Fall 2010
MWF 9:00-9:50 am

Japan from Earliest Times to 1868

Professor Raja Adal  
Rice Hall 308  raja.adal@oberlin.edu  tel. 5-6708

This course introduces you to the history of Japan, from the time when a land bridge connected the Japanese isles to the Asian mainland to the dawn of the modern era. Topics will include the introduction of Buddhism, writing, and tea from Asia, the establishment of the Medieval culture described in The Tale of Genji, the rise of warrior rule, and the lives of the women, samurai, peasants, city dwellers, and outcasts who lived, worked, played, and sometimes revolted in Medieval and Early Modern Japan. It will draw extensively on translated primary sources and on visual sources from Oberlin’s collection and online. Enrollment Limit: 45.

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


RECOMMENDED TEXT

ALL OTHER READINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD.

ASSESSMENT
The course grade will be based on the following:

- Mid-term (hour) exam: 20%
- Papers (3): 10% each
- Final exam: 30%
- Map quizzes (2): 5%
- Attendance/Participation: 15%

EXAMS
The Midterm Examination, covering the lectures and all assigned readings to date will be given in class on Friday October 8. The Final Examination is scheduled for Saturday December 18 from 2-4pm.
ESSAYS
Students will write three 3-4 page essays drawing on visual and primary sources, due in class on Monday September 27, Monday November 8, and Monday December 6. The papers will draw on textual primary sources that we will read every week in class and on material and visual culture from Oberlin’s collections and online. During week 9, we will visit the temporary print study room of Oberlin’s Allen Memorial Art Museum to examine original images from Early Modern Japan. During that same visit, we will also view a Japanese map from the early nineteenth century and books from Early Modern Japan in Special Collections.

Papers are due on (or before) the due date noted in the syllabus. Only one extension will be granted per semester and must be requested during office hours at Pal for the paper. Late assignments will be reduced by one grade step per day. A “B” paper due on Friday November 5 but turned in on Saturday November 6, for example, will get a “B-.” If paper turned in on Monday November 8 it will earn a “C,” etc.

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 them in class.
- Each week, students will be required to post one question concerning the readings on the online discussion board in Blackboard by Thursday, 10 pm.

FILM SCREENINGS
Two films will be shown during the course of the semester in King 337. The first, “Ran” by Director Kurosawa Akira will be screened on Tuesday October 12 at 7pm. The second film, “Twilight Samurai” (“Tasogare Seibei”) by Director Yamada Yōji will be screened on Tuesday November 30 at 7pm. 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.

WRITING ASSISTANCE
Students are encouraged to visit the Writing Center in Mudd Library where tutors from the Writing Associates Program can provide strategies for improving writing skills.

OFFICE HOURS
Mondays 1:00-2:30 and Wednesdays 10:00-11:30.
Students are encouraged to come see the instructor with questions about any aspect of the course.
Lecture Schedule

I. PRE-MODERN JAPAN

Week 1: Origins
Sep. 8 (W) Introduction: Why study Japanese history?
Sep. 10 (F) Early Peoples, Myths, and Technologies

Secondary Sources
Hall, John W., *Japan from Prehistory to Modern Times*, 1-23 (Blackboard).

Primary sources
“History of the Kingdom of Wei,” 6-8 (SJ).T.
“Legends concerning Shintō Deities;” 19-23 (SJ/T).

Week 2: The Early Japanese State
Sept. 15 (W) Buddhism
Sept. 17 (M) The Writing System
*On Monday Sept. 13 there will be a map quiz at the beginning of class.

Secondary Sources
Mason & Caiger, 25-63.

Primary sources
“Buddhism and the State in Nara Japan,” 114-120 (SJ/T).

Week 3: The Classical Age
Sept. 20 (M) Courtier Rulership in the Heian Period (794-1185)
Sept. 22 (W) Heian Refinements and Religions
Sept. 24 (F) *The Tale of Genji* and Heian Literature

Secondary Source
Mason & Caiger, 64-117.

Primary sources
“Saichō: Vow of the Uninterrupted Study of the Lotus Sutra,” 140 (SJ/T).
“Saichō: Explaining the Precepts,” 141-142 (SJ/T).
“Regulations for Students of the Mountain School in Six Articles I,” 145-146 (SJ/T).

Week 4: The Rise of the Warrior Class
Sept. 27* (M) The Rise of the Warrior Class 
Sept. 29 (W) Warrior Rulership and Kamakura Culture 
Oct. 1 (F) Civil War

*First paper due in class on Monday September 27.

Secondary Source
Mason & Caiger, 121-143.

Primary sources
Tales of Times Now Past, 93-101; 173-77; 184-186 (Blackboard). 

Week 5: Medieval Cultures
Oct. 4 (M) The Culture of War and the Southern Barbarians 
Oct. 6 (W) The Visual Arts 
Oct. 8 (F) In-Class Midterm

Secondary Source
Mason & Caiger, 144-170.

Primary sources 
“Medieval Uses of the Past,” 250-257 (SJ). 
“Dōgen: How to Practice Buddhism,” 319-328 (SJ). 
Mason, Penelope. History of Japanese Art, 147-148; 174-201; 211-212 (SJ). 

Week 6: From War to Unification
Oct. 11* (M) The Period of Warring States
Oct. 13 (W) The Unifiers
Oct. 15 (F) Unification
*Reminder: Screening of “Ran” by Kurosawa Akira in King 337 at 7pm on Tuesday, Oct. 12.

Secondary Source

Primary sources

II. EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Week 7: The Tokugawa Polity: The Warriors
Oct. 18* (M) Shoguns and Warriors
Oct. 20 (W) Case Study: Katsu Kokichi
Oct. 22 (F) Case Study: The Akō Vendetta
*On Wednesday Oct. 18 there will be a map quiz at the beginning of class.

Secondary Sources

Primary sources
“Code for the Warrior Households,” 12-14 (Blackboard).
“Code for the Imperial Court and Court Nobility,” 14-18 (Blackboard).
“Anecdotes concerning Yamazaki Ansai,” 82-83 (Blackboard).

Fall Recess

Week 8: The Tokugawa Polity and its Discontents
Nov. 1 (F) Villagers, City Dwellers, and Outcasts
Nov. 3 (M) Women
Nov. 5 (W) Revolt!
*Students will be assigned to one of two groups. On the day of your visit, please convene at 9:00 am at Special Collections.*
Secondary Sources
Gordon, 20-33 (Blackboard).

Primary sources

**Week 9: The Tokugawa Polity in Mythology and Art**
Nov. 8 (M) “A Tale of a Dream from the Fox Woman Plain”
Nov. 10 (W) Section 1: Visit to Special Collections and Museum Temporary Print Study Room*
Nov. 12 (F) Section 2: Visit to Special Collections and Museum Temporary Print Study Room*

Primary source

**Week 10: A Closed Country? Foreign Relations in Tokugawa Japan**
Nov. 15* (M) “Sakoku”
Nov. 17 (W) The Dutch on Dejima
Nov. 19 (F) Case Study: Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716)
*Second paper due in class on Monday November 8.

Secondary Sources
Gordon, 34-45 (Blackboard).
Toby, Ronald. *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, 1-22 (Blackboard).

Primary sources
“Aizawa Seishisai: Revere the Emperor, Repel the Barbarian;” “New Theses” 520-529 (Blackboard).
“Sakuma Shōzan: Eastern Ethics and Western Science,” 530-540 (Blackboard).

**Week 11: Black Ships and Red Beards**
Nov. 22 (M) 1850s Troubles
Nov. 24 (W) The Black Ships

Secondary Sources
Gordon, 46-59 (Blackboard).

Thanksgiving Recess

Week 12: Narrating the Restoration
Nov. 29 (M) The Black Ships in Multiple Perspectives
Dec. 1 (W) How to Narrate the Restoration
Dec. 3 (F) The Restoration and Modern Japan
*Reminder: Screening of “Twilight Samurai” in King 337 at 7pm on Tuesday Nov. 30.

Secondary Source
Shiba Gorō, Remembering Aizu. Entire.

Primary sources

Week 13: Assessing the Tokugawa Period
Dec. 6* (M) Abandoning the Old, Building the New
Dec. 8 (W) From Edo to Tokyo
Dec. 10 (F) Japan’s Premodern and Early Modern Period in Global Perspective
*Third paper due in class on Monday December 6.

Secondary Source
Gordon, preface and introduction (Blackboard).

Primary sources

Week 14: Assessing the Tokugawa Period
Dec. 13 (M) Japan’s Premodern and Early Modern Period in Contemporary Perspective

Secondary Source

Final Examination: Dec. 18 (Sat.) 2-4PM