Written in the eleventh century by a noble lady of the Japanese court, *The Tale of Genji* has been called the world’s first novel, and even the world’s first psychological novel. But can we really use the terms “novel” and “psychological” to describe the narrative? In this seven-week course we will supplement our reading of the primary text with selected secondary sources to focus our attention on such topics as: narration, visuality, sexual politics, relation to reality, poetics, and aesthetics in the text.

Presentation themes:
1. power and sexual politics
2. women’s “voice”
3. narration
4. fiction (as opposed to realism)
5. Heian poetics and aesthetics

Course Requirements:
- Attendance and participation 20%
- Presentation 20%
- Final paper 8-10 pages 60%

This class meets once a week for only seven sessions. Any unexcused absence will negatively impact your grade. Late papers will be accepted, but progressively penalized for tardiness.

**Statement on Plagiarism**
Plagiarism means: presenting as your own someone else’s words, ideas, opinions, and/or argument. You must be sure to cite your sources, include a bibliography, and use quotation marks when you incorporate another person’s words or language verbatim. This
includes buying a paper! Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action(s). Confirmation of plagiarism will mean a failure for the class.

**** On Japanese names: Japanese names are in the opposite order of American ones, so the FAMILY NAME (our last name) comes first, and the GIVEN NAME is second. (Like in a bibliographic list, but without a comma: i.e. Cornyetz Nina).

Students are required to bring a copy of the assigned readings to class.

**Required Books:**
For sale at Bluestockings, 172 Allen Street between Stanton and Rivington – (1 block south of Houston and 1st Avenue). Buy these in the beginning of the class, the bookstore sends back unsold copies by around midterm. Also on reserve at Bobst Library.


**Required Articles and Chapter on Blackboard:**


There are Supplementary (not required) readings on Blackboard on sexual coercion, marriage and property, translation, and etc. Some of these may be helpful for the final papers. Take a look.
Schedule

Readings: in class, Seidensticker’s introduction to Genji; Seidensticker, “Chiefly on Translating the Genji” (selections) view scrolls
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~arth17/Genji.html

2. Sept. 14  Power and Sexual politics 1
Readings: Seidensticker, Genji: Chapters 1-5 (pp. 3-111); Kimura, “Meshûdo and the System of Sexuality” (blackboard); Sarra, “Staging,” 13-29.

3. Sept. 21  Power and Sexual Politics 2, Women’s “voice” and Narration

4. Sept. 28  Women’s Voice and Narration 2
Readings: Genji Chapters 11-16; Tyler, “Marriage, Rank and Rape” (blackboard); Okada, Figures of Resistance, 157-294.

5. Oct. 5  Aesthetics, Poetics
Readings: Genji Chapters 17-22; LaMarre, selections, Uncovering Heian Japan, (blackboard), 13-25, 41-74.

6. Oct. 12 Fiction; Karma
Readings: Genji Chapters 23-31; Raud, “The Lover’s Subject”; Field, The Splendor of Longing in the Tale of Genji, 125-136; Reichenbach, “The Law of Karma” (all on blackboard)

7. Oct. 19 Visuality
Readings: Genji Chapter 32, A branch of plum (only 1 chapter); Sarra, “The Poetics of Voyeurism,” 222-243; Mostow, “'Picturing' in the Tale of Genji,” (blackboard), Final Paper Due