

## **HIST 407/507 WOMEN AND FAMILY IN PREMODERN JAPAN.**

Dr. Andrew Goble  
361 McKenzie; 346-4800  
[platypus@uoregon.edu](mailto:platypus@uoregon.edu)  
Office Hours: UW 1300-1500

Department of History.  
University of Oregon.  
Fall 2022; M 1400-1650.  
CRN 13488/13500; 375 McKenzie.

This seminar will explore a variety of topics and scholarly works which take up issues relating to women and family in premodern Japan. We will engage material dealing with the classical Heian era (794 - 1185), the medieval Kamakura and Muromachi eras (1185 - 1600), and the early modern Tokugawa (Edo) (1600 - 1868) era.

The seminar will provide an opportunity to move away from understandings of society that foreground politics and power, and to engage some of the concerns, conflicts, and anxieties that shaped family dynamics and family responses to the times and contexts in which they lived. The seminar, as the title indicates, will also present an opportunity to explore the experiences, opportunities, or constraints of women of different stations and of different eras. Among the issues to engage will be reproduction, family planning, reproductive choice, medical and religious understandings of female bodies, sexuality, and access to economic resources.

While the family was a fundamental social unit, the composition of and basis for formation of (and thus social recognition of) a family varied over time. There appears never to have been a preferred model of a family (though writings addressing this topic emerged as a genre in the early modern period). We may note general similarities in family morphology when looking at particular social groups (such as Heian era aristocrats; medieval warriors; or early modern merchants, higher-status agriculturalists, or urban dwellers), but variation was common. As far as we can discern, in any one era various types of family structures existed simultaneously.

Our understanding of families, and what we can observe of them, has been greatly influenced by the types of original sources that have survived. In general, the further back in time we go the less opportunity we have to explore non-elite social groups. Accordingly, our engagement will progressively engage families from a wider range of social backgrounds.

### **EVALUATION.**

One 4000-word term paper (5000 words for graduate students) is the main basis of the grade. Attendance and discussion will count for 10% of the grade. Term paper topic shall be chosen in consultation with the instructor, and it is due no later than the Friday of the last class period.

## **HIST 407/507 WOMEN AND FAMILY IN PREMODERN JAPAN.**

### **REQUIRED TEXT.**

The “core” work for the course is: Mary Elizabeth Berry and Marcia Yonemoto eds., *What is a Family? Answers From Early Modern Japan* (UC Press Luminos, 2019).

The work is open access and freely available. <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.77>

The entire work, in addition to individual chapters, will be available on Canvas, in the Modules section, for the course.

This work addresses, and raises, a number of fundamental questions about women and family. It also offers material on a wide variety of families, and on a varied range of social and cultural dynamics which surround families.

We will first engage this work collectively in Week Two, and we will return to various chapters subsequently.

### **OTHER READING.**

Essays and articles noted below will be available as PDFs on Canvas (in the “Modules” section).

Books (monographs, edited collections) will be on Course Reserve in the Knight Library. Works may be checked out at the main circulation desk.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE.**

The course is focused on reading and discussion.

In order to cover the readings, and to allow time and mental focus for working on the seminar paper (and not get exhausted), the weekly discussion will be led by a portion of the class – the discussion leader group.

The discussion leader group will (in consultation with the instructor) be responsible for allocating the weekly readings among its members. Each presenter should assume that they will have a minimum of 20 minutes (and perhaps up to 35 minutes) to present the material.

The remainder of the class, while free to read widely, is only required to cover (and also be prepared to discuss) the readings marked with an asterisk \*.

Depending on class size, it is likely that each student will be part of a presentation group three (maybe four) times.

We will work out the details of the discussion groups – who is a member for which weeks – no later than the end of Week One (see details below in Schedule for Week One).

We will need to make sure that we have a minimum of three (four is even better) presenters for each week. And, especially to make sure that the discussion group for Week Two is formed.

## HIST 407/507 WOMEN AND FAMILY IN PREMODERN JAPAN.

### SCHEDULE

**Week One.** 09/26 No classes held.

HOWEVER, for this week students are to view the film *Redbeard (Akahige)*. Film is to be viewed remotely via Kanopy through the Knight Library Catalog.

Please view this thought-provoking and insightful film at your leisure, but certainly prior to class in the second week.

Also, prior to class on October 03 (next week) please submit to instructor your ranked choice of four weeks (meetings) for which you would serve as a presenter. We will confirm the schedule at our meeting in Week Two.

Also this week: since in Week Two we will engage *What is a Family?* collectively, please let me know which chapter (please select two possibilities, in case there is overlap in choices) you would like to present. Each presentation in Week Two week should be about 15 minutes in length.

**Week Two** 10/03 Aspects of the Early Modern Family.

Berry and Yonemoto. *What is a Family?* (OA).

**Week Three.** 10/10 Aristocratic Families

\* McCullough, "Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period."

\* Nickerson, "The Meaning of Matrilocality: Kinship, Property and Politics in Mid-Heian."

\* Conlan, Thomas. "Thicker than Blood: The Social and Political Significance of Wet Nurses in Japan, 950-1330."

Akazome Emon. *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period.* (trans. William H. and Helen Craig McCullough). (1980).

McCullough, Helen Craig trans. *Ōkagami, The Great Mirror.*

Morris, Ivan. *The World of the Shining Prince.* (1975).

*Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 2, Heian Japan.* Chapters 1, 2, 6.

## HIST 407/507 WOMEN AND FAMILY IN PREMODERN JAPAN.

### **Week Four** 10/17 Classical and Medieval Attitudes to Pregnancy and Birth.

Akazome Emon. *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period*. (trans. William H. and Helen Craig McCullough). (1980).

McCullough, Helen Craig trans. *Ōkagami, The Great Mirror*.

\* Tan, Daniela. "The Body as Place in Time(s): Concepts of the Female Body in Medieval Japan." *Kronoscope*, 20 (2020), pp. 17-40.

\* Wakabayashi, Haruko. "Visualizing Hungry Ghosts in Heian Japan: *Gaki Zōshi* Scrolls as Translation." *Monumenta Nipponica*, 75.2 (2020), pp. 205-239.

Suzuki, Yui. "Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding Off Evil in Medieval Japanese Birth Scenes." *Artibus Asiae*, 74.1 (2014), pp. 17-41.

\* Triplett, Katja. "For Mothers and Sisters: Care of the Reproductive Female Body in the Medico-Ritual World of Early and Medieval Japan." *Dynamis*, 34.2 (2014), pp. 337-356.

\* Andreeva, Anna. "Childbirth in Aristocratic Households of Heian Japan." *Dynamis*, 34.2 (2014), pp. 357-376.

Andreeva, Anna. "Empowering the Pregnancy Sash in Medieval Japan." In Salguero, Pierce and Andrew Macomber eds., *Buddhist Healing in Medieval China and Japan*. (2020)

Standlee, Mary W. *The Great Pulse: Japanese Midwifery and Obstetrics through the Ages*. (1959).

### **Week Five.** 10/24 Some Medieval Family Dynamics.

Mass, Jeffrey. *Lordship and Inheritance in Early Medieval Japan*.

\* Tonomura, Hitomi. "Women and Inheritance in Japan's Early Warrior Society." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 32.3 (1990), pp. 592-623.

\* Atkins, Paul. "Nijo versus Reizei." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 66.2 (2006), pp. 495-529.

\* Some translated judicial decisions from the Kamakura period. Class discussion.

Kurushima, Noriko. "Marriage and Female Inheritance in Medieval Japan." *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 1.2 (2004), pp.223-245.

Laffin, Christina. *Rewriting Medieval Japanese Women*.

Reischauer, Edwin. "The Izayoi Nikki (1277-1280)."

Goodwin, Janet R. *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan*.

### **Week Six.** 10/31 Some Life Stories.

\* Berry and Yonemoto. *What is a Family?* Chapters to be selected.

Yonemoto, Marcia. *The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan*. (OA also).

Stanley, Amy. *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World*. (OA also).

Rowley, Gaye. *An Imperial Concubine's Tale: Scandal, Shipwreck, and Salvation in Seventeenth-Century Japan*. (OA also).

## HIST 407/507 WOMEN AND FAMILY IN PREMODERN JAPAN.

**Week Seven.** 11/07. Some Elements in Family Planning.

\* Berry and Yonemoto. *What is a Family?* Chapters to be selected.

\* Yokota, Fuyuhiko and Burtscher, Michael. "Childbirth in Japan circa 1700: Gleanings from the Diary of Yamamoto Heizaemon." *Monumenta Nipponica*, 75.2 (2020), pp. 281-315.

Drixler, Fabian. *Mabiki: Infanticide, and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660-1950*. (OA also).

Terazawa, Yuki. *Knowledge, Power, and Women's Reproductive Health in Japan, 1690-1945*.

Yasui, Manami. "Imagining the Spirits of Deceased Pregnant Women." *Japan Review*, 35 (2020), pp. 91-112.

Ochiai, Emiko. "The Reproductive Revolution at the End of the Tokugawa Period."

Smith, Thomas. *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*.

**Week Eight.** 11/14 Early Modern Sex work and Family.

Stanley, Amy. *Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets, and the Household in Early Modern Japan*. (OA also).

Seigel, Cecilia Segawa. *Yoshiwara*.

\* Lindsey, William R. *Fertility and Pleasure: Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan*.

**Week Nine.** 11/21 Individual consultation.

**Week Ten.** 11/28. Papers due, final class meeting and presentation of term paper topics and research.