp.45-69

Thursday, February 21  
Kenji Nakagami, "Snakelust," from *Snakelust*, pp.41-70

**Week Six: The Tiny Deaths of Small Things**

Tuesday, February 26  
Takako Takahashi, "The Oracle," from *Lonely Woman*, pp.33-62

Thursday, February 28  
Mieko Kanai, "Rabbits," from *Rabbits, Crabs, Etc.*, pp.1-16

**Week Seven: The Uncanny Family**

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

Thursday, March 7  
Asa Nonami, *Now You're One of Us*, pp.127-239

RESPONSE PAPER TWO DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

\* \* \* SPRING BREAK \* \* \*

Monday, March 11 – Sunday, March 17

**Week Eight: Haunted Houses and Haunted People**

Tuesday, March 19  
Yōko Ogawa, "Dormitory," from *The Diving Pool*, pp.109-164

Thursday, March 21  
Takashi Shimizu, *Ju-On*  
(available on YouTube Movies, Amazon Prime Video, and iTunes)

**Week Nine: A Descent into Madness**

Tuesday, March 26  
Ryū Murakami, *Audition*, pp.7-86

Thursday, March 28  
Ryū Murakami, *Audition*, pp.87-190

**Week Ten: The Return of the Repressed**

Tuesday, April 2  
Junji Itō, "Tomio · Red Turtleneck," from *Fragments of Horror*, pp.41-74  
Junji Itō, "Gentle Goodbye," from *Fragments of Horror*, pp.75-104

Thursday, April 4  
Mamoru Kanbe, *Elfen Lied*, Episodes 1 and 2  
(available on Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, and iTunes)

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

**Week Eleven: Museums of Unnatural History**

Tuesday, April 9

Tatsuaki Ishiguro, "Snow Woman," from *Biogenesis*, pp.113-151

Thursday, April 11

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

RESPONSE PAPER THREE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

**Week Twelve: Dangerous Women and Deadly Words**

Tuesday, April 16

Kanae Minato, *Penance*, pp.3-128

Thursday, April 18

Kanae Minato, *Penance*, pp.129-227

**Week Thirteen: Difference and Disruption**

Tuesday, April 23

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 25

Norihiro Naganuma, *The Ancient Magus' Bride: Those Awaiting a Star*, Part 1  
(available on Crunchyroll)

**Week Fourteen: Student Presentations**

Tuesday, April 30

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, May 2

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

**FINAL PROJECT MUST BE SUBMITTED BY  
5:00PM on THURSDAY, MAY 10**