

Syllabus for History 104

Introduction to Japanese History

Instructor: Viren Murthy

Meeting Times: MWF: 2:25-3:15

Room: Humanities 1651

Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday 3:30-4:30

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TA: Michael Hayata

Course Description and Learning Goals:

If one asks ten people what “Japan” means to them, one might get ten different answers. Manga, anime, samurai, Zen Buddhism, tea ceremony among other phenomena are all associated with Japan. One might ask to what extent we can find something unifying these seemingly diverse practices. Although this course will not try to provide such a unifying perspective, we will discuss the meaning of such practices in historical context and also how some of these practices overlapped at various points in history. For example, anime often depicts the history of Japan, including that of the samurai, the tea-ceremony expresses ideals from Zen Buddhism and the samurai often performed the tea-ceremony.

Through looking at these and other practices associated with Japan, the course aims to introduce students to the culture, politics and intellectual currents in Japan from ancient times to the present.

The course will allow students to analyze writings about history and to construct historical arguments. Through this process students will also learn to think historically about politics and culture, not only in Japan, but in the world. Among the larger questions we will ask include: How do we periodize Japanese history? How should we understand “modern” Japan in relation to its premodern past? The implications of these questions go well beyond Japan.

The more specific themes we will study include: whether we can talk about a unique Japanese culture, the influence of China on Japan and how Japan’s relation to China and East Asia changes throughout history, the emergence of a samurai/shogunal system in Japan, Japanese Confucianism and national learning in the Edo period (1604-1868), Japanese imperialism and its legacies for the present, and the cultural, intellectual and artistic changes that took place in various periods of Japanese history.

Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Final Exam (Take Home) 20%

Paper: 20%

You are expected to attend all classes and the instructor and TA will randomly take attendance. You are also expected to respond to questions during the lecture by the instructor and participate in the discussion sections with the TA.

There are three exams and one paper in this class. The first two exams will be in class and will consist of fill in the blanks, short answer and essay questions. The final exam will be a cumulative take home exam, which will consist of two essay questions. They will be open questions, which should give students an opportunity to express what they have learned over the semester.

Students will also be responsible for writing a paper (5-7 pages, Times New Roman Font 12, Double-Spaced) on a topic of their choice. The topic can also be an expansion of one of the essay questions on the mid-term exam.

Students should definitely do some outside research for this paper, but the student can decide whether s/he would like to base the project on primary or secondary works. Students should attempt to construct their own thesis about the topic and defend their position with an argument. Students are encouraged to meet with the TA or the instructor as they formulate their ideas and topics.

While topics may vary, here are some possibilities:

Did Zen Buddhism play an important role in samurai life? If so, why?

The Nara and Heian courts took the Chinese Tang dynasty as a model. How do you explain the transformation of the Chinese model in Japan?

Japan's position in the world changed in the 20th century. How do you explain this shift?

There are those who describe Japanese imperialism as "imperialism against imperialism." Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

Did the position of women in Japan improve in the 20th century? Why or why not?

Required Text:

Shirokauer, Lurie and Gay, *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization*. Available at the bookstore

All other readings will be on the Learn@UW website.

Schedule

(Instructor may alter dates and readings during the course of the semester)

The readings specified must be done before that day of class.

Week 1 Beginnings and Foundations

Sept. 3 Introduction

Japan and the Japanese

*What is Japan? Who are the Japanese?

PART I: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL JAPAN

Sept. 5 The Pre-history of the Japanese Archipelago

Jomon and Yayoi periods

Shirokauer, 3-13

*How do we study pre-history? What types of evidence are available?

Week 2: Emergence of the Early State and the Influence of China

*How did Japan incorporate foreign, and in particular Chinese, influence?

Sept. 8 Chinese and Korean Backgrounds

Shirokauer, 17-25

Sept. 10 Nara as Center

Shirokauer, 17-31

Sept. 12 Nara continued and Heian

Shirokauer, 31-42

Week 3: Heian Period and Kamakura

*How does the imperial system in Japan give way to the Shogunal system?
What types of art forms and religion emerged?

Sept. 15 Rise of Fujiwara

Shirokauer, 46-62

Sept. 17 End of the Heian and beginning of Kamakura
Shirokauer, 62-72

Sept. 19 Religion in Kamakura
Shirokauer, 72-79

Week 4: Religion in Kamakura

*What are the key ideas in Zen Buddhism and Dogen?
Why would Samurai be interested in Zen?

Sept. 22 Culture of the Samurai and Religion
Shirokauer, 79-91

Sept. 24 Dogen
Dogen Selctions
Shobogenzo and Genjokoan

Sept. 26 Muromachi Japan
Shirokauer, 91-112

Week 5: Art and Culture in the Muromachi

*What are some of the key characteristics of Japanese art and why did they develop during the Muromachi period?

Sept. 29
Tea Ceremony, Noh Drama and Renga
Steven Heine on Chikamatsu-Death.

Oct 1 Continue discussion of art

Oct 3 Exam I

PART II: EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Week 6: Formation of a New Order

*How did centralized power re-emerge in Japan?

Oct. 6
Warring States period

Oct. 8 Oda Nobunaga

Shirokauer, 113-114

Oct. 10 Toyotomi Hideyoshi

Shirokauer, 114-117

Week 7: The Tokugawa Shogun and Intellectual Change

What are the characteristics of Tokugawa culture and thought?

Oct 13 Tokugawa Shogunate

Shirokauer, 129-141

Oct 15

Tokugawa art and Poetry (Basho)

Shirokauer, 141-151

Oct. 17 Intellectual Currents

Tetsuo Najita, "Interpreting the Historicism of Ogyu Sorai" in *Tokugawa Political Writings*

Week 8: Tokugawa Confucianism and National Learning

*In what ways, do Sorai and Jinsai represent a type of turn towards modernity? What happens to the relation to China and the West, especially with Motoori Norinaga and Hiraga Gennai? What is the role of sound in Motoori's thought?

Oct. 20 Ogyu Sorai, Ito Jinsai

Essays by Ogyu Sorai and Ito Jinsai

Oct. 22 National Learning and Hiraga Gennai

Reread Motoori, also read Hiraga Gennai

Oct 24

Princess Mononoke,

Read essay by Tucker, "Anime and Historical Inversion in Miyazaki Hayao's *Princess Mononoke*" in *Japan Studies Review*, vol. 7, 2003, 65-103.

Week 9: Edo-Pop-culture and Japan's Confrontation with Imperialism

*How should we understand Kibyoshi or Edo Comic Books in relation to the Edo period? How should we understand the events of 1868 in Japan?

Oct 27 Late Tokugawa

Shirokauer, 151-167

Kibyoshi essay Adam Kern

Oct 29

Nov. 1 Meiji Restoration

Saigo Takamori in Meiji Japan

Shirokauer, 167-175

Hastings, "Empress's Clothes"

Oct 31 Meiji Restoration and the Emperor

Richard Devine, "Way of the King,"

Week 10: Early Meiji Intellectual Developments and Gender

*How do gender relations change after Meiji Japan?

Why did intellectual changes take place during the Meiji period?

Nov 3 Surnames and Gender in Japan

Essay by Kimiko Tanaka, "Surnames and Gender in Japan"

Essay by Botsman, "Freedom without Slavery"

Nov. 6 Intellectual and Political Developments

Shirokauer, 175-196

Nov. 8 Fukuzawa Yukichi

Fukuzawa selections from *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*

Week 11: Fukuzawa Yukichi: Civilization and Enlightenment

* How should we understand the thought of Fukuzawa Yukichi and his idea of a national body?

Nov. 11 Fukuzawa

Selections Contd.

Nov. 13 Okakura Tenshin

Rustom Barucha, *Another Asia*, Oxford University Press, 2009, Chapter on Okakura Tenshin.

Nov. 15 Taisho Period

Shirokauer, 207-220

Week 12: Taisho Liberalism

*How did the politics of Taisho Japan change from that of the Meiji?

Nov. 18 Yoshino Sakuzo and Taisho liberalism

Han, "Liberal Empire in East Asia"
Henry Smith, "The Non-liberal Roots of Taisho Democracy"

Nov. 20

Woman in Taisho Japan
Richard Reitan, "Claiming Woman"

Nov. 22 Silverberg on 1930s
Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center* (Selection)

Week 13: Exam

Nov. 25 Exam 2 Early Modern to Taisho Period

Nov. 27

No Class

Nov. 29

No Class

PART III: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

Week 14: Asianism and Postwar Japan

*What is pan-Asianism and how did it become enmeshed with militarism? How did Japan rebuild after WWII?

Dec. 2 Militarism and War
Shirokauer, 220-232

Dec. 4 Okawa Shumei
Essay on Okawa Shumei

Dec. 6 New Japan
Shirokauer, 232-242
Dower, Useful War.

Week 15: Asianism, Late Showa and Pop Culture

How does the relationship between Japan and the United States change after World War II? How does Takeuchi Yoshimi react to this change? How does this change affect pop culture?

Dec 8 Takeuchi Yoshimi and Asianism in Postwar Japan
Takeuchi Yoshimi, "What is Modernity?" in Takeuchi Yoshimi, *What is Modernity?*, Columbia University Press, 2005.

Sakamoto Kyu and the problem of J-pop.

Bourdaghs, *Sayonara Nippon*, chapter on Sakamoto Kyu

Dec. 10 Showa Economy, Culture and Politics

Shirokauer, 243-262

Toshiya Takahashi, "Japanese Neo-Conservatism", *Security Challenges*, Vol 6.3, 2010.
21-40.

Shirokauer, 262-267

Dec 12 Take home exam given in class

Turn in Final Draft of Paper

Week 16: Exam Week

Final Exam: Due on Dec 19.