This course surveys Japan’s modern transformation from the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the present. It examines how political, social, and economic modernization were simultaneous projects while considering their impact on the lives of citizens at home and imperial subjects abroad. We focus on how economic volatility, popular struggles for representative democracy, war, and colonization represent aspects of Japan’s twentieth century experience as well as widely shared dilemmas of modernity.

Students are encouraged to keep in mind the following goals for maximizing learning throughout the semester:

- To look for patterns and themes in history. Students are encouraged to draw connections between major events and ideas in Japan’s modern history and those encountered in other history courses.
- To think about how historians practice their craft. In particular, students will learn to read and interpret a variety of primary sources as a way of understanding the creation of multiple perspectives on the past.
- To understand how history-writing is shaped by contemporary concerns.
- To improve expository writing about historical events; to posit an argument and develop it in a clear and logical progression of evidence.
- To polish the verbal articulation of ideas before an audience of one’s peers.
- To gain an appreciation for Japan’s role in today’s world, understanding the relationship between where it has been and where it is headed as a nation.

**Required texts:** Required texts have been ordered in paperback at the Oberlin Bookstore (basement) as well as placed on reserve at Mudd Library.

All other readings are available on Blackboard.

**ASSESSMENT:**
The course grade will be based on the following:
- Mid-term (hour) exam: 20%
- Short papers: 20% each
- Final exam: 20%
- Pop quizzes: 5%
- Attendance/Participation: 15%

**EXAMS:** The Midterm Examination, covering the lectures and all assigned readings to date will be given on Monday, March 8. The Final Exam for Section #1 is scheduled for Thursday, May 20 from 9-11am. Final Exam for Section #2: Wednesday, May 19 from 7-9pm.

**PAPERS:** Students will write two 4-6 page essays, due in class Friday, March 26 and Monday, May 10.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**
- Lectures are an integral part of the course, and attendance is mandatory.
- Students are expected to complete all readings and be prepared to discuss in class.
- In select weeks, students will be responsible for posting either a question or answer related to assigned readings on the online discussion board in Blackboard. Schedules for this assignment will be distributed in the second week of class. Students may expect to post six questions or answers during the course of the semester.

**VISUAL CULTURE ASSIGNMENT:** Students will write a 300-word museum description of a print chosen from a selection of works held by the Allen Memorial Museum. Students should explain the print’s importance within the context of relevant themes from the history of its period. Since the museum is closed until Spring 2011, students will have access to eight prints from April 12-16 at Special Collections in Mudd Library. The assignment is due Monday, April 19 in class.

**POP QUIZZES** will be conducted at the instructor’s discretion. These will normally occur on Fridays by which date students will be expected to have completed all of the week’s readings.

**LATE POLICY:** All assignments are due on (or before) the date noted in the syllabus. Only one extension will be granted per semester and must be requested during office hours at least 2 days before the due date of the paper. (Note: Requests for extensions may not be granted in all cases.) Late assignments will be reduced by one grade step per day.

**Special Needs:** Requests for extra time on exams and other special needs must be made well in advance of exam times/other due dates and must be accompanied by an endorsement from Ms. Jane Boomer, Student Academic Services (Peters G27).
FILM SCREENINGS: Three films will be shown during the course of the semester in Wilder 101. The first, “No Regrets for our Youth” (Waga seishun ni kuinashi, 1946) by Director Kurosawa Akira will be screened on Tuesday, April 6 at 7pm. The second film, “When a Woman Ascends the Stairs” (Onna ga kaidan wo agaru toki, 1960) by Director Naruse Mikio will be screened on Tuesday, April 20 at 7pm. While viewing of the first two films is mandatory, students are encouraged also to attend the screening on Thursday, April 8 at 7pm of Director Frank Capra’s 1945 War Department Orientation Film, “Know Your Enemy—Japan.” All films will be available for viewing on library reserve if you cannot make the screenings. Films will be discussed during lecture in conjunction with the readings for the week.

Honor Code: All students are expected to adhere to the Oberlin Honor Code on all written assignments and examinations.

Writing Assistance: Students are encouraged to visit the Writing Center in Mudd where tutors from the Writing Associates Program can provide tips and strategies for improving writing skills.

LECTURE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Japan’s Modern Revolution
Feb 8 (M) Introduction; Meiji Restoration
Feb 10 (W) Dismantling Feudalism, Creating a Nation-State
Feb 12 (F) Discussion of Primary Sources

Readings:
Gordon, Andrew. A Modern History of Japan (MHJ), ch. 5.

Primary Sources:
“Memorial on the Proposal to Return the Registers,” pp. 10-12* 
“Imperial Rescript on the Abolition of the Han,” p. 12. 
Conscription Ordinance, 1873. [Blackboard]

*All entries under “Primary Sources” can be found in Sources of Japanese Tradition, (Vol. 2, Part 2) unless otherwise noted.

Week 2: Freedom and Popular Rights
*Feb 15 (M) Civilization and Enlightenment
Feb 17 (W) Freedom and Popular Rights, 1873-1889
Feb. 19 (F) A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government (1887); The Meiji Constitution (1889)

There will be a map quiz at the beginning of class on Monday, Feb. 15.
Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 6.

Primary Sources:
“Kido’s Observations on Returning from the West,” pp. 16-17.

**Week 3: Building Modernity**
Feb. 22 (M) Building Modernity
Feb. 24 (W) Modern Economic Growth
Feb. 26 (F) Education

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 7.

Primary Sources:
“Progress of Female Education in Meiji,” pp. 115-16.

**Week 4: The Meiji Wars**
March 1 (M) 1890s: New Concepts of “Japanese-ness”
March 3 (W) War with China, 1894-95 / War with Russia, 1904-05
March 5 (F) The Battle of Tsushima

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 8.


Primary Sources:

**Week 5: Generating Capitalism**
March 8 (M) In class Midterm
March 10 (W) Empire Attained and Industrialization Begun
March 12 (F) Factory Girls

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 9. (Review *MHJ*, ch. 7.)


**Primary Source:**

**Week 6: Prewar Liberalism**
March 15 (M) A Politicized Citizenry, An Enlarged Electorate
March 17 (W) *Minponshugi* / Contention in the Workplace
March 19 (F) Discussion

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 10.

**Primary Sources:**

**Week 7: Alternative Modernities**
March 22 (M) The End of Capitalism?; The Rise and Fall of Party Cabinets
March 24 (W) Visions of a New Society
March 26 (F) **Paper #1 due in class.**

Readings:
*MHJ*, ch. 11.

**Spring Recess**

**Week 8: Depression, War, Defeat**
April 5 (M) Militarism and Politics
April 7  (W) Imperial Japan at War
April 9  (F) Total Defeat

**Film (Required):** “No Regrets for our Youth” (*Waga seishun ni kuinashi*, 1946) by Director Kurosawa Akira will be screened on **Tuesday, April 6.**

*Film (Optional):* “Know Your Enemy—Japan” (War Department orientation film. Director: Frank Capra, 1945) will be screened on **Thursday, April 8** in Wilder 101.

**Readings:**
*MHJ*, ch. 12.

**Primary Sources:**
“The Decision for War with the United States,” (1941) pp. 309-12.

**Week 9: Transwar**
April 12  (M) Reckoning and Repatriation
April 14  (W) Rebuilding
April 16  (F) Recreation

**Readings:**

**Primary Sources:**

*Visual Culture Assignment due in class Monday, April 19.*

**Week 10: The High-Growth Era, 1956-1973**
*April 19  (M) Citizen, State, and Democracy in the Postwar Era
April 21  (W) Middle Class Life for Everyone?
April 23  (F) Social Revolutions

**Readings:**

Primary Sources:

Film (Required): “When a Woman Ascends the Stairs” (1960) by Director Naruse Mikio to be screened: Tues., April 20.

**Week 11: The ‘80s Boom**

April 26 (M) The Making of the Bubble
April 28 (W) Japan on the World Stage
April 30 (F) Japan Inc.

Readings:
MHJ, Ch. 16.

Primary Sources:
Ishihara Shintarō, The Japan that Can Say No. chs. 2-3 (pp. 26-41). [Blackboard]


**Week 12: The ‘Lost Decade’ of the ‘90s**

May 3 (M) The Bubble Bursts and the End of LDP Dominance
May 5 (W) Aum Shinrikyō and New Limits on a Free Society
May 7 (F) New Social Phenotypes & Murakami, Underground

Primary Source:


**Week 13: Issues for the 21st Century**

May 10 (M) **Paper #2 due in class.** Constitutional Revision and War Memory
May 12 (W) Future Concerns
May 14 (F) Concluding Thoughts

Readings:
MHJ, Ch. 17.
Primary Sources:


Final Exam for Section #1: **Thursday, May 20** from 9-11am.

Final Exam for Section #2: **Wednesday, May 19** from 7-9pm.