

## THE GLOBAL &amp; THE LOCAL IN JAPANESE FOOD

TR 1:10-2:40

Linda Chance

Office Hours: T 3-4, R 11:30-12:30 and by appointment at your convenience

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## DESCRIPTION:

Kyoto is home to serious Japanese cuisine, from elaborate multi-course *kaiseki* to inventive temple vegetarian *shōjin ryōri*; guests at a tea experience hot water in rarefied forms. The city also abounds in shops or companies that specialize in snacks, be they roasted chestnuts, *nama-yatsuhashi* sweets, or “soft cream” cones. Kyoto’s traditions include Korean barbecue, ramen noodles, and French pastry as well. Given such variety, who determines what counts as “Japanese food”—consumers, historians and critics, top chefs, home cooks, the Japanese government, which has an interest in promoting “soft power” abroad through food? In this class we will consider how Japanese food came to be defined in distinction to Western and Chinese foods beginning in the nineteenth century, and how Japanese food became a global cuisine while maintaining strong regional variants. We will use the food cultures of Kyoto as test cases to explore the economics, history, aesthetics, and politics of preparing and eating food in Japan.

Among our questions: What makes a dish “Japanese”? How did Portuguese or Spanish frying habits (*tempura*) and Chinese *lamian* (ramen) become hallmarks? How traditional is the diet of rice and fish, and in what ways does it interact with the environment? How did Buddhist vegetarians justify *sukiyaki*? What relationship does food have to the longevity of Japanese today? How does gender affect Japanese food cultures? What are the origins of *Iron Chef* and *bento*? If you are in a homestay, what is that household’s home cooking? Some controversies we will discuss include the consumption of whale meat in Japan. We will also investigate Japanese government controls of food to combat obesity and to make food safe after the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe. Materials include essays, films, novellas, menus, cookbooks, and the Kyoto foodscape itself.

## GENERAL:

- Background reading is in English translation. I assume no prior knowledge about Japan or Asia, but we will make use of whatever you may have. We will integrate Japanese language materials into class sessions when possible, and you are encouraged to use Japanese language in your research.
- Sessions will include multimedia presentations, fieldtrips, and occasional preparing and eating of Japanese food. Please inform me of any food allergies you may have. I have a kosher consultant and can accommodate vegetarians.
- Research makes it clear that “multi-tasking” is inefficient and even dangerous. Limit your use of computers and cellphones during class and activities to course-related work.
- The main project for this course is to produce a “Wiki” site (in the manner of Wikipedia, but on the Columbia Courseworks site) with your team. Each Wiki will deal with a different aspect of course topics, and may make use of the local Kyoto scene.

**OBJECTIVES:**

The course is structured to help you do the following:

- become familiar with varying approaches to the topic in the disciplines of the humanities (literature, history, etc.) and social sciences (anthropology, law, sociology, etc.)
- read and discuss with critical awareness and interpretive sophistication
- write with clarity, interest, and concision
- learn to collaborate on identifying, researching, and presenting subjects of interest

**REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

Class preparation and participation, including brief responses to field trips (20%); prepare questions on reading and lead discussion (in pairs, twice, 5% each); two weekly food diaries, 5% each; two short papers (10% each); Wiki collaboration (30%); final presentation (10%); evaluate your own and others' contributions to a Wiki (5%); reflection on the nature of collaboration (5%).

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:**

You are expected to prepare for and attend all class meetings. If you must miss some portion of a bi-weekly meeting, you are responsible for informing me in advance and for making up the material. See me early if you need some kind of accommodation or extension. Participation means both active contribution to discussions and active listening to your classmates. There will be no quizzes or exams unless you ask for them.

You should expect me to respond to your suggestions for improvements to the course. On principle, I do not assign readings that are not engaging and well written. (Some informative but less palatable writing will appear among the supplemental readings.) Over the semester, we will have opportunities to explore what makes some writing better than others.

Instructions for discussion leading, evaluations, and the reflection will be posted to the Courseworks website. Do not hesitate to contact me if you do not find what you need.

**ABOUT THE PAPERS:**

Each of you will write two papers: one largely descriptive, and one analytic. Each paper will be a minimum of 1000 words. Ideally, each paper should address some aspect of your Wiki project.

**ABOUT THE WIKI:**

In this class, you will collaborate to produce new knowledge. Teams will each take on a topic and work throughout the semester to prepare a web-based presentation of your findings. Unlike Wikipedia, collaborators will not be anonymous, and you will need to reach decisions together. We will actively monitor what that means for your learning and for the final product. The final class sessions will be devoted to in-class presentations of the Wikis by group. An edited version of the Wiki, incorporating any class feedback, will be due one week later.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** In North American academic culture, there are standards of academic behavior that you must follow. Cheating or plagiarizing in any form, if intentional, must be reported. The problematic assignment will be given a grade of zero. Citation of sources in papers must be consistent in format, and must be used every time you borrow the words or ideas of another author. This includes sources on the Web.

REQUIRED TEXTS available through KCJS:

Cwiertka, Katarzyna J., *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity*

Kariya and Hanasaki, *Oishinbo à la Carte*, vol. 4: *Fish, Sushi and Sashimi* (manga)

Kawabata Yasunari, *The Old Capital*

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *In Praise of Shadows*

Note: All reading must be done prior to the class session for which it is scheduled.

Remember that written work can always be turned in early without penalty.

### CLASS SESSION AND READING SCHEDULE

### SPECIAL ITEMS

**N.B. This syllabus is a planning document. Details may change depending on your interests.**

#### **T 1/12 Introduction: Global versus Local in Japanese Food**

Begin First Food Diary

#### **R 1/14 Japanese Food Beyond National Borders: What Kind of Japanese Food?**

Read: Cwiertka, “Japanese Cuisine Goes Global,” Postscript to *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, pp. 181–99

Ku, “California Roll,” from *Dubious Gastronomy: The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in the USA*, pp. 17–48

#### **T 1/19 Japanese Food Beyond National Borders: Why the Interest?**

Read: Mouritsen and Styrbæk, “The fifth taste: What is umami?,” from *Umami: Unlocking the Secrets of the Fifth Taste*, pp. 23–39

Kariya and Hanasaki, *Oishinbo 4: Fish, Sushi and Sashimi*, to p. 170, and 215–end

#### **R 1/21 Japanese Food Beyond National Borders: Global Food in Kyoto Locales**

Project: Observe in your immediate environment (school, homestay neighborhood, specific area of Kyoto) food offerings that you think are accommodated to foreign tastes. Document three cases you have seen.

Barthes, “Water and Flake,” from *The Empire of Signs*, pp. 11–14

#### **T 1/26 Japanese Food in National Borders: Lacquer and Light**

Read: Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*

**R 1/28 Japanese Food in National Borders: Japan as “Rice Culture”**

Read: Ohnuki-Tierney, ““Rice in the Discourse of Selves and Others,” chapter 7 from *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time*, pp. 99–126

**T 2/2 Japanese Food in National Borders: Health and Well-being**

Paper 1 Due

Read: Bestor, “Cuisine and identity in contemporary Japan,” from *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, pp. 273–85

Nomination form for the inscription of Washoku on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Courseworks link

**R 2/4 Japanese Food in Place: Marketing Tradition**

Read: St. Maurice, “The Movement to Reinvigorate Local Food Culture in Kyoto, Japan”  
On Nagasaki’s *fucha ryōri* tradition

**KCJS Spring Trip to Nagasaki****T 2/9 Japanese Food in Place: Traditions of the Market**

Fieldtrip to Nishiki kōji market street

**R 2/11 National Holiday—no class****T 2/16 Food and Premodern History: Discipline and Everyday Eating**

Read: Dōgen, “from “Instructions for the Zen Cook (*Tenzo Kyōkun*),” pp. 3–9

Hanley, “A Healthful Lifestyle: Food,” from *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan*, pp. 77–94

**R 2/18 Food and Premodern History: Contributions from Tea Culture**

Wiki proposal due

Read: Cort, “Japanese Ceramics and Cuisine,” pp. 9–19

“Host and Guest”

**T 2/23 Food and Premodern History: Elite Patterns**

Fieldtrip, a taste of high cuisine

**R 2/25 Food and Changing National Identity: Learning to Eat “Western”**

Read: Cwiertka, “Introduction,” “Western Food, Politics and Fashion,” “The Road to Multicultural Gastronomy,” “Reforming Home Meals,” chapters 1–2 and 4 of *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, pp. 7–55 and 87–114

**Spring Break**

**T 3/8 Food and Changing National Identity: Learning to Cook “Western”**

Read: Robun, “The Beefeater,” pp. 31–33

Nakano, selections from *Makiko’s Diary: A Merchant Wife in 1910 Kyoto* on cooking classes and beef

**R 3/10 Food and Changing National Identity: The War in Food History**

Wiki sources and methods due

Read: Cwiertka, “Strengthening the Military,” “Wartime Mobilization and Food Rationing,” chapters 3 and 5 of *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, pp. 56–86

**T 3/15 Food and Changing National Identity: Noodles and the Postwar**

Read: Cwiertka, “The Culinary Consequences of Japanese Imperialism,” chapter 6 of *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, pp. 115–55

**T 3/17 Japanese Food in Place: Heart of the Culture**

Read: Kawabata, *The Old Capital*, pp. 3-73

**T 3/22 Japanese Food in Place: Soft Kyoto**

Read: Kawabata, *The Old Capital*, pp. 74-164

Fieldtrip to place associated with the novelette

**R 3/24 Japanese Food on Display: The Power of Sweets**

Paper 2 Due

Read: Draft article on sweets and cooking in Japanese morning TV

**T 3/29 Japanese Food on Display: Making Sweets**

Wiki outline/visual plan due

Begin Final Food Diary

Fieldtrip to Kyōgashi shiryōkan

**R 3/31 Japanese Food on Display: What is Edible?**

Read: Ishige, brief comments on whale in “Food Culture,” *Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, p. 303–304

Kalland, “Whaling and Identity,” chapter 5 of *Unveiling the Whale: Discourses on Whales and Whaling*, pp. 145–71

**T 4/5 Japanese Food and Social Order: Customs and Control**

Read: Mah, “Shokuiku: Governing Food and Public Health in Contemporary Japan,” pp. 393–412

**R 4/7 Japanese Food and Social Order: What Price Safety?**

Wiki draft due

Read: Frid, “Food Safety in Japan: One Year after the Nuclear Disaster,” *Japan Focus*

Field and Mizenko, trans., *Fukushima Radiation: Will You Still Say No Crime Was Committed?*, selections

**T4/12 and R 4/14 On the Menu: In-Class Presentations**

**4/21 noon** Final Projects revised and turned in with evaluations