To all: Below, I reformulated the exam questions—now I ask only two questions. Note that, even though each of the four characters speaks of his or her story, each story in fact represents the view of Akira Kurosawa—the filmmaker. For this reason, I combined the second and the third questions (of the original text) together. Question 1 remains the same.

Mid-term essay exam question for M155

Please type your essay, double-spaced, with a reasonable font (12). Write no more than 5 pages (strictly enforced). Your paper is due on May 11th (the 6th week). Submit your paper at the end of our class on Tuesday (I will not look at “late papers” favorably).

After viewing Rashômon (by Akira Kurosawa, 1951) and after our class discussion, write an essay answering the following two questions.

♦ Focusing on the life of “the woman” (represented by various characters of this movie), discuss how her life diverts from the lives of women up until the 14th century in Japan. (Your reading of the Japanese origin myths, the Confession of Lady Nijô, and the article by Hitomi Tonomura* is required.)

♦ Discuss how each of the four main characters (bandit, the woman, the man and the woodcutter) expresses his or her sense of masculinity and/or femininity, and how, through their stories, the filmmaker expresses his sense of masculinity, femininity (and humanism).

* Hitomi Tonomura also discusses “the transition” to the more male-dominated gender ideology around and after 1500 in Japan. To write this essay, you can ignore that part of her discussion.