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2013 AASCU-JSI Fellow

Project Summary

Plan for Incorporating Japanese Literature into ENGL 4700 Topics in Nonwestern Literature

ENGL 4700 is a fifteen-week course that will provide students the opportunity to learn about the culture of Japan (five weeks), China (five weeks), and India and Pakistan (five weeks) through analyzing literature and film.

Student outcome goals for Unit One: Literature and Film of Japan

- Students will gain a greater understanding of the folklore, religion, and aesthetics of Japan.
- Students will be able to identify the use of techniques such as unreliable narrator, postmodernism, and magical realism.
- Students will be able to use critical works to gain greater insight into artists' techniques.

Week One: Students will read a short story by Nojima Nobuo, "The American School" (1954). This story will make students aware of cultural differences between Americans and Japanese. More importantly, the story should make students aware of the importance of respecting cultural traditions.

By the end of the week, the students should have viewed the film *Rashomon*. This film will not only introduce them to some elements of daily Japanese life, but also provide discussion for use of multiple point of view and the different kinds of "truth" the course will explore.

Week Two: Students will read excerpts from *The Tale of Genji*, including scenes with Genji's stepmother Fujitsubo and one of his lovers, Yugao who dies in a "haunted" house. We will discuss ghosts and spirits, especially the Rukujo lady. We will also discuss Buddhism, attitudes toward nature, and the role of women.

Week Three: We will spend one class meeting on haiku, especially Basho and then begin reading *Kafka on the Shore*, which will continue into Week Four. This novel will provide the opportunity to discuss Shintoism and additional topics related to Japanese folklore and Nature. In addition, students will see how the novel carries on some of the traditions encountered in *The Tale of Genji*.

Week Five: Students will give reports on the following topics: A critical work found through the use of JSTOR on one of the literary works or the film, the role of Japanese-Americans in World War II (This group will view and discuss *Only the Brave*), the role of women and children in Japan during World War II, education in the primary grades in Japan, and Japanese music.