

**UAB 2025 PhD Summer School**  
**Course Title: "Utopia and Dystopia in Japanese Culture"**  
**Instructor: Pau Pitarch Fernández (Waseda University)**

In this course we will explore the idea of Utopia/Dystopia in texts from different eras of Japanese culture. Rather than a historical approach, we will tackle works in thematic clusters, to consider how the drive to imagine an ideal world has afforded Japanese creators a language to discuss a wide range of issues pertaining to their own time.

**Schedule of Sessions**

**Day 1: Cosmos**

How have Buddhism and other religious traditions shaped the language and models to think about the order of the Cosmos in Japanese culture?

**Primary Sources:**

*Lotus Sutra (Myōhōrengekyō)*

Kamo no Chōmei, *An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut (Hōjōki)*, 1212)

Miyazawa Kenji, *Night on the Galactic Railroad (Ginga tetsudō no yoru)*, 1934)

**Day 2: Labor**

How do Politics and Aesthetics interact in representations of the present and future of modern work in Japan?

**Primary Sources:**

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, "Kappa" (1927)

Kobayashi Takiji, "The Crab Cannery Ship" ("Kanikōsen," 1929)

Satō Haruo, "A Record of Nonchalant" ("Nonsharan kiroku," 1929)

**Day 3: Body/Self**

If the promises of modern medicine are ever realized, how will that affect our understanding of our own selves and bodies?

**Primary Sources:**

Murata Sayaka, "Satsujin shussan" ("Murderous Births," 2014)

Itō Keikaku, *Harmony* (2008)

**Day 4: World**

What impact have Japanese Utopian/Dystopian works had in global culture?

**Primary Sources:**

Studio Ghibli, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (Kaze no tani no Naushika)*, 1984)

Murakami Haruki, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (*Sekai no owari to hādo-boirudo wandārando*, 1985)

### **Recommended Secondary Sources in English**

Bolton, Christopher, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay and Takayuki Tatsumi (eds.). *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Dutton, Jacqueline. "'Non-Western' Utopian Traditions." In *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 223-258.

Moichi, Yoriko. "Japanese Utopian Literature From the 1870s to the Present and the Influence of Western Utopianism." In *Utopian Studies*, 10/2, 1999, pp. 89-97.

Napier, Susan. *The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature*, Routledge, 1996.

Posadas, Baryon Tensor. "Japanese Science Fiction." In *The New Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, Routledge, 2024, pp. 109-117.

Roh, David S., Betsy Huang and Greta Aiyu Niu (eds.). *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media*, Rutgers University Press, 2015.