

Department of History
University of Wisconsin-Madison
College of Letters and Science

Historiography of Modern Japan History 855

Spring 2012
Friday 3:30-5:30
5245 Humanities

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Course Description

This course is designed to help students develop bibliographic and historiographic command of modern Japanese history as a teaching and research field. The class is divided into four parts. We open with a series of discussions about the ways American academic institutions and scholarship have constituted Japan as a field of studies. In particular we look at the dominance of the paradigm of modernization. The second part of the class focuses on key concepts in recent historiography--“gender, culture, and class,”-- exploring ways these concepts are theorized and deployed for historical analysis in new scholarship. The third section examines the influence of anthropology on the practice of Japanese history, taking up the coincidence between methodological developments (the “cultural turn”) and the fashion for histories of folklore, folkcraft, and the movements that sustained them. We end with a look at challenges to the master-narratives of Shōwa history (1926-1989), in particular our understandings of the origins of postwar economic growth and the “new Japan.” Japanese language ability is not required, though special assignments may be made for students with advanced reading ability and interest in exploring Japanese language historiography.

Course Requirements

1. **Weekly response essays.** Each week by 9:00 am the day our class meets, all students should send a short response essay to the course website. This response essay should include three basic paragraphs. The first paragraph should summarize the key arguments in the readings and their significance. The second paragraph should analyze how the week’s readings relate to other course and outside texts. The third paragraph should offer the student’s critical assessment of the week’s readings: What was most persuasive? What was least persuasive? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the authors’ approaches? Which are the issues and questions that need more attention? What kind of new research do the readings inspire?
2. **Annotated bibliography,** due date to be arranged. Students will prepare a bibliography covering work published since 1945 on a single topic or category

(e.g. empire, fascism, gender). The bibliography should include 10 -15 books and articles and be organized thematically to highlight historiographic trends as well as questions of method. Annotations may include brief descriptions of your thematic categories and/or the titles included in the bibliography. Students will present their conclusions orally as brief in-class presentations and in writing as annotated bibliographies.

3. **Syllabus** for an undergraduate course **OR**
4. **Ten-page historiographic essay**, due the last day of class. An historiographic essay analyzes debates in the field of Japanese history around a particular topic, theme or methodology (e.g. World War Two, economic development, social history). You can approach this in a variety of ways: analyzing the politics of scholarship, the key interpretive fault lines, how themes and methods shift over time, how concerns in the Japanese history field intersect with broader trends in history-writing, or comparing historical with other disciplinary approaches.

Readings

Course readings are listed in the class schedule. All readings will be available through the class website (see learn@UW), or on sale at the University Bookstore.

Class Schedule

27 Jan. Introduction

I. **Constituting “Japan”: Modernization and its Discontents**

3 Feb. Foundations of the Discipline

Look over six Princeton volumes: Marius B. Jansen, *Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Modernization*; Robert Ward, *Political Development in Modern Japan*; R. P. Dore, *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan*; William Lockwood, *The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan*; Donald Shively, *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*; James Morley, *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*.

Read: James Morley, intro to *Dilemmas of Growth*, pp. 1-33; John Hall, intro to *Changing Japanese Attitudes*, p. 7-42.

10 Feb. Marxist narratives of modernization

E. H. Norman, *Japan’s Emergence as a Modern State*:
“introduction” pp. 3-10, “The Restoration” pp. 49-103,

“The Agrarian Settlement and its Social Consequences” pp. 136-166; Nakamura Masanori, “The Emperor System of the 1900s”, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 16.2, 1984, pp.2-10; Germaine Hoston, “Conceptualizing Bourgeois Revolution”, *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 33.3, July 1991.

17 Feb. Critiques of Area Studies/ History beyond Marxism

Read: John Dower, “E.H. Norman, Japan, and the Uses of History”, in Dower, ed., *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E.H. Norman*, pp. 3-102; Harry Harootunian, “Tracking in Dinosaur: Area Studies in a Time of ‘Globalism’”, in Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life*, pp. 25-58; Carol Gluck, “House of Mirrors: American History-Writing on Japan,” in *Imagined Histories*, pp. 434-454; Carol Gluck, “The People in History,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Nov 1978, 25-50; Carol Gluck, “Meta-Musings on Historywriting in Japan at the End of the Millennium”, 1995 (xerox)

24 Feb. Modernization Redux?

Look over: Four Routledge volumes edited by Stephen Large, *Showa Japan* (1998); Cambridge history of Japan; recent textbooks by Andrew Gordon, Ann Waswo, other?

Journal exercise: survey the table of contents for *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, *Positions* 1950s through present and map out key themes and trends in postwar historiography

II. **Keywords: Gender, Culture, and Class**

2 March the social construction of gender

Read: Ayako Kano, *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan*

9 March the cultural history of class

Read: Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan*

16 March discourse and subjectivity

Read: Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women*

III. **Disciplinary crossings: Folklore as History; History as Anthropology**

23 March anthropology after “the historical turn”

Read: Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*

30 March Meiji Japan after the “cultural turn”

Read: Read: Gerald Figel, *Civilization and Monsters*

13 April folklore between literature and history

Read: Michael Foster, *Pandemonium and Parade*

IV. Retelling Mainstories of Shōwa: State, Economy, and Technocracy

20 April Wartime Origins of Postwar Technocracy

Read: Janice Mimura, *Planning for Empire*

27 April Economic Thought as Ideology

Read: Scott O’Bryan, *The Growth Idea*

4 May Leftwing Economists as Establishment Planners

Read: Laura Hein, *Reasonable Men; Powerful Words*

11 May Economic Growth and Neo-nationalism

Read: Richard Samuels, *Rich Nation; Strong Army: National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan*