This course will examine works of Japanese literature and visual culture (including poetry, novels, plays, films, and *manga*) to analyze how artists grappled with themes of suicide in their works, and sometimes in their lives, in response to both personal and national tragedies. We will discuss the ethics and politics of artistic representations of suicide when it is precipitated by such diverse contexts as failed romances, military honor, and disillusionment and depression. We will also consider how these works provoke questions about the responsibilities of the artist and audience in society. This class requires no background in Japanese language or culture; all readings are in English translation.

**Expectations:**
As a writing-intensive upper-division seminar, this class will require your active and full-fledged preparation, participation, and engagement to succeed. We will usually start promptly at 2 p.m. with a short quiz in the first 5 minutes of class to check attendance and that you have done the readings (absolutely no make-ups or late takes). Classes will be a mixture of class and small group discussion and in-class assignments and writing exercises. It is essential that you bring with you to class each week a hard copy of all your readings that should be heavily marked up with your notes, questions, opinions, thoughts, etc. In addition, you will need a packet of 3”X5” index cards for quizzes and in-class exercises, which will only be graded if turned in on an index card.

This course carries the Writing flag. Writing flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

**Required Texts/Course Materials:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chūshingura</strong> (TAKEDA Izumo et al., 1748)</th>
<th>Available now for purchase at the Co-op</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Reader (CR)</td>
<td>Will be available for purchase at the northern branch of Jenn’s Copy shop at 2518 Guadalupe (512-482-0779 • <a href="mailto:jenns2@io.com">jenns2@io.com</a>) on Tues. 1/24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3”X5” index cards to be used for in-class pop quizzes &amp; exercises.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional discussion/study questions and supplementary readings</td>
<td>To be posted regularly on Blackboard (BB) under Course Documents. It’s your responsibility to check for these, read/print out, and bring with you to class for discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>Some available for viewing at the reserve desk of the Fine Arts Library (3.200 Doty Fine Arts Building) under course reserves. Check Library Catalog under “Fischer” or by course number (ANS 320).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading Policy
Grades are assigned as follows: 93-100 = A; 90-92.9 = A-; 87-89.9 = B+; 83-86.9 = B; 80-82.9 = B-; 77-79.9 = C+; 73-76.9 = C; 70-72.9 = C-; 67-69.9 = D+; 63-66.9 = D; 60-62.9 = D-; below 60 = F. As a rule, I do not grade on a curve or round up grades. If you receive an 89.7, you will receive a B+. One exception to this rule is that a grade that is very close to the next grade level, such as an 89.9 or 79.9, may be rounded up to the higher grade if the student has consistently attended class and participated fully in class discussions. There are no extra credit assignments for this class. Note the following standards: an “A” is earned for “excellent” work; “B” for “above average”; C for “average”; D for “pass”; and F for “failing.”

Grading Breakdown (further details on all assignments/exams to be announced on BB under Assignments):

Pop quizzes and In-class individual and group exercises 10%

Pop Quizzes will be given frequently at the start of the class. Their purpose is twofold: to track timely attendance and to check if you have done the reading assignments carefully. Absolutely no make-ups allowed and no lates accepted. Quizzes will not be returned, but grades will be posted on BB and Answers will be given orally immediately following the quiz. Without an index card they will not be graded (beg, borrow, steal as needed). In addition, we will be doing frequent in-class exercises to help you develop the necessary skills. Your lowest grade will automatically be dropped.

Homework assignments (approx. 5-6 total) 10%

Homework will be assigned occasionally (the first three are listed on the schedule, but others will be added so be sure always to check the BB updated schedule) to help you develop the necessary oral and writing skills for analyzing literary works and films.

Participation/Contribution 5%

Note that this is based on both your participation (active engagement in all classes) and contribution (quality of your participation) rather than merely on attending classes. To earn the full 5% points, you will need to be a consistently active and good participant in class discussions.

Two 5-7 page analytical papers (worth 25% and 30% respectively) 55%

Two 5-7 page formal analytical papers covering Units One (worth 25%) and Units Two/Three (worth 30%) respectively. The first will include an initial draft/outline, peer evaluation, and substantial expansion/rewrite; all parts will be graded.

Final Project/Paper 20%

For this final project, you will draw connections across units to synthesize the material we have covered in class in a creative way of your choice. You will have a chance to present (or perform) these materials in the final classes.

Standards and Expectations:

Careful, thorough reading and viewing of the assigned texts by the date indicated on the schedule. Reading texts and viewing films require your active engagement. Merely highlighting or skimming these will not be sufficient for close analysis. Detailed note-taking is essential as is bringing your notes/text with you to class.

Attendance at all classes and considerate and attentive listening to the lecture. Sleepers and disruptive students will be asked to leave.

Active and considerate participation in class and group discussions. Common courtesy is expected. No one will be allowed to monopolize the class discussion and no one will be allowed to shrink into the background. Remember you need to earn the participation/contribution points toward your grade.

Timely completion of assignments. No make-up assignments will be given. Extensions will be granted in only very rare cases for legitimate reasons (i.e. religious holidays), but even in these cases, arrangements must be made with the instructor one week prior to the due date. Last-minute family or medical emergencies will be considered, but there are no guarantees and extensions will require a note as well as e-mail or telephone notification prior to the class period. No exceptions.
Announcements of quizzes and/or homework assignments may be made in the previous class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what has been assigned.

**Official Policies**

Academic integrity: You are expected to adhere to university requirements on academic honesty and integrity. Behaviors, such as plagiarism, copying of another student’s work, or cheating on an exam, are serious offenses that will result in the grade of an “F” for the course and will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Services, where further disciplinary action may be taken. Please refer to the following website for information on how to avoid plagiarism in your work and/or discuss this with the instructor: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

University Electronic Notification Mail Policy: In this course, e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class announcements and assignments. As per the University Electronic Notification Policy (please see [http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html](http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html)), it is your responsibility to update your email address and to check your e-mail regularly.

Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities: Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6529 voice or 471-4641 TTY). This letter should be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made at that time. For more information, please see: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/)

Use of Blackboard in Class: Some of our readings are available on blackboard. You should print these out and bring with you to class. Please allow yourself enough time before an assignment is due. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Blackboard is available at [http://courses.utexas.edu](http://courses.utexas.edu). Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 during business hours on weekdays.

Religious Holidays: If you will need to miss class or other assignments due to the observance of a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the work you have missed provided you notify me at least one week prior to the absence.
Schedule (subject to change; always consult updated version posted on blackboard):
Notes: All readings/viewings should be completed by class time on the day they are listed. For Japanese texts the author’s name is listed with last name first (following the Japanese convention). When author uses a penname instead, that is underlined below. Books = **; CR = Course Reader; BB = Blackboard.

Week One (Jan. 17 & 19) – Introduction: Suicide in Japan
Tues.: Introduction
  +Homework #1 – Personal Response Essay (2-3 pgs. max.) on Suicide in Japan (worth 10 pts.): In a 2-3 page (maximum) typed and double-spaced personal response paper, compare and contrast the main points about suicide made by these authors. Do these authors agree or disagree with one another? On what points? Why? How might their nationality, occupation, time period in which they were writing affect the way they write and think about suicide? (In addition, while reading and writing, consider the following for our discussion purposes: What did you learn about suicide in Japan that you didn’t already know? Was anything in them contrary to your expectations? Which author do you most agree or disagree with? About what? Why?)

Week Two (Jan. 24 & 26) – Unit One: Warriors’ Suicides, Old School
Tues: --The Tale of the Heike (1185) excerpts
  --Chamberlain, “Hara-kiri” (1890), p. 219-22
  +Homework #2 – Heike Quote Gathering Exercise (5 points)
Thurs: --The Great Mirror of Male Love (Iharu Saikaku, 1687) “Introduction” and excerpts (1-5; 27-34)

Week Three (Jan. 31 & Feb. 2)
Tues.: **Chūshingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers (Takeda Izumo et al., 1748)
Thurs.: Continue discussion of Chūshingura
  +Homework Assignment #3 – Chūshingura paper mock outline (10 points)

Week Four (Feb. 7 & 9) Unit One ct’d: Modern Warrior “Suicide” – His and Hers
Tues.: --Kamikaze letters excerpts
  --supplementary readings on kamikaze
  --“The Departure Never Came” (Shimao Toshio, 1962), p. 755-78
Thurs.: --“Iron Fish” (Kōno Taeko, 1976), p. 362-74
  --supplementary reading for “Iron Fish” (Dojoji summary)

Week Five (Feb. 14 & 16) – Unit One ct’d: Mishima & Nogi
Tues.: --“Patriotism” (Mishima Yukio, 1966), p. 93-118
  In-class screening of Patriotism (dir. Mishima Yukio, 1967)
Thurs.: --Lifton, “Nogi Maresuke: The Emperor’s Samurai” (1979), p. 29-66
  --Supplementary essays on Mishima & Nogi

Week Six (Feb. 21 & 23) –
Tues.: In-class screening of Hara-Kiri (dir. Kobayashi Masaki, 1963) (133 min.)
Thurs.: Continue screening of Hara-Kiri
  Outline and draft of Analytical Paper #1 Due
  In-class workshop on outlines/drafts

Week Seven (Feb. 28 & Mar. 1)
Tues.: Analytical Paper #1 on Unit 1 Due
  In-class: Ink-shedding peer-evaluation workshop on Paper #1
Thurs: ~Finish watching Hara-Kiri and discuss
Week Eight (Mar. 6 & 8)
Tues.: **"Kokoro" (Natsume Sōseki, 1914)
Thurs.: continue discussion of Kokoro
--Orbaugh, "General Nogi's Wife" (1996)
Rewrites/Expansions of Analytical Paper #1 on Unit 1 Due

March 12-16: OFF FOR SPRING BREAK

Week Nine (Mar. 20 & 22) – **Unit Two: Love Suicides, Old & New School**
Tues.: --"Kojiki" (ca. 712) excerpt
--Maiden of Unai poems, Manyōshū (ca. 759)
In-class view clips of Double Suicide (dir. Shinoda Masahiro, 1969)
Thurs.: --"The Love Suicides at Amijima" (Chikamatsu Monzaemon, 1721), p. 170-208

Week Ten (Mar. 27 & 29)
Tues.: "The Love Suicides at Amijima" ct'd
Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare, 1595) excerpts
Suggestion: Start reading Murakami's Norwegian Wood a.s.a.p...
Thurs.: "Love Suicides at Kamaara" (Yoshida Sueko, 1984), p. 213-33

Week Eleven (Apr. 3 & 5)
Tues.: "Landscape with Flatiron" (Murakami Haruki, 1999), p. 1-16
**Norwegian Wood** (Murakami Haruki, 1987)
Thurs.: continue discussion of Norwegian Wood (Murakami Haruki, 1987)

Week Twelve (Apr. 10 & 12)
Tues.: --"Love Suicides" (Kawabata Yasunari, 1926)
Thurs: Analytical Paper #2 Due
Trip to Harry Ransom Center (TBD)

Week Thirteen (Apr. 17 & 19) – **Unit Three: Artist(ic) Suicides: Kawabata, Akutagawa, Dazai, and Mishima**
Tues.: --"A Fool's Life" (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, 1927), p. 177-203
--"Cogwheels" excerpts (" (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, 1927)
--"A Note to an Old Friend" (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, 1927), 1-3
Thurs.: --"Leaves" (Dazai Osamu, 1938), p. 31-41
--"Female" (Dazai Osamu, 1936), p. 43-52
--Supplementary readings on Dazai

Week Fourteen (Apr. 24 & 26) – **Unit Four: Contemporary Youth and Internet Suicides & Others**
Tues.: --"Suicide of an Unemployed Person" (Kogama Kagai, 1903), p. 293
--Suicide Circle manga (Furuya Usumaru, 2001)
--Supplementary articles on Internet and youth suicides
In-class clips from Suicide Circle film (dir. Sono Sion, 2002) and Noriko's Dinner Table (Sono Sion, 2005)
In-class excerpts from The Complete Suicide Manual (Tsurumi Wataru, 1993) and others
Thurs.: --Berman, Surviving Literary Suicide excerpts
In-class view clips of The Bridge (dir. Eric Steel, 2006, DVD 6153)
+Homework assignment #5? 6? – Personal Response Essay on suicide, art, and ethics (10 pts.)

Week Fifteen (May 1 & 3) – **Wrap-up: Final Presentations**
Tues.: In-class final presentations
Thurs.: In-class final presentations