

Department of History
University of Wisconsin-Madison
College of Arts and Sciences

History 500: Japanese Imperialism (3 credits/ in-person)

Spring 2023
Monday 3:30-5:25
5255 Humanities

Professor Louise Young
O.H. Monday 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

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Course Description

Like the rest of the modern world, Japan developed in the crucible of empire. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the world's territory was carved into a handful of colonial empires. With few exceptions, the new imperialism of these years incorporated states into the world system either as colonizers or colonized. Japan's case was unusual: the country started out as a victim of imperialism in the nineteenth century, but became an aggressor in the twentieth. Accounts of Japan's imperial experience tend to focus on this exceptional quality: the peculiarities of a non-Western, late-developing imperial power. But how different, in fact, was the Japanese empire? This course explores this question by looking at different aspects of the Japanese empire and imperial Japan, including imperial ideology, the political economy of empire, metropolitan and peripheral agents promoting expansionism, and the technologies of colonial rule. By considering the Japanese case in comparative terms, we will rethink the problem of Japanese imperialism.

This course is offered for 3 credits. Our seminar meets for 2 hours per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 3 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week for reading, writing, and preparing for discussions for this class.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop a critical understanding of the history of Japanese imperialism, and the ways Japanese expansion shaped the regional Asian order and the 20th century world.
- Facilitate and lead class discussion.
- Improve research skills, including working with databases, the library catalog, and critical evaluation of secondary sources.
- Develop analytic and writing skills.
- Provide constructive feedback for peers, and incorporate feedback for your own work.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Participation. 20% of final grade will be based on the following:
 - Attendance is critical in a course like this, where content knowledge and analytic skills are developed cumulatively through in-class activities.
 - Evidence of preparation for class, meaning that you have both read the assignment for class that day and thought about it. Many class sessions will require you to prepare in small groups.
 - Active participation in classroom activities, including discussion. Use this course as an opportunity to develop your ability to “think out loud” and to engage effectively with others to build new knowledge.
2. Lead class discussion. 20% of your final grade will be based on working in a team to facilitate one class session.
 - To prepare for your week, read ahead and work with your team to introduce the readings and provide context. Meet with me the previous week to discuss your approach. Read carefully and incorporate student posts on the reading prior to our class meeting. We will save time at the end of class to reflect as a group on how the discussion went and what we all learned about facilitating discussion.
3. Weekly one-page posts to the class website. 20% of final grade will be based on short response essays, due each week by 10 pm on the Sunday before class. Late posts will not be credited.
 - This is a reading intensive course. Generally, I assign one book (or its equivalent) per week. To prepare for class discussion, students will be expected to read the book carefully and summarize their reflections in a one-page post to the course website.
 - The post can take any form you wish and sometimes I will give you a specific question to focus your reflections.
4. Short paper (10-12 pages for undergraduates; 12-15 pages for graduates) on a topic of your choice. 40% of your final grade will be based on a series of assignments building up to your final paper draft. This is your opportunity to learn more about a specific issue, event or aspect of Japanese imperialism and improve your library research skills. Your paper can synthesize information drawn from secondary sources; I am not requiring primary source research.
 - Submit a brief description of your topic for approval by **February 20**. (5 points)
 - One paragraph proposal and annotated bibliography of 3-5 monographs and 2-4 journal articles. Due **March 6**. Meet with the instructor later that week to discuss. (5 points)
 - Thesis paragraph and detailed argument outline due **April 8**. We will circulate to the class for our paper workshops. If you would like comments on a first draft from the instructor or peers you may also circulate your paper draft at this time. (10 points)
 - Final draft due **May 5**. (25 points)

Grading Scale

A (92.5+), AB (87.5-92.49), B (82.5-87.49), BC (77.5-82.49), C (69.5-77.49), D (60-69.49), F (60-)

Required Readings

All assigned readings will either be uploaded to Canvas or be available online through the UW Library System.

Writing Resources

Undergraduates are required to make at least two visits to the **History Lab** to help you with your essay. The History Lab is staffed with expert history PhD students who work with you and your history projects 1-on-1 and is a fantastic resource for moving your writing skills to the next level. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff will help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Visit the [History Lab website](#) to schedule an appointment with a Lab TA or to find writing tips, guides, and resources.

Disabilities

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know so that such accommodations may be arranged. For additional assistance, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center: mcburney.wisc.edu, 608-263-2741 (phone), or 608-225-7956 (text).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking credit for someone else's work whether deliberately or unintentionally. This includes but is not limited to turning in all or part of an essay written by someone other than yourself (a friend, an internet source, etc.) and claiming it as your own, and including information or ideas from research material without citing the source. Avoid plagiarism by carefully and correctly citing your sources whenever you use someone else's words, equations, graphics, or ideas. If you are unsure of something and are worried you may be plagiarizing, come see the instructor. Cite sources carefully, completely, and meticulously; when in doubt, cite. For additional help, see Writing Center guide to [Quoting and Paraphrasing](#) and a terrific [resource list](#) from the Journalism School.

Canvas

Weekly posts on readings can be accessed via the “discussion” tab. Assignments linked to the final paper can be accessed via the “assignment” tab. Readings and any updates to the syllabus can be accessed through the home page.

Class schedule

January 30

introduction

**extra credit: attend Mark Bradley talk
Wednesday, February 1 at 5 pm, 226 Pyle Center
write a short summary of the talk

PART 1: WHY CHOOSE EMPIRE?

February 6

gunboat diplomacy, unequal treaties and the “new imperialism”
William Beasley, Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945, 1-158. (**online**)

February 13

the emergence of imperial Japan
Marlene Mayo, “Attitudes towards Asia and the Beginnings of Japanese Empire,” in Goodman, Imperial Japan and Asia: a Reassessment (Columbia, 1967), 6-31 (**canvas**)
Peter Duus, “Economic Dimensions of Meiji Imperialism: The Case of Korea, 1895-1910” in The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945 (Princeton, 1984), 128-171 (**canvas**)
Donald Keene, “The Sino-Japanese War and its Cultural Effects in Japan”, 121-175. (**canvas**)
John Steinberg et al, The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective, Vol 1 (Brill, 2005), chapter 9: “Human Bullets, General Nogi, and the Myth of Port Arthur” (Tak Matsusaka), chapter 28: “Interservice Rivalry and Politics in Postwar Japan” (J. Charles Schecking), chapter 30: “Brave, Brave Tiger of the East: The Russo-Japanese War and the Rise of Nationalism in British Egypt and India” (Steven Marks), pps 179-201, 565-590, and 609-627. (**canvas**)

PART 2: COLONIZED SPACES

February 20

Taiwan

Seiji Shirane, Imperial Gateway: Colonial Taiwan and Japan’s Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895-1945 (Cornell, 2022), selections (**online**)

February 27

Korea

Carter Eckert, Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea: The Roots of Militarism, 1866-1945 (Harvard, 2016), selections (**online**)

March 6

China

Rana Mitter, Forgotten Ally: China’s World War Two, 1937-1945 (Houghton-Mifflin, 2013), selections (**canvas**)

March 13 SPRING BREAK

March 20 *Southeast Asia*
Jeremy Yellen, The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War (Cornell, 2019), selections (**online**)

PART 3: TECHNOLOGIES OF EMPIRE

March 27 *institutions*
Ramon Myers & Mark Peattie, eds., The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945 (Princeton 1984), 213-311; (**canvas**)
Peter Duus, Ramon Myers, & Mark Peattie, The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1945 (Princeton, 1989), 101-132, 395-421 (**online**)

April 3 *ideologies*
Louise Young, “When Fascism Met Empire in Japanese-occupied Manchuria”, Journal of Global History (2017), 274-296; (**canvas**)
Louise Young, “Imagined Empire: The Cultural Construction of Manchuria”, in The Japanese Wartime Empire (Princeton, 1996), 71-96; (**canvas**)
Janis Mimura, “Ideologues of Fascism” in Planning for Empire: Reform Bureaucrats and the Japanese Wartime State (Cornell, 2011), 107-137; (**canvas**)
Prasenjit Duara, “The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism”, Journal of World History 12, 1 (2001), 99-130; (**canvas**)
Sven Saaler and Christopher W.A. Szpilman, “Introduction: The Emergence of Pan-Asianism as an Ideal of Asian Identity and Solidarity, 1850-2008,” in Pan-Asianism, A Documentary History (Roman and Littlefield, 2011), 10-43. (**canvas**)

PART 4: STUDENT PROJECTS

April 10 *paper workshop I*

April 17 *paper workshop II*

PART 5: DECOLONIZATION AND POST-EMPIRE

April 24 *transitions*
Barak Kushner, et al, In the Ruins of Empire, (Hong Kong University Press, 2020), introduction (Kushner), chapter 1 (Mark Caprio), 1-49. (**canvas**)

Barak Kushner et al, The Dismantling of Japan's Empire in East Asia, (Routledge, 2017), chapters 1 (Kiyofumi), 2 (Kawashima), 3 (Kushner), 4 (Araragi), 13-84; (**canvas**)
Victor Louzon, "From Japanese Soldiers to Chinese Rebels" Journal of Asian Studies 77.1 (2018), 161-179 (**canvas**)

**extra credit: attend Aaron Skabelund lecture
Tuesday, April 25 @ 4 pm, 3rd fl lounge, Ingraham Hall
write a short summary of the talk

May 1

Japan and Asia reset
Simon Avenell, Asia and Postwar Japan: Deimperialization, Civic Activism, and National Identity (Harvard, 2022), selections