

1st Paper Assignment: Due October 19, 2017 IN CLASS

The first paper is due on **October 19, IN CLASS**. Only hard copies will be accepted. Your paper should be 4-6 pages double-spaced with 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and page numbers. It should also have a title and follow the conventional format of an academic paper including proper citations (see below). When citing secondary sources, please use endnotes. Your paper needs to reach the end of the 4th page in order to receive a passing grade. In other words, your discussion needs to be longer than 4 pages or it will receive a deduction. However, simply just reaching the end of the 4th page for the sake of reaching the end of the 4th page will not guarantee a passing grade either. At the same time, it should not exceed 6 pages as I would like you to edit your ideas and present them effectively.

I do not expect you to read or refer to anything outside the required readings or the texts specified in each topic (though you are welcome to incorporate other materials with which you are already familiar).

Your paper will be evaluated for style as well as content. Please refer to the criteria below.

- On-time submission
- Title
- Paper format (e.g., 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and double-spaced)
- Citation format (e.g. Tanizaki, *Naomi*, 35)
- Required minimum and maximum length
- Articulation and strength of thesis
- Appropriate language for academic writing assignment
- Proper grammar, including punctuation
- Clear writing style, including coherent structure and flow of argument
- Effective use of quotations to prove point
- Sufficient defense against opposing/differing views
- Synthesis/conclusion at the end of the analysis
- Miscellaneous (e.g, factual accuracy)

Please choose one of the topics below. *You need not answer all sub-questions within the topic—they are meant as guidelines.

1) Tayama Katai's "The Quilt" and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *Naomi* (more literally: An Idiot's/Fool's Love) both narrate older men's struggle to control their younger objects of desire. Discuss how sincere (or insincere) their accounts of reality may be. How do they effectively (or ineffectively) justify their possibly "immoral" desires in their narratives? How differently do you think Yoshiko and/or Naomi would recount these stories? Justify the difference(s) you propose based on the evidence in narratives of their male partners. As you consider the fragmentariness of supposedly transparent narration and/or first person narrative, think about to whom it accords power, and

when that power falters. While the two above texts may be central to your discussion, please also bring in the idea of “Poison Woman” as discussed by Marran as necessary.

2) The theme of “education” figures prominently in various stories discussed hitherto in class. Using two texts in addition to *Naomi*, examine the nature of this education, and discuss how well it works (or doesn’t work). How do the notions of gender, nation, and/or race relate to it? Is “education” tied to other ideas such as “career” and “life,” and/or “public” vs “private/personal” dichotomy?

3) Using Kobayashi Takiji’s “The Cannery Boat” (alternate title: “The Factory Ship”) and two other texts we read in class, discuss the relationship between the city and the countryside as depicted in fiction. Think about to what end Kobayashi is writing, and compare his narrative of suffering to others we came across in class. Who is “the bad guy”? Is it always clear?

4) Using “Beautiful Town” by Satō Haruo along with either “Troubled Waters” by Higuchi Ichiyō, or “The Secret” by Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, discuss Satō’s views of the urban space – i.e. how the author conceives pre-Great Kantō Earthquake Tokyo and its potential as well as past, and compare his/her views with those of another author as reflected in other works we read in class. What is the city for them? What sort of prose poetry of the city does Satō offer? (If you want to use all three stories please let me know). Please also utilize relevant secondary source(s) assigned in the course.

5) In “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” German urban cultural critic Georg Simmel said:

There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon which is so unconditionally reserved to the city as the blasé outlook. It is at first the consequence of those rapidly shifting stimulations of the nerves which are thrown together in all their contrasts and from which it seems to us the intensification of metropolitan intellectuality seems to be derived. [...] Just as an immoderately sensuous life makes one blasé because it stimulates the nerves to their utmost reactivity until they finally can no longer produce any reaction at all, so, less harmful stimuli, through the rapidity and the contradictoriness of their shifts, force the nerves to make such violent responses, tear them about so brutally that they exhaust their last reserves of strength and, remaining in the same milieu, do not have time for new reserves to form.¹

Does this description of urban malaise apply to any of the characters we encountered in class? Pick at least two such characters from two different texts, and analyze their conditions in light of Simmel’s comment. What exactly do these characters try in order to cope with this, and how are they successful (or not successful)? Are they decadent as some people suggest, or are they something else?

* * *

¹ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in The Sociology of Georg Simmel trans. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: The Free Press, 1950), 413-4. Originally published in 1903.

This is an exercise to get you to think about 1) how to develop and polish one idea, and 2) how to get your point across in a concise manner.

Since you will be citing (almost) exclusively from assigned readings, your citations can look like this: “Naomi was crouching at his feet behind the flowerbed” (Tanizaki, *Naomi*, 55)—your edition’s page number is fine.

If you do get an idea from someone else’s work (of any kind!), PLEASE CITE IT and give the author credit.

Please give your paper a specific title that is representative of the content of your paper (and NOT “*Naomi*” or “JAPAN 250 1st Paper Assignment”...)

For audience, you can imagine a reader who is already familiar with the texts you discuss—so there is no need for you to repeat the summary of the story in your paper.

As stated above, the hard-copy of your paper is due on **October 19, 2017, in class**. NO EMAILED PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

If you are unsure about your writing skills, I suggest that you seek help from the Writing, Reading, and Study Strategies Center on campus (link also available on Blackboard). You should check their workshop schedule and tutor availability *now* as they can be busy around midterm and final.

https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic_support/tutoring/rwssc

You should come up with a thesis, introduction, and outline for the paper by October 12 if you want to show it to me; we’ll also have an in-class workshop on October 17.

Writing a paper is (or at least should be!) an exciting exercise – have fun and good luck —
がんばってください。