

**HIS 220/AAS 219**  
**Japan in the Age of Courtier and Samurai**

Satisfies: GLO, SBS

Thematic Categories: "Arts, Ideas & Culture," "Empires, Violence & Global Connections," "Law, Politics & Social Justice"

Tu/Thu, 8:30-9:50

Professor Janis Mimura

This course examines the fascinating history of premodern Japan and its transformation during the ancient, classical, medieval, and early modern periods. We will analyze the change in the nature of power from an emperor-centered, aristocratic court in Kyoto to the medieval and early modern warrior regimes in the Eastern capitals of Kamakura and Edo and the complicated shifts in between during the period of the Warring States. Using a wide variety of primary sources, including Murasaki Shikibu's classic, *Tale of Genji*, war, religious, and folk tales, paintings, memoirs, and legal codes, in addition to scholarly articles, books, and films, we will explore both the ideas, institutions, and culture of the elite courtier and samurai, as well as the mental world and everyday lives of the peasant and artisan. Topics include the court intrigues of the imperial regents, consorts, and retired emperors, samurai culture and zen, the political economy of Tokugawa, and Japan's interaction with the outside world. The class is in lecture format with frequent and active discussion of course readings. Requirements include discussion question responses, two short papers, and a midterm and final exam.