

Lesson Plan #2—The Tale of Genji

Ashley Dugan, Cascia Hall Preparatory School
12th Grade Literary Survey

Standards

Cascia Hall is a North Central Accredited College Preparatory School, but currently adheres to no set lesson plan construction.

Objectives

- Exposure to excerpt of Japanese classic *The Tale of Genji*
- Identification of literary irony
- Identification of theme
- Ability to recognize elements of Japanese culture and thought in *Genji*

Time Allotment

Lesson will take two-three 50 minute class periods. One period for an introductory lecture to *The Tale of Genji* and one-two periods for discussion of excerpt and small group work.

Resources Needed

Shikibu, Murasaki. "Yugao" from *Genji Monogatari. Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Donald Keene. New York: Grove Press, 1955.106-136.

Murphy, Rhoads. "Warriors, Monks and Conflict: Medieval Japan." *East Asia: A New History*. 2nd Edition. New York: Longman, 2001. 209-227.

Procedure

- Introduce students to elements of early Japanese culture as it applies to *The Tale of Genji*
- Hand out Xeroxed copies of "Yugao"
- Discuss discrepancy between Genji's feminine ideal (and those of his compatriots) and his experience with Yugao and how this illustrates literary irony
- Break students into small groups to identify themes in Yugao: unpredictability of desire, importance of memory, ability (or lack of ability) to transcend social class
- Identify other works which contain similar themes: *The Great Gatsby*, *Romeo and Juliet*, etc.
- Discuss elements of Japanese culture evident in the text (show powerpoint presentation of Japanese dress during eleventh century for fun)

Assessment

Students will be given exam questions relating to *Genji* where they will identify the irony in "Yugao" as well as some of its themes, and discuss elements of Japanese culture reflected in text.

Teacher Resource List

Shikibu, Murasaki. "Yugao" from *Genji Monogatari. Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Donald Keene. New York: Grove Press, 1955. 106-136.

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