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Syllabus — Version 1

J159
Oe Kenzaburo

(Officially: "Japan 159: Contemporary Japanese Literature")

Fall 2019

Instructor: John R Wallace

Our class meets **TuTh, 2:10 PM-3:30 PM** in 215 Dwinelle (but double-check the location via CalCentral).

Our digital classroom has three spaces:

1. My public website, called "**Sonic**":

   Top page for office hours, what to prepare, and the daily events of class: http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/

   Be familiar with the contents of "Course syllabus and daily session details" and "Syllabus, Part 2"

2. **bCourse** — for announcements, materials, assignments, and grade reporting

3. our course **Google Drive folder(s)** @ J159Fa19 (G-Drive shared for view only AND J159Fa19 (G-Drive shared and editable) — *requires invitation from me, usually enabled after course registration settles, sometimes never created*

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1. Prerequisites

This class requires Japanese 100A (may be taken concurrently) or permission by me. We spend a significant amount of time reading the original in Japanese.

2. Course content

This class provides an opportunity to read and discuss novels and short stories by Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎 (1935–). We read primarily fiction written in since 1957 and before 1994 (when he received the Nobel Prize for Literature). We read both in English translation and his original modern Japanese.

Our approach is to engage a specific set of his ideas. We explore these both in depth as well as consider their “evolution” across his writing career. This is done through a variety of paths which include an expectation that the student will read his work with care and thought, will try to obtain a more accurate understanding of his ideas through the original text, will participate in extensive in-class discussion, and will express her- or himself through writing exercises. This class is quasi-seminar style, emphasizing not just Ōe’s ideas but the process of learning through critical reading, the exchange of ideas with others, and written expression. I expect full engagement by students in all aspects of this course.

We focus on a particular set of concepts, and each student will select **one** of these sets for his or her essay work. Though, as with any author, his ideas are interconnected in complex ways, we group them as described in "Themes", below.

This class stays with the above set of ideas almost exclusively, basically never deviating from this simple pattern: read and prepare to discuss a segment of his writing (though we alternate between reading in English and Japanese), often with related outside reading.

3. Learning objectives

3.1. Knowledge

By the end of the course students know:

- the basics of Oe's life,
- some of Oe's basic literary themes and narrative techniques, including grotesque realism,
- some of the ideas of prose writers, poets, painters, philosophers, and thinkers that Oe references in his works including existentialism, and

- five major novels by Oe.

3.2. Skills

The skills developed in this class include:

- appreciation of how a writer's ideas are developed,
- a polishing of reading skills, especially the extraction of thematic content,
- a polishing of listening skills (due to the emphasis on the in-class discourse), and
- probably an enhancement of expressive abilities (through the frequent "reflections" required).

4. Relative weights of the three portfolio grade components

The assessments of various activities in which the students will engage during the term are used at the end of the term in multiple ways to determine grades for these three areas:

KNOWLEDGE gained

SKILLS learned

course **ENGAGEMENT**

The relative weight for this course is:

KNOWLEDGE—30% SKILLS—20% ENGAGEMENT—50%

This means that engagement in the discourse-oriented nature of the class is key for grade success. It also means that if you are not a strong reader, you can support your grade by learning the factual content of the course.

The final course portfolio KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS grades are an assessment of the student's progress in terms of the learning objectives outlined earlier in this syllabus. The ENGAGEMENT portion considers the below:

- regular on-time attendance that is attentive and free of multitasking
- fully reading with care the material assigned for each session
- being proactive towards thinking about the assigned reading rather than just following my lead, although there is indeed guidance

- content-rich "reflection" submissions that indicate that you are listening to, and thinking about, the comments your fellow peers are making and that you are thinking, too, on your own about the content of the material assigned

5. Frequently used assignments and assessments

5.1. How they relate to the three portfolio grades

Activity or assessment	(tag)	Knowledge	Skills	Engagement
Record of on-time, attentive, attendance	**ATTEND**			key to this grade
Exercises to explore and practice content	**EX**			It is unlikely that there will be any exercises, but if there are, it is possible that the rate of on-time and in good form submissions will become key to this grade. If there are only a couple, they won't be.
Reflections	**REFLECT**	important to this grade	important to this grade	key to this grade
Details Recorder	**D-RECORD**			key to this grade
Theme-level Recorder	**TL-RECORD**			key to this grade
Session Transcript Review work	**REVIEW**			key to this grade
Quizzes	**Q**	If given, they will be key to this category		If given, they will be important for measuring preparation.
Test that happens during finals week	**FINAL**	key to this grade	key to this grade	
"General EC"	**GenEC**	taken into consideration when appropriate (depends on content)		taken into consideration
In-class observation by me		important to this grade	important to this grade	key to this grade

5.2. Assignment titles

Since I develop assignments as the class develops, not in a fixed way ahead of time, I needed to develop a titling system. The method I use tells the us the type of assignment, the session day for which it is relevant, and where the assessment took place.

For example:

"EX181205 InC Active Learning"

means "an exercise (EX) done on December 5, 2018, in class, and which was about active learning." Put schematically:

type of exercise - date - location - descriptive tag

6. Assignments for this course

6.1. Attendance (ATTEND)

On-time, attentive attendance that is free of multitasking is a key component of the ENGAGEMENT component of the final grade portfolio. You should attend class. When this is not possible, **be sure to complete the appropriate Google Form**. I read this at the end of the term and will consider whether attendance should be adjusted in some way.

- If you are not well, you should to come to class.
- If you cannot come to class, it is not required but appreciated if you tell me ahead of time. I might want to or need to restructure group membership for the day based on that information.
- If you plan on coming to class, come on-time. We will get a quick start in the room and late arrival is disruptive to the active learning environment.
- If you attend, never multitask. Please engage with the class fully when you are present. Multitasking is certain to have a negative role when I am calculating final grades and considering what I think is an accurate grade for you.
- On-time, multitask-free attendance (more exactly, of the times when attendance was tracked less the times for excused absences) will be used to help determine the final grade of “A+” if there are any.

6.2. Exercises (EX)

Exercises are not likely in this class. If used, they are to review knowledge, develop knowledge through discussion, and learn or practice skills that will later be assessed. Exercises are low risk assignments. They are graded, but the grade is usually a feedback grade. However, whether they are complete or not, (in time and in good form) is indeed part of the ENGAGEMENT grade. All assignments should be done with care. Missed assignments due to absences or not submitted before the deadline cannot be made up.

6.3. Reflections (REFLECT)

Each week you will write and submit a "Reflection" on the content of the week just concluded. These submission will also be printed out by me and brought to the final, for you to use in another way. Some of the questions that might be asked:

- On in-class discourse: What were the best ideas offered this week?
- On in-class discourse: Share one or two of your reactions to something said this week.
- Share one or two of your own thoughts about something assigned (not said by a peer—written content, although it might have been discussed).
- Make one or two comments that are relevant to specific themes for the week just finished.
- What is as least one interesting idea your read or heard.
- What would you like most to think about more if you had the time?

6.4. Details Recorder, Theme-level Recorder, Reviewer (D-RECORD, TL-RECORD, REVIEW)

We generate a transcript of what was said in class, by everyone. To do this we have two student recorders and a third student who reviews their work. This is put on a shared Google Doc. The Details Recorder is responsible simply for typing all that is possible, and then checking factual information. This is put on the Google Doc. The Themes-Level Recorder is responsible for rearranging this raw data into chunks that can have sub-section titles. The Reviewer checks and corrects the work for format issues and any other errors.

This work is rotated equally (or almost so) among class members. When English is not your primary language you are only expected to do the best you can. You cannot audio record the session; you will need to work in class, in real-time.

Session Transcript responsibilities are scheduled by me. You cannot switch when you are assigned. If you cannot be in class for that day, your score is zero. This is true for all three duties. (Reviewers cannot quality check if they did not hear the original class content.)

6.5. Final Exam (FINAL)

The final exam will ask you annotate and provide accurate, nuanced meaning of premodern passages you have not seen before, using the knowledge you have learned. You will be given the passages, grammar charts (you cannot use your own), and any vocabulary that you would not be expected to know. Otherwise the test is closed-book, no devices. It will take the full three hours. There is a "Pre-Final

Exam" that will not affect your grade but will give you a sense of what you might score, and which will help you understand what the test will look like.

6.6. Extra credit (EC) opportunities

6.6.1. General EC

See "Syllabus, Part 2."

6.6.2. Major EC

You are invited to read yet one more of Oe's major novels and write a formal essay on it.

7. Schedule (initial version)

7.1. Test dates (with relevance to portfolio grade in parentheses)

- Session Transcript responsibilities are scheduled by me. You cannot switch when you are assigned. If you cannot be in class for that day, your score is zero.
- At any time — Quizzes (KNOWLEDGE) — I don't expect to quiz in this class but if it seems the assigned reading is not being done, then we will indeed quiz, and frequently.
- November 26 — Optional practice Final Exam (not graded)
- December 17 — Final exam (KNOWLEDGE & SKILL)

7.2. Day-to-day schedule (early draft)

Session Details or a Google Sheet in our Google course folder will be the official schedule.

The below is only the initial schedule. Due to the interactive nature of this active learning class (I watch student progress and adjust as necessary), the schedule is frequently updated. For the correct and up-to-date information, refer to the Session Details page.

Thursday, August 29, 2019	1	Orientation
Tuesday, September 3, 2019	2	Introductory Readings
Thursday, September 5, 2019	3	Introductory Readings
Tuesday, September 10, 2019	4	Introductory Readings
Thursday, September 12, 2019	5	MEMUSHIRI (芽雀り仔撃ち Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids)
Tuesday, September 17, 2019	6	MEMUSHIRI (芽雀り仔撃ち Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids)
Thursday, September 19, 2019	7	MEMUSHIRI (芽雀り仔撃ち Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids)
Tuesday, September 24, 2019	8	MEMUSHIRI (芽雀り仔撃ち Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids)
Thursday, September 26, 2019	9	KOJIN (個人的な体験 Personal Matter)
Tuesday, October 1, 2019	10	KOJIN (個人的な体験 Personal Matter)
Thursday, October 3, 2019	11	KOJIN (個人的な体験 Personal Matter)
Tuesday, October 8, 2019	12	KOJIN (個人的な体験 Personal Matter)
Thursday, October 10, 2019	13	AGHWEE (空の怪物アグイー Aghwee, the Sky Monster)
Tuesday, October 15, 2019	14	AGHWEE (空の怪物アグイー Aghwee, the Sky Monster)
Thursday, October 17, 2019	15	AGHWEE (空の怪物アグイー Aghwee, the Sky Monster)
Tuesday, October 22, 2019	16	MANEN (万延元年のフットボル Silent Cry))
Thursday, October 24, 2019	17	MANEN (万延元年のフットボル Silent Cry))
Tuesday, October 29, 2019	18	MANEN (万延元年のフットボル Silent Cry))
Thursday, October 31, 2019	19	MANEN (万延元年のフットボル Silent Cry))
Tuesday, November 5, 2019	20	MANEN (万延元年のフットボル Silent Cry))
Thursday, November 7, 2019	21	MANEN (万延元年のフットボル Silent Cry))
Tuesday, November 12, 2019	22	JINSEI (人生の親戚 Echo of Heaven)
Thursday, November 14, 2019	23	JINSEI (人生の親戚 Echo of Heaven)
Tuesday, November 19, 2019	24	JINSEI (人生の親戚 Echo of Heaven)
Thursday, November 21, 2019	25	JINSEI (人生の親戚 Echo of Heaven)
Tuesday, November 26, 2019	26	Pre-Final on JINSEI (optional)
Tuesday, December 3, 2019	27	THEMES DISCUSSION and TORIKAE (取り替え子・チェンジリング Changling)

Thursday, December 5, 2019	28	THEMES DISCUSSION and TORIKAE (取り替え子・チェンジリング Changling)
Tuesday, December 17, 2019	Exam	Final on TORIKAE as it relates to previous works

8. Course materials

All materials except those in red font are provided digitally. **You will need to obtain the red font works.** You can read these in a language appropriate for your best comprehension of content. We discuss style via the original Japanese, in class.

Works by Ōe

- "Lavish Are the Dead" *Japan Quarterly* 12:2 1965 / 死者の奢り、ししゃのおごり (1957)
- *Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids* (Grove/Atlantic 1996) / 芽むしり仔撃ち、めむしりこうち 1958
- *A Personal Matter* (Grove/Atlantic 1994) / 個人的な体験、こじんてきなたいけん 1964
- 後書 (post script) that is at the end of the Japanese version of 『個人的な体験』.
- Ahgwee "Ahgwee the Sky Monster" / 空の怪物アグイー、そらのかいぶつあぐいい (1964)
- *The Silent Cry* (Kodansha 1997) / 万延元年のフットボール、まんえんがんねんのふっとぼーる 1967
- *An Echo of Heaven* (Kodansha 2000) / 人生の親戚、じんせいのしんせき1989
- Japan, The Ambiguous, and Myself Nobel Prize Speech. Stockholm 1994.
- Liner notes "A Soul Wailing in the Darkness" in *Music of Hikari Oe 2* (1994)
- *A healing family*. Illustrated by Yukari Oe; translated by Stephen Snyder (1996).
- *The Changling* (Grove Press, 2011) / 取り替え子（チェンジリング） 、とりかえこ 2005
- Optional: *Somersault* (Grove Press, 2011) / 宙返り、ちゅうがえり 1999 (extra credit) or any other later work by Oe.

Other readings — individuals referenced by Ōe (*usually excerpts from longer works, and list does not include all very short readings)

VARIOUS

- "Sartre Awarded Nobel Prize, but Rejects It" *New York Times* Oct 23, 1964
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Rabelais and His World" (1940)

- Hemmingway, Ernest. The Sun Also Rises swim scene
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. On flies The world as will and representation, vol. 2 Arthur Schopenhauer, E. F. J Payne trans.

FAULKNER

- Faulkner, William. “The Bear” (1942) in *Adventures in American Literature* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985): 505-15.
- Faulkner, William. *Absalom! Absalom!* (plot summary only)
- Faulkner, William. The Sound and the Fury (plot summary only)
- Faulkner, William. *Light in August*, Chapter 3 (1932)

O'CONNOR

- O'Connor, Flannery. "A good man is hard to find"
- O'Connor, Flannery. "Everything that rises must converge"
- O'Connor, Flannery. "Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction"
- Grimshaw, James. A The Flannery O'Connor Companion (Greenwood Press)
- Muller, Gilbert H. Flannery O'Connor and the Catholic Grotesque (University of Georgia Press)
- Paulson, Suzanne Morrow Flannery O'Connor: A Study of the Short Fiction (Twayne)
- Schaum, Melita. "Erasing Angel: The Lucifer-Trickster Figure in Flannery O'Connor's Short Fiction" Southern Literary Journal

Other readings — critical works on Ōe (*usually excerpts from longer works, and list does not include all very short readings)

- Kimura, Akira. Faulkner and Oe: the self-critical imagination (University Press of America, Inc., 2007)
- "Oe Kenzaburo The Art of Fiction No. 195" *Paris Review* (Winter 2007)

9. Contacting me / meeting with me

My office is 5110 Dwinelle Hall.

My email is jwallace@berkeley.edu. **Please do not message me** either using my private account, or the appointment software, or via bCourse. Please use email.

My office hours, any last-minute changes to them, and how to request a meeting are listed at Sonic. Please don't rely on the department's webpage listing. I am very often not in my office. Making appointments is better. During the regular year, a part of my office hours will be for drop-ins.

10. Announcements and finding out what to do

Information about class activity (what to do, assignment instructions, due dates, grading explanations, test information, etc.) will come to you through four channels:

- in-class announcements
- bCourse announcements (arrives to you as an email notice and remains accessible on the bCourse site)
- postings to Session Details page (must remember to manually visit Sonic)
- bCourse assignment pages (creation notices and grade releases arrive to you as an email notice and remains accessible on the bCourse site, due date can appear on your calendar if you coordinate it with bCourse and remains on the bCourse site as "syllabus" and "calendar")

Because, as an active learning classroom, we are already very busy with activities, and because I think all of you are good readers, I rarely make announcements in class.

11. "How do I know what to do for each class session?"

The information is on the course Sonic Session Details page: http://www.sonic.net/~tabine/ .

12. Things to remember that help your course grade

"Syllabus, Part 2" provides thoughts on what is helpful and not helpful in terms of your course grade.

This class is about reading conscientiously, thinking about what was read, sharing those ideas, and listening to the ideas of others. In the final analysis, it will be how well you do these things that will determine your grade.