Japan, Earliest Times to 1868
MWF—9:00-9:50—King 341

Course Description:
For many people, the term “Japan” conjures up images of a traditional society defined by the unchanging continuity of certain social, cultural, and political practices in a mono-ethnic society isolated by large bodies of water. Indeed, kimono-clad geisha, the tea ceremony, Zen Buddhism, and sword-wielding samurai all serve as contemporary icons of what it means to be “Japanese.” This course will investigate the beginning of some of these “traditions,” but our focus will be on the ways in which Japanese negotiated their meanings—as well as their own individual identities—in particular historical contexts. Rather than thinking in terms of stasis or isolation, we will collectively examine how Japanese notions of “self” and “Japan” changed through domestic conflict and international exchange. All the while, we will pay special attention to the cultural, social, and political ideologies that transformed a loose assemblage of communities into a robust and sophisticated early modern civilization with a capital city of over 1,000,000 people. This course is also designed to introduce students to a variety of approaches to the study of history. Over the course of the semester, we will explore the innovations, challenges, and new modes of thought that emerged in ancient, medieval, and early-modern Japan through the lenses of, among other things, politics, culture, ecology, and gender.

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, students should be able to:
- Understand how and why historical change occurred in ancient, medieval, and early modern Japan.
- Evaluate historical arguments based on their critical readings of primary and secondary textual and visual sources.
- Identify the motivations of historical agents and place their individual experiences within broader social, cultural, and political developments.
- Explain the chronology of pre-modern Japanese history and the origin and development of practices typically depicted as “traditional” and unchanging.

Evaluation:
Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:
1) 2 papers, worth 20% each.
   a) Paper #1 due 10/12.
2) Weekly discussion posts (15%).
3) Final Exam (12/19, 2-4pm) worth 25%.
4) Participation in discussion (15%).
Assignments (Detail):

Papers:
Throughout the course you will be required to write two papers (4-5 pages) on material from assigned readings. You will be provided with specific information and formatting guidelines at least two weeks prior to submission deadlines. Papers will be submitted electronically through blackboard.

Final Exam:
The final exam will include short identifications and essay questions. I am less concerned with your ability to memorized names and dates than I am with how well you integrate primary and secondary sources into your own interpretations of Japan’s pre-modern history. Blue books will be provided on exam day.

Discussion/Responses:
This course is a mixture of lectures (usually given on M/W) and discussion (usually falling on F). On designated Fridays, the class will divide into small groups to discuss questions/topics/issues related to that week’s assigned readings. Toward the end of class we will come back together to discuss our findings. The discipline of history is built on disagreements and differing interpretations. Please remember to disagree respectfully and base your comments on your consideration of the evidence.

In addition to your active participation in group discussions, you are also required to compose reading responses. In week two, the class will be divided into two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) and each week members of a designated group will upload their responses to Blackboard. Each student will compose a total of 5 responses over the course of the semester. These posts are due no later than 3pm on the Thursday before discussion. These posts should be no longer than 1 double-spaced page and will not be evaluated as a formal essay. Instead, your responses will be judged on their engagement with weekly readings. Your response should include at least one discussion question. The best discussion questions cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” and they are not intended to quiz your classmates on names and dates. Instead, try to formulate questions that require your classmates to think comparatively or to consider issues from different perspectives. You may be asked to read your response, or those of your classmates, during class, so do take them seriously. In addition, you must bring a hardcopy of your response to class on the day of the discussion.

Questions you should ask yourself when reading:
- Who produced this document and what kind of document is it? Who was the intended audience?
- Why was the work created? What conclusion(s) did the author(s) want their readers to take away?
  How did the author/creator accomplish his/her purpose? What kind of evidence or “proof” did s/he offer for the argument? What rhetorical elements or forms of persuasion are used?
- How does this document(s) relate to other class readings and why is it a valuable historical source?

Course Policies:

Late Submissions: History is primarily a written discipline and this course requires regular short assignments in addition to larger essays. Be strategic in how you plan your time. I will not accept late reading responses. Essays will incur a 1/3-grade penalty per 24-hour period. In other words, if a B+ paper is submitted two days late, the student would receive a B- after assessing the 2/3-grade penalty.

Absences: Attendance is taken every day. Absences will be noted and may count toward your participation grade. You will not succeed in this class if you regularly miss our meetings. Please contact me if you know you will be absent from class sessions.

Tardiness: Please try to be on time to all class meetings. If you must be late, please enter the class in the least disruptive manner possible. If you need to leave class early, please let me know in advance and do not cartwheel out the door.

Laptop/Computers: I highly recommend that all students able to do so take notes by hand on paper. This method is proven to be most effective in helping students understand and retain information. Official course policy is as follows:
Lecture: laptops and tablets are allowed in class during lecture. You are required, however, to turn off your wifi and/or put your device in airplane mode during class time. If you plan to use a laptop, please consider sitting in the back of the classroom.

Discussion: No devices are to be used during discussion section unless arrangements have been made through Disability Services. Please bring hardcopies of readings OR detailed notes to discussion.

Office Hours and Communication: I will be available in my office, Rice 312, on Mondays and Fridays from 1:30-2:30pm and on Thursdays from 2:00-3:00pm. To book an appointment during office hours visit https://aparks.youcanbook.me and reserve a 10- or 20-minute spot. (You are free to stay longer if no other students are waiting.) You are also free to drop by my office without an appointment, but those with prearranged meeting times have priority. If you are unavailable during my office hours, please speak with me and we can find a time to meet that fits both our schedules. The best way to reach me is through my Oberlin email account listed at the top of page one. I respond to emails from 4:00-6:00pm, Monday-Friday, and will in most cases reply within 24 hours. Do not expect an same-day response if you write me after 6:00pm. Also keep in mind that emails between students and faculty are professional exchanges and, as such, should be crafted with a modicum of care in regards to language and etiquette.

Students with Disabilities:
Oberlin College is committed to providing a supportive and challenging environment for all students. Oberlin works to provide all students with disabilities a learning environment that affords them equal access and reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Please let me know if you are eligible for and require accommodations in accordance with college policies, which can be found here at: http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/

Academic Integrity:
All students should be familiar and are required to adhere to Oberlin College’s “Honor Code.” The college requires that students sign an “Honor Code” for all assignments, and it should be included on the last page of essays submitted for this class. The pledge states, "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment."

More from “The Honor Code”:

Oberlin College students are on their honor to uphold a high degree of academic integrity. All work that students submit is expected to be of their own creation and give proper credit to the ideas and work of others. When students write and sign the Honor Pledge, they are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information, nor assisted others in these actions.

Further information can be found at:
http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/

Required Books:

Other assigned readings (marked with *) can be found online or on the blackboard site for this course. If you have trouble accessing readings, please contact me as soon as possible.
Class Schedule:
Readings must be completed by the date they are listed. Come to class prepared with discussion questions, interesting or problematic passages, copies of the readings, and notes. This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. You will always be notified well in advance in the event that the schedule is altered.

Special Events: The mandatory events listed below will take place outside our normal classroom and/or class time. Please plan accordingly. These events also appear in the detailed schedule below.
10/14, Group 1 AMAM Visit.
10/16, Group 2 AMAM Visit.
11/24, Film Screening. (7:00-9:30pm, location TBA.)

Week One: Geography and Prehistory

Assignments: None

Textbooks: (Background) Hane, 1-23.

(M—8/31): Introduction.


(F—9/4): Prehistoric Japan.

Week Two: Early Kingship

Assignments: None

Textbook: (Background) Hane, 1-26.

(M—9/7): No Class, Labor Day.

Readings:

(F—9/11): Constructing “Japan” in Myth and History.
Readings:


Week Three: Classical Japan
Assignments:

Map Quiz on 9/14
(Group 1) Reading response on De Bary and Farris due 9/17.

Textbook: (Background) Hane, 27-56.

(M—9/14): Buddha vs. the Kami.
Readings:
De Bary, 106-108, 114-120.

Readings:
*Farris, Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archeology of Ancient Japan (Honolulu, Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 1998), 123-177 & 201-232. (Available as an ebook through OBIS.)

(F—9/18): Discussion of Religion & Myth (De Bary and Farris).


Week Four: Heian Japan

Assignments:
(Group 2) Reading response on Sei Shônagon due 9/24.

Textbook: (Background) Hane, 57-83.

(M—9/21): Heian Aristocratic Culture.
Readings:
The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon, 196-264.


(F—9/25): Discussion of Sei Shônagon.

Week Five: A Sea of Problems

Assignments:
(Group 1) Reading response on De Bary and Hall due 9/31

Readings:
*Judith Rabinovitch, trans. Shômônkî, selections.

(W—9/30): The Kamakura Shogunate.
Readings:

(F—10/1): Discussion of De Bary, Hall, and Rabinovitch.

Begin Reading, Mary E. Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, xv-54.

**Week Six: The Sengoku jidai (Warring States Era)**

**Assignments:**
(Group 2) Reading response due 10/8

**Textbook:** (Background) Hane, 119-150.

(M—10/5): The Kenmu Revolution and the Ashikaga Shogunate.

**Readings:**


**Readings:**
Mary E. Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, 55-209.

(F—10/9): Discussion of Berry and De Bary.

**Week Seven: Art and Aesthetics During War and Peace**

**Assignments:**
Paper #1 due 10/12

*Readings need to be done before museum visits. Bring a pencil (not a pen) and paper to the Museum. Any bags will need to be left in lockers on the first floor of the Museum. Meet at the back entrance at 8:55am. The museum will lock its doors at 9:10am and will not allow entry after that time.*

(M—10/12): Ukiyo-e Prints and Art from the Sengoku Era Onward.

**Readings:**

*Ihara Saikaku, The Life of an Amorous Woman* (New York: New Directions, 1963), introduction by Ivan Morris, 3-15


(F—10/16): Museum Visit, group 2.

**Fall Recess—Catch up on earlier readings and sleep.

**Week Eight: War(s) for Peace**
Assignment:
(Group 1) Reading response due 10/29

Textbook: (Background) Hane, 194-215, 237-249.

Readings:

(W—10/28): Establishing Central Control during the Pax Tokugawa.
Readings:

(F—10/30): Discussion of Berry and De Bary.

Week Nine: Gender and Society in the Tokugawa Era

Assignments:
(Group 2) Reading response due 11/5

Readings:
Musui’s Story, ix-70

Readings:
Musui’s Story, 71-157.

(F—11/6): Discussion of Musui.

Week Ten: Early Modern Ecologies

Assignments:
(Group 1) Reading response due 11/12

(M—11/9): The Economics of Urban Growth.
Readings:

Readings:

(F—11/13): Discussion of Environments and Ecologies.

**Week Eleven: Expanding the Realm**

**Assignments:**

(Group 2) Reading response due 11/19

(M—11/16): Ainu Encounters.

**Readings:**


(W—11/18): The Ryukyu Islands.

**Readings:**


(F—11/20): Discussion of Tokugawa Foreign Policy.

**Week Twelve: Internal Discontent (Naiyū)**

**Assignments:**

Second Paper due 11/23

**Textbook:**

(Background) Hane, 253-275.


**Readings:**


(T—11/24): **Film Screening:** *The Twilight Samurai* (*Tasogare seibei*) (2002), dir. Yamada Yōjirō. Time: 7:00-9:30pm. Location: TBA.


**Readings:**


*Ôshio Heihachirō, “A Call to Arms.”

(F—11/27): **No Class, Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week Thirteen: External Threats (Gaikan)**

**Assignments:**

(Group 1) Reading response due 12/3
Textbook: (Background) Hane, 289-299.

(M—11/30): Learning from the West.
**Readings:**

**Readings:**
*“Black Ships and Samurai,” MIT Visualizing Cultures, online access. Read “Intro,” “Perry,” “Black Ships,” “Facing East,” and “Facing West.”

(F—12/4): Discussion of Black Ship materials.

**Week Fourteen: The Fall of the Tokugawa**

**Assignments:**
(Group 2) Reading response due 12/10

Textbook: (Background) Hane, 299-312.

(M—12/7): Tokugawa Death Rattle.
**Readings:**
*Teruko Craig, trans., Remembering Aizu, selections.

(W—12/9): Modernity and Tradition in Meiji Japan or The Beefeater’s Dilemma.
**Readings:**
*Kune Kunitake, Japan Rising: The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe, 1871-1873* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 55-87.

(F—12/11): Discussion of Remembering Aizu and Japan Rising.

**Final Exam: December 19, 2:00-4:00pm**
A Guide to Essay Writing

Formatting:
- 12pt font, Times New Roman or equivalent.
- 1" margins on all sides.
- Left justify (aligned left).
- Double-spaced.
- Block quotations (quotations over three full lines of text) are single-spaced with 10pt. font and 1.5” margins on the left and right.

Citations:
- All quotations must be followed by parenthetical citations: “All quotations, Parks wrote, “must be followed by parenthetical citations” (Parks, 10).
- If you are using outside sources—sources not listed on this syllabus—you must include a Chicago-style bibliographic entry on a separate page at the end of your paper.
- Please remember, you must cite the sources of all quotations, paraphrases, specific references, and arguments you use in your papers. You do not need to cite lectures or what is considered to be common knowledge. In other words, you do not have to cite Wikipedia even though you used it to look up the dates of the Heian period. Citing does not weaken your paper! It shows that you can select appropriate evidence and/or incorporate secondary sources into your own work. If you are unsure if something needs a citation, then cite it and move on.

Grading (General):
An A essay will feature:
- A clear, compelling, and non-obvious thesis that responds to the assigned question and goes beyond what has already been discussed (by you or others in the class)
- Forceful argumentation, including creative component claims below the level of the thesis, a careful selection of evidence, and logical connections between the various component claims
- Thoughtful organization of the argument
- Demonstration of mastery of both the relevant lecture themes and readings, including subtleties in both
- Polished, sophisticated, and correct prose
- Little wasted space
- Properly formatted citations
- Adherence to paper specifications listed on the syllabus

A B essay will feature:
- A discernible thesis that responds to the assigned question but may be less than compelling or may rely somewhat on the repetition of what has been said already by others in the class.
- Coherent argumentation, including component claims below the level of the thesis, an acceptable use of evidence, and some connections between the various component claims (perhaps inconsistent)
- Demonstration of a comprehension of the relevant lecture themes and readings, although perhaps with some errors
- Some attention paid to paper organization
- Generally correct prose
- Generally correct citations
- Adherence to paper specifications listed on the syllabus

A C essay will feature:
- No discernible thesis or a thesis that has obvious flaws, either because it is unconvincing or because it merely repeats class material
- Unnecessary plot summary or other non-sequiturs in the place of argument, unpersuasive argumentation, or no evidence
- Arguments or the use of evidence that suggest some problems with understanding readings or the lecture
- Clearly weak or incorrect prose
- Intact but improperly executed citations
- Possible failure to adhere to paper specifications (for instance, paper is too short and uses nonstandard fonts and spacing to conceal the fact)

**A D essay** will feature:

- No discernible thesis or a thesis that has obvious flaws, either because it is unconvincing or because it merely repeats class material
- No comprehensible or convincing argument, reliance on non-sequiturs, poor use of evidence
- Arguments or the use of evidence that suggest that the relevant lectures were not attended or that the readings were not read
- Clearly weak or incorrect prose
- Absent or improperly executed citations
- Possible failure to adhere to paper specifications (for instance, paper is too short and uses nonstandard fonts and spacing to conceal the fact)

Essays will be returned with a version of following table, which evaluates areas of relative strength and weakness.

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<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Praiseworthy</th>
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<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Failing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis</strong></td>
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<td>Paper makes clearly worded claim, which meets the criteria for a strong thesis as discussed in class.</td>
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<td><strong>Claims and Evidence:</strong></td>
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<td>Paper advances the thesis with mini-arguments (topic sentences).</td>
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<td>Paper supports these claims with strong evidence from the text.</td>
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<td>All evidence is explained.</td>
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<td><strong>Structure and Organization:</strong></td>
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<td>Paper is well organized and flows logically. Paper makes effective use of paragraphs (with transitions).</td>
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<td><strong>Introduction and Conclusion:</strong></td>
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<td>Paper introduces object of study and provides all information necessary for understanding the paper. Conclusion appropriately wraps up paper.</td>
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<td><strong>Readability &amp; Form:</strong></td>
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<td>Paper reads well and is free from errors. Paper adheres to the conventions outlined on the assignment (MLA format, etc.).</td>
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